The "Barking Up The Wrong Tree" Workbook

"So what the heck is this thing supposed to do, anyway?"

I don't want "Barking Up The Wrong Tree" to be a book you read at the beach and lose in the sand.

Hopefully it's something you use to actually make changes in your life and get closer to your personal definition of success.

But there's no way for me to make a mainstream book personalized for you…

So that's where the workbook comes in.

For each chapter I'll give you one solid interactive test or exercise that will tailor the content a bit and allow you to jump-start the process of making the book useful in your day-to-day life.

Ready? Let's get to it…

Chapter 1

So a key part of chapter one is focused on "knowing thyself" and the crux of that is determining your "signature strengths."

What's the most common question I get asked regarding this? Hands down it's:

How do I figure out what my signature strengths are?

In the book I discuss Peter Drucker's system of "feedback analysis." It's a solid method — but it takes time and, sadly, a lot of people are not going to follow through with something like that. (Hmm, perhaps I should have put the "grit" chapter *before* the "know thyself" section.)

So if you want another method — and a very legit one — you can take an online test to help you discover your strengths at the University of Pennsylvania website here.

(Look under the heading for "Questionnaires" and select "Brief Strengths test" or "VIA Survey of Character Strengths.")

There are a number of other excellent professional-grade tests there you may want to check out as well.

Another great resource is Adam Grant's post on how to discover your strengths, which you can read here.

So that'll get you cracking with a key part of Chapter 1. On to Chapter 2…

Chapter 2

So we broke down the research on whether "nice guys finish last." But the bigger question is:

Are <u>you</u> really a nice guy or a nice gal?

Of course you are. You bought my book. You are an AMAZING human being…

But as Matt Damon's character says in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*: "Nobody thinks they're a bad person." (Note: his character is a serial-killing psychopath.)

So for the sake of thoroughness, let's <u>really</u> find out…

Want to know if you're a giver, a matcher or a taker? Want to get feedback from your friends as well? Wharton Professor <u>Adam Grant</u> has a test based on the latest organizational psychology research to tell you more about what your reciprocity style is. Check it out <u>here</u>.

Want to take a version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory to determine whether or not you're a narcissist? Click <u>here</u>.

Okay, so you've got some personal insight on your ethics (or utter lack thereof.)

What about Chapter 3 and that grit issue? Were you clear on how to tell if it was time to quit or to apply grit?

Well, here's a tool to make it easy…

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 lays out the "grit or quit" dilemma and explains the best tool for determining which path to take: WOOP.

I've done interviews promoting the book and sometimes even *I* forget what each of the letters stands for. Not good. So I don't expect you to be perfect about this either…

So how do we make WOOP-ing even easier?

How about a free app for your smartphone that walks you through the process for any big decision you're making?

You can download that here.

There are other resources to improve your WOOP-ability on that website as well. Check those out here.

So four letters just got even easier. Let's move on to Chapter 4 and the world of introverts and extroverts…

Chapter 4

We broke down the research on introverts and extroverts. But many people seem to be confused about which camp they <u>really</u> fall into.

If you want to take a "Big-5" personality test, which will give you your level of introversion/extroversion, click <u>here</u>.

Now you know whether you're really an introvert who is happy to be alone reading a workbook or if you're a…

HEY!

Extroverts. Pay attention.

You can text later, alright? I'm trying to help you out here. Jeez…

Time to move on to Chapter 5 and (hopefully) I'll be able to recover my self-esteem…

Chapter 5

So you got a really interesting analysis of confidence… and why it might be more of a problem than a solution to anything.

And then we talked about the latest research (and a thousand-plus years of Buddhist philosophy) that says self-compassion might be the better way…

So how do you get started with all this self-compassion stuff?

Well, let's talk to the real expert… No, not Buddha. He's a smart guy but he's dead. (I'll let you know if his condition changes.)

I'm talking about Kristin Neff, who is doing a lot of the key research on the subject at the University of Texas at Austin:

• Want to know how self-compassionate you currently are? Kristin has a test you can take to determine that <u>here</u>.

• She also has a very good list of exercises to help you increase your self-compassion. Those are <u>here</u>.

• If you want a much deeper dive into the topic, you can get her book <u>here</u>.

Alright, almost done.

Now we gotta go big picture in Chapter 6…

Chapter 6

How do you make the big choices in life like work-life balance and maintaining happiness while creating success?

Barry Schwartz gave us the breakdown on how people choose and what those styles lead to.

Maximizers do better but are less happy. Satisficers still do pretty well, and they are able to actually enjoy what they achieve.

So which one are you?

A test based on the research is here.

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Hopefully, this little workbook gave you some useful starting points to get a better idea of how the book's concepts apply to you personally and where you need to start in terms of applying the information.

After going through the exercises and tests I recommend reviewing the chapter and starting to create a plan for yourself. Write that plan down. Then start putting things on your calendar to follow through with.

Got questions? You're always welcome to email me: ebarker@ucla.edu

I wish you great success. :)