

# Can't Hurt Me Summary – David Goggins

11 MINUTE READ

[Can't Hurt Me](#) (2018)

Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds

by [David Goggins](#)

Can't Hurt Me is a powerful, uplifting, part-how-to, part-memoir that'll pick you up by your collar, help you take control of your life circumstances and kick your victim mentality to the curb - by endurance athlete and retired Navy SEAL, David Goggins. ([290 pages](#))

[Paperback](#) | [Ebook](#) | [Audiobook](#)

**Note:** This **Can't Hurt Me summary** is part of an ongoing project to summarise the [Best Mindset Books](#) and [Best Self Help Books](#) of all time.

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# **Can't Hurt Me Review**

There's always an inner voice (or demon) that tells you your life circumstances are too overwhelming. You might convince yourself that life's adversities are too tough for you to reach your full potential. David Goggins and I can tell you right now...that's a damn lie.

In his powerful autobiography, David Goggins reminds us that, in life, there are people who have excuses and people who move past their comfort zone. The latter group of people accomplish their goals and achieve true self-mastery. Goggins' story of beating trauma, poverty, racism, and rising to the occasion as a Navy SEAL and ultramarathon runner is one that is as inspiring as it is captivating.

For me, this book came at the perfect time to remind me of how much potential I had left in me. I picked up a copy shortly after leaving the Navy in 2018, having served four years. It was a time where I had zero clue of what life had in store for me.

I stood in front of the accountability mirror with tears in my eyes wondering what would become of me. Would I rise to the occasion and harness the mental toughness that David Goggins says is in all of us? Using his powerful story and how Goggins himself overcame childhood trauma and adversity, I decided to take my chances and do something to better the world and myself.

I now work as a health technician and am a certified Peer Support Specialist supporting veterans like myself on their road to addiction and mental health recovery. I share my own personal story of recovery, and

always make sure to include David Goggins' story and *Can't Hurt Me* into my talks with veterans. This is a book that has useful tools that have profoundly shaped my outlook on life for the better. It'll shape your life too.

## Can't Hurt Me Summary

### Beating the Odds

By all accounts, David Goggins should have been a statistic of poverty, racism, violence, or crime. He could have even chosen to label himself a thug and proceeded to move through life as a victim of his childhood. By all accounts, the physical abuse that Goggins faced at the hands of his father, Trunnis Goggins, should have caused him and his mother to look at life with different eyes and deny themselves the ability to accept a different future.

On the contrary, the nightmare that Goggins and his mother went through transitioning from Williamsville, New York, to Brazil, Indiana, was one that made both of them the powerful individuals they are today.

In the first chapter of *Can't Hurt Me*, Goggins recounts his childhood facing physical abuse at the hands of his father. As a child, Goggins would work in his father's skate rink and bear witness to the abuse his father inflicted on him and his mother. To survive, Goggins and his mother formulated an escape plan, which brought them to Brazil, Indiana to live with other friends and relatives. Unfortunately, Goggins' brother, Trunnis Jr., is left behind as he chooses to live with his father.

As a child, Goggins witnessed unimaginable despair from domestic violence to the death of his stepfather later on. He even recounts seeing the mangled body of a boy during a freak accident involving a school bus. This experience would cause him to suffer from bouts of insomnia

and toxic stress as a child. The abuse was so bad, chunks of hair would fall out and patches of skin would be white. A nervous stutter would also develop during his childhood. Even with all of this tragedy, Goggins was able to excel in high school, although...it wasn't necessarily using the right tools.

## **Accountability Mirror**

Goggins admits he was a popular jock in high school and was involved in the high school varsity basketball team. He accomplished this even while undergoing the trauma of racism, prejudice, bullying, and mistreatment. He describes an instance of school bullies leaving racist remarks on his books. This scared Goggins to the point of having to seek help from his principal. His principal did nothing.

It was here, in high school, that Goggins learned he had to fend for himself and succeed by any means necessary. To do so, Goggins cheated. He Lied. He lied to himself and to the teachers around him that he was capable of graduating high school. In reality, Goggins admits he could only read at a third grade level and was skilled at cheating on tests.

His vulnerability and candidness is something that is a common theme throughout Can't Hurt Me. Goggins reminds us that we all have our flaws, and absolutely no one is perfect. He didn't become a hardened individual overnight. His past mistakes are still with him. However, Goggins reminds his readers that making mistakes doesn't mean you can't make a change for the better. For Goggins, he realized he needed to study hard and improve his grades after enrolling in the Civil Air Patrol, a civilian sector of the Air Force.

Goggins heard the story of a pararescueman named Scott Gearen. Gearen survived a fall while jumping out of an airplane. His story inspired Goggins to make the move and transition into the Air Force. To do so, he had to

pass the military's entrance exam known as the ASVAB. After failing the exam twice, Goggins develops the accountability mirror.

He says that his accountability mirror helped him take a deep look inwardly and realize he was unsatisfied with himself. On the accountability mirror, Goggins stuck on post-its that reminded him of things he had to accomplish. Through studying and looking at the accountability mirror, Goggins passed the ASVAB on his third try and joined the Air Force.

Readers are encouraged to use an accountability mirror of their own in Challenge 2. There are various challenges dispersed throughout the book encouraging readers to practice thought exercises. Goggins says of the accountability mirror exercise, "It's time to come eyeball to eyeball with yourself, and get raw and real. This is not a self-love tactic. You can't fluff it. Don't massage your ego. This is about abolishing the ego and taking the first step toward becoming the real you!"

## **No Excuses**

If there's anything readers know from Can't Hurt Me, it's that Goggins believes in callousing the mind and avoiding excuses. Unfortunately, this wasn't always his stance in life. Although Goggins passed the ASVAB and joined the Air Force, he didn't make it through pararescue school quite like he had hoped.

In fact, Goggins found an excuse to leave pararescue training and take the path of least resistance: sickle cell anemia trait. This was the medical excuse Goggins used to leave special training and settle for less than he was capable of in the Air Force. This saved him from countless suffering and the torture of having to undergo pararescue training not knowing how to swim. Although leaving pararescue training and leaving the military should have been a great move for Goggins, it was after leaving the Air Force that things got even worse for him.

By now, his weight had ballooned to 300 pounds! His mother would prepare Goggins what he calls "the staple." This was a huge breakfast chock full of fatty breakfast foods and calories that he would enjoy. This, along with daily milkshakes and lack of exercise, brought Goggins to his lowest point physically and emotionally.

Goggins was married to a woman whose father was racist and prejudice towards him in the past. He worked as an exterminator, and was by all means living a life putting forth the least amount of effort possible. This was no life for David Goggins. He admits that leaving the military and using his sickle cell trait was just an excuse. He says, "I knew I was a quitter who had let fear dictate my future."

## **Making a Change**

After watching a Navy SEAL documentary on television, Goggins decides to do what many thought would be impossible at his weight size- become a Navy SEAL. It was through this obsession with becoming a SEAL that Goggins turned himself from an overweight young man into a warrior ready to put out on the battlefield. However, the journey wasn't easy.

In fact, it was during this transition from exterminator to Navy SEAL recruit that Goggins began his journey into callousness and mental toughness. Laughed at by countless Navy recruiters, Goggins used this hatred as fuel. He spent countless hours running and training to lose over 100 pounds in three months just to qualify for boot camp. In addition, he had to significantly improve his ASVAB score and score 50 on mechanics in order to join the Navy SEALs. The mental anguish of having to study in order to pass his ASVAB, plus the physical anguish of having to train in order to lose weight, were the perfect storm to create the beast Goggins is today.

He paid no attention to the Navy recruiters that laughed at his 300 pound size. Instead, Goggins learned to callous his mind, wake up and run miles in the dead of winter, and proved to himself that human beings change for the better. Even after learning he qualified through passing his ASVAB, Goggins wasn't done. He spent the day celebrating by plunging into ice-cold waters, enjoying the pain of it all.

## **Taking Souls**

In true Goggins fashion, Navy SEAL training held its own unique set of challenges for Goggins. Not only did Goggins have to undergo the scorn of drill instructors day in and day out, he also had to face his biggest enemy: himself.

It was during SEAL training that Goggins truly proved how powerful he could be. It was here where he saw men get beaten down to their very core and give up on dreams. Goggins learned to never give in, or "ring the bell" during SEAL training. He learned to push past his injuries in order to accomplish the feat of becoming one of only a few African-American Navy SEALs in America. As it stands, only 2% of Navy SEALs are black.

To accomplish this feat, Goggins refused to back down even after battling almost fatal pneumonia. He ran on broken shins and taped up broken ankles. He made it a point to enjoy the torture of SEAL training and motivate those around him.

Goggins knew he had the world set against him, yet he pushed forward through not one, but two hell weeks. Hell week is the phase of BUDS training where men are pushed to their absolute limit. Sleep deprivation, punishment, and frigid waters cause men to quit and emotions run high. Not for Goggins. Goggins completed two hell weeks successfully, eventually becoming a Navy SEAL and retiring after 20 years in service as a Chief.

What he learned from Navy SEAL training was only the beginning in a long line of personal challenges. Most importantly, Goggins learned to take souls, meaning to laugh in the face of those that want to put you down. These "haters" can be anyone. Family. Friends. Drill instructors. Take their souls and focus on accomplishing your personal best, and they'll have nothing to hurt you.

## **Harness Your Inner Power**

The Cookie Jar is what David Goggins calls his personal collection of accomplishments. Whenever he felt himself growing weak at BUDS training and every single ultramarathon later on, he would reach into his personal arsenal of cookies.

This is also known as positive affirmations, but for David Goggins, it's so much more than that. He says, "Whenever you feel down, you need to go down in the cookie jar and remember who you really are. You are not the weak person your mind may be trying to tell you, you are the person that has survived tough times in the past."

## **What Are You Capable Of?**

Goggins trained with the best of them. From running missions in Malaysia with Navy SEALs, to later on graduating from Army Ranger School as the Enlisted Honor Man and witnessing the most powerful men on Earth yell into the snow-covered mountain abyss. However, it wasn't until he got a taste of ultramarathons and running that he truly got the answer to the question: What are you capable of?

It's a question each of us asks ourselves from time to time, but don't attempt to answer. Goggins has never stopped trying to find the answer. As he says, "There is no finish line."

Nevertheless, in his efforts to raise money for Navy SEALs and their



families, Goggins began a journey of badassery in 2005 and never looked back. This was the year he completed his first Marathon, the San Diego 1-day. The objective? Run 100 miles in 24 hours. Goggins finished the race with no formal training. By the end, he was urinating blood. Amazingly, however, 2 months later, he finished the Hurt 100 race in Las Vegas, another 100-mile race.

It is here that the reader begins to see just how obsessive and addicted to pain Goggins is. It's also where we learn about his methodology and mindset that sets him apart- an uncommon man.

## **The Governor and 40% Rule**

Goggins qualified for the Badwater 135 race, a race that went through the California's Death Valley in the middle of July. It was a race where Goggins learned about the Governor and the 40% rule. The Governor is the voice in our heads that tells us we can't do something. It's the valve that prevents us from exploding full-force with all our maximum effort. According to Goggins, the Governor holds us back at 40%. Goggins says, "The 40% rule is simple: When your mind is telling you that you're done, that you're exhausted, that you cannot possibly go any further, you're only actually 40% done."

## **Train for Your Weaknesses**

Through his many ultramarathons, Goggins teaches us that it doesn't take talent or genetics to reach the trappings of success. Only elite training, preparing for your weaknesses, and being ready to control yourself will allow you to tap into your maximum potential. For Goggins, this meant learning to accept failure, such as when he failed twice at breaking the pull-up world record. On his third attempt, Goggins beat the record with a whopping 4,030 pull-ups done in less than 24 hours.

Although this record has been beat, it taught Goggins a lesson in preparation and self-mastery. He chose to do his pull-ups in a small setting without mass media present. At this point, Goggins was an influential public speaker on a mission to recruit talented black students to join the Navy SEALs. His work ethic back then is still as strong as it is today. He continues to teach his audience that they must trim fat off their schedules to accomplish the impossible. From hardcore training, to spending time with family, to beating his own personal best records, Goggins inspires us to never give up on seeking only the best for ourselves.

## What If?

Goggins later learns he has a heart condition which could have killed him. After two surgeries, he then hits another wall when his years of stress and lack of stretching lead to near death experiences. Nevertheless, Goggins learns to stretch. He learns to let go of the scared and angry youth he was once. He learns to forgive his own brother and even those racist individuals that kept him from joining the Delta Force in the Army. His final lesson to us is to answer the question "What If?" with a strong mentality. There is no limit, and no finish line. "What If?" is a world of possibilities, waiting to be unleashed.

## Can't Hurt Me Contents

***Can't Hurt Me* has 11 main chapters...**

Introduction

1. I Should Have Been a Statistic
2. Truth Hurts
3. The Impossible Task
4. Taking Souls
5. Armored Mind

6. It's Not About a Trophy
7. The Most Powerful Weapon
8. Talent Not Required
9. Uncommon Amongst Uncommon
10. The Empowerment of Failure
11. What If?

## **Can't Hurt Me FAQs**

### **Is Cant Hurt Me a True Story?**

Can't Hurt Me is a true story based on the life of David Goggins. David Goggins is one of the world's top endurance athletes, who spent 20 years in the military as a Navy SEAL. He is the first and only person in the U.S. Armed Forces to have completed Navy SEAL training, Army Ranger School, and Air Force Tactical Air Controller school. He still competes in numerous endurance events and now works as a wild land firefighter.

### **What Is David Goggins's Philosophy?**

David Goggins philosophy is to never take the path of least resistance. He encourages his readers to continue to face challenges, prepare their minds for life's setbacks, and continue to challenge themselves to achieve self-mastery. Whether it's studying for an exam, going hard at the gym, or accepting new tasks, there's virtually an endless amount of ways to continue to challenge oneself.

### **What Is Goggins's Law of Nature?**

Chapter 7 of the book covers Goggins's laws of nature. In the chapter, Goggins describes the laws he lives by in order to make himself hard and callous his mind. The laws of nature consist of the following:

- You will be made fun of;
- You will feel insecure;
- You may not be the best all the time;
- You may be the only black, white, Asian, Latino, female, male, gay, lesbian or [fill in your identity here] in a given situation; and
- There will be times when you feel alone.

Get over it! Goggins reminds readers that the mind is the most powerful tool in our arsenals. You have to be open-minded to access your full potential and get past pain in everyday life.

## Best Can't Hurt Me Quotes

These Can't Hurt Me quotes come from **The Art of Living's** ever-growing central library of thoughts, anecdotes, notes, and [inspirational quotes](#).

**"Our culture has become hooked on the quick-fix, the life hack, efficiency. Everyone is on the hunt for that simple action algorithm that nets maximum profit with the least amount of effort. There's no denying this attitude may get you some of the trappings of success, if you're lucky, but it will not lead to a calloused mind or self-mastery. If you want to master the mind and remove your governor, you'll have to become addicted to hard work. Because passion and obsession, even talent, are only useful tools if you have the work ethic to back them up."**

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

**"You are in danger of living a life so comfortable and soft, that you will die without ever realizing your true potential."**

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

**"It won't always go your way, so you can't get trapped in this idea that just because you've imagined a possibility for yourself that you**

***somehow deserve it. Your entitled mind is dead weight. Cut it loose. Don't focus on what you think you deserve. Take aim on what you are willing to earn!"***

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

***"In the military we always say we don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training."***

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

***"I thought I'd solved a problem when really I was creating new ones by taking the path of least resistance."***

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

***"No one is going to come help you. No one's coming to save you."***

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

***"It's a lot more than mind over matter. It takes relentless self discipline to schedule suffering into your day, every day."***

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

***"We live in a world with a lot of insecure, jealous people. Some of them are our best friends. They are blood relatives. Failure terrifies them. So does our success. Because when we transcend what we once thought possible, push our limits, and become more, our light reflects off all the walls they've built up around them. Your light enables them to see the contours of their own prison, their own self-limitations. But if they are truly the great people you always believed them to be, their jealousy will evolve, and soon their imagination might hop its fence, and it will be their turn to change for the better."***

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

**"We're either getting better or we're getting worse."**

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

**"The most important conversations you'll ever have are the ones you'll have with yourself."**

- [David Goggins](#), Can't Hurt Me

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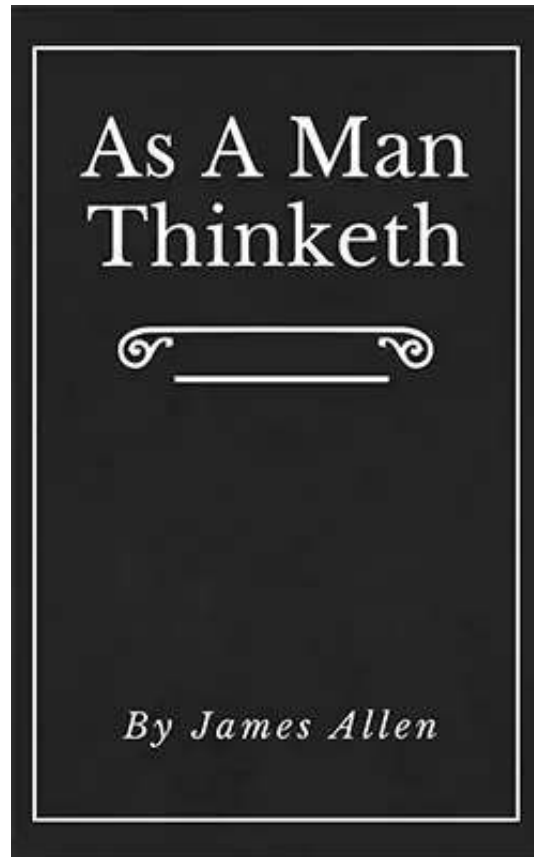
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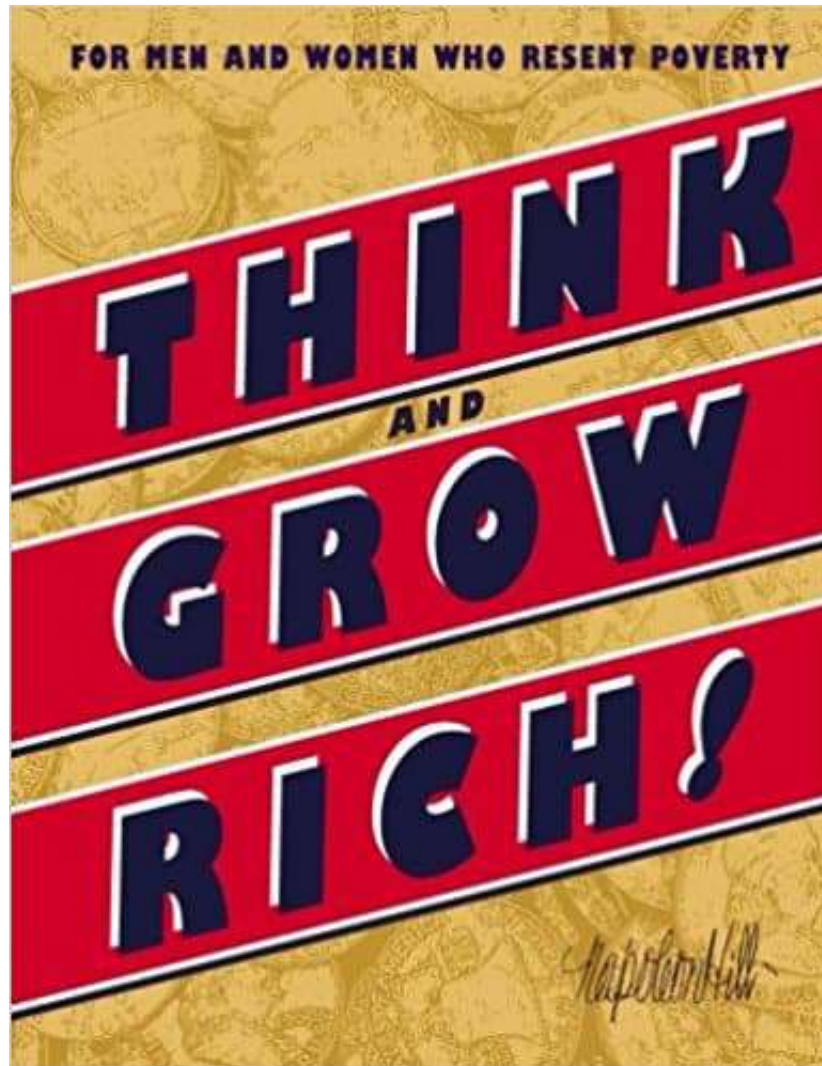
**Here are 5 top books like Can't Hurt Me...**



1. [As a Man Thinketh](#) - [James Allen](#) ([FREE Summary](#))

As a Man Thinketh is THE #1 ranking, uplifting, pocket-sized pep-talk on the power and importance of changing your thoughts as the cornerstone to changing your life - by philosopher and prolific self-help author, James Allen.

Published 1902 // 34 pages // Rated 4.3 over 68,100 reviews [on Goodreads](#)

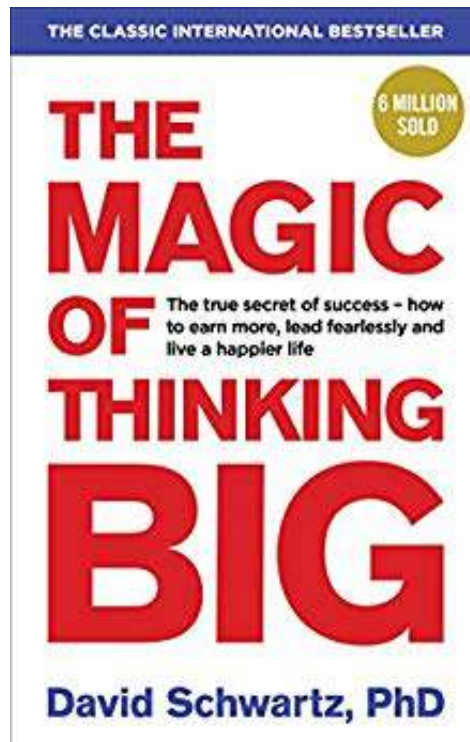


## 2. [Think and Grow Rich](#) - [Napoleon Hill](#) ([FREE Summary](#))

Think and Grow Rich is a best-selling book of all time and a cornerstone guide to the Law of Attraction and the role of the subconscious in transforming your life - by a titan of the self-help genre, Napoleon Hill.

Published 1937 // 233 pages // Rated 4.2 over 254,900 reviews [on Goodreads](#)

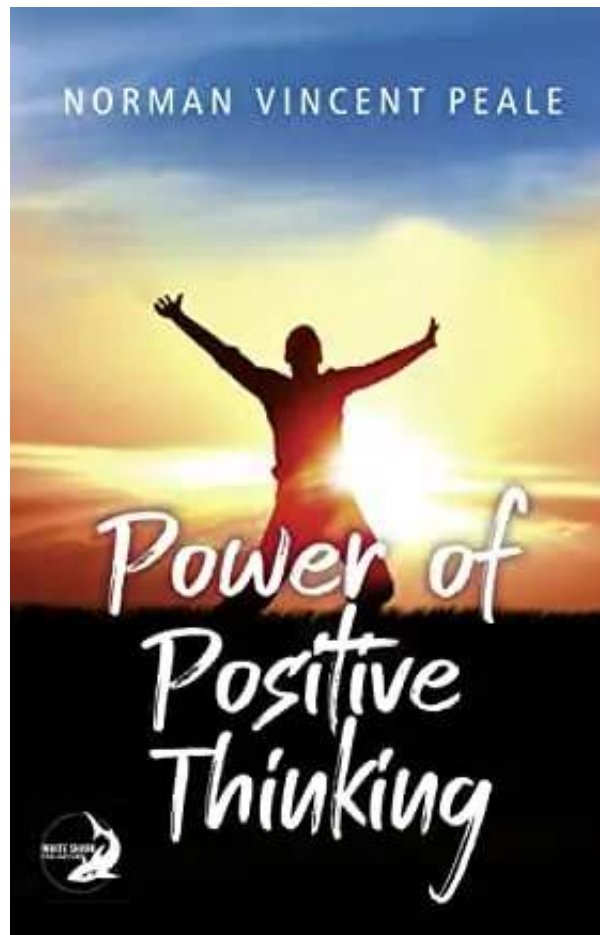




### 3. [The Magic of Thinking Big](#) - [David J. Schwartz](#) ([FREE Summary](#))

The Magic of Thinking Big is a powerful, practical and uplifting book to help get you out of a rut, invigorate your goals and empower you towards success - by life-long motivational writer and coach, David J. Schwartz.

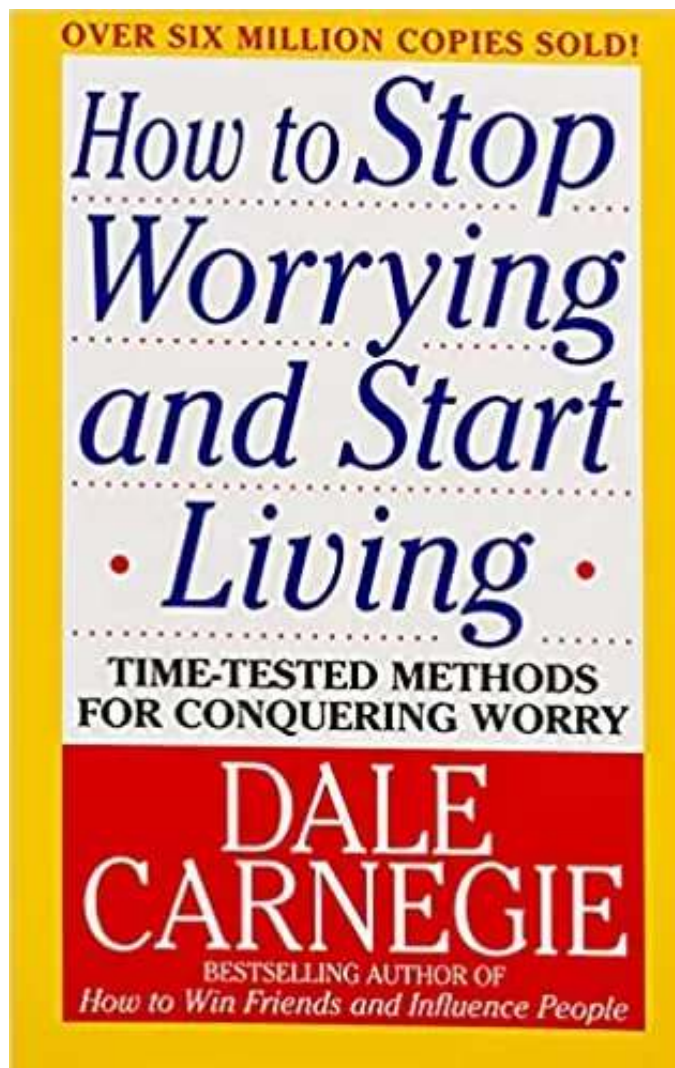
Published 1959 // 320 pages // Rated 4.2 over 77,300 reviews [on Goodreads](#)



#### 4. [The Power of Positive Thinking](#) - [Norman Vincent Peale](#) ([FREE Summary](#))

The Power of Positive Thinking reminds us that we don't need a PhD in Human Relations to live our best lives if we can learn a few tricks to change how we think - by minister and best-selling author Norman Vincent Peale.

Published 1952 // 128 pages // Rated 4.1 over 96,300 reviews [on Goodreads](#)



## 5. [How to Stop Worrying and Start Living](#) - [Dale Carnegie](#) ([FREE Summary](#))

How to Stop Worrying and Start Living is a practical, common-sense bible filled with stories, case studies and simple step-by-step guides to conquering worry, anxiety and depression - by self development guru, Dale Carnegie.

Published 1944 // 358 pages // Rated 4.1 over 87,800 reviews [on Goodreads](#)

## **Wish There Was a Faster/Easier Way?**

Whenever you're ready, here are four ways I can help you be more productive, find more balance and live life more on purpose...

1. **Curious? Discover how productive you really are...** Take this free, 2-minute assessment to unlock your PQ and discover the top 25 habits you need to get big things done. [Take the 2-minute quiz →](#)
2. **Overwhelmed? Get a free chapter of my book...** Let me show you how to beat procrastination, permanently, with this free sneak peek inside **TAoL**'s ultimate productivity primer. [Download your free chapter →](#)
3. **Stuck? Grab a 90-Day TRACKTION Planner...** Get the tool thousands trust to help them take control of their time, master their habits and hit goals in every part of their lives. [Order your 90-day planner →](#)
4. **Burned out? Join the TRACKTION Community...** Take the 6-week masterclass, get weekly group coaching, find accountability partners and connect with like-minded self-starters. [Get started FREE →](#)

### [Veronica Huerta](#)

I'm a Navy Veteran turned freelance writer. I work full-time helping veterans recover from mental health and substance abuse, and was once in recovery myself. Through past traumas, I've learned to give back to the community of veterans that I now call my brothers and sisters and teach them what I've learned over the years: how to believe in yourself and how to overcome the odds.