

**Don't Gamble on Life  
Improvement...  
Until You Shift the Odds!**



**Kevin E. Eastman**

Don't Gamble on Life Improvement... Until You Shift the Odds!  
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# THE LAYOUT

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# 1. “Why Should I Pay Attention to This Guy?”

“*Thank you*” is the only sentiment that begins to express my appreciation to you for opening this book. With literally thousands of choices for reading material available, I’m grateful this time you picked this one. It makes no difference whether you bought it, borrowed it, found it, or had it gifted to you, I’m overjoyed that you’re taking the time to read the thoughts of a man out of Oakland, California who believes he has beneficial information to share.

Why I chose writing a book as my sharing method is simple. This was written for the person who feels like their dreams of success and happiness have been dashed, because of the obstacles they’ve encountered. I’ve seen people fail in ways they shouldn’t be failing, and believe some of the lessons I’ve learned can help remedy that. Too often, these people can’t see the forest because they’re blinded by the trees. From my vantage point, there hasn’t been a lot of “common sense” assistance available for them... until *now!*

Like most people, my life has been full of peaks and valleys. I’ve been beaten up, beaten down, and at times completely *broken!* At my lowest, life had beaten me so badly, I felt like I was nothing. Low self-esteem, depression, failed relationships, dismal finances, etc. I was convinced the world had turned against me, and I was my only line of defense.

Thankfully, in addition to those horrible beat-downs, I was provided a surplus of information from some great sources. I've been able to uncover a number of methods that have helped me decode some of my life's most challenging situations. The goal is to explain a few of them so you'll be able to use them, if you've grown tired of the direction your life has gone. Through a lot of adversity I've learned, "*A hand up is better than a handout*," and the effects last longer!

At the beginning of just about every non-fiction book, the author strives to establish themselves as a competent authority, aiming to create a bond of trust with the reader and get them excited about the rest of the book. I'll continue this practice, hoping some great advice I received helps me: "*You never know from whom, or where inspiration is going to come from.*"

A degree of skepticism often arises when introduced to a book written by a first time author. It doesn't help matters when the author makes a claim like, "*This book may be able to assist you in improving your life.*" Don't worry if you're skeptical right now. I'd be as well, and take no offense with anyone who may be. In fact, two questions probably came to mind: "*Who is this guy?*" and "*Why should I pay attention to him?*"

Both these questions are valid, and my answer to the first question will be displayed throughout this book. I'm an *extremely* calculated thinker. There is always a method to my madness. I'm simplistic in my thought process, logical and methodical in my approach to resolving issues. In my mind, there is no value in unnecessarily complicating things.

However, my answer to the second question may shock

some people: “*You don’t!*” There’s no law that says you have to listen to a word I say. You have the freedom to choose who you pay attention to and who you ignore, but I believe you should consider what I’ve written for a few reasons.

I’ll begin by asking a rhetorical, yet thought-provoking question: If you’re not satisfied with your life, and someone told you they might be able to help you turn it 180 degrees from where it currently is, wouldn’t you owe it to yourself to at least listen to what they have to say? If you’d listen, you’re on the right track. If you listen, but ultimately didn’t follow their suggestions, the only thing you’ve lost (albeit valuable) is time. What if the information they provided made things start making sense for you? Would you still consider the time lost? Of course not, and that’s my point! You have everything to gain if the information helps you.

Conversely, if you’re not satisfied with your life, and you say you *wouldn’t* listen, then *why not?*? What’s the alternative? Stay where you’re *not* satisfied? Here’s some tough truth and good luck trying to choke this down: “*Your plan thus far hasn’t worked!*” Any alternative to *your* plan should at least be entertained. Decide later if the alternative was stupid. “*When the possible ain’t working, you must take a shot at the impossible!*” Only then, can you say you’ve tried everything!

A basic fundamental in communicating effectively is relatability. A communicator must be able to reach people with language they’re familiar with. I believe I can relate to most people, thanks to being awarded the privileges of growing up in the so-called “hood” in Oakland, and serving

over 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. These experiences have allowed me to interact with people from all walks of life, ethnicities, orientations, and economic and social statuses.

I've learned if you carry yourself with confidence and act like you have some sense, your appearance, education, or economic status isn't much of a factor; your communication skills will make the difference. I have no problem conversing with *anybody*, about any *subject*, at any time. I'm as comfortable talking with a homeless person as I am with a company CEO, and have successfully done both. Maybe *these* reasons are good enough for you to consider paying attention to me.

Before we get too far along, I want to ensure a few things are clear. This way you have a good understanding of what to expect, and can't say you weren't warned. You're about to embark on a journey unlike any you've ever been on. I'm taking you inside of my head (Lord help you!), and exposing you to my thoughts and opinions on a series of topics I believe contribute most to the chaos in our lives. Some of them may sound strange if you've never experienced them, but each has been included with the intent of depicting fairly common situations from a very *uncommon* perspective.

If you opened this book with the expectation of it being the stereotypical self-development book, filled with a bunch of terminology that belongs in an Ivy League lecture hall, I have bad news for you: "*This ain't that book!*" You won't find any \$500 words in here and that is by design. My feeling is even the best information is useless if the person on the receiving end doesn't understand it. I did my best to make

sure the majority of this information is easily understandable.

Whether you *agree* with the information is a different matter. I'm intelligent enough to realize every reader isn't going to agree with everything in this book. Then again, getting every reader to agree with everything was not my intent when I began writing it. I had a more reasonable goal in mind: get each reader to agree with at least *one* thing in the book. An old adage says, "*Rome wasn't built in a day.*"

You should prepare yourself, because some of the book's sections and descriptions are quite lengthy. I sincerely hope you weren't expecting a book of CliffsNotes®. I promise I'm not trying to lull you to sleep with long sections and descriptions. I simply *despise* being misinterpreted. Having to go back and clarify something I felt was initially clear has taught me how profound effective communication really is.

I won't be doing you any favors if you're an impatient reader, either! Many of life's lessons cannot be summed up with one-liners, *despite* society's inherent desire for instant gratification, or to "*get to the point.*" Speed doesn't always translate to effectiveness. If I can provide facts, logic, reason, and rationale, I'll accomplish a couple of things. I'll minimize misinterpretations, regardless of the length of the explanation, which maximizes its effectiveness. Second, you won't be able to argue with it for long, because my parents taught me, "*It's impossible to argue with facts without looking stupid!*"

You may have already noticed, but many words, phrases, and ideas will be emphasized through the use of exclamation, italics, underlining, and repeating. This is also by

design. I may not be physically reading the book, where you can hear the voice inflections. Therefore, I must rely on other methods of getting the messages across effectively.

At first glance, the repeated things will look like a mistake, but it was *intentional*. I wholeheartedly believe in the law of repetition. The more you see or hear something, there's a greater chance you'll remember it. The more you practice something, the better you should become at it. That's how our brains work. At least, that's how mine works.

This book isn't a one size fits all. I'm not crazy enough to believe every topic will apply to every reader. At times, you may feel the information in a chapter doesn't apply. You're free to skip it, but I recommend reading each chapter entirely. What you *need* may be in the segment you decide to skip.

A word of caution: *Buckle your seat belt, because you're in for a wild ride!* I'm about to challenge your thinking on a variety of topics, with some very *unconventional* methods! If you have what's considered "thin skin," it may be a good idea to keep a helmet and some armor nearby. Your world is about to be upended and your emotions put through the wringer! I know, because my emotions went through the wringer while writing it. Humor, sadness, anger, and surprise; it's all in here.

A lot of this content is example-based, so it may be tempting to wonder, "*Is he talking about me?*" I'll put your mind at ease, right away – I'm *not!* What you'll be reading is a fusion of many lives (including mine), but none... I repeat *none* of it is intended as a personal attack. I don't operate that way, so you can *relax*. Besides... that question would only be

asked if you have an idea that you may *do* what's being described!

*“Nothing is offensive until it bits a nerve.”* Words and gestures are harmless until a conscience assigns *meaning* to them. The last thing I want to be is offensive, but there's a lot of content crammed into this book, and “*it ain't all nice!*” There may be times when the content punches you in the mouth, real hard! Sadly, getting punched in the mouth real hard is the only way some people will pay attention.

Some nerves are going to be hit – I guarantee it! However, one thing you won't say when you're finished with this book is, “*He's lying!*” I'm confident in saying this because you know, or have seen someone who fits every description included. If you can't find anyone who fits a description... it's probably because *you* fit it! I was taught to never apologize for telling the truth and I'm not about to *start*.

My challenge to you: if you come across something that gets you riled up, keep reading! I'm hoping my explanation quells any initial anger, but in case it doesn't, remember the intent is to get your mind working, not ruffle your feathers.

The idea of improvement can be frightening to many people, due to what may prompt the improvement need. A person may uncover things they were unaware of. Or they may be forced to acknowledge things about themselves they'd been ignoring, with the latter being the worst of the two.

People can become uneasy and possibly overwhelmed when they discover what may be required of them to correct

a deficiency. One of the lowest feelings I've experienced was listening to someone tell me about myself, then, having to look in the mirror and begrudgingly *admit* they were spot-on!

Being forced to eat a big ol' slice of humble pie did wonders for me, so a person getting angry may not be a bad thing. An angry person takes action, which is essential to success. You'll never reach a goal by standing in one spot, talking about how good things would be "*if only...*" It takes action. You can't begin the improvement process if you're unable, or remain *unwilling* to admit a problem exists.

*"Improvement always starts with an idea, but is advanced or defeated by an attitude."* This book will provide plenty of ideas. You will provide the decisions to whether you want to use any of them to create and execute a plan to adjust anything in your life (the attitude).

Some extremely ugly truths need to be, and *will be* exposed. Many may be tough to read, especially if you unexpectedly discover you're the culprit of one of them! I feel they need to be uncovered, no matter how ugly they are, because denial has never made an issue disappear... *ever!* The issue only festers, and with continued *ignoring* can boil over. Then, you're trying to resolve it with extreme action fueled by panic, which isn't, nor has ever *been* an effective combination.

There are a handful of colorful words sprinkled throughout the book. I'm mentioning this now, so you aren't shocked when you come across them. I've limited them as much as possible, because I believe excessive use would undermine the messages, but they *are* there. I decided to

include them because for some people, the colorful word may be what makes the message stick. Call me crazy, but I believe the message is more important than the method of delivery.

I want another thought firmly planted in your head: nothing in this book should be viewed as a substitute for professional medical assistance. This isn't a medical journal, and isn't *intended* to be. If something isn't right, and you can't fix it yourself, find a licensed medical professional... period!

By the same token, I don't believe you should go running to a medical professional every time you feel you can't handle a situation. That's taking nothing away from professional medical assistance, because quite frankly, some people need it. In my opinion, many issues can be resolved, and dare I say prevented, if you first looked within yourself. You'd save yourself time and likely, some embarrassment. It certainly beats paying someone *your* money to lie on their couch and have them listen to you talk about your feelings.

If you're satisfied with your life, reading beyond this chapter will be of little benefit. You can, however pay it forward by giving the book to someone you believe *would* benefit from it, and encourage them to read it. I'd prefer it if *you* read it before giving it away.

On the other hand, if you feel like I felt at my lowest, that your life is an endless cycle of disappointments, you have the right book in your hands. I do suggest approaching these topics with an open mind. You must also be willing to adjust your thinking if you discover it's flawed, because what you find blocking the path to success *may shock the hell out of you!*

As stated earlier, improvement can be painful due to what you uncover is necessary to achieve it. What may be necessary is taking action you don't necessarily *like*, or even *want* to do, but unless you *do* it, your situation won't change!

Should you pay attention to me? I sincerely hope you do. I've provided reasons why I think you should, but it's a decision you'll have to make. If the information helps you, then it's a win-win. However, remember: if you decide to take the ride, you might want to strap in because it's going to get bumpy! You may discover you're not the person you *thought* you were.

You'll need to get comfortable with the possibility of being made *uncomfortable*, because what you read in this book may make you feel that way at times. However, that *isn't* necessarily a bad thing because from discomfort, growth emerges! This book may lead you to places you weren't intending to go. There's also a possibility that my suggestions may sound unfamiliar to you, or conflict with your sense of normalcy. The anticipation of that can be unnerving to some people. For them, the risk seems high, but the reward on the *flip side* of that risk is an improved life!

So, if the possibility of the reward is intriguing to you, put on some thick skin, pull up your big boy or big girl pants, and try to hang on! I wonder if that was enough to convince you to keep reading?!