

The Art of Possibility by Benjamin Zander and Rosamund Stone Zander

The book's central premise is that your perspectives shape your possibilities. To reconstruct how you perceive the world, you must first be willing to challenge your beliefs and assumptions, and to keep applying these 12 practices until the new ways of thinking and behaving become intuitive to you.

THE 12 POSSIBILITY PRACTICES



1. Realize that Everything's Invented



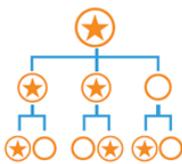
2. Move from Scarcity to Abundance



3. Give an "A" as a Gift



4. Be a Contribution



5. Lead from Any Position



6. Lighten Up



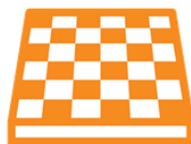
7. See the Way Things Are



8. Flow with Passion



9. Ignite the Spark



10. Be the Chess Board



11. Create Possibility Frameworks



12. Focus on WE

1. Realize That Everything is Invented

Everything we know about the world around us is actually filtered through our mental stories. You pick up selective info about the environment via your 5 senses => your brain interprets the info => you have a conscious experience. By the time you're conscious of something, your brain has already gone through a complex process of info-selection, cue-matching and story-telling. Human perceptions are so flawed/limited but you can break out of your self-imposed frames/boxes to see new possibilities.

2. Move From Scarcity To Abundance

We live in a “world of measurement” where everything is evaluated against goals, standards, and comparisons. All human struggles—including our fears, doubts and disappointments—are built on the hidden assumption that we must fight to survive in a world of scarcity and danger. This practice is about shifting to an abundance-mindset and tapping into an infinite universe of possibilities. The book goes into detail on the difference between scarcity and scarcity-thinking, and how to let go of the need to constantly judge and measure everything.

3. Give An A

We tend to grade people (literally or mentally) and use that grade to define their abilities/potential. When you give others an “A” as a gift (not because they’ve met a certain standard or expectation), it opens up a new world of possibilities for yourself and others to achieve what previously wouldn’t have been possible. There are some wonderful examples of this in the book.

4. Be A Contribution

Most of us are constantly judging everything we do as a “success” or “failure”. This practice is about transforming your struggles into fulfilling experiences, by focusing on your contributions instead. To do this just do the following: declare yourself to be a contribution and throw yourself into life as someone who makes a difference, accepting that you may not understand how or why. Think of it as playing the contribution game.

5. Lead From Any Position (In The Orchestra)

This practice is about finding and unlocking the hidden passion and commitment that exists in every person, rather than assuming that your approach/standards are the best. See new possibilities emerge when you apply this practice at home and at work. Ben draws on his experience as orchestra conductor to illustrate this.

6. Rule Number 6 – Don’t Take Yourself Too Seriously -

Lighten Up

We tend to look for external threats when in reality, it’s our own fears, views and positions that truly stand in the way of our rewarding experiences. Learn the difference between your “calculating self” (concerned with its survival in a world of scarcity) vs your “central self” (a term used to embrace the remarkably generative, prolific and creative nature of ourselves and the world), and why problems/issues may magically melt away when you simply lighten up and learn to laugh at yourself and your situation.

7. See The Way Things Are

Have you ever felt resigned that there's nothing you can do because "that's just the way things are"? This practice is about becoming present to (i) what's truly happening and (ii) your own reactions to them, so you get clear on your circumstances and what you can do to move toward your desired outcomes. In the book you can learn how to discern between facts, feelings and assumptions, and shift from downward spiral talk to possibility talk.

8. Giving Way To Passion

When we see the objects/people around us as separate entities, it creates artificial barriers that don't truly exist. Notice where you are holding back and let go. Release those barriers of self that keep you separate and in control, and let the vital energy of passion surge through you, connecting you to all beyond. Then participate wholly. Allow yourself to be a channel to shape the stream of passion into a new expression for the world.

9. Ignite The Spark

It's untrue that you can only persuade others through manipulation or some form of exchange. This practice is about enrolling people by giving yourself as a possibility to others and being ready, in turn, to catch their spark. Igniting their imagination and bringing out their passion. It's about playing together as partners in a field of light. Appeal to their sense of passion and abundance (not fear and scarcity) as a source of motivation.

10. Be The Board (Of The Game)

This practice is about shifting your perspective so you can see your own role in a particular situation. Stop trying to control all aspects of the game and the moves; be the board that accommodates *all* possible moves, so you see things more objectively and can take enlightened actions. Ask yourself the question. "How did this happen in the game of which I am the board?" This is a very powerful way of considering an issue.

11. Create Possibility Frameworks

This practice is about breaking downward spirals, and instead generating options by (i) restructuring meaning, (ii) developing visions and (iii) creating environments that support possibilities. Make a new distinction in the realm of possibility as a substitute for the current framework of meaning that generates downward spiral thinking. Embody that new distinction so it becomes a framework for life around you. Keep distinguishing what is "on the track" and what is "off the track" of your framework for possibility.

12. Focus On WE

Most of the time, we think of “we” as “You + I”. The parties are seen as separate entities with irreconcilable differences. The WE practice is about (i) identifying what connects people, (ii) listening/looking out for what emerges and (iii) jointly defining what WE want and what’s the best thing to do for US.

Reading the actual book is highly recommended! There is a follow up book by Rosamund Stone Zander, Pathways to Possibility

This summary was adapted from the Reading Graphics website: <https://readinggraphics.com/book-summary-the-art-of-possibility/>