



**The Luck Factor**  
**Changing Your Luck, Changing Your Life: The Four Essential Principles**

**Notes by Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD**

**Author:** Dr. Richard Wiseman

**Publisher:** Miramax Books

**Copyright year:** 2003

**ISBN:** 0-7868-6914-3

**Author's Bio:** Dr. Richard Wiseman heads a research unit within the psychology department at the University of Hertfordshire in Britain and was recently given the prestigious CSICOP Public Education in Science Award. This is his first book.

**Author's big thought:** Luck is something that can be learned. It is available to anyone willing to pay attention to four essential principles: 1. Creating Chance Opportunities 2. Thinking Lucky 3. Feeling Lucky, and 4. Denying Fate.

**Chapter Notes:**

**Introduction**

- Lucky people meet their perfect partners, achieve their lifelong ambitions, find fulfilling careers, and live happy and meaningful lives. Their success is not due to working especially hard, being amazingly talented, or being exceptionally intelligent. Instead, they appear to have an uncanny ability to be in the right place at the right time and enjoy more than their share of lucky breaks.
- This book describes the first scientific study into why lucky people live such charmed lives and offers ideas for how others can enhance their own good fortune.
- The research took several years to complete and involved interviews and experiments with hundreds of exceptionally lucky and unlucky people.
- People are not born lucky. Instead, lucky people are, without realizing it, using four basic principles to create good fortune in their lives.
- This book presents the most elusive of holy grails – a scientifically proven way to understand, control, and increase your luck.

**Section One. Initial Research**

**Chapter One – The Power of Luck**

- Luck exerts a dramatic influence over our lives. A few seconds of bad fortune can unravel years of striving, while a moment of good luck can lead to success and happiness. Luck has the power

to transform the improbable into the possible; to make a difference between life and death, reward and ruin, happiness and despair.

- The effects of good luck and bad luck are not confined to matters of life and death; they can make the difference between financial reward and ruin, in our personal lives, on the careers of many highly successful business people, and on the careers of actors and models.
- In fact, chance events and accidental discoveries have frequently altered the course of science and have played an important part in many discoveries and inventions, including the contraceptive pill, penicillin, x-rays, photography, safety glass, artificial sweeteners, Velcro, insulin and aspirin.
- The author surveyed a very wide range of people – men and women, old and young. The results revealed that 50 percent of people indicated that they had been consistently lucky and a further 14 percent said that they had been consistently unlucky. In other words, 64 percent, or nearly two thirds, of the people questioned indicated that they were consistently lucky or unlucky. There was a strong tendency for people who said that they had been lucky in one area of their lives to indicate that they had also been lucky in several others.

## **Chapter two – Lucky and Unlucky Lives**

- These results made the author eager to discover more about the nature of luck. He decided to carry out some scientific research with groups of exceptionally lucky and unlucky people.
- All were kind enough to allow him to put their lives and minds under the microscope. He conducted lengthy interviews with many of them and asked them to keep diaries. With the help of this exceptional group of people, he slowly uncovered the secret of luck.
- One of the first goals was to discover what it is like to live a lucky or unlucky life. He interviewed participants about key events in their lives, and their stories provided remarkable evidence about the power of good and bad fortune.
- This research revealed that there are four main differences between the lives of lucky and unlucky people:
  1. *Lucky people constantly encounter chance opportunities.* They accidentally meet people who have a very beneficial effect on their lives and come across interesting opportunities in newspapers and magazines. In contrast, unlucky people rarely have these sorts of experiences, or, they meet people who have a negative effect on their lives.
  2. *Lucky people make good decisions without knowing why.* They just seem to know when a business decision is sound or someone shouldn't be trusted. Unlucky people's decisions tend to result in failure and despair.
  3. *Lucky people's dreams, ambitions, and goals have an uncanny knack of coming true.* Once again, unlucky people are the exact opposite-their dreams and ambitions remain little more than an elusive fantasy.
  4. *Lucky people have an ability to turn their bad luck into good fortune.* Unlucky people lack this ability and their bad luck causes nothing but upset and ruin.
- Eventually, the author identified the psychological mechanism that lies behind the four major differences between a lucky and unlucky life. These are what he calls the four principles of luck. Each of these four principles breaks down into several subprinciples, and there are twelve subprinciples in all. Understand these four main principles, and twelve subprinciples and you

will understand luck itself.

## **Section two – The Four principles of Luck**

### **Chapter three – Principle One: Maximize Your Chance Opportunities**

Principle: *Lucky people create, notice, and act upon the chance opportunities in their lives.*

- Lucky people are more likely than unlucky people to create, notice, and act upon chance opportunities. They do this in various ways. They initiate conversations with more people because they are extroverts. More people start to talk to them because of their social magnetism. And they are good at keeping in touch with people.
- Lucky people are also more relaxed than unlucky people, and this makes them more able to notice unexpected chance opportunities in many different aspects of their lives.
- Finally, lucky people also introduce more variety and new experiences into their lives, which helps to increase the likelihood of their experiencing, and maximizing, chance opportunities.

#### ***Subprinciples:***

##### *1. Lucky people build and maintain a strong "network of luck."*

- Lucky people scored high on a dimension of personality known as *extroversion*. There are three ways in which lucky people's extroversion significantly increased the likelihood of their having a lucky chance encounter – meeting a large number of people, being a social "magnet", and keeping in contact with people.
- Lucky people's body language and facial expressions attract other people to them. The more people they meet, the greater the probability of their having a chance encounter. The more people they talk to at a party, the greater their chances of meeting their dream partner. The more people they talk to about business, the greater their chances of meeting a new client or someone who can have a beneficial impact on their career.
- Lucky people are effective at building secure, long-lasting, attachments with the people they meet. They are easy to get to know and most people like them. They tend to be trusting and form close friendships with others. As a result, they often keep in touch with a much larger number of friends and colleagues than unlucky people. And time and time again, this network of friends helps promote opportunity in their lives.
- Without realizing it, lucky people behave in a way that maximizes the chance opportunities in their lives. They talk to lots of people and spend time with them, attract other people to them and keep in touch with people. These actions results in a massive "network of luck" and a huge potential for chance opportunities. And it takes only one chance encounter to change a life.

##### *2. Lucky people have a relaxed attitude toward life.*

- Techniques used by lucky people enhance their ability to notice and act upon opportunities that arise naturally.
- Quite often, we are simply unaware of the opportunities that surround us because we are too focused on looking for something else.
- Because lucky people tend to be more relaxed than most, they are more likely to notice

- chance opportunities, even when they are not expecting them. It is not that they expect to find certain opportunities, but rather they notice them when they come across them. In contrast, unlucky people tend to be more anxious.
- It is ironic, by not trying too hard to look, lucky people end up seeing far more.

### 3. *Lucky people are open to new experiences in their lives*

- Another technique centers on another important dimension of their personalities, “openness”. Those people who obtain a high score in this dimension like to have a great deal of variety and novelty in their lives. They love trying new experiences, new kinds of foods and new ways of doing things.
- Lucky people’s greater openness can help promote the chance opportunities in their lives.

## **Chapter Four – Principle Two: Listen to Your Lucky Hunches**

Principle: *Lucky people make successful decisions by using their intuition and gut feelings.*

- Unlucky people tend to make unsuccessful decisions – they trust the wrong people and make the wrong career choices. In contrast, lucky people have an uncanny ability to place their trust in reliable and honest people, and make profitable and effective business decisions.
- These differences depend on the different ways in which lucky and unlucky people use their intuition when making important decisions in their lives. Unlucky people do not tend to rely upon their gut feelings, hunches, and intuition. It is not that they do not have such feelings, but rather that they do not foster their intuition, nor do they listen to it when it speaks to them. Lucky people are the opposite. They listen to their intuition and use it as an alarm bell—a good reason to stop and consider the situation carefully.
- Many lucky people also take steps to actively boost their intuitive abilities by meditating and clearing their minds of other thoughts. They have the confidence to trust their inner voices and develop their intuitive feelings. In doing so, they reap the benefits of a lucky life full of successful decisions.

### **Subprinciples:**

1. *Lucky people listen to their “inner voice.”*
  - Lucky people are more skilled at making intuitive decisions than unlucky people. Often these decisions concern the people that they meet in their personal and professional lives. Sometimes they relate to decisions in the workplace.
  - Lucky people’s gut feelings and hunches are often surprisingly reliable and accurate. Even more amazingly, they have no idea what lies behind their success. To them it just looks like luck. In reality it is all due to the remarkable inner workings of the unconscious mind.
  - Our unconscious minds have a remarkable ability to identify patterns and set off intuitive alarm bells when a person or a situation feels very right or very wrong. Lucky people’s gut feelings and hunches tend to pay off time and time again. In contrast, unlucky people often ignore their intuition and regret their decision.
2. *Lucky people take steps to boost their intuition.*

- A greater percentage of lucky than unlucky people used all of the different techniques such as meditation.

### **Chapter Five – Principle Three: Expect Good Fortune**

Principle: *Lucky people's expectations about the future help them fulfill their dreams and ambitions.*

- Lucky and unlucky people seem to be living in different worlds. No matter how hard they try, unlucky people seem unable to obtain their goals while lucky people effortlessly achieve their lifelong dreams and ambitions.
- Research revealed that the two groups of people have very different expectations about the future. Unlucky people are certain that their future will be bleak and that there is nothing they can do about the situation. Lucky people are the complete opposite. They are certain that the future is going to be wonderful and that great things lie in store for them.
- These unusual and extreme expectations exert a considerable influence over people's thoughts and behavior. They determine whether people try to achieve their goals and how long they persist in the face of failure. These expectations also determine how they behave toward others and how others respond to them. This reaction, in turn, transforms people's expectations into potent self-fulfilling prophecies that affect their personal and professional lives.
- Lucky people do not achieve their ambitions by chance. Neither are unlucky people destined never to get what they want from life. Instead, their extreme expectations are responsible for much of their success and failure. Lucky and unlucky people have strong expectations about the future, and these expectations have the power to create that future.

#### **Subprinciples:**

1. Lucky people expect their good luck to continue in the future
2. Lucky people attempt to achieve their goals, even if their chances of success seem slim, and persevere in the face of failure.
3. Lucky people expect their interactions with others to be lucky and successful.

### **Chapter Six - Principle Four: Turn Bad Luck into Good**

Principle: *Lucky people are able to transform their bad luck into good fortune.*

- Lucky people are not born with a magical ability to turn bad luck into good. Instead, often without realizing it, they employ four psychological techniques to overcome, and even thrive upon, the ill fortune in their lives.
- First, lucky people imagine how things could have been worse and they compare themselves to people who are unluckier than themselves.
- Second, they take the long view and assume that something positive will come from their bad luck.
- Third, they do not dwell on the ill fortune that they have encountered.
- Fourth, they assume that there is something they can do about their ill fortune – they persist, think about lateral ways around the problem, and learn from their mistakes.
- Together, these four techniques explain their uncanny ability to cope with, and often even thrive upon, any ill fortune that comes their way.

**Subprinciples:**

1. Lucky people see the positive side of their bad luck
2. Lucky people are convinced that any ill fortune in their lives will, in the long run, work out for the best.
3. Lucky people do not dwell on their ill fortune.
4. Lucky people take constructive steps to prevent more bad luck in the future.

**Recommendation:** This book is full of interesting stories as well as exercises to determine your own attitudes on life and luck. If you are so inclined, buy this book and work through the exercises. At the end of the book there is a “Luck School” with a month long program which can help you make effective changes in your life.

Get 100 business book summaries just like this one at [100mustreads.com](http://100mustreads.com)



Contact Frumi at 949-729-1577  
[ceoconfidante@frumi.com](mailto:ceoconfidante@frumi.com)  
[www.frumi.com](http://www.frumi.com)  
[www.100mustreads.com](http://www.100mustreads.com)

**About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD**

Many CEO's find themselves asking “What now?” to sensitive situations that only an experienced former CEO can understand. Frumi is brought in to solve problems and often remains to work with you, as your confidante and secret weapon. She has an uncanny knack of getting to the heart of your corporate climate and maximizing your team’s performance, profitability and sustainability.

To schedule a free *Break From the Pack to Success* consultation email [ceoconfidante@frumi.com](mailto:ceoconfidante@frumi.com) or call 949-729-1577