

Limitless

BY JIM KWIK

When Aladdin finds the magic lamp with a genie inside, he is offered 3 wishes, for anything in the world. His story is entertaining due to his total mismanagement of this amazing opportunity. But if he had been only given one wish, what should he have asked for? Of course, an unlimited supply of wishes!

In a similar vein, if YOU were offered the chance to learn only one thing which could substantially change your future, what one learning endeavor should you invest your precious/limited time in? How to manage your finances? How to speak Chinese? How to Meditate? While all are excellent choices, the correct answer is to Learn how to LEARN, which surprisingly few of us have actually been taught how to do.

Celebrity Brain Coach Jim Kwik has motivated and educated thousands of people to shed their own learning limitations by showing them the incredible superpowers residing within their own brains. He suffered a significant head injury at a young age; he was told that he had a “broken brain” and would never amount to much. However, through his struggles to learn, he discovered an amazing model for helping anyone to truly become limitless in their ability to learn new things efficiently and with superb retention.

Why are so many of us “limited” in the first place? Kwik describes the 4 D’s which we may have all experienced:

- **Digital Deluge:** we now consume as much data in a single day as an average person in the 1400s would have absorbed in an entire lifetime; but this “data”/information is not knowledge
- **Digital Distraction:** nonstop digital connectedness makes focus nearly impossible
- **Digital Dementia:** Short term memory pathways will start to degenerate if we overuse technology, outsourcing our brain, not treating our brain like the muscle it is
- **Digital Deduction:** the reliance on technology to solve every question confuses people’s perception of their own knowledge and intelligence, leading to overconfidence and poor decision-making

Kwik proposes an engaging model to overcome the 4 D’s and optimize your brain’s capabilities; the elements that you need are:

1. **Mindset:** Do you have a Growth vs. Fixed Mindset? How can you overcome the 7 Lies of Learning?
2. **Motivation:**
 - a. What is your Purpose?
 - b. Techniques to maintain maximal brain energy through the entire day
 - c. Proven techniques to help foster the change we need in our habits
 - d. Guidance on achieving a state of FLOW on a regular basis
3. **Methods:** Specific skills to improve your ability to learn

MINDSET: Carol Dweck’s highly praised book Mindset highlighted the vital difference for an individual’s ability to overcome learning obstacles when they have a Growth versus a Fixed Mindset! The Fixed Mindset leads you to embrace the “7 Lies of Learning”, restricting you from properly using your brain.

	7 Lies of Learning	7 Truths of Learning
1	Intelligence is fixed	Intelligence is fluid
2	We only use 10% of our brains	We can better use the brain
3	Mistakes are failures	Embrace failure and learning
4	Knowledge is power	Knowledge X Action is power
5	Learning new things is difficult	Learning is a process
6	The criticism of other people matters	Be your own hero
7	Genius is born, not made	Genius is created from Deep Work

The Growth Mindset is so crucial to our ability to learn that everyone should know the difference between the Fixed and Growth Mindset, recognizing that we may actually hold a fixed mindset toward certain areas (I can’t draw; I could never learn a language; I suck at Math/Research/etc.).

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
View of Intelligence:	Fixed	Can be Developed
Leads to a desire to:	Look Smart	Learn

These desires cause you to react in markedly different manners:

Challenges	Avoid	Embrace
Obstacles	Get defensive/give up easily	Persist in Face of Setbacks
Effort	See Effort as Fruitless or worse	See Effort as Path to Mastery
Criticism	Ignore Useful Negative Feedback	Learn from Criticism
Success of Others	Feel Threatened	Find Lessons and Inspiration
Result	Achieve Less Than Full Potential	Reach Ever-Higher Levels Achievement

The Growth Mindset allows for an intriguing possibility:
There isn't an ability that we have or don't have, only an ability that we have or haven't CULTIVATED!

MOTIVATION: This section pulls from other authors recent work, to provide the backdrop to improve your learning capability and optimize your brain power

-Purpose: Start with Why (Simon Sinek)

-Manage your **ENERGY**, not your **TIME**: The Power of Full Engagement (Jim Loehr and Tony Swartz) which focuses on how to optimize your brain's function through appropriate Sleep, Activity, Nutrition, Rest/Recovery, which harkens to the Army's Performance Triad

-Even after becoming motivated to make change, changing your habits can still be hard; start with "Small Simple Steps" as described in the following recent books:

Tiny Habits, TJ Fogg

Atomic Habits, James Clear

The Power of Habit, Charles Duhigg

-Motivation comes easily when you can learn how to achieve "Optimal experiences" on a regular basis as described in Flow, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

METHODS: The final section provides easy to use upgraded learning techniques that you will lament about why you didn't know this prior to medical school!

-**Focus:** It is not just a challenge for people with ADHD; we all need to learn how to calm our busy minds, cut out distractions and avoid the tendency to try to multitask



-**Study:** our brains are not wired for long blocks of studying and definitely not for all-nighters.

-**Memory:** Excellent tips on memorizing the key points to a lecture/speech, as well as great tool how to remember names of people you meet in social settings

-**Speed Reading:** This is a skill I have always avoided because I assumed I wouldn't remember anything, but I just didn't know how to do it. Amazingly, my speed improved from 350 to 525 words per minute, with no loss of comprehension; Kwik provides other exercises to increase your effective reading speed even more!

-**Thinking:** Several methods to improve the quality of your thinking process, to include trying on the "6 types of thinking hats"

Jim Kwik's Limitless is the ultimate guide to combining the current science behind brain fitness, learning enhancement and mental acuity, and it can help you to better tap the unused potential in your brain!