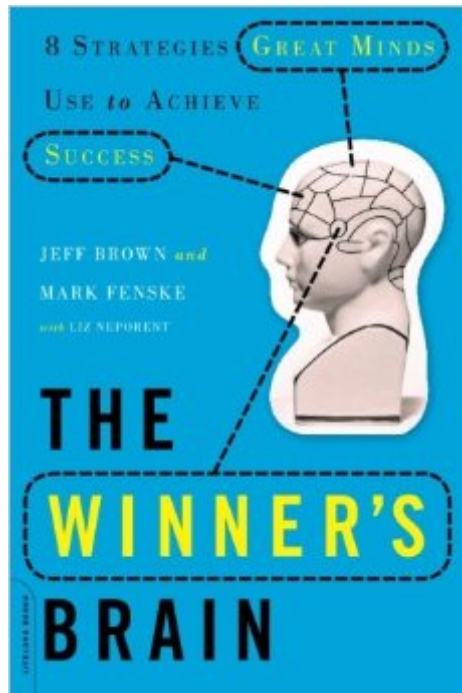


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The Winner's Brain: 8 Strategies Great Minds Use To Achieve Success



Synopsis

What can you learn about success from a robot? And why shouldn't you take a test while wearing red? In *The Winner's Brain*, Harvard-trained brain experts Jeff Brown and Mark Fenske explore the surprising science behind motivation, focus, and extraordinary achievement--identifying eight essential "win factors"--and why the key to success really is all in your head. The book includes dozens of interviews with notable winners, from B.B. King and Olympian Kerri Strug to the Whac-A-Mole® inventor. Compulsively readable, *The Winner's Brain* will show you how to unlock your hidden potential and give yourself an edge.

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Customer Reviews

What enables some people to succeed in life, while others simply survive? Is our maximum potential predetermined, or do we have the capacity to push beyond what we perceive to be our limitations? The authors of this book say that the workings of the brain make the difference, and that it is possible to train the brain to perform at a higher level. How? By identifying and employing the same strategies as high-achieving individuals use to overcome obstacles and reach their goals. Perhaps the key message is that 'the brain is active and subject to change no matter what you do'. This provides an opportunity: 'what sets the owner of a *Winner's Brain* apart is the desire and the know-how to take charge of the process.' The authors have identified five 'BrainPower Tools' commonly used by successful people: seeing opportunities where others don't ('Opportunity Radar'); accurately gauging and being willing to take risks ('Optimal Risk Gauge'); being able to

stay focussed on a goal (‘Goal Laser’); possessing the energy to take action (‘Effort Accelerator’); and being able to accurately assess one’s strengths and weaknesses (‘Talent Meter’). Of course, we don’t all share the same goals, and we will each have different definitions of success. But whatever your goals, it is likely that one or more of the eight strategies listed below will provide the keys to greater achievement. The eight strategies (‘win factors’) are: self awareness; motivation; focus; emotional balance; memory; resilience; adaptability and brain care. In this book, the authors give examples of how each strategy works and share techniques to enhance brain function.

I’m in two minds about this book. On the one hand I loved it and certainly got my money worth but, on the other I didn’t learn anything of practical use that was new. Maybe that’s an unfair statement since for years I have been a keen study of these types of books, and I am a demanding reader. Back to the positive, this book was really well written and very interesting. I thought all the “tools” and “win factors” were very valid and certainly would help someone move towards success (see the table of contents for a summary). There were no Ra-Ra moments, instead there were solid and convincing scientific arguments which were new to me. This discussion on what functional MRI’s (and other studies) show about brain functioning were fascinating and really helped to illustrate and support the points made. They went into the right level of detail, good solid discussions without getting too long. As an example, I already knew that labelling emotions helped to calm myself down but I didn’t understand why. The book gives an interesting discussion of a study showing how labelling emotions calmed down the amygdalae while brain areas involved controlling behaviour lit up. To quote “By simply labelling what they were feeling with words, they were better able to control the parts of their brain responsible for overreaction and call upon greater neural resources to help them stay in Emotional Balance’. The other aspect I liked were the examples of people who demonstrate the “win factors” eg Whoopi Goldberg “the Queen of Resilience”. Typically I don’t enjoy these types of digressions, but they were unusually well written and well integrated in this book. If this is an area that is at all new to you, I would highly recommend this book.

Note: I recently re-read this book, first published in 2010, and value what it offers even more now than I did then. Opinions vary as to how much (on average) people use of their brain’s capacities but there seems to be almost unanimous agreement among neuroscientists that it is possible to increase those capacities through a combination of mental and physical exercises, nutrition, and an increasing understanding of what the brain is, does, and can do. Hence the great value of this book. With Liz Neporent, Jeff Brown and Mark Fenske identify and then rigorously examine eight

strategies that great minds use to achieve success (however defined) and what those with less-than-great minds can learn from them. As they explain in the Introduction, "Our definition of Winners encompasses the usual conception: people who meet with extraordinary success in the particular aspects of life they value most... The kind of Winners we are talking about revel in the journey toward their goals almost as much as the destination itself, and they strive for the type of success that helps make the world a better place." This is precisely what Teresa Amabile had in mind years ago when offering career advice during a commencement address at Stanford: "Do what you love and love what you do because what you love is what you'll do best." Brown and Fenske include dozens of such Winners in this book, telling their stories that (whether they realize it or not) "illuminate the science and the theories" on which the eight strategies are based.

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