

Seven insights
for more
FLOW
in your business
and your life
JAN BOMMEREZ

ALMERE  PUBLISHING

Dedicated to
Napoleon Hill,
who inspired millions of people to discover the
guidance of universal principles

and to
Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr,
who demonstrated the power of these universal
principles.

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Introduction

Can we call it progress when a cannibal learns to eat with a fork and knife?

You are holding a book that was inspired by some of the most notable individuals in human history. Since the book is about business as an art form, several of those we will be introducing will, of course, be from the business world. The fact that these exceptional people search much further and deeper for their inspiration than purely in the economic sphere will immediately become apparent to you. For example, one of the sources of inspiration mentioned most frequently by successful businesspeople is a man called Napoleon Hill, the author of 'Think and Grow Rich'. This perennial bestseller was published almost 100 years ago and it still inspires people today. It is estimated that at least one hundred million people have read it. Those who have applied its lessons have indeed seen the enormous impact in their lives. Let the title not mislead you though. Riches are not limited to 'money riches.' There are many ways to become 'richer'. Consider for example that even Gandhi's leadership was inspired by Napoleon Hill's book.

It is, in essence, a book about the discovery of unsuspected spiritual powers within us. Business is only one of the fields this power can be applied to. Napoleon Hill himself had a mentor of the most exceptional calibre, the 'captain' of the industrial era, Andrew Carnegie. He introduced Hill to historical figures such as Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and Henry Ford. It took Hill twenty years, and a very thorough study of 504 of the most exceptional people

of his time, to find out whether 'Laws of Success' really do exist. Andrew Carnegie asked him in 1908 if he would like to carry out this study knowing that it would probably take twenty years. Hill did and, sure enough, he published 'The Law of Success' (his first book) in 1928. It was quite a voluminous work and it probably was too much effort to ask for most people to read.¹

Many people spend more time planning their holidays than acquiring insight into how to fulfil their life's purpose. We are often so busy surviving that we do not get round to actually living. The survival mode costs a great deal of effort. Life beyond the survival mode is, however, fluid and often effortless. Effortlessness is a characteristic of nature. When we live in harmony with the basic principles of Life, we will spontaneously achieve a state of grace (or effortlessness) known as FLOW.²

By studying exceptional people, Hill discovered that if we take the trouble to achieve harmony with a number of fundamental laws and principles of nature, the universe will always come to our aid with its infinite resources. In this book I will call those exceptionally successful role models 'four percenters'. Here is why: according to Pareto's Law eighty percent of all results are produced by twenty percent of the active population. If we apply Pareto's Law to these twenty percent we find our 'four percenters' (the top twenty percent of the top twenty percent). These four percenters are typically very intuitive. That is also what Napoleon Hill discovered. He called intuition 'the sixth sense' and he

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- 1 Hill, N., *The Law of Success*, first published by Ralston University Press in 1928.
 - 2 Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Harper & Row, 1990. The concept of FLOW is discussed extensively in this book. In a nutshell, it comes down to a state of effortlessness in which you have access to your greater creative potential.

called awakening the sixth sense in his students the ultimate goal of all his teachings.

Once we have reached a state of alignment with nature and we start navigating on our sixth sense, the 'right things' simply begin to happen. Carl Gustav Jung later named this spontaneous appearance of results and solutions 'synchronicities'. When we are in energy alignment with the universal flow, things and people are attracted to us in an almost magical manner. We literally become a kind of magnet for the right type of people, resources and situations. Much of what Hill discovered about the invisible powers we have access to, is now being confirmed by quantum physics, chaos theory and complexity science. We will, therefore, also be drawing from this rich source of knowledge in order to obtain more insight in our true potential. As an example: quantum physicists have done experiments that proved that subatomic particles anticipated what the scientists were about to test (you can Google the famous 'Double Slit Experiments'). In other words: material reality does not exist as separate from consciousness.

Einstein had already pointed out the role of the observer in his relativity theory but quantum physics goes a lot further than that. We will go into how much further later. But for now, let's go back to Napoleon Hill. Hill's work was meant to be a practical philosophy for the adventurers of the Industrial Era: the entrepreneurs and businesspeople. Hill wanted an applied philosophy, not just wise words. We could read the works of Plato and Socrates and many other philosophers until we know them backwards, but how do we apply them to our daily business? Hill wanted to inspire the businesspeople of his time who were searching for practical answers. He was one of the pioneers in the whole field of personal development. Perhaps the most influential one. Hill pointed out that we can consciously cooperate with the infinite intelligence behind all of nature, since it is in us too. That particular message inspired Mahatma Gandhi. He

had thousands of copies made of one of Hill's essays and distributed them throughout India as an inspiration for his Non-Violent Revolution. The essay was about the boundless power that lives within us and that never forces itself on us but is always willing to support us. The following Gandhi quote could just as well have been said by Hill:

***“There is a Power that – if only we allow it
can flow through us and work miracles ...”***

MAHATMA GANDHI

The problem is that many of us usually cannot believe that this power really exists in us and that we can actually cooperate with it! It can only be truly found out by discovering it in our own experience. Perhaps we understand it intellectually but that is not enough. True faith is showed by our actions, not by adhering to a belief system. To find this Power in us (what Napoleon Hill calls ‘the Infinite Intelligence’) and to be able to hear its quiet voice, we need to do the inner work. We need to become channels or conductors for the creative Life Force that brings forth all of creation. This is only possible if we do not pretend that we know better. We need to be open and receptive.

***“The Power can only work for us
when it can work through us.”***

NAPOLEON HILL

Life is, by its own nature, abundant. Think of the number of stars, the number of species, and the number of star systems. The abundance of life is above all given to us as unlimited possibilities³. Life is a field of potential. Every crea-

3 How many grains of wheat can you receive back from nature in return for a single one? Using a geometric progression you quickly reach millions. And this is only one example.

tive idea is in fact a potential. It takes conscious action to bring possibilities to fruition. There are many people working hard but never achieving success. The action we refer to is therefore not just 'hard work'. We could call it 'inspired action'. It is action lead by inspiration and intuition, not by fears and worries. Inspired action is always preceded by the willingness to be receptive for inner guidance. Our capacity for inner guidance is regulated by who and what we think we are. What do we consciously and unconsciously believe about ourselves? Can we really believe that we are a unique expression of Life itself? Or do we suffer from limiting beliefs instead? If we have this enormous potential inside us, how do we unconsciously sabotage ourselves? How do we unconsciously cut ourselves off from the natural abundance of Life, the ever-giving flow of Life? Those are questions to be answered if we want to create more flow in our life. Wise individuals have known the key throughout the ages: *Know Thyself.*

***"To know thyself is the
beginning of wisdom."***

SOCRATES

There is vast potential beyond common belief of what we are. In this book we will look at ways to get access to this unknown part of ourselves. Without it, we cannot know our true power.

***"You cannot get to know the
Power which determines all
forms of success if you do not first
discover who you really are."***

-NAPOLEON HILL

The potential of everything we desire already exists in the world of possibilities, just as the principles of telephony already existed before Edison discovered them. Edison was able to receive what had been there all along. The same goes

Insight Number One

Being centred is the key to acting in flow - in sports, in business and in life

*"Our life is made up of the things
we focus our attention on."*

- RALPH WALDO EMERSON

When I talk about exceptional salespeople as role models, I am not referring to 'really good salespeople'; I am referring to sales legends. I am referring to the ones who were transformed into 'butterflies'. They acquired wings ...

Take Joe Gandolfo for example. He is the role model that I personally have learned the most from when it comes to selling 'in a state of flow'. At his peak he sold life insurance policies valuing more than a billion dollars every year for more than ten years in a row. This was approximately four hundred times more than the average in his industry. Or, to put it another way, Gandolfo sold as much as four hundred 'normal' insurance salespeople. Did he work four hundred times harder? No. Was he four hundred times smarter? No. Did he know four hundred times more about sales techniques or about life insurance policies? Of course, not. Then what?

The answer may not immediately be easy to believe: Gandolfo was selling from a place of inner power not accessible for people who do not do the inner work. What is this inner work? It consists of letting go of all limiting beliefs about human beings and human relationships and replacing them by universal principles, as taught by Gandolfo's mentor, Napoleon Hill.

Gandolfo wrote: "You do not have to be a genius to sell, nor do you have to work day and night. What you need is

the right mindset. I learned the universal principles that ensure the right mindset from Napoleon Hill. I have read his book 'Think and Grow Rich' at least 50 times. It's in my DNA." This is the kind of learning needed to become a four percenter.

Many other legendary businesspeople were also inspired by Napoleon Hill. I will often refer to his teachings in this book. For now, however, what I would like to make crystal clear is that without integrating what will be shared in the chapter about Insight One, you will not have the locomotive to pull all the wagons that represent the remaining chapters.

Insight Number One determines, literally, ninety percent of the difference between 'good' salespeople and the truly exceptional salespeople (and leaders in other fields) that will be our role models in this book. We can compare the effort it takes to get in this state of inner power to a rocket leaving the Earth's gravity field. It will travel hundreds of thousands of miles through space, but it will use ninety percent of its fuel in the first twenty miles of its voyage, just to overcome the gravity pull of the Earth. Similarly, if you desire to reach your inner power centre, you will do well to prepare to spend ninety percent of your energy in conquering the 'gravity' of your limiting beliefs and constricting emotions, like fear. Most of our limiting beliefs are collective beliefs. 'Everybody knows' type of beliefs. It is simply impossible to reach the inner circle of the four percenters by falling in line with collective thinking.

To come back to the metaphor of the rocket leaving Earth: once it has broken free from Earth's gravity, it requires very little additional energy to keep going. Something similar happens on the way to our inner power centre. After making a great deal of effort for a long period of time we can reach a wonderful state of effortlessness. This is the state called 'flow'. In flow, we can easily achieve ten times more in any given time-period than when we are still stuck in the

limiting patterns of our past. The true top performers achieve results which cannot be explained by factors such as hard work or talent alone. A man like Joe Gandolfo worked hard to reach the state of effortlessness, or flow in sales. This flow state looks very much like an astronaut's state of weightlessness. Once we 'lift off', we are being carried by an amazing inner power source. What it takes, is to come into harmony with the same laws of nature which keep planets in their orbits, enable flowers to bloom, caterpillars to metamorphose into butterflies and babies to grow in the womb.

What we sometimes call personal power is not personal at all. It is transpersonal. It comes from a conscious alignment with the Whole. In such a state of alignment we become some kind of superconductor for the creative Life Force that animates all things. Alignment is a state of non-resistance to the universal flow as it unfolds in the now. It requires an absence of fear of the unknown. This allows for letting go of the need to control events. Only those who trust the infinite intelligence called Life can live without resistance.

***"The sage does not resist and
therefore nobody can resist him."***

-LAO TZU

***"Non-resistance opens the door to
the greatest power in the universe."***

-ECKHART TOLLE

Flow is a state of non-resistance. Resistance comes from psychological fear (see introduction). Surrender to the Universal Power comes from deep trust in Life and the Source of Life. Trust is a state of fearlessness about the unknown. It takes the deep realisation that all unrealised potential resides in the unknown!

***“When you become comfortable
with uncertainty, infinite
possibilities open up in your life.”***

-ECKHART TOLLE

The difference between Gandolfo-types and ‘good performers’ does not lie in what they know nor in their skills, but in the fact that they come from the universal power centre which exists in every one of us, but of which most of us are unaware. Or if we have heard about the power of ‘I AM’, we have no real clue what that really means because we can only know it by being it. ‘I AM’ implies a fearless ‘mindset’. ‘I AM’ is the subjective experience of Being. We can only have this experience when we are centred in our core, our heart. Most people live in the head. That is not where the ‘Power’ resides.

We have the most leverage when we are centred. Compare it to the best position of the fulcrum to optimize the power of a lever.

***“Give me a place to stand, and a lever
long enough, and I will move the world.”***

-ARCHIMEDES

Our core is an unmoving centre from which we operate all our movements: from thinking to feeling to acting. All creative people are rooted in inner stillness.

***“Wisdom comes with the ability to
be still. Being still is what activates
the non-conceptual intelligence in
you. Stillness is where creativity and
solutions to problems are found.”***

-ECKHART TOLLE

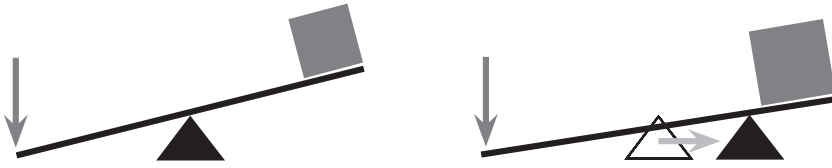


Figure 1: The fulcrum determines the leverage.

The position of the fulcrum (point of support) of a lever determines how much power can be exerted by the lever. Notice that the power of the lever comes from the fulcrum i.e. the part that does not move. Compare this to the axle of a wheel which allows the wheel to move while not moving itself.

Our inner centre of power is the stillness that exists beyond the movements of the mind, beyond thinking. The inner stillness is the 'I AM'. It is awareness itself.

“When you lose touch with inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. When you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world. Your innermost sense of self, of who you are, is inseparable from stillness. This is the ‘I AM’ that is deeper than name and form. All true artists, whether they know it or not, create from a place of no-mind, from inner stillness.”

- ECKHART TOLLE

Another way of saying the same is that our true power is not the power of the mind (the so-called 'mindpower'), but the power of awareness, the power of being.

Epilogue:

The Inner Game of Selling

In 1994 tennis coach W. Timothy Gallwey wrote 'The Inner Game of Tennis' (Pan Books, 1994). We could replace the title by 'The Inner Game of Selling' and his suggestions would still apply. Timothy teaches tennis players to be their own inner coach during a game. He teaches them to catch negative thoughts before they change the energy state. He teaches an inner coaching process that can neutralise occasional negative thoughts or feelings during games. The whole idea is to be the observer of the negative thoughts, or feelings, that sometimes well up from an unhealed part of us, and to make sure that part feels heard so that it can withdraw, rather than beg for attention. Not fighting the automatic thoughts or feelings is the key. Just observe them and let them be. What you resist persists. Remember?

***"Non-resistance opens the door to
the greatest power in the universe."***

- ECKHART TOLLE

Silently and compassionately acknowledge the still unhealed parts in you and come back to the now. Many tennis players have a small ritual to do just that, like spinning their racket a couple of times or balancing back and forth from one foot to the other foot. It means 'I am back'. Flow only happens in the now.

***Golfers hit holes-in-one in the flow state.
Tennis players hit aces in the flow state.***

It's like Tony Robbins used to teach: manage your feeling state and the rest will follow. In the inner game, you can never lose, whatever happens. By learning to manage your inner state first, you will be more and more anchored in the now and in your core and as a consequence flow will happen more and more often for you. The wonders then never cease. The key is non-resistance which is Love. If it were easy, we would not talk of four percenters ... Are you willing to pay the price?

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK FROM READERS LIKE YOU

This English book is a revised and expanded version of the original Dutch bestseller about FLOW in life and business. It is considered to be the definitive FLOW manual in the Netherlands and Belgium. Every print of the book keeps selling out year after year because of the constant word of mouth publicity from its readers. Here is a sample of what readers are saying:

“After 20 years in sales, I felt no longer good about old school selling. After reading Jan’s book, I completely reinvented my definition of sales! I applied all the ‘new rules’ I learned in the book and I also read and watched all the ‘sources’ Jan mentioned in his book. The results were literally exponential, so I felt I had to share this amazing wisdom with others in business and sales. To do so, I started a YouTube channel and podcast and gave away more than 100 copies of this book. Saying that Jan’s book has transformed my life might even be an understatement.”

PETER SNAUWAERT

SALES DIRECTOR AND HOST OF
THE ‘WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND?’ PODCAST

“I think this is a really great book; very practically written, understandable language and directly applicable in daily practice. Whether you want to learn how become a top salesperson, a great entrepreneur or simply want to enjoy life optimally, this is a must read to make beautiful steps forward. The many examples that are given made me very enthusiastic about the book. I'm definitely going to read it a few more times. Enjoy the moment!”

EVERT HEINTZ

“I did not just read this book (about 10 times); I studied the material as a manual for success. I also used all the resources that are suggested in the book. This big investment in myself transformed my life, personally and professionally. It is inspirational but also very practical and applicable. It has allowed me to create very effective habits - what Jan calls 'character'. It led to peak results with Hypotheek.Winkel, the largest independent mortgage broker in Belgium. Late in my career I also joined as a partner in a small business and I was able to 42X its results in only 6 years' time and exactly as promised in the book: effortlessly and in FLOW.”

JOOST BERGHMAN

FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND ENTREPRENEUR

“I read the 'Flow book' in 2014. It first of all inspired me personally. It literally opened my eyes. Doing the assignments and answering the questions in the book is a great help to deepen the insights. At the time I was a commercial director working with a fantastic team. It was a group of really great people with very unique profiles. They were atypical sales people. They were incredibly successful because they were always ready to go the extra mile for their customers. I gave copies of the book to all my team members and this created a new common language. We all went through the book in our own way and we shared our insights with each other. This gave us an enormous depth. I recently read the book again and it inspired me to follow a personal dream.”

ANKE HAMMINGA

“Together with my wife I created a very successful chain of design stores in 1990. We were able to sell the business in 2006 and take a sabbatical year in Bonaire where I relaxed and surfed a lot. When in 2011 I came upon Jan's 'flow book' I got an explanation for our success with the stores.

We ran the business in an intuitive way. Our salespeople were co-creating with our customers, not selling to them, just as it is described in the book. When we sent our sales people to a traditional sales seminar they did not fit in at all and I had to cancel the training. We applied what Jan's book explains so well: when you honestly help the customers the income will just follow. Jan's book helped me to become more aware of my profile as a business person and to grow as a human being. I am now happier than ever."

RALPH BLEEKER ENTREPRENEUR

This is a book I keep reading over and over. By doing so I keep refining my selling style into a true art form. I no longer do any old school selling. I can only sell with my heart and soul when there is a real win-win for me and my clients and for the planet! When I can let my actions flow from my inner core things just fall into place. Sales as a people business is such a beautiful profession. I also use the book to teach beginners in sales so they too can know the joy of selling from the heart. When we first value people and planet, sustainable profits follow. I feel that selling with integrity is a form of ecology!"

NICOLE VRANKEN

SALES COACH AND BUSINESS CONSULTANT

"In the year 2000 I did my 1st training to become a professional coach and that is how I got my hands on Jan's book about FLOW in business. It grabbed me from the 1st page and it felt like it was written especially for me. It's an incredibly complete manual for reaching a level of self-knowledge that allows for inner peace as the inner platform for all your actions. Living by the universal principles explained in the book has turned me into a stable person with a very strong core. I have repeatedly done the assignments in the book because they lead to more and more self-awareness. I also use them in my coaching prac-

tice and i have used to book as a manual for the trainees of my Personal Effectiveness training. It is my personal experience that inner peace leads to clarity and thus to right decisions. This is a book I can keep reading again and again.”

SYLVIA LAGERWERIJ PROFESSIONAL COACH

“I, like many, was pushing to reach my sales targets and personal goals through hard work and by pushing my limits. Rather than breakthroughs I ran into breakdowns. Enter Jan's book about FLOW. The veils immediately started to lift! I realised that I was reacting to the demands of the outside world instead of living inside-out. By tapping into my own inner being, FLOW started to happen in my life. I took a long look at my talents and my purpose and I found the match there and then. I shifted, not overnight but over several years of commitment, dedication and inner consistency. Discovering the flow of my own life-force, my own life-energy has been the greatest gift for which I am very grateful.”

SANDRA BAAIJENS

“This book will give you the insights you need in today's business world. It will change your life and your environment because once you will have knowledge that you will want to share with your friends. It is a nice gift for yourself and for your friends. Accessible, inspiring, practical, applicable. I recommend it.”

F. DEPICKERE BELGIAN ENTREPRENEUR

“Working together with the Laws of Nature at the deepest level is what I learn, by reading a passage from this book every day. You will automatically enter the FLOW!”

DANKA HUSKEN DUTCH ENTREPRENEUR

“You can open this book on any page and it seems as if the book is reading you ... ”

JOHN Z.

“When I got my hands on this book in 2010, my life changed. Really helping people became the spearhead of my company, the rewards followed automatically.”

JONAS VAN DER VLUGT DUTCH ENTREPRENEUR

“Reading this book at the age of 40 was the start of my transformation. I have been living a much healthier, more conscious and happier life since then. I am very grateful to Jan!”

RAGNAR DE JONGH

“Every sentence has content and adds something.”

GUIS

“The content of this book has mainly worked as a guide to remember who I am. As a result, it has given me a better direction in life.”

JOOP SCHUURMANS

“This book has taught me the difference between interpretation and perception. I apply this daily in my life. By observing better and more purely, I have really been able to develop my true self.. As a result, my inner world and the world around me look very different. That is an enormous enrichment.”

RENATE O'PRINSEN

“A rock-solid book. I read this book for the first time during my time as an account manager / project manager for the government. It gave me firm roots for my beliefs. It also gave me words to explain what I was intuitively doing: having real conversations, honestly wanting to help,

letting go of self-interest and always going for a win-win, not avoiding 'difficult' issues, staying connected, listening to and cooperating with my clients. I would recommend this book to anyone who has external or internal clients! I can hardly put into words how wonderful this book is.. It keeps inspiring me and it is a guarantee for more flow! Thank you Jan for writing this book!"

ESTER KOENS

TRANSFORMATIONAL COACH AT SUPERNOVA

"It's a fantastic book because it really works. Clear explanation, inspiring, applicable in practice. Highly recommended."

TASOMA

"Fate brought Jan and me together in 2012 when I received the book 'FLOW and the art of doing business' as a gift. A real treasure chest where every time you unpacked something, a door opened inside. Since childhood I have been fascinated by the theme FLOW, living from an open connection with the heart. Never before have I met someone who could describe this subject so concisely and tell it in such a fascinating way. When Jan writes or talks, the heart sings and the mind comes to rest. Lived wisdom that is conveyed in a calm, understandable way with the necessary humor. In 2013 I attended my first day workshop in Wehe den Hoorn. Various day workshops would follow, in which I would invite other people, friends and family, to come along. A special friendship blossomed. Thank you Jan for sharing your knowledge, your friendship, your love for life. I hope this book will touch the hearts of many."

JORAM VAN DOORN

OWNER AND FOUNDER SITEONLINE