

NOTES FROM: *Choose Your Enemies Wisely*, by Patrick Bet-David

SUMMARY: It turns out that having the right enemies in your life can help *launch you* straight towards extreme success and significance. This is a book about selecting the “right” enemies, however, and engaging your emotions in the proper way - channeling those feelings into productive pursuits instead of self-destructive ones.

Patrick Bet-David is a legendary entrepreneur who came to America with basically nothing (his family literally escaped from Iran, crossing a bridge moments before it was destroyed) and inspired millions of others to put real effort into their own personal development, curb their vices, and help build up their communities.

The man also has *enemies*, which he’s used in productive ways, instead of getting stuck in a cycle of anger and retribution that would have scuttled his chances of any meaningful success long before he ever got started.

Choose Your Enemies Wisely explores the link between logic and emotion, and acts as a bridge between the two. Myself, I’m much more *logical* than emotional. Which is great for business planning, but sometimes I just don’t *feel anything* when I think about what I have to do each day. I don’t *automatically* get fired up, which can be just as harmful to one’s dreams as boiling over with emotion, yet having no actual plan.

The book is phenomenal - I’ve read three of his books so far and he’s never let me down yet - and it’ll teach you how to build a solid business plan, fortify it with logic, amplify it with emotion and feeling, and *dominate your competition* in business and in life.

Charles Mackay: “YOU have no enemies, you say? Alas! My friend, the boast is poor; He who has mingled in the fray Of duty, that the brave endure, *Must* have made foes! If you have none, Small is the work that you have done. You’ve hit no traitor on the hip, You’ve dashed no cup from perjured lip, You’ve never turned the wrong to right, You’ve been a coward in the fight.”

“Sometimes we spend so much time trying to find *how* to win at life that we miss the entire point. Maybe you need to look for *why* to win in life. Did somebody humiliate you? Did somebody manipulate you? Is there a teacher or family member who made you feel ashamed? We’re all driven in different ways, but *the right enemy can drive you in ways an ally never can.*”

“Your business plan must be both emotional and logical. That’s why I want you to see which side you favor, and where you need to improve. If you’re only logical, you have probably struggled to inspire people. With my approach, you will know what you need to change to accomplish that. If you’re only emotional, you have struggled to develop systems and stay organized. This is why you’ll benefit from the structure of a methodical plan.”

"It's important to clarify what emotion is *not* and what it *is* in the context of business planning. Emotion is *not* impulsive, irrational, melodramatic, temperamental, or hot-blooded. Emotion *is* passionate, obsessed, maniacal, relentless, powerful, and purposeful. The words for what emotion is *not* describe the people who have chosen the wrong enemy. The list of words for what emotion *is* describes the audacious few who become unstoppable."

"If I talk about *what* to do before I talk about *why* to do it, I lose people."

"Whether it's in sports, war, or business, you can have a team ready to run through walls for you, but they need to know *which* walls and *how* to run through them."

"The 12 Building Blocks are: Enemy and Competition; Will and Skill; Mission and Plan; Dreams and Systems; Culture and Team; Vision and Capital."

Winston Churchill: "The farther back you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see."

"Once you identify who you need to beat, you will naturally raise the standard for what you must achieve."

"New mistakes are okay. Old mistakes are not."

Marcus Aurelius: "Let no one rob me of a single day who isn't going to make a full return on the loss."

"The minute you break your word to yourself, you have sabotaged your entire year."

"Plan like Japan; execute like America."

"A static business plan is a losing business plan."

"There's a difference between competition and enemy. You can list your competitors without any emotion. But who pisses you off? Who's the person who said you'd never make it?"

"Why do you want to defeat this enemy? What will it feel like when you defeat this enemy? What reward will you give yourself when you defeat this enemy?"

"She goes out of her way to talk a big game so others will doubt her."

“14 Types of Enemies:

Outside Yourself:

1. Someone you hate.
2. Relatives who try to hold you back.
3. Manipulators.
4. Gossipers.
5. Someone to prove wrong.
6. Your ex-spouse or former business partner.
7. Someone who doubts you.
8. People who quit on you.

Within Yourself:

9. Scarcity mindset.
10. Your own limited thinking.
11. Your ego.
12. Contentment/mediocrity.
13. Fear of success.

My Vote for the Most Powerful Enemy That Drives Winners:

14. People who are beating you because their vision and accomplishments are greater than yours.”

Jordan Peterson: “What you should be doing is playing people who are beating you as much as you can tolerate.”

“Choose enemies that give you energy, not drain your energy.”

“5 Unworthy Enemies:

1. Companies trailing you in the marketplace.
2. People you have surpassed in your business or on your career path.
3. Relatives who put you down because they are jealous of your success.
4. Toxic people who try to pick fights and bring out the worst in you.
5. Small thinkers with a victim mentality.”

“Identify all the competitors and underestimate none.”

“For private colleges, their competition isn’t just other private schools and lower-cost public schools. It’s also changes in student loan policies, a recession, and, maybe more importantly, a *shift in how people view* education. The moment the narrative shifts and people stop believing that a college degree is required for career success, the value proposition gets destroyed. Taking a broad view of your competitors doesn’t mean stressing out about what could go wrong. It means being deliberate about identifying your competitors to see how they will go after you and poking holes in your own business model. Once you see this, you have to adapt your key differentiators to meet the needs of your customers. For the top universities, online education started out looking like a threat, but once these schools realized they could create their own online courses and degrees, it became an additional revenue source.”

“Indirect and Unseen Competitors:

1. Interest rates.
2. Changes in customer behavior.
3. Technology that can make you obsolete.
4. The economy and economic trends.
5. Legislation and lobbyists.
6. Companies that meet customer needs in different ways.
7. Paradigm shifts that impact your value proposition.”

“You can hire all the research firms and consultants you want, but the best approach is to research the competition yourself.”

“I’ve done this for every job I’ve ever had. When I started with Morgan Stanley in 2001, I’d call Smith Barney and TD Waterhouse and make up a good story. I knew what would qualify me as an ideal prospect, so I would say that I recently inherited money. Then I would ask, ‘What’s different about you? Why should I trust you with my aunt’s hard-earned money?’ I would listen and take notes. Then I would say, ‘My brother has a friend who works at Morgan Stanley, and he thinks we should pick them.’ They would start talking, and I would start writing! I wanted to know exactly how they sold against us. And guess what? With my detective skills, they never outsold me again.”

“Key Questions About Competitors:

1. Who are your direct competitors?
2. Who are your indirect competitors?
3. What competitors aren't so obvious but still need to be monitored?
4. Who are you underestimating? The people who get underestimated the most are those without much experience. They have nothing to lose.
5. Where are your opponents strong? What markets/areas will you concede?
6. Where are your opponents weak? What markets/areas will you attack?
7. Who can you acquire? What strategies will you employ to acquire them at the lowest valuation? (Weaken them to drive down the price.)
8. Who could acquire you? What strategies will you employ to get acquired at the highest valuation?”

“A confrontational approach isn't for everyone. In fact, in the book, *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu says, ‘Never wake up an enemy.’ But for me, I was trying to *wake myself up*.”

“I realized in that moment that, for all my faults and mistakes, I had done two things right. I had chosen my enemies wisely, and I had chosen my life partner wisely. The enemies propelled me, and my wife supported me.”

“Don't be surprised if your enemies come back to you. You know that expression, ‘Hustle until your haters ask if you're hiring.’ It's happened to me dozens of times, and I've hired many of them. Some of my enemies even became allies who helped me fight bigger enemies. And that can only happen if you treat your enemies with the compassion and mutual respect the moment calls for.”

“Take a broad view of your competitors and assume they wake up every day with the goal of putting you out of business. Studying the competition and choosing the right enemies will continue as long as you care to have a business. Choose wisely.”

Mike Tyson: “You have to train your mind to be stronger than your feelings or else you will lose yourself.”

“Enemies light the match. Will keeps the fire burning.”

“The word ‘want’ has zero weight behind it.”

“Going forward, there's no place for your wants. Imagine for a moment that, no matter how bold an idea, you knew you couldn't fail, and no one could hear this thought but you: What would you declare? If you're committed to your vision, tell me what you *will* do.”

“When *you* improve, your business improves.”

“The current version of you doesn’t have the skills to execute your audacious plan.”

“When buttons get pushed, we act differently. That’s why your job is to figure out how to push your own buttons.”

Richard Branson: “Train people well enough so they can leave; treat them well enough so they don’t want to.”

“If you want to be a part of the audacious few, you must start with audacious dreams.”

“If the dream excites you, you’ll work as much as you need. Thinking about what you want is the dream. The emotion comes from picturing what your life will look like when you achieve your goals. If the plan is clear, you and your team will know how to create systems to direct your energy and accomplish tasks.”

“He didn’t do one thing to celebrate. The next month, his income went from \$72,000 to \$5,400. Because he hadn’t rewarded himself the previous month, his subconscious was wondering, *Why am I busting my tail for nothing?* By sitting in the bank, that money didn’t create any emotion. His problem was that he hadn’t experienced the emotions from the reward that would drill into his subconscious the value of hard work. Most people are very good at rewarding themselves when they make money, and more often than not, they overdo it. But every once in a while, it’s the complete opposite. Both you and your family have to see the reward of your working as hard as you are, or else what’s the point? Why would you keep putting in the effort? *Thinking about how you will celebrate makes your dreams come alive.*”

“Your psyche has to be rewarded for paying a price. You program your psyche by using a reward to reinforce your dream. When you decide on the award *in advance* of achieving your dream, you are programming your mind to believe *I’m willing to pay a price because this reward is going to happen*. This is a continuous feedback loop that you must integrate into your plan.”

“Goals are the specific outcomes we aim for on our way to achieving our dreams. Dreams direct our energy; goals take that direction and create a laser focus. When goals are specific and measurable, giving us deadlines and putting rewards in place, they work.”

“A powerful dream becomes a future truth.”

“Trust in God, but lock your car.”

“I simply couldn’t outwork bad systems.”

“Why will next year be different?”

“Declare your dream as a future truth and start to live in the present as if your future truth has already become a reality.”

“Especially if you’re going to drive people hard, they’d better feel five things:

1. They are part of something.
2. They are cared for and supported.
3. They are making a difference.
4. They are having fun and celebrating success.
5. They are being recognized for their contribution and feel needed.”

“14 Things to Look for in an Inner Circle:

1. Confidentiality: what’s said stays in the inner circle.
2. Zero tolerance for games: manipulation leads to loss of trust, and trust is the foundation of the inner circle.
3. Accessible: easy to get a hold of.
4. Opportunity magnet: good attitude.
5. Lacks drama: doesn’t see themselves as a victim.
6. Someone who gives insight (constantly teaches): shares insights on new books, interesting articles, and new ideas.
7. Pays attention to details: special touch and goes above and beyond.
8. Strong Rolodex and high credibility: they know people, and because of their credibility, these people take their calls and respond to their proposals.
9. Respect in their approach: the way feedback is given; the way they deal with others.
10. Defends you: tells you what’s said about you behind your back; protective of the relationship and your credibility.
11. Dependability: you can bank on their word.
12. Exchange of value: not one-sided; picks up their share of the checks.
13. Fun and humble: zero tolerance for arrogance.
14. Presentable in appearance: never sloppy.”

“In what ways do people improve by associating with you?”

“How many lives have you changed positively in the past year?”

“Benefits of Hiring a Rock Star:

1. Sets the tone.
2. Raises the bar and brings out the best in others.
3. Shows what’s possible.
4. Elevates performance.
5. Expedites results.”

“To hire rock stars, you must be a rock star.”

“Have those around you made more money than they ever have?”

“How does your plan incorporate making others around you wealthy?”

“What do you want your top leads/sales reps to make in the coming year?”

“What benefits, both financial and nonfinancial, do others derive from being around your best self in the upcoming year and decades that follow?”

“During the hiring process for every company I lead, we assign a book for each candidate. They are required to read it and come back with a one-page paper. It’s a great filter for our culture. Better to know sooner rather than later if they are readers who are committed to learning. Based on that one assignment, we learn a lot about coachability and reliability.”

“Vision is what makes people never want to stop. You may see some similarities between dreams and vision. But the biggest difference is that dreams are more personal and have a timeline. You can fulfill a dream. A vision extends beyond you and your family. It’s for the people you lead and the world at large, and it never stops. It’s transcendent and will outlast even you.”

Jeff Bezos: “Be stubborn on vision but flexible on details.”

“The moment you start fighting for something bigger than yourself - a true vision - you’ll be introduced to a version of you that you’ve never seen before. No superpower matches this. None.”

Tim Ardam: “Why are we treating ourselves like the underdog? Why can’t we see ourselves as killers who are just getting started?”

“My Business Principles:

1. Never compromise our nonnegotiables.
2. Micromanage until there is trust.
3. What brought us here won’t take us to the next level.
4. No one has 100 percent job security, including the founder or CEO.
5. Create positive peer pressure by challenging one another.
6. Beat your prior best.
7. Treat the company’s money like it’s your own.
8. Be radically open-minded but not easily persuaded.
9. Fight any temptation to lower expectations and standards.
10. Create an environment where our team is taken care of financially and professionally.”

"I declare my dream as a future truth and will live in the present as if it has already become a reality."

"The only way for you to succeed is to be at your best - in terms of attitude, skills, organization, and energy."

"It's taking the time to look ahead in your life, to visualize both success and regret. You have to dream and tap into your imagination by constantly saying, 'Imagine one day if...,' and then create the habits to make it a reality, all the while inspired by the visuals that are constantly in front of your eyes."

"I've said over and over that a business plan first has to *move you*. Without being moved, without getting emotional, you won't follow through. The emotional current that lives inside you is a constant reminder of *why* you are working so hard. By knowing how to ask questions that tap into your deepest desires (just as Pelley did for Musk), your plan takes on an entirely new meaning. I also believe that emotion alone isn't enough. Musk, like all of us, needed a logical plan that precisely detailed how to channel that emotion. Emotion is the *why*. Logic is the *how*. It leads you to specific actions that are required to start a business, scale a business, and put all the pieces together to design your dream life."

"You are prepared to have your best year ever. Your best year brings you one step closer to your best life."

"My why is impact. My why is hope. My why is using business to solve the world's biggest problems. It all started for me twenty-one years ago when I chose the right enemy. If you're ready to build a multigenerational business, there's only one thing left to do: Choose your enemies wisely."