

"The blueprint for hope. Karen shows how to move toward the abundance you deserve."

—Arianna Huffington,
Founder and CEO, Thrive Global

Success From Anywhere



Create Your Own Future of Work
— From the Inside Out —

KAREN MANGIA

AUTHOR OF *WORKING FROM HOME*

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Praise for *Success from Anywhere*

“Your personal guide to unlock higher purpose and humor in yourself, your teams and in your organizations.”

—Dr. Jennifer Aaker and Naomi Bagdonas, Stanford Graduate School of Business Professors and Best Selling Authors of *Humor, Seriously*

“Karen's superpowers lie equally in storytelling and strategy, as evidenced by this pager-turner, packed with advice. A must-read for organizations of all sizes.”

—Coco Brown, founder and CEO of Athena Alliance

“The pandemic can be a powerful catalyst for us to redefine the game of life and the game of work so that everyone can have an equal opportunity to win. Karen Mangia provides us with an approach that will help all of us to succeed.”

—John Hagel, founder and CEO of Beyond Our Edge

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—**Arianna Huffington,**

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To my brother, Paul

Who teaches me each day how to enjoy playing the game

About the Workbook

Thank you for purchasing *Success from Anywhere*.

We have created a Workbook to supplement your experience.

You may access the Workbook provided for your use by visiting:

www.wiley.com/go/mangia/successfromanywhere.

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Foreword.

It's never too late to decide what you want to be when you grow up. I'm still deciding what that looks like every day. How about you?

When I retired from Monster.com in 2005, I had completed a 360-degree entrepreneurial experience: I had been the founder, the president, the CEO, the chairman, and even chief monster (which is a title I still hold to this day).

During my career, I've started about a dozen companies. Now I work with Ray Dalio and the Principles organization, helping people to find and live the power of meaningful work and meaningful relationships. But I'm not done with my journey, and neither are you. In fact, when it comes to exploring success, our journey is always just beginning.

Because you can find success anywhere, if you understand how to turn work into play. I found both joy and success for my company when we jumped into Boston Harbor together. That's right. We were talking about team-building ideas and I didn't want to go bowling.

"Let's go jump in the ocean," I said. Do you think everyone started putting on their bathing suits?

No. No, they did not. But in the end we all did it – together.

From there, what was once a one-time dare became an annual tradition, "The Leap of Faith." And yes, I was the first to jump. Because that's what leaders do. Having a

vision is great, but you've got to take action. You've got to be willing to take the leap.

But here's the crazy thing: the meetings we had after that shared experience off that pier each year are some of the most unforgettable moments I've ever had in business. Because we shared an adventure. We shared a choice to try something different. The shared experience was success, in and of itself. That shared experience is something I strive to find in every aspect of my life, whether it's at Burning Man creating and running my theme camp called Root Society, or while actively volunteering in my local community in Connecticut. That shared experience is where the magic is. And that experience is something I find every time I tell my stories with an audience, as a keynote speaker. We share, we laugh, and we learn together.

I wonder, what's the adventure you'd like to create for yourself, and your organization? What's that new experience that would make a meaningful difference in your career? Karen is here to help you seize your own spirit of adventure, and move towards new goals and new horizons. And she does it with these amazing stories—and practical exercises—that will inspire you to take action.

Which is great, because stories are better than jokes. I mean, if you tell a joke, people laugh but they don't do anything. It's a trap, actually. Because, after you tell a joke, now people are waiting to see if you know another joke. Laughter may be the best medicine but it doesn't necessarily transform lives or careers. (Unless you're a comedian, but that's not the point.) Stories invite us to share new perspectives, to create shared learnings, and to reimagine our own impact on the world. Stories create a dialogue, and encourage new points of view. Karen shares her stories—many of them just happen to be hilarious—in order to open up your own perspective.

Speaking of perspective, I remember when Richard Branson challenged me to break his world record. No, not for space flight. He dared me to break his world record for waterskiing behind a blimp. That's right – waterskiing behind a blimp is a real thing. Some people use boats; Sir Richard Branson uses blimps. He dared me and I said yes. The result? I am the Guinness World Record holder for waterskiing behind a blimp. I told you I wasn't sure what I wanted to be when I grew up. Each day I get to decide, and so do you.

On this particularly cold day in Panama City, Florida, I got up on my skis behind a 155-foot inflatable flying machine. After some failed attempts, I caught and held a long-rope handle—holding on for dear life—and I beat Sir Richard's record. I am still not a great water-skier. That's not the point of the story. The point of the story is that I said Yes. I said I would try. Karen explains similar experiences with these two words: “Why not?” I've discovered that those two words can change the game – change your future!

See, I saw a blimp as big, but not scary. Sort of a monster challenge (yes, I said it) that if you push through, the fear can really help you. And, in life, what happens when we see things as fun instead of scary? What changes when we find new ways to embrace adventure? When we face what others fear?

I've been running life and living businesses since I founded Monster in the '90s, and I've discovered something: Life is a game that's meant to be played full-out. Now, I'm living my principles – and helping others to find meaning and purpose at work. Because sharing ideas is sharing success. Karen's ideas will help you to discover success on your own terms, no matter where you are. Because it's never too late to be who you want to be.

The journey to success starts right now with Karen as your guide! Inside this book you will find the courage to try new things. To make new choices. And to access the success you deserve.

Jeff Taylor
lifelong entrepreneur
GM/chief customer officer at principles, a Ray Dalio
Company

Chapter 1.

A New Game in Town

“This is the real secret of life - to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play.”

—Alan Watts, British philosopher

“My work is a game. A very serious game.”

—M.C. Escher, artist

I love to win.

In a time before smartphones, before Super Mario Bros.[™] started their family business, before Nintendo[®] made their Switch[™], my brother and I were notorious gamers. We played old-school games that lasted for days. Board games. Card games. Puzzle games. Sometimes we even set up camp next to our games, with no screens or distractions to interrupt us. My brother would hunker down in his Hot Wheels sleeping bag. Mine was bright blue with a rainbow interior. I always kept a red plastic flashlight inside of my personal campsite - not because I was afraid of the dark, but because I wanted to keep a night watch over the game. And to make sure my brother was playing by the rules 24/7.

The day was built around the game. We curtailed the duration of breakfast and lunch to return to the game. Then we figured out how to sneak snacks upstairs so we could eat while we played the game. We skipped playing with friends to play the game. And we staged a united front with

our parents to play the game: we didn't always like each other, but we were feverishly united in resisting anything that might pull us away from the game. Doctor visits. Dinner. Family time. Baths. Bedtime stories. We understood commitment. The game mattered most.

Sound familiar?

Sometimes seemingly arbitrary obligations – like school and homework – required us to play shorter-duration games. Since my brother is four years younger than me, I would defer to him to choose the game on “quick game days.” He predictably returned with the same box.

A board game called Life.

In the Game of Life[®], players travel through their lives looking for success. Throughout the process, you earn money, make investments, get married, have children, and retire.

As you spin the wheel and advance your Game of Life[®], you encounter a series of crossroads. Take the short route and go directly to business and to a salary? Or take a detour to university and the long road to business and a career?

The strategy to win at the Game of Life[®] – by design – is to accumulate:

- Cars
- Cash
- Connections
- Collateral

No matter how you play the game, all of the players eventually reach the block on the board labeled in bright red: DAY OF RECKONING.

According to the rules on the box top, you must STOP in the DAY OF RECKONING SPACE.

Hey, guess where we all are right now?

The game of life no longer feels like child's play.

I've lived through the unintended implications of playing to win the game of life at all costs – and I'm not just talking about the flashlight next to my sleeping bag. I wrote about the high price I paid in my first book, *Success With Less* (<http://bit.ly/successwithless>). And then I took a look at how the game changed, in my second book, *Working from Home* (<http://bit.ly/wfh-karenmangia>).

The pandemic brought us all to a simultaneous stop: a full stop in a space called the Day of Reckoning. And what our collective Day of Reckoning revealed is a tally of who's winning and who's losing in life. In real terms. With real people. Real people we know. Real people we care about. Real people who we want to win. I'm talking about our families. Our friends. Our local business owners. Our frontline workers. Ourselves.

You're here because you like to win. Are you ready to play a new game – so that you can find the success that will determine your future?

You and I now have to make a big decision. Let's decide, right now, how we move forward from the Day of Reckoning. Let's discover how to get unstuck from the patterns of the past.

After all, if you're going to win at the game of life, you have to see new pathways and perspectives. Otherwise, you're just going to keep retracing the same steps.

This book is designed, specifically, so that you can see beyond your limits. From a place of personal awareness and redesign, a new kind of contribution emerges. Does

your organization need a better hybrid work model, improved diversity, or greater presence in Europe? These kinds of organizational design decisions come from the people within the organization. Therefore, *Success from Anywhere* really starts with you.

In these pages, you will find an opportunity to begin again. A blueprint for creating the future – one person, and one organization, at a time.

In a post-pandemic era, each of us has a choice: a choice to design a new kind of game, regardless of how anyone else decides to design, play, or win their game. But wait a minute. Does that kind of flexibility sound too good to be true?

I still work in a huge corporation. I still have a boss. I still have deadlines. I still have meetings. But I designed a new game for myself with new rules and outcomes and measures of success.

No one else had to change their game design for me to change mine. Playing a game I can win means redefining what it means to win. And what I'm willing to do to win. Even if everyone else wants to play the same old game. Or play by someone else's rules.

My premise for you is a simple one:

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF

WE COULD CHANGE THE GAME OF LIFE TOGETHER?

I thought it was impossible. Until I met Fitch.

"I've got a dilemma," I told him as I adjusted my mask. "I keep thinking there must be a way for everyone to live and work better. These COVID days aren't going to last forever. Lots of people are burnt out. There's a lot of people who aren't being treated fairly. There's frustration for everybody," I said, looking at my shoes for inspiration. "I just don't know how. I feel stuck."

Fitch nodded his bushy head of hair. His bright blue eyes looked back at me, over his mask, with an unfiltered kindness and empathy. You know the friend who feels like family? That's Fitch. He's always on the lookout – keeping his eyes open for the next thing. That game-changing idea. That plan that we can all understand.

A slight breeze on the back patio brought the reminders of early fall in central Indiana. Rays of warm sunshine danced on our faces, as we sat in the big patio chairs on the new deck. Sunset would come soon. Sitting in the newly finished outdoor kitchen, we were pondering a way to make things better. Simple, right?

Fitch leaned forward. "I'm trying to do something with my new company," he explained. "Look at the swings in our backyard," he said, pointing to a large wooden playset that included monkey bars and a small fort up top. "I think *all kids should be able to play on a playground.*"

Fitch continued. "I wondered, 'How could I create a playground for every kid?'" That idea turned into a subscription candy service, where Fitch donates 10% of earnings to help pay for new swing sets on playgrounds.

Fitch laughed. What was so funny?

"I know the best way to get unstuck," he exclaimed as he rushed into the house, calling out to me over his shoulder. "Let's play a game!"

The Game of Life®?

He burst through the patio doors and laid something down on the patio table. What was he planning? I looked down and saw it: a silver pen on top of a simple white notepad, no bigger than a deck of playing cards.

Before I could ask questions, Fitch got down to business. He wielded the pen and paper like a master artist with a brush and canvas. A moment later, he revealed his masterpiece.

"Wow," I said, "What game is this?" I wasn't sure what the masterpiece was, exactly. Was Fitch going through his very own Blue Period, becoming a patio Picasso? Had he just invented his own alphabet, or was that a duck chasing a snowman? I was mystified – and intrigued.

"This is our game," he stepped back and pointed at the pad, using the pen like a laser pointer. "The game we are going to play together." He grinned, certain that he had solved the puzzle that I had yet to understand.

"What are the rules?" I asked. "How do you win? I'm not familiar with this game." The duck might be a rock. I couldn't be sure. I shifted forward in my seat to get a better view.

"It's simple," he explained. "Just roll the dice. Choose a path. Any path that looks good to you."

The master in the art of living makes little distinction between his [or her] work and his play, labor and leisure, mind and body, information and recreation, love and religion. [S]he hardly knows which is which. [S]he simply pursues a vision of excellence at whatever is being done, leaving others to decide whether it is working or playing. To the master, it is always both.

—James Michener, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Tales of the South Pacific* and 40 other books

An appearance from his co-CEO interrupted our pregame warm-up. Janna sat down cross-legged on the corner cushion. She flipped her stick-straight hair over her ears. She overheard the rules of the game. “I want to play, too!” she added.

I turned to Fitch. “If she joins, won't you need to change the game?”

“Nope,” he replied without hesitation, as if he had already asked and answered the question in his own mind. Resolute, he continued, “I designed the game to accommodate everybody. To infinity. And there are just as many ways to win.”

A powerful realization struck me. My long-standing belief was that a game is an experience to execute. Designed by someone else, with a fixed set of rules, and resulting in one winner. Unlike my game-time focus on execution, Fitch saw a game as an experience to create. Designed with all possible players in mind, with a flexible set of rules, and room for everybody to play.

Fitch had the power to invent the game. He didn't have to follow someone else's rules, because he tapped into the power of a beginner's mind. How did he do it? Well, it's easy for him – Fitch is five years old.

In addition to being a full-time kindergarten student, Fitch is also the founder and co-CEO of You've Got Candy (<http://youvegotcandy.com>). In front of him sat a blank sheet of paper – the beginnings of a new kind of game. He looked at it as an artist would:

- An artist knows that the blank page (or empty canvas) can become anything.
- An artist knows that any drawing can be changed, erased, or thrown out at any time.