

NOTES FROM: *The Achievement Habit*, by Bernard Roth

SUMMARY: *The Achievement Habit* was a serendipitous eBook find, but I'm *so* glad I discovered it, and it has both a charm and usefulness that's really quite special. If you've read *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Bernard Roth is kind of like Morrie. Kind, wise, patient, and always has your best interests at heart.

Roth is the co-founder of the Stanford d.School and an expert in design thinking who convinces you in this book that *achievement can be learned*. He calls it a muscle, and once you learn how to flex it, you'll never approach your life in the same way ever again. You'll never be intimidated by the magnitude of a pursuit, and you'll never back down from the great work of your life.

One of the main aims of the book is to get you to stand back from the chaos of your life, get a clear view of your options and possibilities, look as far forward into the future as you possibly can, and then bring yourself back to the *present*, where you take the very next step forward. Then the next one, and the next, until you've reached the peak you were aiming for in the beginning. Then, from *that* peak, you'll be able to see mountains beyond that you never even knew existed.

"When you *do*, you are using power. But when you *try*, you are using force."

"In life, it's much better to be powerful than forceful."

"Many of our fixed views of the world are based on limited samples of reality."

"Most people just do a good job walking the path that others have created."

"The experience of changing your life will change your reality."

"Nothing is what you think it is."

"Pay attention to the difference between trying to do something and actually doing it."

"If the consequences were really important to you, you would perform."

"If you don't like the way things are happening, do something different next time."

"If someone goes to great lengths to prove that they are not a liar or a cheat, then they probably are."

"The origin of hatred lies in the individual's attempt to disown certain potentialities of the self."

"We are all potentially capable of any human act."

“Manifest a bias towards action and don't be afraid of failure.”

“If there's something you really want to do, often it's as simple as just doing it.”

“No one's usually trying to prevent us from achieving our goals.”

“Always make sure that you are working on the real problem.”

“Sometimes you'll find that you are working on an answer instead of a question.”

“What will solving this problem do for me? Is what I *thought* was the answer just one of *many* possible solutions?”

“Often, we disguise our excuses as reasons.”

“Often, what we strive for is more of what we already have.”

“You can't get enough from more.”

“Society depends on building on other people's ideas.”

“Don't be too possessive of your own ideas.”

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.”

“If you really don't want to do it, the world might be nice enough to give you good reasons why it can't be done. If you really *want* to do it though, those reasons are not going to stop you.”

“Use affirmations to modify a behaviour that will *lead* to a positive result, instead of trying to affirm the accomplishment itself.”

“If you succeed, the odds against it in the first place are rendered meaningless.”

“Saying ‘and’ instead of ‘but’ opens up the whole conversation and lets your brain focus on new potentialities.”

“When you ‘help’ someone it's because they're helpless, but when you ‘assist’ someone, you're working *with* them so they can do it on their own.”

“Behavior changes the self-image and the self-image changes behavior.”

“Imagine you only have the rest of your life to live. What would you do?”

“Your own death is closer today than it was yesterday, and it will be closer still tomorrow.”

“Your life will likely end up deviating from any rational life path that you may have laid out.”

“By making our background assumptions explicit, we can either affirm them or change them.”

“If enough people do something, it stops being crazy and becomes the accepted norm.”

“Almost all stories that are told with a beginning are distortions of the full story of what has actually happened.”

“Prototyping can be useful in everyday life, in that you can ideate, test out earlier versions of the solution to your problem, and then build up to a testable solution.”

“Improving yourself will keep you busy until you die.”