

SUCCESS SERIES: BOOK I

FOUNDER

*How to build a
foundation for your
dreams*

JAMES WILDER

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INTRODUCTION

Some people seem to be born with a clear mission in life. They know what they want and they go all out to get it. What about the rest of us?

What if we were like most people and went to school, became employable, and tried to live life the best we knew?

Maybe at times along our journey we entertained the idea that there might be more to life. Or, we know we're capable of more, but we're not sure what to do or how to start. Or maybe we have tried but got frustrated due to lack of progress.

I've wrestled with all these issues. There is an answer. In the search for a deeper experience in my life I have discovered that dreams serve a purpose. I have come to believe that our dreams are not an escape from reality, they are there to become reality. The question is, how?

I have spent most of my life dreaming and trying to live the life I want. I had mixed results. I wasted a lot of time. The years were burning away. I finally realized I needed help. I began reading every success book I could find. Then I became overwhelmed with so much information and contradictions! I finally realized the book I was looking for didn't exist. So I decided to look for key principles, patterns, and processes. Then I assembled them in a way that made sense to me. My approach was to write a series of short books that clearly show the big picture as well as the steps along the way.

I eventually settled on three books and three titles: **FOUNDER**, **BUILDER**, and **MASTER**. Each book builds on the other.

FOUNDER is the first book to come from this process. This book is the starting point. It will give you the keys to building a solid foundation for your dreams. Everything that endures the test of time has a strong foundation.

BUILDER is the second book. Once you have your foundation, you can begin building. This book gives you the five pillars of following your dream and building something that matters to you.

MASTER is the third book in the series. This book gives you the long term practices for mastering your dream.

The ability to dream is a gift. But dreams take work and success is no accident. In order to build our dreams, we must become students of success. There are principles and practices we can learn. There are ways to change our thinking. There is no limit, or end to learning, practicing and expressing our gifts. With the right mindset, life becomes a world of possibilities. Choose a dream and run with it!

I hope this book inspires you and gives you the determination to pursue a greater vision for your life – a vision that excites you and empowers you to live each day on purpose. I hope you experience an ever increasing joy and fulfillment knowing that your life has greater meaning and impact than you ever imagined. I hope that you achieve your greatest destiny.

Are these big hopes? Yes, of course! Why waste hope on small things? Let's move some mountains.

To your success!

James Wilder

WE ARE CREATORS

In order to build our dreams, we must see ourselves as creators. If we don't see ourselves as creators, we will miss out on one of the most fulfilling aspects of life - the gift of creating. We need the mindset of a creator.

We Admire Creators

Maybe we are drawn to athletes, actors, musicians, writers, and artists not just because of what they create, but because they exercise their creative desires to the fullest. Maybe we think "I wish I could experience a bit of what they have." I believe we can. I believe we can experience what the greats experience.

No actor, musician, or artist is given success. They start with raw talent. They study, train, work hard, and they create. The truth is, anyone can study, train, work hard, and create. We have the instinct to create, but we have to choose our art. We have to choose something to master. It is what we were born to do.

The Art We Create

Creating is not reserved for artists and the arts. We are all creators. We are all creatives. We create in the everyday experiences of life.

We create with our mind. We think, we plan, we analyze, we compose, have ideas, gain wisdom, find solutions, and see opportunities.

We create with our hands. We heal, write books, make music, create sculptures, paint paintings, build engines, and design bridges.

We create with our heart. We care, show concern, we love, we express empathy.

We create with our words. We teach, empower, encourage, inspire, direct, and connect.

We create with our love. The most fundamental form of creation is having children. We were all created.

We create in infinite ways things of beauty and things of industry. Creating is for all.

The Creator Mindset

A mindset is a set of beliefs that represent a view. A Creator Mindset means expressing ourselves in creative ways is fulfilling. It means we are more focused on creating than consuming. What we consume should be for our benefit and support our creative efforts. We are at our best when we are creating.

Being a creator means there is always more to create. We can create more than we need. This gives us the ability to give abundantly. We are not giving from a fixed amount that we need to hoard and protect.

A Creator Mindset means we should also rest, look back on our work, and call it good. It is good because we exercised our ability to create. We affirm the time and care we put into creating. We bless it and let it go.

Finally

Creating is not a season of life. Something we did once. We create until we can no longer breathe. What we have created continues to do its work, long after we leave. The crown of “creator” is not for the gods. Do not wait to be crowned. The crown is for all who awaken to their purpose. The crown is for you.

START WITH A DREAM

A dream comes from the belief that there is something better. Not in the sense of acquiring more things, but in the sense of more life. Life is energy, growth, expansion, and transformation.

If we don't dream, are we really alive? How can we live and not breathe? How can we live, and not dream? Our dreams are a natural expression of life. Our dreams are the evidence of life with a strong pulse.

Feed Your Dreams

Anything that is alive needs nourishment and attention. Do we say someday I will eat? Or someday I will feed my child? No! We experience pain if we don't eat. And we wouldn't even think of not feeding our children! In the same way, our dreams need to be fed daily. We need to take specific action in order to advance our dream.

Unless we started in childhood, we probably aren't in a position to go all-in on our dreams. We can start building little by little. If we can't build, then we prepare. We can read books that educate, encourage and inspire us. We can save money. We can build our network. There is much work to do that doesn't cost a dime and doesn't take much time.

Anything that is alive needs nourishment and attention. Our dreams need to be fed. We feed our dreams by taking action daily.

Our Dreams Transform Us

A dream by definition is something we want, but aren't yet able to obtain. It's something that seems impossible. It's a dream because it will take something we don't have to make it a reality.

An amazing thing happens when we follow our dreams, we are transformed. We transform into something new. We will be able to say "I am a different person today than when I started pursuing my dreams."

When we experience transformation, we think differently, we see differently, we act differently. Our values change.

Our personal transformation is evidence of the power of a living dream.

Finally

Our dreams are evidence of a strong, healthy, and vibrant life. In the process of making our dreams real, we are transformed. The greater the dream, the greater the transformation.

The only dream that becomes real is the one that is fed daily. If today, we can take even the smallest action to make our dreams real, then today is the day to live our dream.

BELIEVE YOUR DREAM

A dream requires an indestructible, unshakable belief. It's one thing to have a dream, but it's a totally different animal to make it real. We might start with excitement, but the harsh reality is: building our dreams will take more than what we are capable of today. We will face adversity, distraction, and discouragement. Therefore, we need a strong foundation for our dream.

What is Belief?

Belief is something we hold to be true. Belief guides our actions and influences our feelings. If you believe you aren't good at math, then you will avoid anything to do with math and certainly won't enjoy learning more math! If you believe you will never be rich then you will not pursue the skills to understand and build wealth. Belief has consequences.

Every action we take is based on our beliefs. The actions we choose to take on a daily basis form our future. Therefore, what we believe is supremely important! For example, I believe that I have much more potential than what I experience today. I believe I can have more joy, more fulfillment, and more impact. Life is about growth and growth is a choice. Therefore, my belief directs the daily actions I choose to take in order to grow and experience more life!

Belief is an urgent matter because it determines the actions we choose to take.

We have thousands of beliefs! Every action we take is based on the many beliefs we have, right or wrong. Some beliefs have minimal impact. Other beliefs shape our destiny.

How We Acquire Beliefs

Over time, we unconsciously acquire beliefs about ourselves and the world. Our beliefs are usually acquired through the daily influence of our parents, friends, education, culture, authority figures, and personal experiences.

Some of the beliefs we adopt might be based on misunderstanding or misinterpretation. These default (unexamined) beliefs may not serve us. In fact, they may hold us back. If there is even the slightest possibility an existing belief might be holding us back, we should seize the opportunity to consciously examine it, test it, refine it, or reject it.

Limiting Beliefs Limit Life

Limiting beliefs deprive us of a higher quality of life. A faulty belief could keep us from living and enjoying an ability we actually possess. Limiting beliefs can distort reality and block us from enjoying the experience of our true potential. Limiting beliefs can chain us to a destiny that is far short of our potential.

I had a major limiting belief from childhood. I believed my daydreaming was simply for my own entertainment. It took me decades to realize that I actually enjoy thinking. And thinking can be put to good use if focused on problems that are important to me. I used to feel ashamed because I was a deep thinker and couldn't come up with quick answers. Now I realize deep thinking is a

supreme gift! It is a gift that can, and should, be developed. Not something to feel shame over.

Limiting beliefs held me back from attempting things that I wanted to do. I believed I had to be an expert in order to do most anything. I listened to the critics and the nitpickers. I gave them power. I censored myself.

Maybe we were treated in a way that made us feel unintelligent. We withhold our viewpoints for fear that someone will ridicule us. Maybe we never considered owning a business because we didn't think it was a possibility. These are all beliefs, right or wrong.

The key is to examine our beliefs and determine if they are based on reality or adopted unconsciously over time. If some of our beliefs block us from living our potential and enjoying a greater life, it makes sense to examine those beliefs. In fact, it is an urgent matter.

Levels of Belief

It is helpful to know that there are at least three levels of belief: opinion, belief, and conviction.

Opinion. Our opinions are held somewhat loosely. We can easily change our mind if new information sways us to change our mind. Our opinions have very little influence on our daily actions.

Belief. Belief is deeper. It is typically based on matters important to us, such as values of justice, kindness, fairness, and honesty. We have beliefs about ourselves, beliefs about others, and beliefs about the world. Our beliefs direct our daily actions.

Conviction. Conviction is far deeper. There is little possibility that anyone can persuade us or offer any evidence that could overthrow our convictions. It is accompanied by deep commitment and consistent action.

Finally

We don't have to join the ranks of "*the crazy ones.*" But we can join the ranks of the unstoppable. We have the power to adopt new beliefs that empower us to grow. If some of our beliefs block us from living our potential and enjoying life in a greater way, it makes sense to examine those beliefs. In fact, it is an urgent matter. A matter of life and destiny.

A STRONG FOUNDATION

In order for us to build a foundation for our dream, we have to strengthen our belief. The first, and most important, foundation we build is in our mind. If we do not build on this foundation our work may not endure the test of time and the storms of life.

There are seven components that create a strong foundation for belief. So strong that you will most certainly achieve what you believe.

1. Faith

We first gain evidence by faith. A wise teacher said that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move mountains. If you strongly believe something but you have no evidence, that is faith. Faith is the evidence. Faith is the evidence of things unseen. If we have nothing but faith, we have more than most! Faith can be the starting point, but we must add to it.

2. Knowledge

We are not building some mystical thing. Whatever we dream of has already been accomplished to some degree. The difference is, can we obtain it too? For this we seek knowledge. Has anyone accomplished this? How did they do it? Is it possible for me?

3. Action

We can grow evidence of success by putting in the work required to grow. Read the books, take a class, create, practice. If you put in a

thousand hours studying something, that my friend is powerful evidence! Action is evidence.

4. Completed Works

When we start putting in the effort, we will start creating things. These are our "works of art." Initially, we may not think our work is good enough. But no initial work of art is awesome. This takes time. Our works of art will start accumulating. They will build on each other. Given time, we will amass a "body of work." It could be a list of classes you have taken, a list of articles you have written, or a list of contacts you have made. Anything you create along the way is evidence of success.

5. Close Relationships

We can gain evidence when close relationships believe in us. My mom has been my biggest supporter. Seek out a support network of people that believe in you and your dreams. Don't listen to negative people always coming up with reasons why you can't. Seek out and journey with people who are trying to accomplish something similar. We are rarely ever the first to attempt something. Other people have done it. Now it's your turn, and it's your time.

6. Results

At some point, we will start seeing results from our effort. It will probably take much longer than we expected. I never hear: "That was easy and didn't take nearly as long as I expected." There is much work to do, but in due time, you will see. Like the green shoot of an oak tree breaking through the soil to reach the light of the sun. The initial work is unseen. But there will be a time when you, and all, will see.

7. Purpose

Aligning your dream with your purpose creates an inexhaustible power source. The next chapter will dig deeper.

Finally

When you doubt yourself. When you question your dream. When you get tired and worn out. Don't despair. Remember the components of the foundation. Belief is powerful. If you have faith you can move mountains. Your purpose will make you unstoppable. With a solid foundation to support your dream, what can stop you?

THE POWER OF PURPOSE

Plug into an inexhaustible power source to become unstoppable.

Willpower will fail. Motivation will fade. Interests come and go. Rather than being passionate about talent or skills, we can tap into our purpose. Our purpose is broader than our talent or skills. How we choose to fulfill our purpose can vary.

A dream gives us a vision of what to build. Purpose gives us a reason why to build and the determination to build to completion.

Here are some of the benefits of choosing a purpose.

Purpose Gives You Clarity

Choosing your purpose is like creating a clear path through a dense jungle. By wielding your machete, you clear distractions (this is ongoing). By choosing one destination, you have a direction. You eliminate a thousand roads. You can finally make progress!

Purpose Motivates

Your purpose should motivate you to take action every day. The actions you take should align with your purpose. Why do people look forward to Monday, get up early, and work late? It is because they have a clear purpose - a purpose they have chosen.

Purpose Gives You Perseverance

You can suffer many losses, and still maintain your power. It is your purpose that you cling to when you get knocked down. It fuels your comeback. Your purpose is the key to perseverance.

Purpose Creates Urgency

Your purpose will give you a sense of urgency because you are the only one who can fulfill your purpose! When you have ownership, commitment, and investment, you will not waste time. Ask anyone with a clear purpose if they ever get bored. They will probably say, the only time I am bored is when I have to do things that don't align with my purpose.

Purpose Can Shield You From Loss

In an imperfect world there are things out of our control. Sometimes we experience loss. For example, some people might have a passion for playing the violin. They travel the world with the greatest orchestras. Their passion and joy come from their ability to play the violin. But in an imperfect world we could lose our abilities. This can feel devastating. They might become bitter and feel that life is over.

The good news is, many people that experience loss discover something deeper. They discover a purpose. Maybe they discover their purpose is to bring appreciation for music to the world. They might lose the ability to play violin, but they can bring the appreciation of music to the world in many different ways.

Having a broad purpose can shield us emotionally from the tragedy of losing things and abilities.

Your Dreams Can Evolve

How you get where you want to go, and what you create along the way can change. Don't get attached to these things. They will come and go.

For example, some might say that Elon Musk is passionate about rockets and electric vehicles, but it goes much deeper than that. Elon Musk's purpose (as far as I understand) might be to "save humanity." How he does it can vary. Today he does it by creating SpaceX and giving it a mission to put a sustainable colony on Mars and making humans a multiplanetary species. If a better idea comes along, he might very well choose a different way. But your purpose will always remain.

Purpose Is Positive

Our purpose is always positive. It is never negative or destructive. When we build our dreams, we are creating something new. We are creating something that never existed. We are creating abundantly. We are contributing.

Finally

Decide on a purpose so personal and compelling that you may overcome any obstacle. You know you have a powerful purpose if you're willing to invest all you have. Our purpose will always remain. However, it can be refined as we learn and grow.

BECOME A BUILDER

We now have a dream, a strong foundation, and the power of purpose. We can now pursue our dreams with confidence! But we have to take action. What are we building?

If someone asked you today "show me what you have been building all these years you have lived," what would you show them? This question came to me as I wrestled with my purpose. I looked at all I had done in my life. I couldn't answer the question, "What are you building?" The only answer was "I don't know!"

What are you building? This question is something everyone should at least think about and decide for themselves.

Are you building what you want to build?
What should you be building?

When you look back on your life, what do you want to see?

Unlimited Potential

As human beings, we have so much potential. What if for the rest of our lives we continued to develop our potential? What if we channeled our vision, curiosity, creativity, learning and experimentation into something that could be added to year after year, for as long as we live? What would it look like in 10, 20 or even 60 years?

Having a builder mindset can help channel our energy into creating something we believe in, something significant, something that can

be added to year after year, something that endures for a lifetime, and beyond.

What Every Builder Needs

Every builder needs to build themselves, while building their dreams. Start with a minimum viable skill set. Start building. Learn, Improve, and add skills as needed. Here are just a few things every builder needs:

- **A dream.** What do you want to build? Write it down.
- **A plan.** How are you going to build it?
- **Self Leadership.** It's your dream. You will have to learn skills in order to lead yourself.
- **Skills.** Dream building requires much training. Start with a minimum viable set of skills and train for life.
- **Tools.** Identify the tools you will need. You will discover more tools along the way.
- **Time.** Allocate time. Start building. Start simple. Build daily.
- **Practice.** This is a lifelong journey. You will get better.
- **Connections.** Connect with other builders. Encourage other builders.
- **Process.** Observe what worked well and learn from what didn't work well. Incorporate what you learn.

Does this sound like work? Yes! Dreams take labor. But it's a labor of love. Take it one day at a time.

Pursuing your dreams and wanting to grow is not something to be ashamed of. This is not a grind or a hustle. There is nothing to crush. This is something we do because it is fulfilling. It makes us feel alive. The effort we invest is worthwhile. It is a source of an ever

increasing excitement and awe about life. If you develop your skills as a builder and continuously pursue your dreams, your direction is onward and upward.

START BUILDING

Our dreams serve a purpose. They serve as a voice that calls us to a higher experience of life. If we constantly push our dreams aside or treat them as fantasy we are missing the point. Dreams are for building. If we do not build our dreams, no one else will. What dream do you have? Are you living it? If not, what is stopping you?

Practice is belief in action. When you practice your dream on a daily basis you make it real. As you practice your new belief, you might decide it really isn't what you want. This is not a waste of time. We have gained clarity through experience. Push-button success does not exist! We have to overcome our desire to want everything now with little effort. We really do have to live our beliefs over time in order to verify if it is something that truly makes us come alive.

Practicing and refining your new beliefs ultimately causes you to try things you've never done before. This is where growth is unleashed!

History Begins Today

This is super important. Probably way more important than you imagine right now. In order to know you are making progress you have to have a measurable starting point. Your starting point will be something you reference for the rest of your life. It's that important!

Every historian wants to know "When did this begin?" or "When was this built?" It's an important question and an important part of history. A starting point is also an important part of your story!

If your starting point is "someday," then maybe you don't have a compelling dream. It's important to make this distinction.

Building your dream causes you to grow, so it's important to choose a dream that you can start building today.

If you don't have a clear starting point and a clear destination you are simply wandering. Until you make a decision, nothing will happen.

It is time to decide.

TAKE ACTION

A decision requires action. If you do not have a start date for building your dream, here is your opportunity to make history. History begins today!

Create a one page "founding" document with the following:

- Document your start date.
- Create your definition of success.
- Choose your purpose.
- Describe your dream.
- List some action items (a simple plan).

Keep it simple. One or two pages. You probably won't be crystal clear! Don't take more than an hour! Review it each day until it is good enough. Then start building! As you build, you will gain more insight and clarity. Review your founding document on a regular basis. Review it when you feel lost. Revise it when you change directions.

NEXT

Your dream and foundation are just the beginning. There are many principles and practices that can be learned to help build your dreams. In the next book I will introduce you to the five pillars of building your dream.

Read Next:

BUILDER

The five pillars of following your dream and building something that matters.

See details below on how to get the books!

Success Series Books

Below are my Success Series books that offer a simple framework for following your dreams.

- 1. FOUNDER (this book)**
- 2. BUILDER**
- 3. MASTER**

Find these books online at:

JamesOnSuccess.com

The strongest foundation is the one you build in your mind.

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