

NOTES FROM: *Gateless*, by Sebastian Marshall and Kai Zau

SUMMARY: This is one of those books that feels like a secret weapon. Not all that many people know about it, and I'm fine with that! The people who've never read this book will have to compete against *me*, and they won't stand a *chance*.

Gateless gives you a comprehensive strategy - a precise *structure* - to maximize your most important resources, which include your skills, reputation, and relationships. It starts off with the 30,000-foot view, but then dives deep into the weeds to feed you virtually everything you need to know to max out those stats. See my four pages of notes!

To this day, I'm still not sure where I heard about this book, but I've returned to it over and over to help me revise my business strategy, optimize my energy levels and effectiveness, and plan my next move.

"There is now thousands of times more opportunity out there than there ever was in the history of the world."

"You can't rely on anything else or anyone else or any institution to take care of you."

"If you can make things happen generally, you're valuable everywhere."

"The simple ability to get a job done is incredibly prized and valuable."

"Is the 'I' that needs XYZ the highest and best version of you?"

"To hit the highest levels of performance, you need to manage your biochemistry."

"Universal literacy was a utopian dream not all that long ago."

"The stresses and aggravations of everyday life become somewhat muted under knowledge of one's own raw power."

"The best time to drink coffee is when you are already very alert."

"Examine which states you want to experience over the long term, then start testing and researching ways to get there more often."

"There is no gap between biochemistry and cognition."

"Most people don't make life-altering shifts very often, and they're often not doing well when they do it, so these decisions often come from a bad place from which to do any great thinking."

"Reflection is a luxury that was not always available in all times and in all places."

“People who are doing okay and *almost* thriving are in a perfect position to do some deep thinking and to make some positive changes.”

“It's so easy to get our worldviews confirmed to us.”

“We see what we already think is true.”

“Shift your thinking from ‘I'm not really a numbers person’ to ‘I'm not really a numbers person, but I could learn a little bit more about it.’”

“Actively search for new skills, and do this at least once a year.”

“There are perhaps ten million worthy ways to spend your life, and you're not going to get an off chance to experience 9.9 million of them.”

“Many of the obstacles you'll face can be easily overcome with a patient, attritional style of wearing down the obstacle and repeatedly taking small gains. In doing it this way, you gain morale, insight, small victories, and build up strategies and operations to sustain yourself.”

“What am I trying to achieve here? Why am I trying to achieve it? How will I know I'm successful? When do I want this to be complete? How much time do I estimate this will take? What's my budget in time and money for this? What are the most likely pitfalls? What key advantages can I build for myself early? What scares me the most that would make me unlikely to finish? How good am I at achieving and finishing things like this in the past? When will I check in and see how it's going on waypoints? Who can help me stay on track with this? What other types of allies, friends, and support do I need? If I hit major setbacks, what will I do? Under what circumstances would I quit, abandon, or change this plan? How much effort and time do I want to make under this plan before reviewing and considering changing it?”

“More motivation doesn't just make it likely that you'll succeed at the task, but also that you'll have more fun doing it.”

“If you're doing something reasonably complex that's going to take around 100 hours, spending 3-5 hours really planning it out well, or even longer, will almost always save you more time than it costs.”

“When you are 90% finished, you're halfway done.”

“Lots of talented people work with official or unofficial therapists.”

“Learn how to finish a project and make sure you don't self-destruct at the end.”

“Meditation is about discovering the true nature of our thoughts and their unreality.”

“Often, desires or cravings feel overwhelmingly like they need to be satisfied immediately, but this is rarely the case.”

“You don't actually need to flee from some intimidating work that's ahead of you.”

“You can feel thoughts and impulses, observe them, and then take alternative action.”

“Learning to work while tired, or distracted, or anxious are all fantastic life experiences to have.”

“A growth mindset, the rigor of experimentation, and looking for new methodologies is a very strong base to start from.”

“There are people in the world you could have met, who could have been as important to you as the person who is most important to you now, whom you *haven't* met - and it's just by accident.”

“Your greatest friends and supporters are out there, and you have to go out and find them.”

“The cost of *not* seeking out great people in your life is incredibly high.”

“It's a lot easier to meet people if you're both likeable and useful.”

“Your worldview surfaces constantly in your language.”

“Never ask for favors from someone you wouldn't be happy to help equally as much.”

“Excellent people tend to be able to introduce you to other excellent people.”

“Cultivate a relationship with mentors by asking for a small piece of advice, executing on it, and following up with a thank you.”

“Give your contacts a letter grade and use that to determine how often you keep in touch.”

“Assign a number score based on their relevance to what you are doing.”

“Ideally, you want to be close with lots of people who are very relevant to your life.”

“As you move through your life, everyone is matching you against patterns they already have in their mind.”

“You have finite time and an infinite number of worthy things you could be doing.”

“You can build a life of relaxation, experimentation, leisure, or one filled with intense meaning, but it's not going to happen by accident.”

“If there's a type of person you want in your life, determine what would make a person like that *want* to spend time with you.”

“Don't try to *look* good; *be* good.”

“Operate under the assumption that you will have to drastically improve in order to get the kind of quality of life that you want, and that the improvement will sometimes be painful, but that it will always be satisfying and worth it.”

“One of the biggest obstacles is not knowing what's possible.”

“There are quite literally millions of good things that *could* be happening to you and for you right now but aren't, all because you didn't set them up to happen.”

“Some part of you, deep down, knows what's actually going on in your life.”

“Most people don't really understand money very well, or food, or people, but we've been around money, food, and people for our entire lives.”

“When things are *very* bad, the mind's focus is on short-term palliatives and quick fixes, not helpful and long-term solutions.”

“How money ‘feels’ and how money actually *works* are radically different.”

“The experience you can get *now*, in the particular situation you are in, is quite possibly invaluable.”

“Make the most out of your current situation, especially the parts about it you may dislike.”

“It's not fatal to occasionally test a different quality of life to prove that you've got more options and more freedom.”

“The second you lie to yourself, you lose the ability to build yourself the best possible life.”

“There's no shame in starting from where you are.”

“Something you're taking active steps towards every day has a chance of happening.”

“Do things that no one ever regrets doing.”

“Anything that's on the verge of being finished *must* be finished.”

“Finishing is hard, and finishing *anything* is worthwhile.”

“You're far better off committing right now to spending a month or two training in a skill you know is worthwhile, than standing out in the cold trying to figure out what to do.”