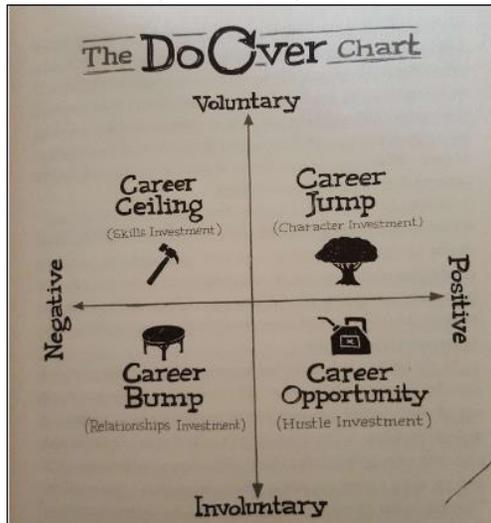


Do Over

Jon Acuff—2015

Chapter 1: The Career savings account.

- You control more than you think. Good job, bad job, dream job, no job, this is true. It's on us. I would often prefer to blame others for the economy or boss who doesn't get us, the reality is that a better job begins with building a better you. Work is not the enemy.
- We eat at TGI Fridays not TGI Mondays.
- **Relationships** + skills + character * hustle = career savings account.
- We were taught to work jobs, not build careers.



- Careers are built or broken on how we invest in them. (Do a scenario of losing job -- exposes what to do).

Chapter 2: do this first.

- **If you** want to have a better job right this second, it's possible. All you have to do is choose your attitude and adjust your expectations.
- Notice, I didn't say, change your attitude. That could take years. Choosing it, though, takes a handful of seconds. Tomorrow at work, choose to have a good attitude. Choose not to be cynical. Choose not to act like you're doing them a favor by showing up. Choose not to complain. Choose to cheer for the accomplishments of your coworkers. Choose to treat customers like superstars. Choose your attitude every day until eventually it chooses you right back.

Chapter 3: you don't know who you know.

- There are 1 million ways to get stuck in a career, every version shares one thing: a suspension of creativity.
- Put that on pause for a minute and just answer this question: who is one person who could help me with my career do over? Write their name down in the margin of this page. Don't you already

feel a tiny bit like a winner? That wasn't so hard. In the reality is, that was just the tip of the iceberg, because you know a lot more people than you think.

- This isn't just crafty hyperbole either, there's gobs of research that show how important it is to write out your ideas and see them.
- To begin, answer the following questions, starting with your closest relationships and then progressing to your more casual, writing one person's name per card. I am pretty sure you might be able to double, triple or even quadruple the results from the first exercise.
 1. Who do I know that is wise about career issues?
 2. Who have I worked with?
 3. Who do I know that is influential?
 4. Who do I know that owns a business?
 5. Would I follow online that is in my desired career space?
 6. What casual relationships and my forgetting that might have a career impact?

Chapter 4: give your foes what they need most.

- **A foe could** be someone who keeps you out drinking on nights you swore you would do work. When they call themselves a foe? No. They probably even call themselves your friend, but the results are the same. Their presence is an attack on what you're trying to accomplish with your do over.
- **In the book,** Change Anything, a team of authors discussed this very thing. They said, "Bad habits are almost always a social disease—if those around us model and encourage them, will almost always fall prey.
- And right now, you've got some lobsters in your life, too. Every job has lobsters, that group of people who are determined to hate the entire experience of working somewhere. Ice to be a lobster, quick to criticize everything, slow to see anything good, determined to make sure everyone around me was having the same negative experience at work I was. I remember, with shame, when a friend and I took a new employee out to lunch at a job once. He was full of that new job buzz and we did everything we could to tell him how horrible the job she had just taken really was. We try to clip his wings. Misery loves company and it also recruits it. You have a gossiping, cynical group of lobsters that go to lunch together at the company you are at right now. They're fun to hang around with sometimes – negativity is more enjoyable than we like to admit – but it's the death of our career do over. And yet with lobsters never teaches you how to be a better bird. That empties your career savings account instead of filling it up. Give the lobsters in your life what they really need. Distance.

Chapter 5: casual counts.

- We constantly bemoan the fact that texting, Facebook and twitter are eroding the depths of our friendships. That might be true but when it comes to boomerangs we are living in the Golden age? Something as simple as an encouraging text or tweet can do wonders and reconnecting you to a work relationship you haven't talked to in a while.
- I don't grab anyone by the scruff of the neck, I just stand up abruptly made conversation and declare, "It was wonderful seeing you tonight!" The trick is to say with enough confidence that is clear you are reminiscing about an experience that had just ended.

- Realizing she wanted to know her neighbors, she simply invited them to dinner. All of them. She knew to at the time but figured that the worst that can happen is that no one would come to dinner that night. So, one by one she put invitations in their mailboxes, inviting them to a potluck. She expected a handful of people to show up. Instead, 91 people walked down the driveway that night. She discovered what you'll discover if you dare to be just a tiny bit brave. People are desperate for community. All of us, even us introverts. Market up to fear, the pace of life or any other factor that whittles away our sense of community, feels hard to find these days. So when someone risks awkwardness and days to throw one boomerang, something strange happens: other boomerangs show up. Or in Sarah's case, 1500. That's how many people have come to dinner in her backyard since 2012.
- That might happen – not the stork part – but the accidental friend at work who becomes a good friend over time. But it's a lot faster to choose who you want to be friends with.

Chapter 6: great careers take great advocates.

- One afternoon, after giving a speech that fell flat to a room full of teenagers, a comedy group called the Skit Guys asked me if I wanted to know what the problem was. I said yes, because I wanted to get better at public speaking. They told me the house lights were too bright. Teenagers were nervous about laughing at the wrong thing. They don't want to feel embarrassed or licked him. So if the room is bright, they won't laugh. Adults are similar, which is part of the reason comedy clubs are so dark.
 - 1. What is one piece of advice you'd give to a writer like me?
 - 2. What did you wish you knew about work when you were my age?

Part two: skills, what you do.

Chapter 9: you have more skills than you think.

- To get started, here are some questions you can answer about your skills:
 1. What are you good at?
 2. What comes naturally?
 3. What do people pay me to do?
 4. What are you afraid of?
 5. If you wrote an e-book, what would the topic be?

Chapter 10: Master the invisible skills.

- Own your attitude.
- Making sure you enjoy work isn't your company's job. It's your job.
- Skill = exceed expectations.
- Skill = express gratefulness.
- A skill well practiced and honed has the ability to become a character trait.

Chapter 11: never become a dinosaur.

- I like the moment when I look at everyone and say, “I have no idea how to do this, let’s figure it out.”
- Think about it, what did Taurus have in common? They ask lots of questions. They don’t pretend to be something they’re not. They don’t feel the pressure to know everything. They give themselves permission to be excited about experiencing new things. And they have fun! It’s not easy to learn something new but approaching it like a touristy makes it a lot easier.

Chapter 13: kickstart your new skills with something fun.

- **Most** of the time, learning something new requires five different things: time, year, money, access to experts and knowledge.

Chapter 14: skills get sharp slowly and dull quickly.

- Without missing a beat he replied, “The secret is that you have to outsmart yourself. You have to get your routine. You have to get your system together as a player. The things you always do. Off-season, during the season, you have to have your list. That’s why every week I know which days I’m going to be doing weight work, cardio, sauna, ice bath etc. I take care of my body. Some guys can’t handle the mental discipline of it, especially once they’ve made some money.”
- First times that should be the worst times when it comes to learning something new. And the reason we have such a hard time outsmarting ourselves and sharpening our skills is hidden in this point. When it comes to our careers, most of us make every time the first time. Call it a causality of speed or just lack of self-awareness, we often approach every single task an opportunity leg it’s the first time. Disagree if you must, if you are a business traveler, please go pull out the list you created of the items you always pack for every trip.
- You do this, too. Maybe not with packing, but with something else in your life. Make every time the first time, and you never bother to learn from the last time.
- In her book, Succeed, “we work best when as much of what we are doing can be delegated to the unconscious mind as possible.”
- If we can make the activities that should be rote, deliberately rote, we free up a tremendous amount of brain space, time and energy to actually do new things for the first time. The more we can make something of routine, and stop giving your brain power, the easier it is for us to apply that brainpower somewhere else in our life. I didn’t invent that idea either. On Christmas Day, and the year 1876, author Gustave Flaubert Wrote Gertrude Tennant and said “the regular and orderly in your life like a bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your work.
- **Your willingness** to discipline one part of your life creates freedom in another. This is a technique leaders throughout history have taken up, like a guy named Albert Einstein.
- You also need to remove from your life the day-to-day problems absorb most people for meaningful parts of the day. You’ll see I only wear gray or blue suits.
- Some skills can’t and shouldn’t be put on autopilot. Instead they should be put on a fighter pilot. Every day should bring a new mission.
- But some skills on autopilot and some skills on fighter pilot. If you are ever confused about which is which, talk to someone in your industry who has 10 more years of experience than you and someone who has 10 years less experience than you.

Part three: character, who you are.

Chapter 16: planted an orchard.

- The goal of this section is to help you become the type of person people want to work with. We're going to accomplish this by planting an orchard and being generous, empathetic and present.
- Be brave and ask them what career centered character traits could use a little work in your life.
- It's easier to blame other people for our fall shorts but we only get to strengthen the things we take responsibility for.
- Sometimes if I overplayed my hand in step five, I never got to launch steps six and seven and instead got fired. Sitting down and realizing I did that revealed that my core character issue wasn't boredom or bitterness. It was chaos. At every job, I create chaos of some sort. If things are going along well, I would throw grenade into them, often sabotaging myself.
- It wasn't my last job or my last boss that kept me on the road, it was my addiction to chaos, and I've Artie found a new way to feed it as I work for myself.
- If you've had more than one job, if developed the pattern too. In the same ways we looked for consistency in the skills we possess, you need to look for consistency in the character you possess.
- Take a look at your pattern might be trying to tell you.
 1. Write down the jobs you've had. Include any part-time and full-time positions.
 2. Give a brief description of your job performance. We promoted? Did you get good annual reviews? Did you get reprimanded?
 3. List the ways you lefty's job. We fired? Did you move out of state? Did you get a better offer from another company?
 4. Describe the strength of the relationships you left behind. With the awkward to run into a former coworker? They ask you to do freelance work for them even though you no longer worked there? Did your boss write you a great referral?
- **Pull these weeds** as fast as you can.
 1. Narcissism, dishonesty, pessimism, apathy.

Chapter 17: generosity is a game changer.

- Generosity breeds loyalty. You will go to bat for people who have shown your generosity. Your employees will work harder. Your clients will return more often. When you are down, people will look for opportunities to pick you up. When you do something that risky, like a career jump, people make excuses to find ways to support you. The number of people who show up to help you will be proportional to the amount of character you've invested in your relationships before your career jump.
- There are few things in the world that will change a person's opinion of you as quickly as your generosity.

Chapter 18: empathy, no longer just for people who like to cry with friends.

- Maybe empathy is as simple as remembering something that matters to someone you work with. I recorded my last two audiobooks in a small home studio in Nashville. The guy who runs it, Joe Loesch is an audio master.
- **That's** why I try to have a 15 minute to 30 minute phone call with the host before the event. During the call, I'll ask what their hopes are for the event, how I can serve the audience and what challenges I need to dress. But the most unexpected question I ask and the most important one is this: "a week after the event, what can I have done that makes you look like a rock star to the people who matter at your job?"
- I often have to rephrase it a few times because speaking hosts aren't used to being asked that. They are actually a little taken aback. Instead of focusing on my needs, I just ask them "how can I make you bigger" and that surprises them. That's the question we need to ask if you want to know someone else's needs and how to act on them. I promise, regardless of the specific crew you have, you ask people you work with this type of question. Ask lines: "what can I do to make you look like a rock star to your boss?" Asked vendors: "what can I do to make you look like a rock star to your superiors?" Ask your coworkers: "what can I do to make you look like a rock star to your manager?"
- No one at work whom you make feel bigger will ever say, "That guy really made me feel better about myself. He really understood my needs and met them before I even asked. Fire him immediately!"
- On the contrary, when things go awry, your boss will probably shout, "get me Smith, he knows what I'm looking for!"
- **The** weaknesses you think you are revealing like a secret have been apparent to the people you work with for years. They've just been waiting for you to see them too.
- Understand someone else's needs. Act on them.

Chapter 19: be present.

- The trick, though, is you can launch a career jump and still be absent. You can have perfect attendance to whatever new opportunity you leap towards and still be missing. Being metaphysically, sitting in the seat as it were, is only one part of your career do over. You still have to be present. Right now that's harder to be than ever because of all the distractions we are facing. But, if you really want to reinvent your work and get ahead, there are three things you need to do with—your phone, your computer and your meetings.
- I looked for a power outlet twice in the 1990s. Now, I scan airport terminals like an electricity junkie. I judge the quality of a hotel room by the number of outlets it has. If there aren't some built in to the lamp, I throw it out the window in the Def Leppard like rage.
- "You just put me on pause. Let me know when you're ready to continue."
- **That's** why companies lose an estimated \$6.5 billion during the 15 week fantasy football season. And it's only going to get worse. The Internet is only going to get bigger and more interesting with more things to do that don't move us forward in our careers. Today is the smallest social media will ever be. Every day it expands.

- There are few things in life quite as exhilarating as having a meeting canceled. It's one of the best feelings you can have the job. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief and says, "oh, I just got our back in my day. Sweet joy."
- "I'm just using this paper for notes"
- **In** the years to calm, being present at work is going to be a game changer. No one is present anymore.

Part four: hustle, how you work.

Chapter 21: grit is choice, not a feeling.

- **Busyness** is not the same as hustle.
- Grit, which is simply being brave when you don't feel like being brave.
- If we were honest, we call these what we really hope they are: "when the lottery moments." We believe in these types of opportunities often out of laziness.
- Here is what every great decision needs:
 - Time. Don't confuse hustle with the rush.
 - Counsel. If Columbus had an advisory committee he would probably still be at the dock.
 - Questions.
 - Kindness.
 - Honesty.
 - Build a grit list.
- I don't get to say, "I want to invest a lot in relationships, but not via one of the most popular ways people communicate today."

Chapter 22: hustle has seasons: use awareness to recognize them.

- Bob is doing everything he can to hustle. He might be able to carve out a sliver during lunch or focus more on weekends, but unless he's playing eight hours of mad in every Friday night, he's already running pretty thin. He's not suffering from lack of effort, he's missing awareness, the second principle of hustle.
- Trying to hustle in the wrong season ruins the other parts of your life. Take something ordinary like vacation as an example.
- He's working 70 hours a week, hustling as hard as he can to get a new company off the ground. He felt a little guilty about that until he started calling his season of his life med school. If he was learning to be a doctor, no one would tell him, "I think you're working too hard. You are always hustling. You need to take it easier on yourself. It's just medical school. By studying so hard?" We have a culture understand that medical school requires intense, all-consuming hard work. Perhaps that's a season you are in with your hustle. It's springtime. If that is the season you are facing, make sure it has a conclusion. Even doctors eventually graduate. Don't act like medical school is a 20 year process and the speed you can maintain forever.
- Perhaps right now you are in family season. You've got young kids and need to focus on establishing your family. A dad of a four-year-old told me he was still getting up at 5 AM to try and work on his dream. I told him to stop that. He was already getting up at 3 AM to help feed the

baby. He had enough dream to work on right now, it's called raising a human. That's plenty for a season.

- **Hustle** with awareness; without it, all the hustle and the world gets you to the wrong place faster.

Chapter 23: Career yoga.

- **Purpose** is often a byproduct of hustle, not a prerequisite.
- Business travel is only fun if you never done it, similar to how people who never grew up around snow thinks it's always beautiful.

Chapter 24: always use this to multiply the moment.

- As I walked across campus in the cold that first night to speak to less than a dozen people, I couldn't imagine where it would lead. But I do remember clearly thinking, "You know where most authors are right now? At home, having a key. Probably wearing a Norwegian sweater like they sell at the end of the Disney Epcot rides." Not me, I was on the grind, hustling my way to a gig that I was going to give my all to, regardless of how many people showed up.
- **Hustle** works those two ways. You hustle hard to stir up more opportunities. And then when you have one, you hustle hard to blow it up as large as it can possibly be.

Chapter 25: Three final words you'll tell me someday soon.

- But, and this is a big but because I cannot lie, it's on us. If we want our jobs to change, we have to change first.
- Oh, what a perfect word "there" is. Our friends, our advocates, they don't just encourage us, they dare us.
- www.sketcheffect.com.