

**17**

**Laws Of  
Career  
Mastery**

by Will Vaughan

# Introduction.

Welcome to the 17 Laws Of Career Mastery!

In this book you're getting my 17 best principles for hacking growth in your career.

But aren't there more principles than just these 17?

For sure (and you're also getting an 18th bonus law!)

But throughout my career working full time in different companies...

I've learnt that there are certain fundamentals to moving forward in your career.

And I've distilled them down to 17 principles that if applied consistently overtime...

Will allow you to reap incredible rewards.

Rewards such as doing more inspiring work, collaborating with cooler people, working for better companies...

And of course, making more money!

But none of these things come easily...

And they certainly won't happen by accident, or overnight.

Mastering your career is about taking consistent, strategic action towards achieving your goals and career vision.

And here's the thing...

Everything you'll find in this book is practical.

These tactics have been battle-tested year after year (and they've never failed me).

These are the principles that have helped me navigate my career.

And have allowed me to go from making \$30K per year in a warehouse...

To \$55K as a digital copywriter...

To \$75K as a digital content writer & strategist...

And then to building my own profitable consulting business which I run on the side.

So take these principles and strategies and absorb them.

Make them your own by finding ways to implement them into your daily life.

I wish you nothing but incredible success and fulfillment in your career and life.

Best,

Will

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# Master One Core Skill.

Mastering one CORE skill is one of the fundamentals of career mastery.

It's this skill that will carry you throughout your career.

It will usually be something you have an unusual or natural talent for.

It could literally be anything from:

- Sales
- Pitching to investors and companies
- Writing, copywriting, creative writing, screenwriting
- Accounting
- Management & leadership
- Computer coding
- Web development
- Advertising
- Project management
- Operations
- Selling real estate
- Sound engineering
- Video production
- Coaching a particular sport
- Financial planning & consulting
- Graphic design
- Understanding complex mathematics
- Being a finance whiz

Your skill is based upon what you KNOW and what you can DO.

Both of these are built by rapid learning and experience performing that skill.

You want to take ONE skill and develop it to complete mastery.

This will form part of your reputation and your personal brand.

You will become an expert and an authority in this area.

People who excel at Career Mastery are the absolute BEST at what they do.

These are the kinds of people who are so in-demand by companies that they can literally cherry pick the jobs they want.

And because they have the ability to deliver a TONNE of value to businesses and companies...

...They get paid the big bucks.

Remember, skills pay the bills.

And the more refined your skill, the more money you can make.

Consider this...

Who makes more money: a doctor or a brain surgeon?

The brain surgeon by a factor of about 10X!

Why?

Because brain surgeons are highly specialised.

They're masters at what they do, and their level of expertise is rare.

They understand all of the nuances of a delicate and complex task.

You need to seek to become like the brain surgeon, not the doctor.



## Network Every Week.

People have different ideas about what it means to “network.”

To keep things simple, I define networking as any activity that either:

- A) Establishes a connection with someone new
- B) Strengthens the connection with that new person

And I’m not talking about new people you meet at the bar or club on the weekend.

I’m talking about people you intentionally contact because their relationship can set up a win-win value exchange.

What do I mean by “win-win value exchange”?

Put simply, it’s where they can offer some value to you - and in turn you can offer value to them.

Make sense?

If you can offer them value then they’re more likely to want to align with you, and are more likely to give you the value you need to move forward.

You’ll generally find that most people are willing to help you when it comes to:

- Advice
- Referring you to someone
- Keeping you in mind for an opportunity down the track
- Promoting you or your work

Building great relationships is a HUGE part of Career Mastery.

Having a network of great people is essential for many reasons, but one of the best is that they can become a giant referral system.

This becomes critical if for example you’re looking for a new job or position.

What are your options in this situation?

- A) Sending your resume out to businesses
- B) Applying for jobs online
- C) Talking to a recruiter
- D) Talking to people in your network

The first three take quite a lot of time (especially sending out resumes).

But contacting people in your network can be done in MINUTES.

And contacting 5 influential people in your network is equivalent to sending out 100 resumes.

Why?

Because these people in turn will probably know 10 or so businesses that need someone with your skills.

And they can REFER you (which gives you instant credibility).

See where I'm getting at?

There's literally no downside.

So what IS networking and how can you do it?

Weekly networking can literally be as simple as:

- A) Retweeting and direct messaging the person you want to connect with on Twitter
- B) Commenting on their post or article on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter
- C) Sending them an email (saying how much you like their work)
- D) Offer to do some free work for them in exchange for a testimonial

I've had a lot of success with the first two tactics.

And you always want to:

- Compliment the person (in reference to their article, post, portfolio, speech etc)
- Explain who you are and why you're emailing them
- If you need something from them specifically - then tell them what THEY will get out of it

NOTE: Networking isn't just about connecting yourself to new people.

In fact another great strategy is to take two people from your network who don't know each other and connect them together.

Although this will benefit them more than it does you (at least in the short term)...

Doing so opens the doors for them to reciprocate and connect others to you.



# Become An Effective Communicator.

All successful people that I've met are great communicators.

Effective communication is needed to:

- Connect and relate to people
- Get your ideas across
- Position yourself as someone of value in the office
- Persuade & influence (ethically)
- Resolve disputes and conflict
- Defend yourself in tough situations

And in my experience communication is made up of two main areas:

- A) What you do and don't say
- B) How you say (or don't say) it

Realising that you're communicating even when you're silent was a big realisation for me.

Sometimes failing to speak up can communicate that you don't care about something.

Or that you're uninterested and maybe even daydreaming.

Or that you don't actually have any valuable ideas to express.

This doesn't mean that you need to be talking all the time.

Sometimes it's better to be silent if you don't have anything meaningful to say, than to offer a half baked idea just for the sake of it.

So how do you improve your communication?

I know it's cliché to say, but practice.

Getting better at telling stories to your friends on the weekend is a great place to start.

Also, take ANY opportunity you can to do a toast for someone (when appropriate) at birthdays, family gatherings, or celebratory dinner parties.

This was a little hack that I picked up, and allowed me to develop an ability to improvise "on my feet."

Another suggestion that had a huge impact on my communication skills was to learn about sales.



Sales is ALL about communication.

It's about persuading, negotiating, and overcoming objections.

It's also about clarity, and trying to understand where the other person is coming from.

NOTE: You don't always want to persuade when you're communicating - that would be weird.

So buy a couple of introductory books or courses on the basics of sales.

Don't buy anything crazily expensive, just enough to learn some of the fundamentals.

So again, when it comes to communication there's two areas to improve within yourself:

- A) What you say
- B) How you say it

When it comes to "What You Say" try to:

- Avoid negativity
- Be solution oriented
- Bring enthusiasm
- Think quickly & clearly
- Give credit to others & acknowledge their skills
- Back up things you say with examples & proof

When it comes to "How You Say It" try to:

- Speak calmly and clearly
- Not mumble - but rather talk with at a confident volume
- Stand tall with your shoulders back
- Avoid fidgeting
- Take deep breaths
- Smile
- Look people in the eye when you're speaking to them (and break eye contact when appropriate)



## Find Mentors.

For years I'd heard people talk about the importance of having a mentor.

And of course you can have mentors whose books and courses you study.

But it wasn't until I had one in the flesh that I realised how powerful it is to have one in that way.

My first "in the flesh" mentor was my boss when I landed my first dream job as a copywriter.

For the sake of the story let's just call him Jay.

We never had any formal (or even informal) arrangement saying "you are my mentor and I am your student."

No. He was just my boss and I was his employee.

So what made Jay my mentor?

Well firstly because I studied his every move.

Jay guy had become a millionaire very young (in his twenties).

And by his early thirties he'd...

- Made a tonne of cash
- Bought a rad Mercedes Benz
- Proposed to a beautiful woman
- Built an awesome business in a fun & exciting market
- Travelled all over the world
- Built up an impressive network of successful people

And whilst working for him I was able to observe how he behaved on a daily basis.

I was able to soak up his beliefs, mindsets, and values.

For example, I learnt that he spent thousands of dollars every year on books, training programs, and events.

He knew that expanding his mindset, knowledge, and skills was the best way to gain a competitive advantage...

And thus make more money.

Just to clarify, he literally would spend like \$30K a year on personal development.

I also learnt about building systems (both in your life and your business).

For example, instead of focusing on a result, such as putting on muscle - you focus on building a system that makes getting that result inevitable.

Such as buying healthy food, working out, hiring a personal trainer, tracking your weight/reps stats with an app.

Then you focus on perfecting that system until you get the results you want.

Little gems like these were huge learning curves that I've implemented into my life.

It also influenced how much money I spend per year on books, courses, and programs.

So you need to find great mentors.

Study their habits, body language, how they talk and communicate, and how they think.

Notice their flaws too - don't just focus on the good stuff. No-one is perfect.

Because doing so can shave YEARS off your learning curve.



## Audit Yourself Every 6 Months-Year.

If you owned a stock portfolio you wouldn't simply buy the shares and forget about them...

You'd check in on them.

You'd monitor their progress.

Had they increased or decreased in value?

What were the best and worst performers and why?

Based on these results you might ask yourself a set of questions such as:

What would I do differently if I bought this portfolio over again?

What actions am I going to take next years based on this year's outcomes?

Well here's the thing...

You need to view your career as a kind of portfolio.

Because in a way, you're a kind of one person stock.

You're the stock, the industry you work in is the market...

And potential businesses and business owners are the ones who'll assess whether they want to invest in you.

So every year to six months I suggest you audit yourself.

Here's why...

Firstly it's an incredible way to reflect on what you've achieved (and how to build on it).

As well as to uncover some important areas you might have neglected.

And which now need your attention to move forward.

You want to ask yourself questions such as:

- Did I achieve my goals in this period?
  - If yes - then what worked?
  - If no - what went wrong and how can I do things differently next time?

- Did I make some new relationships in this period?
- What did I learn in this period?
- What do I want to learn next?
- Do I feel as if I'm on track with my long term strategy?
- Am I happy and inspired with what I'm doing right now?
- Could I be doing more to reach my goals?
- Do I need to work less and achieve more balance?
- Do my short term goals still reflect the quickest path to my long term goals?
- Do my long term goals still reflect my deepest values?

This process is an amazing reset point.

I know personally there's so many different distractions and shiny objects to chase these days.

Both long term when it comes to goals...

As well as on a minute-to-minute basis with the demands on work, family, and our social lives.

But this shiny object syndrome makes these personal strategy and audit sessions even MORE important!

It's easy to veer off course (and keep veering).

So every 6-12 months make sure you revisit your strategy...

Make sure everything lines up...

And go full steam ahead into the next phase.



## Invest In Yourself.

This was one of the biggest things I learnt from my first mentor.

As we talked about earlier...

Jay had built a multi-million dollar business by the age of 30.

And would spend at least \$30,000 on books, courses, and events each year.

I couldn't believe it!

But here's the really cool thing he understood that I didn't...

The amount of money he could make was directly proportional to how much he knew and could actually execute on.

The more knowledge he had, the more skills he developed, the more strategies, tactics, and techniques he had up his sleeve - the faster he could drive rapid amounts of money into his bank account.

If you want to reach high levels in Career Mastery you NEED to invest in yourself.

There's no way around it.

It's literally the most empowering thing you can do.

Why?

Because YOU can take 100% control of your learning.

Which means that you can take 100% control of how VALUABLE you are to the market.

And the more valuable you are, the more choice you have about where you want to work...

And how you want to work...

And WHAT kind of work you do, and of course, how much you get paid!

There's almost no downside (other than that yes, books and courses cost money).

But here's a really cool thing...

I bought a course on Content Marketing because I knew I needed to learn more about it.

And my current employer wasn't interested in buying it for me.

This course cost me roughly \$995.

A lot of money? Maybe.

However the knowledge I learned from this course, and then implemented into a personal project (my copywriting website)...

Allowed me to earn \$15K MORE in salary when I changed jobs.

I literally went from a \$55K salary, to a \$75K salary.

I don't feel like I need to sell this principle to you too hard...

After all, if you didn't believe it was important to invest in yourself you wouldn't be reading this book.

But I urge you - don't be afraid to drop cash on courses and programs relevant to the SKILLS you need.

Start by reverse engineering the skills & knowledge you need to get to the next level.

Then start seeking out free & paid resources that can help you close the gap.

And the important thing is to learn and implement rapidly (and never stop doing so).



## Know Yourself.

My older brother always wanted to join the army.

More specifically, he always wanted to join the airforce and be a pilot.

(I think he got excited after watching Top Gun, but who doesn't?)

Unfortunately when he was 14 he was diagnosed with a genetic (and irreversible) form of Diabetes.

He was the only person on both sides of our family who'd ever been diagnosed with it.

This meant that he would never be able to join the airforce.

No amount of wishing things were different was going to change these circumstances.

Here's the thing...

No matter how hard we try, there are just some things you and I are just not built to do.

For example, I hate maths.

In fact I hate pretty much all numbers, as well as anything to do with tax, accounting, division and calculators in general.

And as much as the idea of "trading stocks" sounds cool...

I know I wouldn't last a month as a trader or stock analyst - the reality of dealing with numbers all day would drive me nuts!

But the good news is that I don't have to be a stockbroker.

I love writing - and thankfully there's plenty of jobs paying great money for people who can write well and create engaging content.

My brother on the other hand was always great at maths...

He now works in corporate finance, and has been quite successful at it.

So what are your natural strengths & unique talents?

What can you do (sometimes quite easily) that you know others either can't do or struggle to do?

So you need to discover...

- A) What your unique talents & strengths are
- B) What jobs allow you to use these skills



And once you discover these two variables then it's time to double down on them!

This means that you go all in.

If you discover you're great at sales, then throw all your chips into sales.

Here's what I mean by this...

If you find out you're great at sales, then start buying books, courses, and audio programs on sales.

Also, start networking with other people who're great at sales and can help you improve your game!

However, this means you have to make a decision...

A decision about what you ARE going to focus on, and what you're NOT going to focus on.

For example, when I decided to double down on both my copywriting & content writing career...

It meant that my "fiction writing" career got completely neglected.

I realised that at this stage in my life it made more sense to develop skills and experience in a field that actually paid money right now...

Than to cling to my dreams of "one day" experiencing a big payday with a bestselling novel.

In other words, I grew up.

So my question to you is this...

Do you know what your unique talents & strengths are?

And are you doubling down on them?

Are you honing in on their development with laser precision?

Knowing yourself is a big principle in Career Mastery.

And successfully navigating your career comes down to knowing things like:

- What you're awesome at
- What you suck at
- How you best use time to get things done
- What kills your productivity
- What inspires you
- What doesn't motivate you
- How to both avoid and deal with conflict in the workplace
- How to best manage your own stress
- What actually stresses you out
- What you value in a workplace
- What's important for you to get out of your work

All these things matter.

And discovering your answers takes time, experience, and a good dose of reflection.



# Build Complementary Skills.

Success in any position will usually require a few core competencies.

For example, an accountant needs to understand the laws and regulations of accounting.

But they also need to know how to use accounting software.

They may also need to have great communication skills since accountants deal with clients face to face each day.

Here's what this means for you...

You will have your core competency that you're dedicated to mastering.

But to be successful you'll also need to discover what other skill sets you can develop that will increase the value of your core skill.

To use another example...

My core skill is writing - specifically digital content & copywriting.

Complementary skill sets in the market I work in also include:

- Understanding SEO & doing keyword research
- Knowing how to use customer relationship management (CRM) platforms
- Knowing how to write copy for Facebook & Google ads
- Knowing how to write webinar scripts
- Knowing how to write blogs and online articles

So what are the complementary skills you can build?

Especially ones that will...

- A) Increase the flexibility & value of your core competency
- B) Increase the amount of value that you can offer to a certain business type

And when choosing new skills to develop consider which skills are in the highest DEMAND.

Demand = \$\$\$

And just like with your core competency - whichever new skills you decide to develop, commit to mastery.



# Master The Day.

Here's an important truth...

You and I can no longer control what happened yesterday...

...And we certainly can't control tomorrow.

All we can control is today.

And every "today" for the rest of our lives.

This concept had a huge impact on my when I first realised it.

If all you have is today, then you need to extract AS MUCH out of it as possible.

You need find ways to optimise it.

Here's the deal...

We all have things we know we "should do", but which we put off.

Things like:

- I know I should read more...
- I should stretch every morning...
- I should probably start preparing healthier lunches...
- I should meditate every day...

Well here's the thing...

You need to find ways to structure habits of greatness into your day.

Because all you have in your life is a day.

If you can't find a way to squeeze reading into your day regularly, then it will never happen.

Because all you ever have is your day.

And if you can't find time to do the things you know you "should do everyday" into your average day, then it will NEVER happen.

Do you get what I mean?

Most of us go through the same average routines day in and day out.

Sure, some days are busier than others...

And some days we have more time on our hands...

But 80% of the time you and I go through the regular motions of our lives.

Here's what I'm getting at - I'm trying to emphasise that your day is a series of 24 hours.

And in those hours you NEED to find room to build great habits.

You need to squeeze them in wherever you can.

For example...

I run Your Career Mastery, as well as copywriting training website...

As well as weekly comedy podcast...

And I work 9-5.

It's impossible for me to work on each of these things EVERY night after work.

So I SCHEDULE blocks of time to work on them wherever I can.

For example, I write material for my podcast on my phone whilst on the train before and after work.

And one night after work I might work on Your Career Mastery.

Then the next night I might work on my copywriting website.

I also try to meditate each day as soon as I get home from work.

And I read every night before going to bed.

I'm not saying any of this to brag or show off, and my routine is FAR from perfect.

But the important thing is that these habits GUARANTEE that:

A) I get things done EVERY week

I don't have to stress about whether or not I'm moving forward with projects

So here's what I suggest you consider...

I suggest blocking out certain times in your day to develop and build great habits.

Because you NEED to have time dedicated to your development & well being EVERY single day.

Once you lock these little habits in they'll become routine. They'll happen on autopilot so you don't have to stress about whether or not you're getting stuff done...

You'll know 100% that you are.

This is a way of automating your development. You're building systems, processes, and habits into your day.

Over a year, two years, three years, these little things add up to huge rewards.



## Build Your Brand.

One of my favourite copywriting mentors is a guy called Dan Kennedy.

He's published several awesome books on copywriting and marketing.

And he's also is a world renowned expert (and highly paid consultant) on the subject.

One of my favourite quotes of his is:

"The higher the income, the more the person is paid for who they are, rather than what they do."

Building your brand is one of the most overlooked areas of career development.

And here's the good news - it's easier and better to do now than ever before!

So what is your "brand"?

Your brand is your reputation.

It's what you're known for.

It's what you value and stand for.

It's your "magic powers" or masterful skills and abilities that you can do that no-one else can. Your brand is what people think about when they think of you.

Which begs the question...why would you want to build your brand?

Here's what it comes down to...

Deciding to form a brand around yourself, your skills, and your career is about one thing:

Positioning yourself as an expert.

You're positioning yourself as an authority.

And people are ALWAYS seeking out experts and authority figures to give them help and guidance with their problems.

For example, if you have health and fitness questions then you're going to seek out an expert. And an expert is usually someone who's built a brand in the public domain;

Essentially a brand is like a magnet.

It draws people in who are looking for you help, guidance, advice, and counsel.

Having a brand around your name gives people a vehicle through which to understand you, your work, and your skills.

This positioning can lead to incredible opportunities!

But enough theory, let's get into some specifics...

There's a few simple actions you can take to start building your brand today.

And get this...

The earlier you start building your brand, the sooner you can reap the rewards of having one.

Personal Branding is a HUGE topic with lots of books and courses created on the subject.

(I even have one that I created called the Personal Branding Masterclass).

And in my opinion there's three main pillars to building a kickass personal brand:

- Having an online platform people can access you (blog, Youtube channel, Twitter, Facebook page, podcast)
- Publishing content on your skillset (blogs, books, ebooks, video training, webinars)
- Doing great work (consulting, professional services, strategy)
- Promotion (public speaking, sponsored content, networking, marketing)

So first off set up a website.

Nothing fancy, just a simple Wordpress site will do.

And on that site you need a logo, an about section, a blog section, and contact information.

That's literally all version 1.0 one of your site needs. And on that site you'll write articles and blogs about your specific area of skill.

As well as your perspective on the market or niche you work in.

For example, I'm a copywriter so I publish articles on copywriting tips and strategies on my site.

You can also create a post content on LinkedIn and Youtube.

In fact posting content on LinkedIn is a great way to spread your name and brand through business networks.

Remember though...

The overall POINT of the website (and the content that you publish) is to prove to people that you're an EXPERT on your CORE Skill.

Personal branding isn't for people just starting out in their career.

But once you've racked up a significant amount of experience and have started to truly master your core skill...

Then brand building is the vehicle that can propel your career to new heights.

The most important thing is to do GREAT work for your boss or for your clients.  
This is the cornerstone of any great brand.

Over time your name will become its own currency.

And it could be worth millions!





## Stay On Trend.

It's almost cliché to say that "technology is rapidly changing" every year...

Sometimes even I take for granted just how fast everything is moving!

And here's the thing...

I'm always on the lookout for how technology can help improve my career.

As well as how technology could potentially screw me over...

And you should be too! You need to be aware of what's happening and how these changes could affect your career long term.

For example, are jobs in your industry going to get more and more competitive?

Or is your Dream Job actually likely get outsourced overseas...

Or automated by technology such as AI.

Each and every year (without fail) technology demolishes entire workforces.

So you need to keep your eyes open and start preparing for any major shifts in your field.

And here's another important point...

From a basic skills standpoint - best practices in every industry change quite frequently.

It's your job to know what the latest software, standards, practices, and trends are.

Don't fall behind.

Keep refreshing your knowledge as if your job depended on it (because it does).

One of the easiest ways to do this is to follow experts in your industry.

Keep an eye on their blogs and social media content.

Also, follow any journals, newsletters, blogs, or e-publications that are relevant to your industry.

Things will change. Guaranteed.

It's your responsibility to keep adapting. To move with the times. To be current and up to date.

Don't lag behind...

Instead, lead the pack.

## Sacrifice Pay For Learning.

Like most people who're looking for their first job out of university or college...

I wanted a really awesome job that paid me what I was worth.

And just like a lot of young graduates, I felt entitled to a great job!

After all, I'd studied for four years...

That meant I was fully qualified for my dream job, right?

WRONG.

Yes a degree is important, but it's merely the price of admission for most job markets.

It doesn't give you an edge, it gives you access.

And here's what I soon came to realise...

I learned that your first job isn't about making a big payday.

It's about developing as many different skills, having as many new experiences, and forging as many new connections as POSSIBLE.

And it's on your second and third job where you start to really make bank.

So if you're just starting out (or looking to switch up careers) then I highly suggest doing what I call sacrificing pay for learning.

This is where you simply take less money than you're worth (or are currently making)...

In order work somewhere that will 10X the development of your skills or network.

Let me give you an example for my career.

I was paid \$55K per year in my first full time job as a digital copywriter.

I thought I was worth more, but I had no experience and therefore no significant leverage.

So I took the smaller salary.

However, when I switched jobs 19 months later I had a significantly more skills & experience.

Therefore when I asked for \$70K (which was industry standard) for my next job I got it.

That's a \$15K increase for doing pretty much the SAME job.

What had changed?

As I said, I now had skills, experience, achievements, a portfolio of great work...

And highly credible references.

With every new role you need to ask yourself...

"Is what I'm going to learn on this job going to make me MORE valuable as an employee?"

If the answer is yes (even if it means taking a temporary pay cut) then I suggest going for it.

It doesn't matter if you get paid less than you're "worth."

Because the experiences, connections, insights, and skills you'll develop will absolutely catapult you to new heights.



# Be Prepared For Retrenchment.

Earlier we talked about staying on trend.

Well what happens if you don't?

You could still be pretty awesome at your job - sure.

However, you could miss out on something BIG.

And as a result of dropping the ball once, twice, and a third time...

You could get retrenched.

On the same note, we talked earlier about how technology is constantly making whole workforces redundant.

Companies retrench employees for dozens of reasons...

For example:

- They're relocating the business to another country
- They no longer need a chief marketing officer because they're outsourcing their marketing to a big agency
- The business has been acquired by a large company and they have to cut people
- The business loses a big client and has to cut people
- The business goes bankrupt and has to close its doors

It's just the way it is - people get retrenched every day.

Even I've been retrenched!

It was from my first dream job, and the boss brought the whole team upstairs and told us one afternoon that he'd decided to reconfigure the business.

He decided to build a 100% virtual team of freelancers and outsourcers.

It was crushing.

All of a sudden you lose that fun place produced great work each day.

You lose that place to get up and go to each morning.

And the financial pipeline dries up!

This is a reality every day in every industry around the world.

But here's the deal...

Being retrenched is NOT the end of the world.

And sure, you can get retrenched because of reasons that you have ZERO control over.

For instance, you could be their best employee - but a bankrupt company is a bankrupt company.

So what are you going to do if YOU get retrenched?

What's your gameplan for landing the next Dream Job?

What influential people in your network can you reach out to?

What other businesses in your niche could use a high performing, results delivering superstar like yourself?

This is why I urge you to network with influential people.

You never know when you might need to call upon them.

It's also why I'm such a strong advocate for core skill building, investing in yourself, and building your personal brand.

All of these strategies are like insurance policies so that when things go bad you have options.

Retrenchment proofing starts when you're INSIDE your dream job.

Don't wait until you're out of work to start networking and brand building.

Start today.



## Be A Good Person.

You'd think this would be assumed...

But we all need a reminder to actually be good people at work.

To be kind, ethical, and straightforward.

I personally still find the idea of a working environment kind of weird.

Here you are in a room all day with people you wouldn't necessarily hang out with if you had the choice.

And you can often find yourself in situations where you disagree with these people on important issues.

This creates tension.

Or you could find yourself stuck on a project with another team member who's incredibly boring, or has zero sense of humour.

This can create frustration and impatience.

And thus tension.

It's easy to be a good person when things are going great and you're loving life.

But I'm writing this chapter to remind you to remind yourself to be a good, patient person when...

- Someone steals your ideas
- You don't get credibility for a project
- The business decides on a direction you don't agree with
- Someone's behaviour or working style pisses you off
- You don't get the outcome that you want
- Someone says something rude to you in the workplace
- You're dealing with a sociopath or bully

Don't lash out.

Be patient.

Keep your eye on the big picture.

The big picture being that this situation you're in is transient - it will soon pass.

And to remember that shitty, rude, impatient, incompetent assholes in your workplace rarely remain in their role for any length of time.

They either jump ship into a different role, or get fired or retrenched.

You never want to take the bait and sink to their level.

Buying into inappropriate workplace conflict is permanently damaging to your reputation.

On the flipside...

If you consistently demonstrate the behaviour of a "good" if not "great" person then you're likely to get:

- The benefit of the doubt in bad situations
- Cut more slack when you make a mistake
- Higher consideration for promotions
- Glowing references when levelling up into your next Dream Job

Relationships are like investments.

They can pay serious dividends over the course of your career and lead to bigger and better opportunities.

And they're also like boomerangs...

You'd be amazed how people continue to show up again and again over the course of a career.

Especially if you're working within the same industry over many years.

Your reputation will both precede and follow you. And you want people saying nothing but GREAT things about you.

So trying and keep your composure in challenging situations.

Trust me, I know how hard it can be to resist telling someone you work with to "get fucked."

But when it comes to conflict, you want to come out credible.

And you do that by keeping your cool, and doing the right thing - always.



# Learn To Manage Stress Effectively.

Some people naturally manage stress effectively.

I am seriously jealous of those people.

Our Operations Manager at my first Dream Job was unflappable.

He was in charge of overseeing all projects happening in the office and was truly gifted at handling highly technical projects with lots of moving parts under tight deadlines.

This was not a skill that came naturally to me.

I personally suck at highly technical things (such as building websites).

And a couple of times in the early days of my first job I was given tasks that were highly technical.

The result?

I found myself getting incredibly stressed out.

Now what is stress?

In my experience it's both mental and physical.

When it overcomes me I start to feel:

- Overwhelmed
- Dizzy and lightheaded
- I can't think straight
- My breathing becomes shallow
- I can feel my body becoming tense
- It becomes harder to breathe normally and take a full breath
- My skull feels compressed
- My heart beats faster

What does stress feel like for you?

Do you know the early warning signs?

Like I said, the signs and symptoms (as well as the causes) express themselves differently for everyone.

And I'm not just talking about when you're "under the pump" at work.

I mean when you're FULLY overloaded.



When there's deadlines, confusion, and social pressure weighing on you.

But here's the really cool thing...

From experience I can say that dealing with stress is a skill you can IMPROVE.

And it all comes down to simple shifts in your thinking.

The challenge comes from the fact that our own individual "stress patterns" are so ingrained.

Especially by the time we enter the workforce in our 20's.

Because of this it takes serious awareness, effort, and discipline to start rewiring those patterns.

Here's what has worked for me:

- 1) Be aware that you're entering a stressful situation
- 2) Be aware of the content of your thoughts, focus, and attitude
- 3) Be aware of how your body language, breathing, and facial expressions are changing
- 4) Break the pattern (redirect focus)

Now the golden question, how do you break your stress patterns?

Below I'm going to give you some strategies that have worked for me.

However, I'm definitely NOT an expert on this topic.

I have ZERO formal training, credentials, qualifications, or training in this area! Nor am I medically trained in ANY way...

So if this is something you need help with, then I genuinely suggest talking to a professional (who can give you strategies unique to your situation).

That said, here's some mindsets and techniques that have worked for me:

- Creative Problem Solving
  - If you're trying to solve a problem, look at it as a playful situation
  - How can you creatively play with the variables
  - How can you experiment with the moving parts to achieve the desired result
  - How can you think outside the box
  - Ask yourself, what would this problem look like if it were easy to solve?
- When dealing with stressful conflict with another person...
  - Be gracious with them
  - Be patient & professional with them
  - Be solution oriented
  - Genuinely keep your cool
  - Fight fire with water
  - + Eg: If they are bitching to you about your work on a project you can say "Yes, you are right. And I take 100% responsibility for what happened. And I have some ideas about how we can put procedures in place

- to prevent this from ever happening again.”
- + By not fighting up against their accusations you can diffuse the situation
  - Use silence - for example if someone makes an off-hand comment to you, walk past as if you didn't hear it and their comment will lose all power (because it didn't achieve the intended result - a reaction)
  - Talk to someone in your workplace who you TRUST
    - + This alliance will give you emotional support
    - + They might also back you if you need to talk to HR or management about the dispute

I also believe that stress is like dirt that needs to be washed off EVERY single day.

And you can do this by:

- Meditating (I use transcendental meditation which is super easy & I do it everyday)
- Take an epsom salt bath (very relaxing)
- Go and get a full body massage
- Spend time with your friends talking through the situation and have a few laughs
- Do something that requires your full focus and allows you to forget about the situation (like playing a musical instrument, working out, cycling, or some other hobby)
- Do a vigorous workout
- Go for a long walk somewhere peaceful
- Write your problems down on paper and look at them objectively
- Find something you do everyday (like shower, walk to the train station, listen to music) and be fully present while you're doing it
  - Eg: If you choose to do it in the shower, then feel the water on your skin, smell the shampoos fruity aroma, hear the water falling against the floor of the shower

NOTE: I learnt that last technique from a very successful entrepreneur who uses it to relieve stress each day.

And it was a technique that HE learned from a successful hedge fund manager.

When you put 100% focus on something routine that you're doing, it gives your mind a break or "mini-holiday" from whatever is stressing you out.

It's a reset.

Another thing I want to quickly bring up regards conflict with people.

A great relationship can make your work life incredibly fun, satisfying, exciting and meaningful.

On the flipside, a bad one can absolutely ruin your life.

I'm very serious about this.

In fact most of the stress in your work life (and probably life in general) will come from people.

For example, stress can be caused by:

- A co-worker rubbing something in your face
- A co-worker embarrassing or blaming you publicly
- A sociopathic employee who continually says rude, mean, and hurtful things to you
- Pressure from a boss
- A highly competitive person in your team
- People who play office politics
- Workplace bullying

Dealing with these situations effectively takes skill & experience.

And dealing with them successfully takes guts, composure, and professionalism.

I look back on situations and wish I'd acted differently.

So it's important to reflect on the situation, your behaviour, and the outcomes...

And prepare yourself to act differently next time.

To cap off here I want you to know that stress is something that you can control.

When you have a stressful situation, that's one problem.

But when you start to freak out, then you have two problems.

And you can't solve the original problem until you calm down.

So here's another two HUGE learning curves I had regarding stress.

The first one came when I was watching one of those reality TV shows on people who live in rural Alaska.

(Bear with me, I know this one's a bit weird).

A husband and wife were bear hunting together in the Alaskan wilderness.

Then the husband fell and rolled his ankle.

The wife started to freak out - and rightfully so!

Especially considering that they were in the middle of nowhere and it was freezing (and there were big ass grizzly bears around!)

The husband spoke very patiently and said something to the effect of:

"Calm down. We need to remain calm. If we start to panic then we don't think right. And if that happens then we're in big trouble."

And then they both took a minute to breath deeply. They regained their focus and composure.

I'd never seen two people compose themselves in such a tough situation before.

I realised that you can INTENTIONALLY gather yourself, take a deep breath, assess the situation, and calm yourself down.

You regain your composure, and direct your focus towards the outcome.

So remember to take a minute to breath if you feel your stress patterns kicking into gear.

My second breakthrough came as a result of reading an amazing book.

It's called "The Obstacle Is The Way" by Ryan Holiday.

In it he talks about how obstacles and challenges aren't actually obstacles blocking the way to achieving your goals...

They ARE the way.

So it SERVES you to get excited when you encounter these challenges.

Why?

Because they're not delaying you...

They're propelling your forward.

And the skills & experience that you'll get by overcoming these challenges will prepare you for the next level.

So the next time you encounter a stressful, overwhelming challenge on a work related project.

Know that on the other side of this obstacle is the success that you're seeking.



## Take Holidays.

Yes, your career is important.

Yes, doing incredible work and working hard and contributing 10X value to your company is important.

But so is your life.

So is your physical and mental health. So are your friends and family.

And so is being able to look back on a year and a decade and saying “wow, I’ve done some really cool stuff!”

In Australia we get four weeks annual leave per year.

(France and Finland get 5 weeks per year - how crazy is that?)

Generally I take all of it off at once (sometimes even an extra week) and travel somewhere internationally.

As I’m writing this I’m in my late 20’s and I don’t have a wife or kids.

So I have a lot of flexibility when it comes to what I do with my annual leave.

But here’s the thing...

I intentionally try to travel as much as I can each year so that I won’t look back and regret not doing cool stuff when I had the chance.

Because that regret would eat away at me for the rest of my life.

Here’s what I’m getting at - you need to take time to step off the treadmill.

I mean REALLY step off.

To the point where you almost forget what it was like to work 9-5 and have a job.

This will rejuvenate your mind and body.

Even if you just chill by the beach for a couple of weeks - whatever works for you.

But this is super important! You need to have awesome memories that you look back on at the end of a year.

As well as to have time to refresh and avoid burnout in your personal and professional life.

So treasure your holiday and vacation time.

Use it to enjoy your life!



# Take Responsibility.

Your career progression is 100% your responsibility.

It's not your bosses, it's not your friends or co-workers.

And it's not the responsibility of the company you work for.

Each of those groups of people and institutions has their own agenda.

The company you work for has the sole responsibility of turning a profit.

Your boss has the agenda of ensuring the company runs smoothly and makes money.

And your co-workers have their own careers to worry about.

So if you're looking to level up, make more money, become more valuable, and land a more exciting role at a growing company...

Then it's up to you to make that happen.

Assuming 100% responsibility for your career is empowering.

It places the control in YOUR hands.

And when you approach your career from this perspective you quickly see that nothing stands in your way.

You can control how many new people you meet.

You can control the rate of your learning and how quickly you can build and develop new skills.

If things go bad with an employee at work - just assume responsibility for the situation.

Because you can only fix the problem when you take responsibility for it.

Leaders take responsibility.

Sure, everyone experiences negative outcomes beyond their control...

But here's the thing...

Blaming technology, or outsourcing, or a bad boss, or the economy does nothing.

Blaming is a waste of your time.

Assume responsibility and take measures to prevent the negative situation from happening again.

For example, as I mentioned earlier I got retrenched from my first Dream Job.

I knew that it was going to happen eventually.

People had been fired earlier in the year, and I could feel that the company was contracting, not expanding.

But I loved working there so I let myself believe I could keep coasting in that position.

Intuitively I knew I should have started to look for a new job. Then a few months later the boss decided to close down the business and move on to his next project.

Well this situation FORCED me to level up.

But it was 100% my fault for not jumping ship earlier and ignoring my gut feeling.

I accept that I got myself into that situation.

And I've put measures in places to ensure I still make cash on the side through consulting and freelancing even when I'm between 9-5 jobs.

See how it works?

You take 100% responsibility and you move forward stronger, smarter, wiser, and more strategic.

So if you want to be successful in career then don't complain or blame circumstances for holding you back.

Take 100% responsibility and propel yourself forward.



## 18th Law: **BONUS: Do Shit.**

And now for the bonus 18th law!

This law is actually one of the most important laws in Career Mastery.

This is the law of “Do Shit.”

What do I mean by this?

I mean you need to DO things if you want to keep moving up the rungs of success in your career.

What kinds of things do you need to do?

Here’s a few examples:

- Start a podcasting relevant to your job or industry
- Start a newsletter
- Start a blog
- Do public speaking
- Start consulting or freelancing
- Attend events or seminars
- Post content on LinkedIn
- Create reports or white papers that offer valuable information and send it to people influential people who could benefit from that information
- Start a mastermind group
- Take on more responsibility in your company
- Take on new challenges, projects, and opportunities!

These kinds of projects can become HUGE long term assets in your career.

They show people that you’re driven, that you’re serious, and that you can make things happen.

They also allow you to leverage new opportunities.

And you want to pick your projects strategically. Build one that allows you to double down on your strengths.

It doesn’t matter if you suck at the beginning.

Everyone sucks at the beginning!

What’s important is that you get started TODAY.



I promise you'll look back in five years and be able to reflect on how building this kind of project allowed you to:

- A) Open doors that would have otherwise been closed
- B) Have conversations with people you'd never otherwise be able to access

The 'do shit' law is something I learned from one of my heroes - a guy called Grant Cardone.

He's a sales coach and author from the US.

And in his book the 10X Rule he says this in reference to growing his business in the post 2008 economic crash:

*"We immediately increased production in every area: phone calls, emails, e-newsletters, social media posts, personal visits, speaking engagements, teleconferences, webinars, Skype conferences, and the like. Over that year and a half, I published three books, introduced four new sales programs, produced more than 700 segments of training material for a virtual training site, did 600 radio interviews, wrote more than 150 articles or blog entries, and made thousands of personal phone calls. While the rest of the world withdrew, we expanded on every front possible."*

Pretty inspiring stuff! Does this motivate you to try and tackle more challenges in your career this year?

I believe there's a DIRECT correlation between "doing more stuff" and seeing more growth and success in your life.

So make a commitment to yourself that this year, you're going to DO more!

And TAKE more action towards achieving your goals and vision for your life and career.

# Wrapping Up...

Well done on finishing the 17 Laws Of Career Mastery!

What are you going to implement in your life today?

What changes are you going to make now that you've taken 100% responsibility for your career?

I'm incredibly excited for the journey you're embarking on.

Especially since you're armed with a new set of tools, mindsets, and strategies for rapidly improving your career.

If you have any feedback or questions feel free to email me.

[will@yourcareermastery.com](mailto:will@yourcareermastery.com)

And if you're ready to go into more detail on how you can land your dream job, boost your productivity, or build your personal brand...

Then feel free to check out my premium training courses where I break these strategies down for you step by step.

You can find them on my site:

[www.yourcareermastery.com](http://www.yourcareermastery.com)

As always, I wish you a fun, meaningful, and lucrative career!

Best,

Will Vaughan