

TAKING YOUR LIFE TO THE NEXT LEVEL



By Ken Brown

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MEET KEN BROWN

Entrepreneur, Speaker, Author



Encouraging Others ... Inspiring Dreams ... Instilling Hope

"He's a person that's going to change a whole lot of lives."

Les Brown, motivational speaker and author

Ken Brown is an all-American success story. Though he grew up with insurmountable circumstances and in extreme poverty, he has achieved success becoming one of the youngest African American owner/operators of two McDonald's restaurants, purchased with no capital of his own. A Chicago native, Ken worked his way through college as a busboy and waiter, graduating from Southern Illinois University.

He began his career with ARA Services, a food management company. During his tenure as Assistant Director of Food Service, he developed a passion for leadership and excellence. Ken spent the next 12 years working in many facets of the food service industry including: General Manager for Wendy's, Sales Manager for Kraft Foods, Sales Consultant for the Assmussen Waxler Group, and McDonald's Corporation. Ken's mantra is, "Life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% of how you choose to respond to it." Ken did not inherit his professional status, nor was it an accident. His discipline in using his guiding principles of **Focus, Ownership, Purpose, Passion** and **Attitude** (FOP²A), has steered his success.

In his speaking ministry, Ken travels across the country delivering powerful messages of life improvement cultivating the energy of change. A talented author and speaker, he has an appeal that transcends barriers of age, culture, and occupation. Ken's passion and energy transfer over to his audiences, igniting a fire of hope and encouragement. He speaks regularly to businesses, churches, schools and nonprofit organizations, affecting lives in a profound way.

Ken recently released his first book, **From Welfare to Faring Well**, in which he shares his amazing story, and has appeared in numerous newspaper and magazine articles. Mr. Brown has also appeared on national television and radio programs. Broadcaster Tavis Smiley has featured Ken's story in his best-seller, **Keeping the Faith: Stories of Courage Healing, and Hope for Black America**.

Ken's workshop topics include: "Secrets of a Millionaire Mind," "Super-Size Your Dream," "Bounce Back and Bounce Up," "Fall Forward – You'll Run Faster," "Loving and Living to Serve," "Passion, Purpose and Possibilities," "Joy Is an Inside Job." Ken, his wife and three children are active members in their local church: **"I am a servant leader. My passion is to use my gifts and talents to benefit others."**

INTRODUCTION

“Welfare is a bridge over troubled waters. It is not a lifestyle or way of life.”

Ken Brown's mother made that clear. Yet, Ken's story is about more than getting off welfare. It's a testimony of the power of faith, grace, mercy and obedience to the call God has on your life. It is the story of making opportunities out of obstacles rather than being a victim of circumstance.

As Ken tells his story, he parallels it with the lives and stories of people in the Bible. He demonstrates that the power of God and the Word of God reaches through time and touches the lives of those who will trust Him.

Ken has identified and is living out his passion and purpose, and he has learned how to take his life to the “next level.” It is this legacy he imparts to you, his valued reader.

Welcome and thank you for joining me to share in this discussion of my principles and a philosophy for life that enables you to take your life to the next level. Learn what it means to stretch your mind and your dreams beyond your current situation and what you could possibly imagine when God places vision within your spirit and aligns you with the right people at the right places at precisely the right time. Heed the message of my favorite mantra:

“Life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% of how you choose to respond to it.”

To your happiness and success in life in all that you do,

Sincerely,

Ken

SUCCESS IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

“I believe that life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% of how you choose to respond to it.”

One of life’s realities is that you're going to have obstacles and you're going to have trials, but there are ways to lessen the pain of the journey.

I love quotes. I read 40 books last year, and I believe information costs, but it pays. Benjamin Franklin once said,

“Once a man or a woman empties his purse into his head, no one can take it away.”

Listen to what Colin Powell said about success:

“There’s no secret to success. It’s a result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”

You see, that’s what we have to understand:

Success is when preparation meets opportunity.

And it’s going to be difficult. It’s not going to be easy. Anyone who thinks it’s going to be easy... Well, you can just forget about it. It is not going to be easy, but it’s possible.

Remember, life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you choose to respond to it.

That philosophy also speaks to vision. Your vision is not about the “now.” It reaches beyond our physical realm.

Vision is the art of the invisible.

THE LAW OF ASSOCIATION

“Mentors, Coaches, Accountability Partners”

The Law of Association says, “You become the top five people that you surround yourself with.” Once again, the Law of Association says,

“You become the top five people that you surround yourself with.”

I believe that words are powerful. You see, people do four things in your life. They either add, they multiply, they divide, or they take away.

What you have to do if you want to be successful, if you want to take your life to the next level, is you have to surround yourself and keep with people who are going to add to your dream and your goals, or they're going to multiply them.

Anybody who's not adding or multiplying, they're either dividing or they're taking away, and you can't be associated with them. I think that's so crucial. George Frazier, a great friend of mine, said,

“It takes teamwork to make a dream work.”

If you have a dream, you have to assemble a dream team. You have to surround yourself and associate with people who are going to edify you. If you have a vision and you have a dream, it's yours. It's not your friend's, it's not your mother's, it's not your father's; it was given to you.

There's a term called “player hater,” and I found out that the term has some meaning. Player haters don't hate *you*. They hate what they're *not*.

They look at you and say, “Wait a minute, how can you go

through the situation and you still have hope? How can you come from the same neighborhood and you're on the same block, but where do you get this passion from? Where do you get this big vision from?"

They don't hate you. They hate what they don't have and what they have not become. And when you figure that out, nothing and no one can stop you.

The one thing that my parents gave me was reading. Once again, Benjamin Franklin said, "When a man or a woman empties his purse in his head, no one can take it away."

That speaks to reading, that speaks to educating yourself, and that speaks to empowering yourself.

Success leaves clues, so I would watch successful people. And in order to be successful, you have to do what successful people do.

So, I've always watched and I've always copied. I've always emulated and gravitated and levitated towards people who are successful and I watched what they did. I watched how they spoke.

I think of mentoring or of a coach. Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player that ever graced a court, but Michael Jordan had a coach. His coach could not beat him at basketball, but his coach knew what greatness was. His coach knew what success was and his coach was able to bring it out of him.

We have coaches for everything else, but how many of us have a coach for our life? How many of us have a success coach? There is such a thing called a "success coach."

About six years ago when I first got on my journey and said I was going to the next level, the first thing I did was I hired a coach. I paid this gentleman \$6,000 for eight weeks of

coaching, just looking at me, doing a 360, doing a self-assessment, asking me, "What are your dreams? What are your goals?"

And then we worked it backwards. "Okay, this is how you're going to get there."

It's called your accountability partner. We all have to have accountability partners.

Oftentimes, we go through life and we have what we call friends, and to be totally honest, each one of my friends, well, I don't like them. I cannot stand them.

Why? Because they make me feel uncomfortable.

Why? Because they stretch me; they make me grow.

They are my accountability partners, and that's what a true friend does. They don't sit and talk and laugh and always say, "Yeah, you're doing a great job."

They say, "No, Ken. You're off your square today. What are you doing? You've got to be able to do the extras."

Friends, true accountability partners push you. And oftentimes, we surround ourselves with people who allow us to get comfortable.

The difference in a Bill Gates, a Stephen Pierce, an Oprah Winfrey, a Michael Jordan, or anyone who you think is successful, the difference in them and you is not that they're more educated or they have favor or they're smarter.

Do you want to know what it is?

It's a level playing field. We all have 24 hours in the day, but the thing is how are we spending our time?

It's the 80/20 rule. The 80/20 rule says that 20% of your activity accounts for 80% of your productivity. So, anyone who's not successful, or anyone who has not reached their goals, the first thing you've got to do is look at yourself and look at your time and say, "How am I spending my time?"

The Bible says, "Do not cast your pearls to swine." The first thing you've got to do is cut the television off. Write that down: Cut the television off. We spend too much time watching television.

There are four kinds of people in life: 1) You've got players, 2) you've got spectators, 3) you've got wonderers, and 4) you've got wanderers.

"Players" make it happen. If you're going to be successful, you've got to make it happen. That's the difference in wealthy people and poor people.

Poor people believe that they can play the lotto, or they can go work a job and exchange dollars for hours and people are going to make them rich. It's going to happen. You've got to stumble upon it.

But wealthy people understand that you can't win your way to wealth. You sure can't work your way to wealth. You've got to make it happen. You're the master of your fate. You're the captain of your soul.

Then you've got "spectators." These are the people who sit up and watch players play their game of life or sports or business. They're read the newspaper and say, "Bill Gates, this guy's got all this money." Or they sit there and watch the players play. They spend so much time 'cheering on.' We call them spectators.

Don't speculate, participate. You see...

It's not about us, but it's up to us to make it happen.

Then we've got "wonderers." They're not playing in the game of life. They're not even watching the game of life. They sit back wondering: "What happened to me? What if I were to put forth more effort? What if I would have gone the extra mile?"

They go through life wondering "*what if.*" You don't want to do that. You want to make it happen.

Then the last one is the "wanderers." They're not playing the game of life. They're not watching it. They aren't even wondering. What are they doing?

They're aimlessly wandering through life clueless, with no goals, no dreams, just waking up every day. They aren't living life. Life is living them.

Life is living them, because they have no goal, they have no direction. That is the most fundamental thing.

Leonardo da Vinci said,

"The problem with most people is not that we aim too high and we miss. The problem is we aim too low and we hit it."

That's profound. He was saying that people don't plan to fail. We fail to plan. That's not just a quote, that's real.

I believe that we were all born and destined for greatness. You see, you have everything you need to be successful. You came equipped to do what you were born to do. But your job and your journey is to figure out that thing and just do it. You're not getting anything else. You have everything you need to be successful, everything.

Remember what Colin Powell said:

"There are no secrets to success. It's the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failures."

The only place that success comes before work is in the dictionary, and it's going to be hard. But if it was easy, then everyone would be successful.

THERE'S MAGIC IN THE JOURNEY

I've studied success for the last 27 years of my life. I have gone around the country and studied success and I've studied successful people. I read 40 books last year. I don't read the newspaper and I don't play games.

I believe that everything I need is in the book, especially in the Bible. I start with the Bible and then read so many other countless books. But the one thing that it's all about is success is a journey and not a destination.

Most people get destination disease. They figure, "Well, I've made it, I've reached it."

No, it's about a journey. It's about being prepared. That's what success is. It's when preparation meets opportunity.

There's a book called **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** by Stephen Covey. It studied successful people and it talks about the seven habits. One of the habits was, "Begin with the end in mind." That talks to preparation. What you have to do is you start from the end, with the end in mind.

I wanted to be a restaurant entrepreneur and own a restaurant, so the first thing I had to do is I had to start with that in mind. Then, I worked it backwards. Then, I had to prepare myself for that opportunity.

Six years ago, I was in Chicago, not working a job, but I was working on my dream. I was working in a restaurant. I already had a great job. I was an executive for one of the largest food brokers in the country, but I had never worked in a white

tablecloth restaurant before, never in my life, and my goal was to become a restaurant entrepreneur.

“Now, how can I become an entrepreneur when I haven’t ever done that before?”

I took a part-time job. I would get off my 9 to 5 and I took a part-time job serving tables at a restaurant. I wasn’t working a job. I wasn’t there for money. I was there working on my dream. I was there learning.

See, it wasn’t a job. It was a paid internship. At a job you work 40 hours, 40 years, and wait to “take my 401K.” That’s the problem with most people. You’ve got to quit working jobs. You’ve got to work on your dream. I never worked a job.

I had to make the job work for me, so I took the paid internship. With paid internship you learn, you earn, and you move on. You don’t fall in love with it, you move on. It had to comply with my purpose.

See, it all starts with the mindset. With a job, you go to it with the thought that, “Well, I’ve got to be able to pay the bills. I don’t really want to be here.”

With that kind of mindset, how can you reach your potential? How can you maximize that moment? You can’t because you’re there for money. You’re not there for a real purpose.

I was excellent at serving tables because I wasn’t there for the money. I was there to learn, to earn, and move on. Doing my work there, not my job, I was serving a Vice-President of McDonald’s and didn’t even know it. I was serving her and her husband, not on one occasion, but on several occasions.

Because of the level of service, the commitment that I had to excellence and to service, they said they had never experienced it before, so they would always come back and request me.

In talking to me, they found out my vision and my goal was to own my own restaurant, and so, every time they came in, they were following up with me.

Again, the lady was the Vice-President of McDonald's and she offered me an opportunity. She walked me to a bank and got me \$3 million to purchase my own McDonald's restaurant because of my commitment.

See, commitment is a line that we draw between wishing and doing. That is a good nugget:

Commitment is the line that you draw between wishing and doing.

The average person says they want to be successful, but what shows up in their conversation is, "I want to be... I'm going to be..." That is expectation. You expect to be successful. That shows up in your actions. It's what you do, actions that speak so loud that people can't hear what you say.

But don't *talk* about it. *Be* about it.

Some people might think that working in a restaurant to learn my trade was somehow less respectable, less honorable, that I might have found a better way to learn.

That was the most honorable thing that I've ever done in my life, because I believe that in order for your dream to come true, you have to help someone else's dream come true.

Shirley Chisholm said this:

"Service is the debt we pay for the space we occupy on the planet."

There is a biblical principle saying that there is a time to seed and a time to harvest. I was sowing a seed in my boss's

business, and to me it was brilliant. Why? Because I wanted to own the restaurant.

Why would I go out and spend my own money on a brick and mortar business trying to recreate the wheel? Why not go and assist someone else and be of service to someone else? The Bible says,

“Give and it shall be given to you.”

I was giving of myself, and at the same time it was a win/win situation. That’s another principle in the book, is win/win. Seek the win/win.

This gentleman was already a successful food service entrepreneur, and I wanted to be one. But you see, that was not his business. That was my business. He was only paying the bills for me, but he didn’t know it; if people could just figure that out.

We spend so much time going to seminars and trying to work on business plans. Go out and “mine” your own business. We try to go out and open up our own hotdog stand. Go work with somebody first.

You’ve probably heard of P. Diddy, Sean ‘Puffy’ Combs. Do you know how he got started? He was working with a record producer and wanted to have his own record label. He didn’t go out and try to do his own label at first. He went to the producer, and do you know what he did?

He went there not saying, “I want to be a record executive.” He said, “Can I be a gofer? Can I simply go get Starbucks Coffee for everyone?”

And the producer said, “Sure.”

People love people who serve them, but you’ve also got to have a vision. It’s a win/win.

And guess what? He was in. He had access.

Remember, you can't be what you can't see. Success leaves clues. In order to pick up the clues, you've got to be in the game.

Puffy was in the game. He had access. He had a little key card. He could go anywhere else.

So, he was going in the booth when they were in there producing. He would say, "Hey, can I get you a Starbucks latte?" But he was watching them and 'knowing' them. He could get into any suite in that building. He had total access.

He did such a great job at it that his boss said, "You know what, Puffy? Why don't you go pick up this record exec? Take the keys to our car and go pick up the record exec from the airport." So then, he had the record exec in his car. He could tell his dream and his vision to him.

Once he did that, his boss noticed that people started loving on Puffy too much, because he was a born leader. He was magnetic. He had a great personality.

One day, his boss called him in the office and said, "Sean, I'm the boss here. We can't have two bosses. You know what? You can't come here anymore."

Guess what? Puffy didn't stop. He had business cards because, remember, he had access.

He started calling some of the execs that he had met in his boss's business. One of them happened to say, "You know what, Sean? We're starting a new label and we're looking for someone to start it, and I think you're the man."

You see, he had to serve first. He didn't go in wanting to become the owner first. He went in and served, picked up the

clues, and the rest is history.

So, I allowed my boss to pay my bills for me, and when a customer came to that table, I would market this man's business.

"Hey, how are you doing? How is the Mrs. doing? Have you ever tried the spumoni before?"

They would say, "No, Mr. Brown, this is our first time here."

And I'd reply, "Oh, first time here?"

I would go to the computer and I would ring up a spumoni ice cream. I would go into my pocket and I would pay for it. I would take it back to their table and I would give them two spoons.

That was *my* business. That wasn't his business.

And this is the level of commitment I had. This is the level of service that I had. And when the Vice-President of McDonald's saw this, she was like, "I've got to have him on my team."

She told me that, "The level of service that you deliver to me and my husband every time, your vision, your passion, we've never seen before."

Remember, vision is the art of seeing the invisible. When you have a purpose and you're passionate and you've got a vision, life will give you a blank paycheck. She gave me a blank check, \$3 million. All I had to do was sign my name.

You see, customer service was my currency. People forget about service. They forget about giving. It says, "Give and it shall be given to you."

I listened to an audio tape recently, not one of my own, and

the gentleman was saying that one of his principles is, "Walk behind a tiger."

The tiger is the greatest beast in the jungle, and when the monkey wants to be protected, it will walk behind a giant. It'll walk behind the lion.

And that's what we have to do.

You have to find who the lion is in your industry. If you're in marketing, if you're in food service, who is the leader? Follow the leader. Walk behind the leader. You've got to humble yourself.

It's not about you, but it's up to you. It wasn't about me, but it was up to me to make my dream come true. Bah-dah, bah-bah-bah, I'm lovin' it. And you can too.

5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO SUCCESS

Now I want to talk to you about the five guiding principles that have steered my success: **FOP²A**. The first thing is **Focus**. The next is **Ownership**. The next one is **Purpose**. The next one is **Passion**, which I am just mad about passion. And then last, it's **Attitude**.

I guarantee you that if you work with and study these five principles, that they will work when you work them. Faith works when you work it. Success works when you work it. These principles that I have studied, read about, talked to, and lived myself work. They are practical, they're timely, and most importantly, they work. But it's up to you to work them.

The first thing you have to do is you have to have **Focus**. Focus, that is so crucial. For most people, it's not the fact that they can't have what they want; they don't know what they want.

I'm going to say that again. The problem for most of us is not that we can't have what we want. We don't know what we want.

If you want to be a jack of all trades and master of none, what are you mastering in? What are you focusing on?

Remember, what you focus on the longest will become your strongest.

Your attention must only be focused on your goals, your vision, your purpose and your thoughts, your emotions. And your actions must always be under control.

To be focused means to exert such self-control, that no one and nothing can deter or distract you from your goal and your vision. Again, what you focus on the longest becomes your strongest.

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

You see, we've been hoodwinked and bamboozled. We've been told to concentrate on "multi-tasking." I hate that word. "Multi-tasking," what is that about?

No. Focus. What you focus on the longest will become your strongest.

In the Bible in Genesis 1:26, it says,

"You are masters, go out and dominate."

What does that mean, "master"? You should ask yourself, "What are you mastering? What are you putting all of your energy in?" I appeal to you.

This also speaks to writing goals. The average person doesn't have goals. They wake up every day and they're just wandering through life. They don't have any targets.

Focus is a target. "What are you spending most of your time on?" Whatever you put your focus on, your thoughts, your emotions, the events and activities will follow.

For example, if you focus on a problem rather than the solution to the problem, you'll never solve or overcome the problem. However, if you focus on solving the problem, the solution will appear.

What you recognize, that's focus on, you energize. And what you energize, you realize.

I've got to say that again for you.

What you recognize, you energize. And what you energize, you realize. This is not hocus-pocus. It is absolutely real.

Your goals, your dreams and your destiny are all right in front of you. There are only two things between you and your goals and your dreams and your future, and those two things are air and opportunity.

Air and opportunity, that's it. They are the only two things. The rest is up to you. What are you focusing on? Remember, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

When I'm talking about focus, I'm not talking about with your eyesight. I hope that's clear. I'm talking about having a vision, having goals. You see, vision is the art of seeing the invisible. When you can see the invisible, then you can begin to do the impossible.

Your vision has to be bigger than your circumstance. Your vision has to be bigger than your bank account. Your vision has to be bigger than your current job.

You can't do what you can't see. That's the problem. How can you be successful when you can't see it in your own eyesight?

This is so crucial. Most people are scared of success because they're afraid that it's going to take work and it's going to be difficult.

Don't focus on what you're going through. Focus on where you're going *to*. Have a vision. That's the first principle.

So remember: Focus. Don't focus on what you're going through. Focus on where you're going *to*.

Vision is the art of seeing the invisible.

The next principle is **Ownership**. Now you come to me and say, "Okay, Ken, once I've got the vision thing down, I'm focused. I understand this is the first step. What now?"

Let me explain it using my example. I wanted to become a restaurant entrepreneur. I went to college. I majored in food and nutrition with specialization in hotel and lodging services. Every other paid internship I took in my life was either in working in hotels, working hotdog stands, working in restaurants, cleaning washrooms, washing dishes. I focused.

What you focus on longest becomes your strongest.

The next step is you're going to take Ownership. I took ownership of it. Once you get the vision, you've got to take ownership.

Do you know what ownership is? It's taking 100% responsibility. It's not about money, it's about stewardship.

Ownership is about doing all you can with all you have from the place that you are. It's about taking 100% responsibility of your actions. It's about taking 100% responsibility of your friends, your associations we talked about earlier.

You have to get rid of toxic people. That's the one thing. Once I became pregnant with my vision, there were certain things I just couldn't do.

It's like when my sons were infants and my wife was pregnant, people couldn't smoke around my wife. There were certain things that we wouldn't do.

It's the same thing when you get pregnant with your vision, your dream. You cannot hang around certain people. We have to go back to that because that's a key element. You have to get rid of the toxins in your life.

The first thing you have to do is you have to detoxify your body, your life, because you're going to the next level.

Back in the day before we had jet propulsion, we had hot air balloons, and we still do. Well, how does it lift off the ground?

It has the sandbags around it, doesn't it? You have to drop a sandbag, and as you drop that sandbag, what happens? The balloon starts to elevate.

Well, if you're going to the next level, you've got to drop some bad habits. You have to take ownership. You simply have to.

The first thing I say you need to do is you have to stop watching the news, because if you listen to the news or read the newspaper, guess what?

You can't do anything about it. How can you take ownership of that? If it's in a newspaper or on the news, guess what? It's already happened, it's the past.

You need to focus. How can that help you? How can you benefit from that? You have to detox. You have to quit watching so much television.

Also, you have to take ownership of your friends. Don't major in the minor. Don't spend major time doing minor things. And most importantly, don't spend major time with minor people.

Time is all you have. You've got to take better ownership of your time. You have to watch everything you do, everything you say. It's that crucial.

When you're pregnant, you do different things, and I was so pregnant with this dream. I have friends that used to come to that restaurant where I worked and they would laugh at me and say, "Ken, we're going to the club tonight. Are you going with us? It's Saturday night, why are you working so hard?"

Well, guess what happened to many of them? Those same friends are doing the same job they were doing six years ago. And I love them, but they weren't taking ownership. They took time for granted.

Time is all we have. You've got to take ownership. Most people are lacking ownership in where it is they are. And if you are someplace where you cannot do that because that's not where you want to be, then you need to go someplace else where you can allow yourself to take ownership.

I currently have 127 employees, and I surround myself with other businesses and CEOs. If you're out there and working a job right now, that's the thing you've got to quit doing. You've got to quit working a job. You are there on assignment. It's a paid internship.

As an employer, I can tell you that if you show up and come to work a job, you're a liability. You're doing nothing but taking from the company.

It's about the mindset. I believe that it's easier to beg for forgiveness than to ask for permission. You don't go to the boss or owner saying, "Oh, I want to buy them desert." No, you do it. You do it and you tell people about it later.

An employer wants people to be empowered, but the average person doesn't think in terms of 'empower.' They can have the power, but they don't want to exercise it.

Take your ownership. Ownership is about doing all you can, not "I can," but "*You* can," from doing all you can with all you have from the place that you are.

William Shakespeare said, "To be or not to be, that's the question." Ownership is about being the best "me" I can be.

This principle is real. It's practical. It's not easy, but it's definitely possible. And that's what this message is about. It's about if you have a dream or you have a vision.

I'm here to tell you about my life as an example, that it's possible. And all you really need is a possibility.

Purpose is something that's near and dear to my heart, because purpose is your *why* for living. The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but life without a purpose. It's more tragic to be alive and not to know why than to be dead and not to know why.

Without purpose life has no meaning; in essence, you have no reason. The greatest discovery in life is the discovery of your personal purpose and destiny, and I believe that without purpose your life has no reason.

I believe it was the philosopher Nietzsche who said,

"When you know the *why*, you can endure any *how*."

When you know your *why*, why you get up in the morning, when you go out, you've got some direction. And that's all purpose is. It's the compass in a direction for your life.

Your purpose has to be what you want your life to represent. It generally reveals your long-range goals.

The purpose provides your orientation and your direction for your journey through this thing called life. It's your reason for living. Like a ship's compass, your purpose will guide you when everything else fails you.

The beautiful thing is that no one, not a palm reader, not a genie, not a priest, not a doctor can choose your purpose. You have to choose it. Only you can choose it.

Your purpose identifies with the quality of your life; not the quantity, but the quality. Man was not born to work for a living, but to live his making. And when living is the making, he will make a living.

That speaks to purpose. You see, it's not about money. It's about the *why*. What's the *why* for living? What motivates you?

It all goes back to goals. That's the reason *why*, because you wake up every day and you don't have a purpose or direction, so life becomes difficult, boring, challenging. You have all these obstacles because you have no direction.

Listen to what Zig Ziglar said about purpose:

“Outstanding people have one thing in common: an absolute sense of mission.”

That's all your purpose is, is your mission for living.

At the end of life, you know you are going to die. When you go to a funeral and see where it says, “John Doe, Born 1966, Died 2001,” we tend to focus so much on when he was born and when he died.

Your purpose, however, is that little hyphen in the middle. It's what you did with your life.

Listen to what Benjamin Franklin said:

"The masterpiece of a man is to live to the purpose."

John D. Rockefeller said,

"Singleness of purpose is the one chief essential for success in life, no matter what may be one's aim."

And Napoleon Hill said,

"There's one quality which one must possess to win, and that is definiteness of purpose, the knowledge of what one wants and burning desire to possess it."

That's what it is. It's the *why*.

The average person doesn't know why they get up in the morning. They don't know why they enter into a contract or an agreement with a job or a relationship. They just aimlessly wander through life, and then they say, "I'm not successful."

Purpose is the *why*, because of what's driving you, what's motivating you.

You must be obsessed with your purpose. You've got to eat it, you've got to sleep it, you've got to breathe it, you've got to think about it, and you've got to act on it every moment of every day.

You've got to live your life so that the youth of your life will outlive you.

I'm going to say that again.

Purpose is all about you living your life so that the youth of your life, the purpose of your life, will outlive you. The purpose is your legacy.

Once again, purpose, that's the *why*. Why do you show up?
Why do you do what you do?

Let's recap to this point.

You start with the Focus. What you focus on longest will be your strongest. You get your vision. Then, once you've got your vision, then you take Ownership of it. You take 100% responsibility of what you do. That's what ownership is all about: being able to do what you want to do, when you want to do it, with who you want to do it with. Take ownership for your life.

Then once you do that, everything that you do, every person you surround yourself with, every action, every book you read, what you eat all aligns with your Purpose. That moves you forward. All your energy, everything you do is on purpose.

And when you're on purpose, the people, the places, the things, the resources will naturally gravitate toward you.

And that leads me to **Passion**.

I really believe that if you love what you do that you will never work another day in your life. I don't go to work. I go to life and get paid for it. Tell somebody,

"I go to life and get paid for it."

Passion is when you love doing something so much that you don't have to get paid for it, but you do it so well that people want to pay you.

Remember the restaurant? I didn't go there for money, did I?

I was there working on my dream. I was passionate about it. Remember, passion is when you love doing something so

much that you don't have to get paid for it. I wasn't there for money.

But listen to what the other part says. It says that you do it so well that people want to pay you, and in my case \$3 million. Bah-dah, bah-bah-bah. That's passion.

Only a passionate person would buy a spumoni and put two spoons down there. That's passion. I wasn't there for the money.

Michael Jordan is the epitome of passion. Way back when he left Carolina and went to the NBA, he wasn't making millions and millions of dollars. He came in at about minimum, but he was passionate about the game of basketball.

He went to the Chicago Bulls and he was so passionate. On the news, almost every day, they had videos of Michael Jordan at the YMCA, in the park on the West side of Chicago playing basketball with these kids.

One day, Jerry Reinsdorf, the owner of the Chicago Bulls, pulled him into the office and said, "Michael, what are you doing? You are a precious commodity. You belong to us."

Michael said, "Wait a minute. No, I am passionate about basketball. It's not about money." He made them put a clause in his contract called a 'For the love of the game' clause.

Remember, it's not about money. It's about passion, what drives you. You see, each one of us must have a 'For the love of the game' clause in our life.

"What would you do for free?" That's passion.

Remember, when you love doing something so much, you will do it for free. And when you love what you do, you will never go to work another day in your life.

When you're passionate your work becomes your play. Passion is action. Passion is the seasoned salt of your life. Most people are sour because they're not passionate.

Your passion has to be the field of your dreams. Passion is like your infected enthusiasm.

Most people are not passionate. I read a study a couple of weeks ago that said 87% of people who get up and go to work Monday morning experience a heart attack, a mild heart attack, but a heart attack nonetheless.

Why? Because they are getting ready to go to a job Monday morning that they hate. Again, that's 87% of people are going to a job that they hate.

Recently, a friend called and told me he hated his job so much that he got up Monday morning and drove past his job just to see how it felt. That suggests that most people want to do a drive-by.

My friend hated his job. He just wanted to drive by to see how it felt. I can't imagine that. Can you?

You see, passion asks *why* instead of *how*. Passion has to be your field of dreams. Passion doesn't look for a handout.

Have a passion. Have a vision. Take ownership. Take 100% responsibility. Do all you can with all you have from where you are. Understand your purpose.

It's not philosophical. Purpose is the *why*. Why do you do what you do? What is the goal? What is the end result?

Everything that you do has to align with purpose, then that leads to passion. They're synonymous. Your purpose and your passion are like a set of Siamese twins. They go hand-in-hand.

You're passionate when you're on purpose. Anybody's who's not passionate, I guarantee you they're just kind of walking through. You're not on purpose if you don't have passion.

Finally, it's about **Attitude**. I went to a doctor a couple of weeks ago and he said, "Ken, you have a contagious ailment and I hope everyone within the sound of my voice catches it, because it's contagious. Do you know what it's called? It's called PMA."

No, I didn't say PMS. I said 'PMA.' That's Positive Mental Attitude. Attitude determines your altitude. If you think you're beaten, you are. I think it was Henry Ford who said,

"Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

It's about your attitude. Attitude is an inward feeling expressed by your outward behavior. It's all about your attitude, about your walk. Your attitude is seen by all people without saying a word. Your attitude will always determine your altitude.

I really believe that when you change the way you look at things, the things that you look at will begin to change. Again,

When you change the way you look at things, the things that you look at will begin to change.

Growing up, being born to teenage parents, being evicted ten times, going from welfare to farewell, from food stamps to cash, I had to change the way that I looked at things.

And then, guess what happened? Bah-dah, bah-bah-bah. The things that I looked at began to change. It's possible.

It reminds me of a poem entitled "If" by Rudyard Kipling. The following lines speak to attitude:

**“If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too...”**

That’s about attitude, keeping a good attitude. He’s talking about attitude when he says,

**“If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same...”**

On your success journey you're going to have triumphs and you're going to have disasters. You're going to have tough times. But count it all joy. That’s attitude.

Remember, stumbling blocks are only stepping stones. Obstacles are only doorways to new opportunities.

I love what Robert Schuller said:

“Tough times don’t last. Tough people do.”

If you want to be successful, if you want to go to the next level, it’s going to be difficult. But it is possible.

And I love what Dr. Benjamin Mays said,

“A setback is a setup for comeback.”

Most people want to be successful in their faith, their family, their finances, and they want to take their life to the next level. But life is funny. You don’t get to be whinny. You get no time out.

Every day is a Super Bowl. Every day is a World Series. Every day is the Olympic Games. So, what we have to do is to maximize every moment. How do we do that?

It's possible by staying in **Focus**, by taking **Ownership**, understanding and only doing things that align with your **Purpose**, or on purpose, and then unleash your **Passion**. And through it all have a good **Attitude**.

You're passionate about your life, your goals and your dreams. You don't go to work. You go to life and get paid for it.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

Remember that success leaves clues. I went through my life, and the way that I was able to capture my vision and hold onto my hope was to read books, to read about people who had gotten from where they were to where they wanted to be. I figured that I needed to move forward, and so, I put every journey towards success.

I don't see myself as successful. I believe that when you're successful, you're dead. But I have experienced success in certain areas of my life and I want to be able to show people, to show you, to give you some clues and some fundamental, practical steps of how you, too, can be successful.

My new book, **From Welfare to Faring Well**, will walk you through actual situations. You will see how I was able to take obstacles and turn them into opportunities. And not only that, once you read the book I think you'll be inspired.

But even more so, I offer an 8-week program. I'll take you shoulder-to-shoulder and hand-by-hand and walk you through these fundamental steps in your own life. I'll take you from where you are to where you want to be in 8 weeks.

Remember, information costs but it pays.

I am a life coach and I've found that people need coaching. You can read the book, you can get the clues, but sometimes I

find that people will read the book and they'll say, "Wow, I'm inspired."

But they want you to walk them through their life and show them how to get from where they are to where they want to be. This is where coaching comes in.

I'm also available to go to any corporation and speak to people, to do whatever it takes. I am passionate about achieving success and about people living in freedom every day. That's what life coaching is, and I am a life coach.

I will show you how to live in freedom every day, how to maximize every moment of your life, how to maximize every opportunity.

It's important to take full advantage of every opportunity in life and to maximize every moment on your journey to success.

There is also a CD, because faith comes by hearing and hearing. I read a study that said 85% to 87% of people in America are pretty much functionally illiterate. That's why people don't read, because they can't read. They can't read and comprehend. They might be able to read the words, but they don't understand the meaning of what they read.

Knowing this, I had someone go into a studio and actually read the book on audio. It is a 6-CD set on audio. Sometimes when you're in the car or on vacation, instead of listening to music, it's good to listen to something that puts information into your mind. That's very, very important to being successful.

I have another CD called **"From Modest to Millionaire."** It's about an hour long, and we're talking about these similar principles. So, I have all the information you need.

The bottom line is that it's not about me, but it is up to me. It's the same thing with you, the reader. I can give you all the information in the world, I can coach you, but...

Information only becomes useful when you use it.

I can give you free CDs, I can give you free books, but you've got to use them.

If you're sick and tired of being sick and tired and if you keep doing what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten.

That's ageless, that's timeless. It's about hope. Anybody who wants hope, anybody who wants a better tomorrow should listen to the resources available to you.

I go into schools, I go into businesses, I go into boardrooms, I go into churches, and I teach these principles. The beauty of them is that they're timeless and they're ageless.

We start off by saying it's a law and it's a principle. It works for anyone. That's the beautiful thing about it. It works for the faithful/the faithless, the lawful/the lawless. It doesn't matter. The principles work if people apply them.

I want you to think about your dreams, no matter how big, no matter how small, and I want you to listen to every word that I have said. And remember,

It's not about you, but it's up to you.

Christ died so we can have life, and not only have life, but have it more abundantly. Life means live in freedom every day. It's a choice. It's up to you. So go out and live.

My name is Ken Brown. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you principles that have guided me through what many people would consider a low level of life to the next levels, one step at a time.

Life offers us all many challenges every day and surprisingly also gives us many lessons and opportunities along our path.

We are here to help each other live better lives through our common bonds, by the challenges we overcome, and by the victories we achieve. Success, being measured in many different ways, is ultimately judged by one true standard, and that is within our own heart.

I wish you Godspeed on your journey to success.