

Roll Up Your Sleeves and Get to Work:
The *Bald Truth* About Making Things Happen

by Rick Kolster, CBC

What People Are Saying About

Roll Up Your Sleeves and Get to Work!

“ With *Roll Up Your Sleeves . . .* Coach Rick Kolster unites both business and life coaching in a totally practical, imaginative, and useful way. I found myself thinking in new ways about common obstacles we too often ignore and feeling inspired to overcome them! This book is a great tool for young and old, in business or in personal life, and especially for those who aspire to lead others. ”

—Major General Bill Essex, USAF, Ret.

“ Coach Rick writes *Roll Up Your Sleeves and Get to Work* just like he speaks—straightforward and to the point. His “listen, learn, and live” approach puts real change into three simple steps. A must-read that leaves the audience focused and inspired. ”

—Judy Gaman, author and co-host of *The Staying Young Show*

“ If life were easy and without serious challenges, there wouldn’t be a need for Coach Rick Kolster. But life isn’t that way, of course. I’ve known Coach Rick for a decade, and it’s wonderful to see him finally sum up his life’s work to help others in this wonderful book. ”

—Dave Lieber, Watchdog columnist, *The Dallas Morning News*

“ Is it time to make your life your own? In *Roll Up Your Sleeves . . .* Coach Rick asks you powerful questions and gives you practical exercises to get on point, on purpose and achieving your success in every aspect of your life now. ”

—Holly Duckworth, CAE, CMP, Chief Connections Officer

Dedication

To Mom and Dad: I love and miss you.

To all those who have helped and shared their inspiration with me and shaped me into the man I am today.

To my two beautiful daughters, Megan and Lauren: I am blessed and humbled to have two of the greatest kids ever. I'm proud of the wonderful, God-fearing and loving young women you have become.

Finally, to all the coaches I have had the privilege to be mentored by and learn from. You are doing great work. Keep it up . . . and, as I was told early on, "Do good things. Don't be the one to screw it up for the rest of us!"

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Foreword

When I was 16, I watched my father work so hard he couldn't enjoy life. A couple of years later, he passed away at age 50. I'll spare you the long version but I set a goal back then...to retire by age 50. As a teenager, I didn't know much about setting goals but that one goal was clear... retire at 50. Fast forward some 30 years later, I started working with Coach Rick Kolster. We spoke about that goal and others, about growth in general, life balance and so much more. Moving forward just a couple of years after working with Rick, I built multiple companies and lead one of those companies to a multi-billion dollar market value. I was able to announce my retirement...at age 50. Goal accomplished!

To tell you the truth, I wasn't very good at retirement. I was bored after a few short months. I'm working again but on very different terms. I'm applying the science of goal setting and achievement, I am balancing my personal life and my career, I set clear intentions for the ambitions that I have laid out before me, and I continue to grow. I am grateful for the principles that Coach Rick led me to employ and embody more of in my life. I won't say that it is always easy, but it is always worth it!

Author, speaker and coach, John C. Maxwell states in his book, *The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth*, "In order to reach your potential, you must grow and in order to grow, you must be intentional about it." What is your potential? What are your goals? How will you achieve them?

Most people "go with the flow" and move through their days, going where life takes them. They dream about what they want. They dream about who they want to be. They hope something miraculous will happen that will allow them to break out of the status quo but, they don't put the pedal to the metal to make it happen. When you consider that there are 7 billion people on this planet, there is a small amount of people that don't just sit around and hope for things to happen; they make it happen. They take full responsibility for themselves, for their situation and for their growth. They hold themselves accountable for their own success.

At its core, this book is about accountability. Yes, this book is filled with far more than just the concepts of accountability... like significant questions and powerful exercises to solidly get you on track. Like, Rick's "listen, learn and live" concepts that if applied will absolutely give you positive life changes. Rick is a tell-it-like-it-is kind of man and this book is no different. His straight forward, no-nonsense, let's get to work approach is how this book is written. Rick is NOT about fluff – He is action-oriented. This book is intended to get you thinking, to challenge (in a good way), your beliefs and habits that may be limiting your life and how to switch those beliefs and habits to ones that serve you.

This is a coaching book and Rick's goal is to inspire you to go deeper, take action and manifest what it is you truly want to accomplish in life. Reading this book is like having Rick as your personal coach and if you follow the guidelines and principles in this book you will be able to make your life work on all levels at a much higher caliber.

Whether or not this book makes a difference in your life has little to do with the book. It depends on you and whether or not you are willing to work hard...on you and your life. If you are not willing to commit to your personal and professional growth, then stop reading right now and gift or re-gift this book. If you are willing to roll up your sleeves and get to work... then read on...

Pat Cline, Chairman & CEO LightBeam

Prologue: Living with Rich and Sally

I was the first-born son of a working-class family in the late fifties. My dad, Rich, dug the holes for telephone poles and my mom, Sally, was a part-time seamstress and full-time mother. While I was number one, it didn't last for long. Soon two sisters came along and then eight years after I was born, my brother showed up to even the score.

Raising four kids in the sixties was tough, just as it was for a hundred years before and will be for a hundred years after. Ward and June Cleaver did *not* live at our house. Mom and Dad were good parents, but trying to deal with four kids eight years apart in age was a challenge. I found that as the oldest, I had to learn to fend for myself. I led the way, but the two girls following in my footsteps got a lot more attention from our parents. Dad was a working guy, blue collar all the way. If it had to be done, Dad just did it. He could fix anything around the house. The car's oil needed changing or the brakes needed replacing? No need to send it out to the shop or call in a repair guy. We did it ourselves. This is where I learned the value of hard work—from my parents.

Mom was the stable one in the family, the one who stayed home with the kids, worked from home when needed, and ran the house. Breakfast was ready at 7:00 AM, every day. Dinner was ready at 6:00 every night without fail. She made our lunches and sewed the clothes we wore. Mom was a seamstress by trade, so all our clothes were homemade. We really hated wearing this stuff—we weren't exactly taking the fashion world by storm. Looking back, I now know those shirts and dresses were made with real love. Ultimately once we kids were old enough to be left alone, she began a second career as a banker. I can see now how hard my parents worked to keep up with us kids.

Robert Fulghum made big bucks on a book called *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Well, all I ever needed to know I learned from my parents. My dad would give you the shirt off his back, make you laugh with his humor (off color as it was at times), and help out in any way if you needed it. Mom was cut from the same cloth. They understood what it took to survive and provide for themselves and their family, and they didn't complain or question or hesitate—they just got on with it.

They themselves came from working families, too. "If it is to be it is up to me" could be the family motto. Dad taught me to fix cars, run electrical wires, plumbing, yard work, splitting firewood, and so many other practical skills. He also taught me to love reading.

At first glance you wouldn't take Dad for a big reader, but every payday, he would bring home paperbacks that he would read and then hand to me. They were mostly action series and military fiction, with muscle-bound, testosterone-laced heroes who could take me into another world. To this day, I love to escape into a good action or

military book. Now I love to read all kinds of other stuff too, and I credit my dad for that as well. Reading is a great way to learn, and learning is such a huge part of success that there's a whole section in this book devoted to it.

The most important thing I learned from Dad was that if you tried, learned what you needed to, and took action on it, you could do anything. He worked his tail off. He had a full-time job with the telephone company, a part-time job at a gas/service station, and a third helping his friend as a laborer setting tile. When he wasn't working at a job, he was working around the house.

He wasn't a touchy-feely guy, but I loved hanging out with him and watching him work, and I knew he loved me.

Here are some of the life lessons I learned from the two best parents a kid could have.

How to Use this Book

This book is about taking action. If you want your life to be different, you have to *make* it different. That means rolling up your sleeves and taking action.



In each section of the book, there's a part called "**ROLL 'EM!**" marked with the graphic you see here. These are exercises meant to help you take action on the lessons of the book. Most of these exercises involve writing things down. Successful people know you can't hold all the important stuff in your head, and sometimes you have to take things out and look at them in a very concrete way in order to learn.

So I suggest that you get a journal, if you don't already have one, and keep it close to this book. You could use your smart phone or tablet or computer for this too; just make sure that whatever you use is easy for you to write in. Your tiny little phone keyboard is probably not going to cut it for writing a couple of paragraphs or a page, but hey—they're your thumbs. Do whatever works for you.

The main thing about this book is that it's not going to help you at all if you don't do anything with it. Books are great as far as they go, but let's face it—nobody ever learned how to swim from reading a book. If you want to learn to swim, you have to get into the water. If you want to change your life, you have to take real action in the real world, not just read about it or think about it or write about it (although those steps are important too).

Taking action is how you are going to build the life you want. **So let's roll up our sleeves and get to work!**

Part 1: Listen

Listen

I had three goals in writing this book: to *inform*, to *inspire*, and to *incite* you, the reader. In turn, I hope you'll hold up your end of the bargain by listening, learning, and living—the three “Ls” that lead to personal success. Let's start with listening.

I learned what I learned from my parents by paying attention to what they said and did. Listening is how we get information, and having information is the first step toward achieving the results you want.

Listening isn't just about what you do with your ears, and hearing is not the same thing as listening. You hear all kinds of stuff all the time—good news, bad news, information, entertainment, and plain old noise. You also hear clear messages in what people around you do. You've heard the saying “actions speak louder than words,” and it's true. The things people do tell you loud and clear what kind of people they are. There's plenty to hear all around you. The question is, what are you going to listen to, and what are you going to ignore?

Listening means paying attention. It means soaking up whatever value there is in what you hear, and making sure you remember the important stuff so you can do something with it later. When your best friend or your spouse says something to you, do you just say, “Yeah, sure,” and move on with your life, or do you really listen to what he or she is trying to tell you? Chances are there's something worthwhile there if you choose to listen.

On the other hand, there's a lot of crap, if you'll pardon the expression, coming into your world every day, too. The news is a mess. People say things to you that are not kind or helpful. Heck, you say things to yourself, inside your own head, that no decent person would ever say out loud to another human being. What are you listening to? Do you let the negative stuff get to you? Do you let it affect how you live your life?

Your attitudes and beliefs evolve based on how you listen and what you hear. This starts at the moment you're born and continues all your life. When you decide what matters, you gain purpose and will, and that makes it more clear what's worth listening to and what's not. So in this section we're going to look at attitude, belief, and purpose. I'll do my best to inform, and I hope you'll do your best to listen. From there, it's up to you to decide where the value is.

1.1 Attitude

How do you wake up every morning? What is your attitude when your feet hit the floor? Before I took a good look at the way I was thinking I used to wake up every morning and that don't really start the day with some words belong in a business book. What a way to start the day, right? The first word out of my mouth was one I never want my kids to use.

“Life is 10 percent what happen to you and 90 percent how you deal with it.”—Anonymous

I used to start every day with a negative thought, an attitude of loss, not

gain. This is what held me back for so long. Maybe it's holding you back, too. How many times have you seen something about positive attitude or affirmations or keeping your chin up, and just shook your head and said, “Wow, what a bunch of losers with their nursery school garbage.” Well, if those guys are richer, happier, and more successful than you are, who exactly is the loser here?

Having a positive attitude isn't the same thing as pretending everything is happy and perfect. It's about knowing where you're going, being grateful for what you have, and looking for the upside in everything. We are not destined for mediocrity. We are wonderful creations made to be successful. Embrace this attitude daily and only good can come from it.

Most of the world looks at the things they cannot do rather than the things they can do. We approach life from a scarcity perspective. Scarcity mentality focuses on all the limits and everything that's missing or wrong in the world. If you have scarcity mentality, you're scrambling to get the biggest piece you can of a pie that's not big enough to feed everyone. All you see is what is holding you back and what is not possible. But remember, I said “most of the world” has this perspective. If you see things this way sometimes, or even most of the time, you're pretty typical. But how does that outlook affect your life?

Scarcity mentality is an attitude, and by the time you are an adult, it's ingrained pretty deep—to the point where you don't even realize how it is coloring your view of the world. And what's more, that attitude affects how you see other people, and can be taught to the people in your life who look up to you, such as your kids, for example.

I am positive that our parents and their parents and their parents didn't wake up in the early morning hours thinking “How can I hold my children back from greatness?” Of course not! They went about trying to raise us as best they could. And if you're a parent, you're doing the same thing. But kids don't come with an instruction manual, and having

a kid doesn't magically turn your entire way of seeing the world 180 degrees. Parenting is trial-and-error, and you do the best you can with what you have. If what you have is a scarcity mentality, you could be holding your kids back without even realizing it.

Case in point: For the longest time I was told that I should be a mechanic. My dad said I was good with my hands and that I was big and strong and that was his picture of a mechanic. I even started to believe it at some point.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking mechanics. I've seen the same thing happen to kids who got pushed and pushed to go to college and be a lawyer or a doctor when what they wanted most in this world was to be a mechanic. The point is that my dad's belief about what I could and should do with my life was driven by his assumptions, and after awhile, I just accepted his belief. He's my dad—he must be right! But he wasn't thinking about what I might want to do, or what I might be capable of or interested in doing. He was just looking at what was in front of him and filtering it through his assumptions.

I had to realize what was going on there before I could make the changes necessary to take the next step in my success journey. I had to decide what I wanted, take charge of my life, and see how my own attitude was going to make or break me. Until you take a hard look at your attitude, you will be stuck where you are.

A positive attitude lets you overcome all the challenges of day-to-day life. Every day we deal with rude people, uncooperative clients, unsafe drivers on the road—a million things eat away at our patience and our moods. Yet all these things can be addressed with a positive attitude—an attitude of abundance that says there's plenty for everybody if we choose to see and accept the blessings that are right in front of us.

I believe that we choose our attitude daily. We make a choice in the attitude we will embrace. Is yours a winner or a loser? Does it come with a list of reasons why you're going to fail and everything is going to go wrong, or is it positive and powerful? Henry Ford said, "If you think you can or you think you can't, you are right." What attitude did you bring into today? What attitude will you bring to tomorrow?

A good friend of mine has one of the best attitudes I have ever seen. He has reached heights of success that most of us would never have imagined. He has been on television and in movies, is a sought-after speaker, and has his own infomercial. He wakes up every day like this: He rolls out of bed, claps his hands together, and says out loud, "It's gonna be a *great day!*" WOW—now that is the way to start things off. Tell yourself it is going to be a great day. That sure beats waking up with a cuss word, right?

The Mechanics of Attitude

Remember, in the introduction of this section, I said that one of my goals was to inform. Knowing a little bit about how attitudes work can help you understand where they come from and how you can change them using the same process that created them in the first place.

Attitudes are habits of thought, and most of them emerge very early. Ninety-five percent of all attitudes are developed before the age of five. By the time we reach adulthood, we have held most of our attitudes for so long, we don't even think of them as attitudes or notice how they influence how we see the world. The world just is what it is. It doesn't even occur to us that someone else may see it differently, or that it might *be* different from what we see. We don't see the world as it is. We see it as *we* are.

Most people tend to think more negatively than positively, most of the time, and this feeds and is fed by our life experience. Emphasis on the negative seems to attract us for some crazy reason—we go toward it like moths to a flame. Think of the adage “if it bleeds, it leads.” Television, newspapers, all forms of media really work the negative, especially if it's spectacular, shocking, and bloody. If a movie has a happy ending, people will say it was “not realistic.” The worst part is that all this negative stuff accumulates in our brains as “evidence” that life is hard, that we'll never be good enough, and that divorces and plane crashes are more normal than living a good life and dying of old age. Pretty soon we believe we have “proof” that life sucks, and that makes our attitudes even *more* negative.

But sniper attacks and the latest cause of cancer are *not* normal. They make headlines *because* they are not normal. If we want to have a more positive experience of life, we have to see things differently. Improvement begins with a change in our attitudes. We have to make sure the attitudes that we're carrying with us are actually taking us closer to our goals and objectives and not further away.

Attitude affects results. Once we see things differently, we see different things. When we do things differently, we do different things. Every day, every moment of every day, from the time you get up in the morning until you go to bed at night, attitude affects results.

In fact, attitude affects everything. If you are ever unsatisfied with the results you are getting with a relationship, a challenge, a project, a problem, or even just a conversation, look inside yourself first. How are you showing up to the situation and how is your attitude affecting it? Chances are, a change of your attitude will change your results. Attitude is the great multiplier. To multiply positive results, choose positive attitudes.

I can hear you saying, “But Coach, if most of my attitudes have been with me since I was five years old, what can I do about it?”

And that’s a great question, because it’s not as easy as just deciding you’re going to have completely different attitudes from this moment on. You have a complex neural network in your brain that likes you just the way you are. Just as you have to work hard if you want to change your body, you have to work hard to change your mind.

From the time you were a little kid, you got a lot of messages drilled into you, and one of the very first words you learned was “No!” You learned not to answer the door when your parents weren’t home. You learned that you weren’t allowed to do certain things. You learned never to talk to strangers. The messages mostly came from your parents and were meant to keep you safe. The problem is, you were such a great learner that you really got those messages down cold, and nobody ever mentioned that some of them don’t apply in adulthood. Think about it: how far are you going to get in your professional life if you never talk to a stranger?

Changing your attitude starts with recognizing how the world is different now. Just the same way you’ve adapted away from audio cassette tapes and typewriters to MP3s and a laptop, you need to adapt to a world that is abundant instead of scarce. The world is full of opportunities, not just problems. While other people are fighting over slices of a small pie, you can decide to get out there and make the pie bigger. If you make the conscious decision to see the opportunities and the abundance, you will likely find that stuff was there all along.

It takes work, though. All those negative attitudes got installed by constant repetition. You heard those messages over and over and over again. If you want to get those old messages out of your head and replace them with better ones, you will have to repeat the better messages at least as many times as you heard the old ones. It might take twenty or a hundred or a thousand repetitions of your new belief before it becomes as ingrained as that old stuff. But do you think it might be worth the trouble?



ROLL 'EM!

Attitude Overhaul

Pick one, or at most two, attitudes to replace some old ones that aren’t working for you. Your new attitudes should describe the person you want to become, in a very concrete way. A good attitude statement has three important elements:

It's in the first person. It's about *you*, not about other people, externalities, or anything you don't directly control. Start your statement with "I am—" or "I can—" or "I believe—." This helps make sure you're keeping it personal.

It's in the present tense. It's about *now*, not about the past or some distant future. Notice that it's "I am" and "I can," not "I will" or "I did" or "I wish." You're describing the person you want to be as if you already are that person, and using the attitude statement to make the dream come true.

It's about the best possible reality, not about limitations or fantasies. Describe yourself as you want to be and as you believe you can be. Most people can't be an NFL star quarterback or a fairy princess; but just about anybody can be a strong leader, a loyal friend, a successful businessperson, or a loving parent. What can you be?

Your best results will come if you write your own attitude statements, but here are some examples to get you thinking:

- I can make new friends by talking to strangers.
- I am a trusted friend.
- I believe I can run the Boston Marathon.

Once you have your new attitudes, write them on several sticky notes and put them where you will see them every day—on your steering wheel, your bathroom mirror, the front door, your desk, your computer monitor—wherever they need to be to make sure you start getting that repetition. Every time you see one of your notes, read it out loud (you can do this quietly if you're afraid your co-workers will think you're nuts). Give this about thirty days—that's how long experts say it takes to create a new habit. At the end of thirty days, evaluate. What's different now from the way it was a month ago? Repeat as necessary until you have attitudes that help you rather than get in your way.