

**'An absurdly motivating book'**  
AJ Jacobs, Author of Four New York Times Bestselling Books;  
Editor at Large, Esquire Magazine

# FOCUS

**TWO FREE  
SAMPLE  
CHAPTERS**

**How intelligent people can create  
a powerful purpose for their lives**

**ISAIAH HANKEL PhD**

# ENDORSEMENTS

*“Isaiah Hankel has written an absurdly motivating book. In fact, it’s so motivational, I was constantly tempted to put the book down and start getting things done using Hankel’s strategies. It was put-downable in the best possible way. But I always came back for more of Isaiah Hankel’s wisdom—and the wisdom he distills from Einstein, Ben Franklin and even The Shawshank Redemption.”*

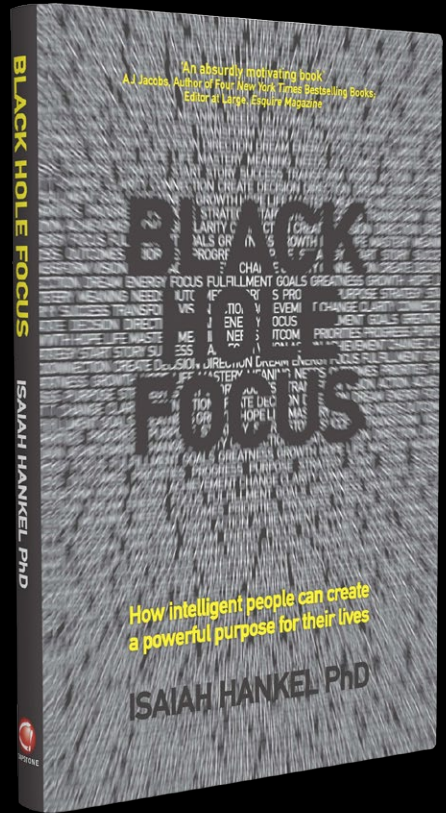
**AJ Jacobs, Author of Four New York Times Bestselling Books; Editor at Large, Esquire Magazine**

*“Black Hole Focus is a wake up call for anyone who feels stuck, distracted, or lost in their own life. Isaiah lays out very actionable steps for taking control of your future and setting yourself up for certain victory. This book will show you how to think like an entrepreneur and develop the mindset necessary for achieving your biggest dreams.”*

**Lewis Howes, Former Professional Football Player and Host of The School of Greatness**

*“Be careful if you read this book. Through interesting stories, compelling case studies and his own inspiring journey, Hankel demolishes your excuses and lays out a plan to identify and fulfill your life’s purpose.”*

**Clay Hebert, Founder of Crowdfunding Hacks and Spindows; The Mastermind Behind Over 35 Successful Kickstarters**



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would enjoy it!**

**Thank you.**

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# Introduction

*"I used to think that information was destroyed in black holes. ... This was my biggest blunder, or at least my biggest blunder in science."*

Stephen Hawking

I've always been fascinated by black holes. The idea of some massive force so intense that absolutely everything is pulled into it is awe-inspiring. Nothing escapes a black hole. In fact, black holes are called "black" exactly because nothing escapes them—not even light. The world's top physicists used to believe that anything that entered a black hole was obliterated. But this is no longer a popular viewpoint. Current research shows that, instead of destroying objects, black holes *transform* them.

Imagine if your purpose in life was as powerful as a black hole. With a force this strong, absolutely everything in your life would be pulled towards it. Nothing would escape. Every thought, every action—your entire identity—would be sucked into it. And, as a result, who you are, what you have, and how you live would be completely transformed.

Determining your ultimate purpose in life is the toughest decision you will ever make, which is why so few people actively decide on one. Instead, most people let life make this critical decision for them. These people fritter their lives away in an endless stream of tiny, meaningless decisions that elicit no great change and leave no real impact. They spend all their time and resources putting out day-today fires and focusing on short-term objectives.

*Black Hole Focus* will show you how to avoid this hollow fate, how to decide your purpose, and how to align your life around your chosen path. It will show you how to determine your current position in life and how to change it. The first section discusses why you need to actively find a purpose for your life. The second section digs into the process of transforming your entire life so that it's completely aligned with your new purpose. The third section reveals how to fulfill your purpose in the face of adversity.

Each chapter is built around cutting-edge science in the fields of psychology, physiology, and motivational theory, as well as my own first-hand experiences and the experiences of other highly successful people. These include medical practitioners, research scientists, lawyers, corporate executives and small business owners. By reading this book, you will gain in-depth knowledge of what you really want in life and how to get it.

I am excited for you!

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5

# Energize Your Dreams

*“Remember, Red, hope is a good thing—maybe the best of things—and no good thing ever dies.”*

Andy Dufresne in *The Shawshank Redemption*

The more you define your purpose, the more energy you'll have to achieve it. In high school, I hated sprints. The worst part of practicing any sport was the inevitable back-and-forth shuttle sprints that my coaches would make me do. Every day for football practice, in full gear, I would have to do 10×100-meter, 8×80-meter, 6×60-meter, and a variable number of 40-meter sprints. During wrestling practices I was forced to do an endless line of shuttle sprints down and back across the wrestling mat, or up and down a stairwell of stadium bleachers. I even had to do shuttle sprints, from base to base, during baseball practice.

Regardless of the sport, my coaches would never tell me how many sprints I had to do. Oh sure, they would tell me the number of sprints I was starting with, but never how many sprints in total. The number ALWAYS grew. "Not fast enough," they would say. "Get back on the line ... Do it again ... And again ... And again." The interesting part was, no matter how many sprints I did, whenever my coaches called out, "Last one, give everything," I was able to run faster.

The hardest part of doing these sprints was not knowing how many I had left. How was I supposed to know how hard to try (or how much to hold back) if I didn't know how many I had to do? But that was the whole point—to learn that no matter how many sprints I just did, I could always do one more. Over time, my coaches trained me to hold back less and less during these sprinting sessions. Still, I was always surprised by how much energy I found in myself whenever they yelled out, "Last one, give everything." I could always run my last sprint much faster than my second-to-last sprint. Why?

**Purpose equals  
hope equals  
energy. Defining  
the path in front  
of you will give  
you the energy  
you need to  
complete it.**



## Purpose provides energy and clarity

In the 1950s, Curt Paul Richter, a Harvard graduate and Johns Hopkins scientist, did a series of experiments that tested how long rats could swim in high-sided buckets of circulating water before drowning. Dr Richter found that, under normal conditions, a rat could swim for an average of 15 minutes before giving up and sinking. However, if he rescued the rats just before drowning, dried them off and let them rest briefly, and then put them back into the same buckets of circulating water, the rats could swim an average of 60 hours. Yes, 60 hours. If a rat was temporarily saved, it would survive 240 times longer than if it was not temporarily saved. This makes no sense. How could these rats swim so much longer during the second session, especially just after swimming as long as possible to stay alive during the first session? Dr Richter concluded that the rats were able to swim longer because they were given hope. A better conclusion is that the rats were able to swim longer because they were given energy through hope. The rats had a clear picture of what being saved looked like, so they kept swimming.

The reason that I (or anyone) will feel a rush of energy close to the finish line of a sprint workout is the same reason rats swim longer after being saved; because the future is defined. Purpose equals hope equals energy. Defining the path in front of you will give you the energy you need to complete it. The key is to positively visualize the end at the beginning. You don't have to actually see the finish line; you just have to envision it. Vision creates hope, or a feeling of expectancy. And hope creates energy.

## 6

# Start at the End

*"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."*

T.S. Eliot

Naming your purpose in life is not an end in itself, but it is the beginning of getting what you want. In his book *Breaking In*, Evan Farmer tells the story of Jim Carrey, the wildly successful comedian and actor. In 1987, Carrey was a struggling 25-year-old comedian, spending most of his time in his car and looking for odd jobs. One night, Carrey drove himself up into the Hollywood Hills and, sitting on Mulholland Drive, overlooking Los Angeles, wrote himself a check for \$10 million. He dated the check for Thanksgiving 1995 and, in the memo, added, "For acting services rendered." Carrey kept the check in his wallet for seven years until, in 1994, he found out he was going to make \$10 million for acting in the movie *Dumb and Dumber*.

## All great stories are created in reverse order

A screenplay, or movie script, is an extremely stripped-down version of a story. But, like every good story, it has a purpose, or plot, that culminates in one climactic moment. Screenwriters are strategists. Professional screenwriters know the best way to write a script is to construct a plot by writing backwards from the climax, using reverse cause and effect. The climax is the object of the plot and the point on the horizon that your story moves towards. For example, in the movie *Gladiator*, the object of the script is that Maximus (Russell Crowe) defeats the Emperor Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix) and with his dying words restores Marcus Aurelius' wishes, returning the power of Rome to the Senate. Working backwards from this climactic moment (the effect), you can string together a series of causes (Maximus' imprisonment, Marcus Aurelius' death, etc.) to create an Academy Award-winning movie. Good screenwriters construct the entire plot of a movie simply by asking themselves, "What is the cause of this effect?" over and over again.

**The only way to find and fulfill a worthy purpose is to name it and work in reverse order to achieve it.**

The answers to this question are what fill in the story. In the same way, you can work backwards to build your life around your climax, or the fulfillment of your overall purpose. In doing so, your long-term goal is always in your sights.

## **All great people are ordinary people with great purposes**

The only way to become the person you want to be in life is to find your purpose and give it a name. Naming is power. Naming your desires imprints them on reality. Now, it's real. Now, it's in front of you. And the mind will naturally focus on whatever is in front of it.

Turning your purpose into a reality by naming it is not *The Secret*; it's science. Studies from Dominican University and Virginia Tech show that people who write down their goals are 33% more likely to achieve them. These same studies show that people who write down their goals make nine times more money than people who don't. Yet 80% of Americans don't have goals. In other words, four out of five people in America do not have a defined purpose in life.

Successful people have a strong, well-defined sense of purpose. First, they realized they needed a purpose. Then, they defined an endpoint for their purpose and worked backwards to fulfill it. The only way to find and fulfill a worthy purpose is to name it and work in reverse order to achieve it. This is the exact opposite of what tacticians do. Tactical people let to-do lists guide their lives, as if having meetings and putting out fires will help them fulfill their master plans. Do not fall into this trap. Trickle-forward goal setting does not work. Running errands and answering emails is not a strategy. Instead of living like a tactician, be strategic and do what's necessary to carefully craft an entire campaign for your life.

The rest of this book will take you step by step through the process of learning what you want in life and exactly how to get it. I challenge you to read through each step carefully and to complete the associated personal exercises. These steps are backed by science and include case studies chronicling how successful people from different backgrounds took these steps to break free from sticking points and achieve their biggest goals. Mapping your purpose in life is an exciting experience. Remember, details generate drive. The more detailed your map, the more energy you'll have to traverse the actual territory. Let's get started.

**Trickle-forward  
goal setting  
does not work.**

## Case Study

*Garett Manion, PharmD*

Garett Manion, PharmD grew up in a small home in rural Washington. Although the family didn't have much, his parents taught him the importance of a strong work ethic and a good education. At a young age, Garett decided to pursue a doctoral degree. He opted to follow in the footsteps of classmates he admired by going into pharmacy school. He liked the idea of being a doctor—and getting a nice paycheck.

To get into pharmacy school, Garett chased a series of short-term goals to help him graduate at the top of his class. He worked hard to successfully complete the pre-requisites for the Washington State University School of Pharmacy, one of the leading pharmacy programs in the United States.

After a grueling four years of pharmacy school and completing the requisite 60-week unpaid internship, he graduated, again, at the top of his class. It didn't take long before Garrett was offered a six-figure contract with an international retail pharmacy as well as a five-figure signing bonus. Within a few months, Garrett was promoted to pharmacy manager at the busiest and most profitable store in the district. Life was great. Garrett was living the dream. Unfortunately, it was a pretty boring dream.

Garrett's pharmacy life was uneventful. All he did was count pills all day. He felt like he didn't have a purpose in life. Although Garrett accomplished all of his goals, this wasn't the dream he had envisioned. As a pharmacist, he wasn't providing the patient care and therapy he was trained for; he was very literally a bean counter and working to increase the company's profit margins.

Garrett was a tactician. He spent his life focused on the shortterm tasks in front of him, like chasing prerequisites, certifications, and other "carrots." He never took time to ask himself what a pharmacist's life actually looked like and whether the ideas and theories set forth in school about patient care and therapy would be implemented in his day-to-day career responsibilities. Instead, he plugged along from start to finish without ever looking at the finish line. He never asked, "Why do I want to be a pharmacist in the first place?"

As a result, he locked himself into a narrow career path that didn't offer much flexibility when it came to personal fulfillment and professional satisfaction.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Isaiah Hankel** is an internationally recognized speaker and author who helps individuals, teams and organizations develop a more entrepreneurial mindset to accelerate their business success.

Isaiah's unique background allows him to offer a scientific approach and tangible methodology to the pursuit of purpose, focus and other entrepreneurial values that every individual and even the largest company can apply.

Isaiah has a Ph.D. in Anatomy and Cell Biology and has worked extensively as a Fortune 500 consultant in the biotechnology industry and with some of the world's leading corporations, including Amgen, GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, Roche and Genentech. He has also presented at many of the world's premier academic institutions, including Harvard University, Stanford University, Oxford University, Cambridge University, The Pasteur Institute and The Curie Institute.

Long before getting his doctorate, Isaiah was a sheep farmer in rural Idaho who struggled in school and was diagnosed repeatedly with ADD and ADHD. He survived college and barely made it into graduate school where he was quickly put on academic probation and forced to work as a janitor and sleep in a friend's basement to make ends meet. Just a few years later, Isaiah formed three successful, multinational businesses and published this book, *Black Hole Focus*.

The system Isaiah used to go from being an ADD-diagnosed sheep farmer to a being a successful entrepreneur, author, and business coach is carefully laid out within these pages. Isaiah mixes science, strategy, and entertaining personal stories to empower you while also providing highly actionable takeaways that you can immediately use to improve your career and life.



[www.isaiahhankel.com](http://www.isaiahhankel.com)

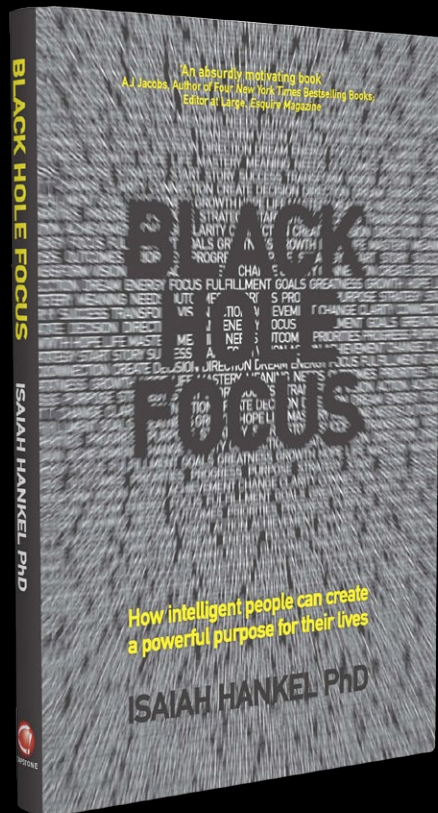


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# TAKE YOUR CAREER AND YOUR LIFE BY THE HELM!

Like what you've read here? Then purchase a copy of **Isaiah Hankel's** *Black Hole Focus*, where you will:

- Gain in-depth knowledge of what you really want in life and how to get it
- Learn how to find a new purpose, escape your narrow career path and achieve success in academia, business or entrepreneurship
- Learn through unique and relevant scientific studies, actionable insights and authentic personal stories



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