

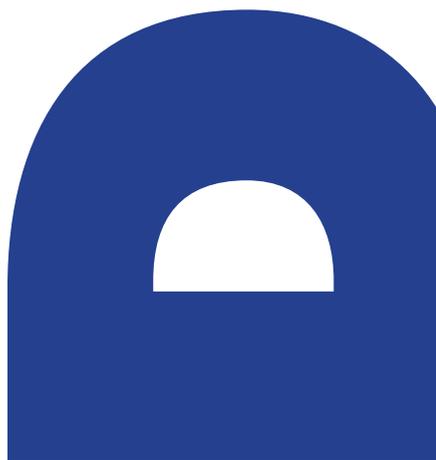
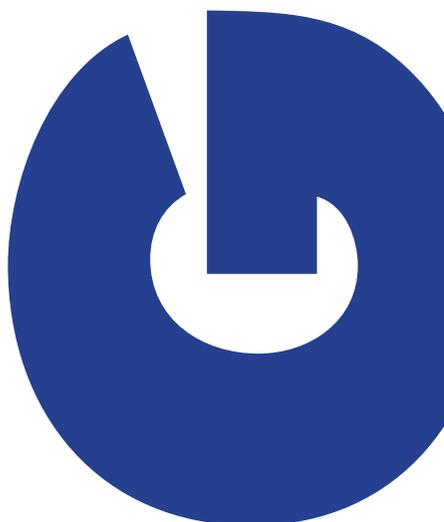
# The SLIGHT

Turning Simple Disciplines  
Into Massive Success

Jeff Olson

Revised Edition

©



*“The Slight Edge makes you aware of the unwritten rules that we all live by and just weren’t aware of. Jeff explains these principles in an easy-to-understand manner that will have you re-evaluating those ‘insignificant’ decisions you make every day.”*

—*John C. Maxwell, Founder of The John Maxwell Company and best-selling author of The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*

*“Success in life comes one day at a time and, as Jeff Olson suggests, one step at a time. The Slight Edge will show you how your daily decisions can be the ultimate key to your success.”*

—*Ken Blanchard, co-author of The One Minute Manager® and Lead with LUV*

*“This fast-moving book teaches you one of the most powerful, practical and important success principles ever discovered. It can change your life!”*

—*Brian Tracy, author of The Way to Wealth*

*“Success is achieved through inches of progress, not miles. Jeff Olson outlines the philosophies that will give you The Slight Edge in life.”*

—*Darren Hardy, publisher of SUCCESS magazine and best-selling author of The Compound Effect and Living Your Best Year Ever*

## **Our favorite endorsements are from our readers!**

*“I have read personal development books for over 20 years, and I can say this is the one that tied them all together. The book is so easy to read and understand and so powerful in its simplicity.”*

—*Mike Bishop, Wilsonville, OR*

**The Slight Edge** is a way of thinking, a way of processing information that enables you to make the daily choices that will lead you to the success you desire.



Jeff Olson has built several multimillion-dollar sales and marketing organizations, hosted seminars in every major city in the United States, and produced more than 900 television programs centered on personal development. Over the past twenty years, Jeff has helped hundreds of thousands of individuals achieve better levels of financial freedom and personal excellence.

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## Praise from readers of *The Slight Edge*

As an instructor of a management course in a master's program at NYU, I made *The Slight Edge* required reading. It serves as the foundation for all other course content because I believe the philosophy is key to understanding success.

—David G Rosenthal, Advisory Board Member, Member Curriculum Committee;  
Adjunct Instructor; Chief Executive Officer, Shepard Communications Group, Inc.

*The Slight Edge* is the book that makes every other personal-development book actually work. This is the REAL secret!

—Jesse Macpherson, Los Angeles, CA

*The Slight Edge* was the single most formative influence on my career, health and happiness. I have gone back and read it over and over so many times that my copy is in complete tatters.

—Reed Herreid, Minneapolis, MN

*The Slight Edge* freed me from the pressure I had put on myself for not maintaining the progress I made. For instance, all the years spent trying to lose weight and maintain. It was always a roller coaster, up and down, never any stability. But along came *The Slight Edge*. This put everything in perspective. I can go after anything and know that without a doubt I will be successful, because of *The Slight Edge*.

—Jimmy Williams, Austin, TX

A unique view on how small changes or actions done repeatedly can change your personal, family and business life. An amazing and simple strategy anyone can apply, if they are willing.

—Pierre Rattini, North Myrtle Beach, SC

I had read self-help books before and they did very little for me, so at first I didn't think this book would be much different. I was very wrong. This book has given me the power of wanting to have some failure in my life, and made me see the point behind the one penny. Before reading this book, I thought being average and unhealthy and overweight was just the life I was meant to live. I was very wrong. This book moved me in ways I never thought I could be. I wish I would have had it when I was 17.

—Tyra Snider, Canon City, CO

It has created a sense of calm and peace for us, knowing we are on this Slight Edge journey to greatness. *The Slight Edge* has taught us the principle to be patient with ourselves, to look toward improving 1 percent at a time. It has taught us that positive and negative results don't happen overnight, but are cultivated through simple daily disciplines.

—Haas & Tahera Khaku, Anaheim Hills, CA, co-author, *Power of Mentorship for the 21st Century*

*The Slight Edge* is the best personal-development book I have ever read.

—Michael Clouse, Seattle, WA

This book is a treasure and I use it in every aspect of my life—business, personal, and fun!

—Shenna Shotwell, Creedmoor, NC

*The Slight Edge* is a life philosophy that should be taught as soon as children take their first steps. I wish someone had taught me this when I was young.

—Jane Lehman, Lexington, MI

I use this philosophy throughout my day. I've become a better person all around. I was able to correct my negative outlooks. I'm a better role model for my children, my health is getting better, I'm more connected spiritually, my relationships are improving, and my business is thriving. It is a must-have and a must-read.

—Pedro Garcia, Middletown, NY

I, like many people, get frustrated when I do not see quick results. Through the Slight Edge mentality, I was able to lose 25 pounds in just under three months. I also convinced my father, 69, who lost 20 pounds in less than three months. My father and I are both testimony to the fact that *The Slight Edge* works!

—Christopher Mangano, Boynton Beach, FL

I find the book to be one of the best "diet books" I have ever read, and I have read quite a few of them through the last few years. So it is not willpower that is helping me to lose weight, it is *The Slight Edge*. What an amazing revelation this has been!

—Carol Chandler, Denver, CO

Before I read *The Slight Edge*, I never understood why my efforts seemed to be a degree off. *The Slight Edge* showed me how to get that last edge I needed!

—Lynda Cromar, Aurora, CO

*The Slight Edge* has had a profound effect on my life. After having it recommended four different times from four different people in one month, I finally purchased it. It was the first nonfiction book that I can remember not wanting to get to the end of because I loved what I was learning!

—Laura Jo Richins, Mesa, AZ

I was born and raised in Albania. I came to America 13 years ago at age 18 by myself, with nothing but a dream. I didn't speak English, and had no money or connections. I am a college dropout and a former pizza delivery driver. A friend gave me *The Slight Edge* book and by implementing its simple principles, I am today living the American Dream.

—Andi Duli, Oklahoma City, OK

*The Slight Edge* is truly a gift to the planet.

—Mark Skovron, Tampa Bay, FL

I was bankrupt, had my car repossessed, and was on Medicaid and applying for food stamps. After putting the principles of *The Slight Edge* in place, I have made over a million dollars and it has also helped me in every area of my life.

—Darin Kidd, Appomattox, VA

Reading *The Slight Edge* is perhaps one of the most eye-opening things one can do. It's such a simple concept that you realize you've overlooked every day of your life. Easy to do, easy not to do. Suddenly it's shocking how many things you really haven't been doing. The examples Jeff Olson provides are easy to understand and truly show how *The Slight Edge* affects the world.

—Julie Jonak, Houston, TX

I have read numerous personal-development books through the years, and by far, this is one of the best! By applying the principles of *The Slight Edge*, I've lost 35 pounds in just three months, and am still going strong. I'm also working them into my job, part-time pursuits and every area of my life. I have quit focusing as much on the goals, and am focusing more on the little things I do every day, since I can control those. As a result, my life is going SO much better than it ever has!

—Richard Green, Franklin, TN

This is a very simple, easy-to-follow book that can lead anyone from where they are to whatever level of success they want to achieve.

—Alex Serrano, Las Vegas, NV

Over the course of the last year, by putting the *Slight Edge* concepts in practice, I have stopped using tobacco, and lost 25 pounds through diet and exercise.

—Bob Sutton, Ft. Collins, CO

Following the principles outlined in Jeff Olson's *The Slight Edge* has helped me become a millionaire—several times over. Thanks for refining the processes into an understandable and workable format, Jeff.

—Rex LeGalley, Albuquerque, NM

*The Slight Edge* principles apply to everything.... My wife and I have used it to improve our health and now we have lost over 100 pounds combined!

—BJ Baker, West Manchester, OH

I led a life of errors in judgment until I came across this magnificent book. A blueprint for life can be founded on the *Slight Edge* philosophy. I found myself discarding old bad habits and replacing them with new positive habits; the result is a successful life. I was very reckless in my daily decisions, as well as my family positioning. My son noticed a huge change in my character and life perception. I no longer spend money haphazardly and my priorities are up to par.

—Simon Ponce, Irvine, CA

As a student of personal progress for the past 40 years, I consider this work to be one of the foundational keys to the application of literally every other resource in this incredibly important area of life.

—Stephen McBroom, Floyd, VA

*The Slight Edge* gives you that extra kick to push you beyond your wish list and into achieving your highest potential. I am able to apply the tools from *The Slight Edge* to balance my full-time work, while completing my bachelor's degree.

—Mark Roberts, Redmond, WA

*The Slight Edge* is a phenomenal book. It makes you aware of the unwritten rules that we all live by and just weren't aware of! A definite MUST READ for EVERYONE, from student to executive. Wondering why you can't pass a class? *The Slight Edge*! Tried those diets but just can't seem to lose the weight? *The Slight Edge*! Have a savings plan but your bank account just refuses to grow? *The Slight Edge*! When applied correctly, *The Slight Edge* will show you how to get things back on track in your life. You will now be aware of what you're doing and be armed with the knowledge to correct the important things in your life, from relationships to getting that executive promotion. The principles have definitely helped my life. Here's to your success!

—Leonard Taylor, Las Vegas, NV

Before reading *The Slight Edge*, my mindset for my life was not where it needed to be. I was a broke college student conforming to the masses. This book has changed the direction of my life dramatically by mentoring me on a new path filled with positive and disciplined philosophy.

—Tim Walter, San Diego, CA

After applying the *Slight Edge*, my life began to change for the better and I found myself harnessing the powers of completion and momentum every day. It was amazing to see results in my business, in my health, and in my personal life.

—Carl Coffin, Goose Creek, SC

I was searching for many answers to my life, when all of a sudden, I came across this magnificent and truthful information. It expanded my vision and took the fog away from my eyes.

—Michael Huerta, San Jacinto, CA

As a successful leadership coach, I recommend two books to all of my clients. *The Slight Edge* is one of them!

—Dennis Antoine, Coral Springs, FL

*The Slight Edge* kept me going on those days when I felt like I was not making progress by reassuring me that taking even the smallest positive action would eventually pay off.

—Susan Mix, Santa Clara, CA

What an incredible masterpiece! *The Slight Edge* challenges me daily in business and in life. An absolute "must read" and "must apply" in every area.

—Dr. Vanessa R. Booker, Glendale, AZ

The *Slight Edge* principles are so powerfully uplifting and inspirational that they are a catalyst for action. The *Slight Edge* gives me the momentum to achieve my daily goals in life.

—Antoinette Mims, New York, NY

I have read personal-development books for over 20 years, and I can say this is the one that tied them all together, because it is so easy to read and understand, and so powerful in its simplicity.

—Mike Bishop, Wilsonville, OR

*The Slight Edge* has been a philosophical staple in my life, and in the lives of those I mentor. I have started a business, and have gotten in better physical shape. The most memorable anecdote I use is, "What you do matters. What you do today matters. What do you every day matters."

—David Mack, Sacramento, CA

I LOVE THIS BOOK! As a former professional athlete, coach for over 25 years and wellness consultant, I strongly recommend *The Slight Edge* to everyone. If you want success in your health, finances and relationships, embrace this book and create a new mindset, thereby a new future for yourself. *The Slight Edge* is empowering! The philosophies and thoughts will hit home with everyone who reads it.

—Lucy Del Sarto, Olathe, KS

*The Slight Edge* is serving as a timeless way for me to help share the principles in which one must live to succeed in life. I have literally shared the concepts in this book with thousands.

—Ryan Chamberlin, Belleview, FL

As a full-time police officer I believe *The Slight Edge* mentality should be a part of the educational system across America.

—Bobby Garcia, Tucson, AZ

This book has given me the vision to look past my current circumstances and into my desired results!

—Steven Joseph, St. Louis, MO

*The Slight Edge* took years of personal-development study and rolled it all into one, easy to understand book. Jeff Olson did an awesome job of communicating how anyone in any profession can improve his/her productivity, personal relationships and family life. WOW!

—Brian Kennedy, Jacksonville, NC

I would recommend *The Slight Edge* to anyone who is looking to understand why they have not been able to achieve their goals. They will understand that it is not all the fancy words many of the television hosts talk about, but the small things Mr. Olson writes about in his book—things that make absolute sense and are easy to do. I enjoy this book and have plans to make it part of my daily routine. I plan to give my family and myself a slight edge lifestyle. Thanks Mr. Olson.

—Glenn Watkins, Cibolo, TX

I use the Slight Edge philosophy every day in my personal life and especially in my business. Doing the daily activities compounded over time has led me to the kind of success most people only dream about. As a single mother of three boys, it is the principles in this book that have made me over a million dollars in just a few short years, and have allowed me to achieve levels of success in business and in life. *The Slight Edge* will help anyone.

—Christa Aufdemberg, Orange County, CA

*The Slight Edge* has given me and my family the secrets to a successful and abundant life. Practicing the basic philosophies of mastering the mundane has given my entire world a complete paradigm shift. There's a one-degree difference between hot and boiling, and this book has given me the necessary degrees to go from Good 2 Great. *The Slight Edge* is a lifer in my arsenal of personal development.

—Ken Hills, Syracuse, NY

I found *The Slight Edge* to be a remarkable book. It was refreshingly different than other self-help books, as it focused on the hundreds of little daily and weekly decisions that build up to deliver the big hairy goals that one wants in life. My problem was that I can dream big and expect a lot from myself. But saying I wanted something huge next month and failing month after month just led to reluctance overall. Instead, after reading *The Slight Edge*, it was easier for me to focus on the daily schedule and on making daily progress.

—Timothy Sharpe, Redmond, WA

I have used the principles of *The Slight Edge* to improve my physical fitness. I have used it to help pay off debt, build my savings and investments, and improve my relationships with my children.

—Stan Snow, North Yarmouth, ME

I came across *The Slight Edge* and it instantly captured my attention. As an actress living in New York, it is so easy to get overwhelmed by everything that comes with this competitive business. *The Slight Edge* helped me to understand that the small choices I make every moment of every day make a huge impact on my life. Living in a society with so much emphasis on success, I found that *The Slight Edge* redefined what success is for me. It helps me to take the next step forward in my everyday life and do the next right thing. This ultimately leads to a very successful and fulfilling life. I attribute much of my success to the simple principles this book has outlined.

—Cara Cooley, Spokane, WA

# Introduction: The Missing Ingredient

## The Shoeshine Woman

I arrived at the Phoenix airport about 6:30 in the morning. Having time before my plane left, I looked around to see if there was a place where I could get my shoes shined. There was hardly anybody in the airport at that time of the morning. I strolled around.

Before long, I found a shoeshine stand. It was open; a woman in her mid to late forties sat in one of the customer chairs, absorbed in a paperback book. She was dressed in black stretch pants, a black apron and a white shirt. She seemed like a nice, solid person.

I walked over to her stand.

The woman greeted me warmly. She was friendly and happy—*not always an easy way to be before the sun comes up*, I thought. She got up, set down her book, first carefully folding over the corner of the page she'd been reading, then took up the tools of her trade and pleasantly ushered me into the chair.

Her stand was located right next to a service door through which a constant stream of maintenance men and janitors came and went. *Got to be at work by seven*, I guessed. As they passed by our shoeshine stand, every one of these men stopped and exchanged greetings with the woman. She knew them all by name and they knew hers, too. It was clear they were all friends.

She went to work on my shoes, and we started talking.

Her daughter, she told me, had just won a cheerleading contest. Boy was she proud of her! The girl was hoping to go to a cheerleading camp in Dallas. "Tell you the truth," she confided, her voice dropping a bit, "I don't know how in the

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world I'm going to find the money to buy her the uniform and plane ticket, let alone the camp tuition."

In just the few minutes that I sat with this woman, I learned a good deal about her life—and about her. She loved her family, and for that matter, liked people in general. She made friends easily and was a natural-born communicator. It was also clear that she enjoyed her work.

*And it's a good thing she does*, I thought—because she'd been there, shining shoes in that same spot, for more than five years.

I couldn't help but wonder what this woman's life would be like if she had taken a different path five years earlier. She was well spoken, carried herself well, and was friendly and affable.

*With different clothes and a little attention to her hair, she could easily pass for a successful businessperson.*

I noticed the book she'd been reading. It was a popular novel, something to pass the time, to survive the stretches of occupational boredom by living vicariously in someone else's imagined romance. There was a little heap of them sitting dog-eared by the wall.

*What if, instead of spending ten or fifteen minutes here and there, tucked in between customers, sinking into the pages of those forgettable novels, she had spent the last five years reading books that were genuinely life changing? What if that little stack of books included Napoleon Hill's Think and Grow Rich, Stephen Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, or David Bach's Smart Women Finish Rich? Where would she be today?*

The shoeshine woman was a hard worker. Good with people. She knew how to read and clearly enjoyed doing so. She was a superb communicator. She obviously had the talent, personality and basic life skills to accomplish a lot more than just living off tips from shining the shoes of people who could afford to buy their kids new uniforms and tickets to Dallas.

But she was spending her life building other people's dreams—not her own.

*Your income tends to equal the average income of your five best friends*, I mused. *What if she had spent time around people with significantly higher incomes than her own? What if, instead of hanging out only with her colleagues here in the airport, she had cultivated a different group of friends? What if she'd been associating with powerful people, successful people, mentors, movers, shakers, leaders? She could easily have done this—she's a terrific conversationalist. If she had, where would she be today?*

I'm not making a value judgment on modest incomes or simple occupations. There are people who work the humblest of jobs yet live lives rich in relationships and joy, just as there are extremely wealthy people who are also extremely

unhappy. And I'm not criticizing popular novels. But it was clear that this woman was struggling, and as we sat there talking, I'd have bet anything that she wanted more out of life.

It was clear that she wanted to give her daughter the uniform and the Dallas trip, things she couldn't afford in the life she was living. And it was clear that it was so much on her mind, she'd confided her worries to a complete stranger within five minutes of meeting him.

She wanted more, it was plain to see. Why didn't she have it?

*She's industrious, motivated and smart. She reads. She listens. She's sharp. Where would she be today if she'd set foot on a different path a year ago? Five years ago? You can bet she wouldn't be shining my shoes. Managing a chain of shoeshine stands is more like it. Would she be having any trouble sending her daughter to Dallas? I bet she'd be sponsoring the entire team—and going with them, too!*

While this woman with the wonderful personality continued shining my shoes, I was watching her in my mind's eye, seeing her on a plane to Texas surrounded by giggling, excited, happy teenagers, seeing her being successful in so many different ways, in so many areas, making such a difference in her own life and the lives of so many others, if only ... what? What was missing?

Feelings welled up in me, a mix of frustration and sadness. I felt for a moment as if I were going to cry, and I wondered, *Why are you so moved by all of this? You've seen this before a hundred times—why are you so affected by this one instance?*

One reason, I knew, was that it reminded me of another character I'd observed before—nice, like the shoeshine woman, a good person ... just not succeeding in life.

## **The Beach Bum**

I was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My dad died when I was eleven; I remember being handed the flag from his casket. My mom held everything together; she was a great, loving mom. But it was still a rough way to grow up: a fatherless, blond-headed kid in a Hispanic neighborhood, who didn't fit in. I really didn't know what to do with it all, so I turned my energy into mischief and misbehavior: I blamed everything and everyone.

In third grade, my teachers informed my mom that I had a low IQ. I quickly gained a reputation for mischief and troublemaking. While my mom worked her way through the years, I struggled my way through school. By age eighteen, it was clear to anyone who knew me that I didn't have much of a future.

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I begged my way into the University of New Mexico. At college, I built on my previous academic career and succeeded in taking my C average to a D average. I did learn one thing, though: I learned that when spring break came, all the students went to Daytona Beach for a week. I thought I could do one better—I quit school and moved there.

At Daytona Beach, I pursued my first profession: I became a beach bum. I lifted weights and chased girls. I let my hair grow long and curly. People started calling me “Gorgeous George,” after the famous wrestler at the time.

I got a job at the Orlando Country Club cutting the grass on the golf course. One day, as I was cutting the greens in the hot Florida sun, I paused to watch the wealthy club members playing golf on the grass I had cut. As I watched them hum to and fro in their zippy golf carts, in dapper fine golf outfits, with their classy golf bags filled with expensive golf clubs, I felt a burning question simmer up inside.

*Why is it that they're over there riding in carts, and I'm over here working? I don't get it. Why are they putting and I'm cutting? I don't get it! I'm as good as these people are. How do they get to have it ten times better than me? Are they ten times better than me? Are they ten times smarter? Or do they work ten times harder?*

For whatever reason, as happens in so many people's lives, I found myself staring squarely at a fork in the road, a point I now refer to as a “day of disgust,” that moment of impact we sometimes hit in our lives when we face our circumstances and make a decision to change.

In that instant, standing there sweating in the Florida heat, I came to a moment of decision. I suddenly knew that I'd had it up to here with where I was, what I was and who I was. Something clicked; the tumblers in the lock fell into place; and I knew that I could never go back to who I'd been only a minute earlier. I knew that for things to change, I had to change. For things to get better, I had to get better.

I left the golf course.

I loaded my stereo and clothes into my 1964 Dodge Dart slant-six (all my possessions fit easily into the back seat with room for a passenger) and took off for Albuquerque. It took me six days just to get to Texas because the car kept overheating. It was the longest trip of my life.

### **The Superachiever**

That semester, for the first time in my life, I got straight A's. I went on to business school and graduated at the very top of my class. Fresh out of college, I

became one of the youngest international airport managers in the country. I was then recruited by Texas Instruments (TI). I wanted to be in management, but they said, “If you want to be in management, you have to start in sales.” Sales! I hated the idea of sales, knew nothing about it and was terrified of it, but sales it was.

I worked at TI for five years and went on to become Intelligent Systems Manager. But corporate America wasn’t for me. There was a lot of politics (which I hated) and it did not feel like I’d yet found the place where I belonged.

I then decided to start a solar energy company. I knew nothing about solar energy; I barely knew whether the sun came up in the east or in the west. But with four hundred solar companies in the state, New Mexico was the capital of the budding new industry, so ignorance or not, the smart course of action seemed clear.

And at first, it looked like I had indeed made the smart decision. Within two years, my company was in the top 20, and eventually we became the fifth-largest solar-air energy company in America. I was thrilled. I was on top of the world. What I did not yet know was that nothing ever stays the same: everything is in motion. Everything changes.

Times changed. Tax laws changed. Our industry was hit hard. Before I knew what was happening, I had lost everything, gone back to zero and below—owing more money than I thought I could ever even hope to make again.

## The Lesson

The night my car was towed away, I sat in despair and thought:

*This just isn't fair. After living as a failure all my life, I woke up one day and came to my senses, went back to college, applied myself like crazy, entered at the bottom and graduated at the top, worked for a major corporation for five years and went to the very top, built my own company in less than five years and went to the top ... and here I am, after twelve long years of building toward success, at the bottom again! I'm more broke today than when I was Gorgeous George on the beach!*

Twelve years of blood and guts, and I was more of a failure than ever. I couldn’t wrap my head around it. I couldn’t see the logic, the justice, the reasons for any of it. Was life just inherently unfair? Was that it? Was there simply no rhyme or reason for anything? Was there no point in even trying?

That was when I began to examine more carefully what had happened in my life.

I had been a college dropout, a beach bum and a complete financial failure. And I had also been a straight-A student, a top corporate manager, a superachieving entrepreneur in a cutting-edge industry and a complete financial

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success. And all of those had been the same person. So what was the difference? It made no sense.

Or did it?

For the first time, I began to see that over the years of my roller-coaster career, I had gone through a rich sequence of experiences that held the secrets to success as well as to failure. I had proven to myself, beyond any shadow of doubt, the depths of failure that simple daily errors in judgment could produce. I had also seen what simple daily disciplines could accomplish. I just hadn't quite realized what I knew.

It was time to pull away the veil of circumstance and look right at the heart of the matter. To go behind the results and examine the actions, and behind the actions to find the attitudes, and behind the attitudes to discover the thinking that held them there.

That was when I began to discover and explore the Slight Edge.

Since that time, I have built some extraordinary businesses and earned more money than I ever dreamed of back when I was a corporate manager or solar energy entrepreneur. I've also experienced more joy and fulfillment within my family and other relationships than I knew was possible. I've also discovered new vistas in my own investment in my own development, in terms of both health and learning.

Perhaps most important of all is that I've built a philosophy that is grounded in reality, in the way things actually work—not on luck but on the power of the simple disciplines.

I could lose it all tomorrow. (It's happened before; I'd survive.) But there is something I cannot lose, and with that one thing I could start from scratch and build it all back up again. That one thing is the Slight Edge.

### **If Only ...**

"You're lookin' good, sir, lookin' good."

The shoeshine woman was grinning at me. *Another customer lost in his early morning thoughts. And another job well done.* I looked down: I could see my reflection in my shoes.

*Indeed I am. Lookin' good ... thank you. Thanks very much.*

I paid her, gave her as big a tip as I could without (I hoped) having her feel I was being patronizing, and walked away with clean shoes and a heavy heart.

She was right; for me, things were lookin' good, sir, lookin' good.

But why the beach bum and not the shoeshine woman?

While my shoes had been getting a shine, the airport had grown busier. I now walked through a growing throng of travelers as I worked my way toward my gate. I noticed all the faces filing past me. Hardly anyone was smiling. Most of my fellow travelers were trudging with their heads bowed down. I saw bored expressions. Vacant. *Porch light's on, dog's barking, but nobody's home.*

Everybody looked so tired. Failing is exhausting.

I heard angry words.

I stopped for a cup of coffee and heard a young couple arguing with each other. A burly man scolded his young son to the point of tears. A heavy woman complained about the service, then the prices, then her food, and then started back in on the service again. The other people in line nodded their heads. A few joined her in a chorus of negativity.

*Why is everyone so ... down? Everything these people need to know to change their lives for the better is already available. All the information they could possibly need to put them on a path of extraordinary success and fulfillment is out there, in books and CDs, DVDs and workshops. There are people to help them—rich, living resources to guide them, be their mentors, teachers, coaches and allies.*

I knew that the difference between who they were and who they could be wasn't based on any lack of good information. It was all already available.

*But why, if the information is all there, all the resources are there, and these people really do want to succeed, aren't they doing it?*

I looked around the airport as the early morning rush hour swelled its ranks of busy, hurrying, scowling, unhappy people shambling past with no spark in their faces, no bounce in their step. I wished I could somehow address them all, that I could touch all their lives with my silent soliloquy.

*The problem, I shouted out in my head, is that you don't have a way to process the information. There's no framework in place for you to take in all the extraordinary insight that's out there and put it to work in your life.*

*If only you were aware of the Slight Edge. If only you knew what it was doing in your life and how easy it is to have the Slight Edge working for you—instead of against you.*

*If only you were making the right choices, doing those simple, little disciplines that would change your life for the better forever ... where would you be five years from today?*

*If only you learned to recognize the Slight Edge ...*

*If only ...*

But it was only in my head. Not a soul heard my words ... nobody, that is, but me.

That day, on the plane, I started writing this book.

*The Slight Edge* is not just more good information. It's not another self-help success book packed with some revolutionary "new best way" of doing things. You don't need that. Nobody needs that. All the "new and better" information is already available and has been for years.

This book is a precursor to help you use that information.

This book is what I hope will help you take whatever information you want, whatever how-to's or strategies or goals or aspirations, and turn them into the life you want. This book is what I wish I could have put into that sweet and sad shoeshine woman's hands.

I have since been back to that airport. In fact, I have been back through there many, many times. I have looked for the shoeshine woman, but she is no longer there. I don't know where she is or what has happened in her life. But I do know this: she is not alone. There are millions upon millions of people, everywhere I go, everywhere I look, whose lives are not all that they wish, not all that they yearn for. Not even close.

And yet they could be.

So I dedicate this book to that shoeshine woman, to her daughter, to her daughter's cheerleading team ... and to everyone else in the world who wants more.

I dedicate this book to *you and to those who have already put the Slight Edge into practice.*

# Foreword: The Road to the Slight Edge

It's been some time now since my encounter with the shoeshine lady, and a lot has happened since then. I have been fortunate to be the CEO and owner of many successful companies. So how did I get there? Well, I've had some help. When you get the opportunity to be around successful CEOs and influential authors and speakers, their wisdom has a way of rubbing off on you.

But the main reason for my success—and the success of other influential people around the world—continues to be the daily application of the philosophy I am going to share with you called the Slight Edge.

After my time at Texas Instruments and building my own company Sun Aire of America, which at the time was one of the largest solar energy companies in the country, I went on to build three separate multimillion-dollar sales forces, one of which I was appointed CEO.

Based on that experience, I founded TPN (The People's Network), which was one of the largest personal-development training companies in the nation, producing over 900 television programs on various topics such as family relationships and finance, etc. As the CEO of TPN I was often regarded as one of the most influential people in personal development. I eventually sold TPN to a New York Stock Exchange company.

I then took the principles I learned at TPN to help consult for a company, and I have been instrumental in taking them from \$70 million in revenues to \$500 million.

I arrived at these destinations, not by being smarter than everyone else, not by quantum leaps of advancement, but by consistently applying the Slight Edge philosophy.

## The Pinnacle of Personal Development

As CEO and founder of TPN I had the opportunity to meet with many of the greatest masterminds and thinkers of our time. Influential authors and speakers were lining up at my door, due to the large distribution of personal-development information our company produced. I sat with Oprah Winfrey for lengthy in-depth discussions on the path of personal development. I spent a weekend with Dick Snyder, then CEO of Simon & Schuster (the largest publisher of personal development), in his mansion in the woods of Connecticut, discussing everything there is to discuss about personal development. I worked closely with Jan Miller, the biggest literary agent of personal development. I even went to Nashville, the capital of country music, to talk with legendary country music executive Jimmy Bowen about mixing personal development with music.

I met with about every leading author and speaker on every topic you can imagine, many of whom made appearances in many of our programs. TPN was making huge waves. I was on the cover of *The Wall Street Journal* as well as many other publications, including *Entrepreneur* magazine and *SUCCESS* magazine, discussing what TPN was accomplishing in the personal-development world.

Does *Chicken Soup for the Soul* sound familiar? It should; this one book has sold over 100 million copies and has spawned several other titles that have been translated into several languages. I was there in 1993 when author Mark Victor Hansen shared with me his idea and dream to create the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series.

I don't bring up these examples just to brag or to drop names; I do it to explain what all these experiences have afforded me: a rare opportunity to absorb and amass information from the very best on every topic imaginable, and see it all from the catbird seat. We were not just information providers but information producers. What I came to realize is that information about how to become successful has always been readily available, but if the person absorbing that information doesn't have the right philosophy to apply it the right way, success will elude their grasp.

You see, there is no magic bullet, quick fix, or quantum leap method to reach success. Marketing tactics are used to pull us in to "lose 30 pounds in 3 weeks" or "make money while you sleep." The only problem? Although some might have success in the beginning, the results are not long lasting. This ends up frustrating the consumer and makes them give up on otherwise great information, that if applied with the right philosophy would have given them great results.

What the Slight Edge philosophy is meant to do is give you a philosophy that will become a filter for every decision you make. It will give you a way to apply great information into your life in a way that will produce lasting results. It

is the missing ingredient to making change happen! If you understand the Slight Edge philosophy then you can effectively apply any sound principle or action into your life with success. And that is a 100 percent guarantee. In fact, if after putting the principles to work in your own life you don't see improvement, we will refund every penny you paid for this book.

I have been teaching the Slight Edge philosophy for many years now, and published the first edition of the book in 2005. Many great things have been birthed from *The Slight Edge*: The SUCCESS Foundation ([www.successfoundation.org](http://www.successfoundation.org)) was created to provide teens with the fundamental principles of personal development and the resources to help them reach their full potential.

The organization even wrote the book *SUCCESS for Teens: Real Teens Talk About Living The Slight Edge*, and have teamed up with stellar organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Clubs, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, Just Say Yes, America's Promise Alliance and Optimist International to get *The Slight Edge* principles into the hands of millions of teenagers.

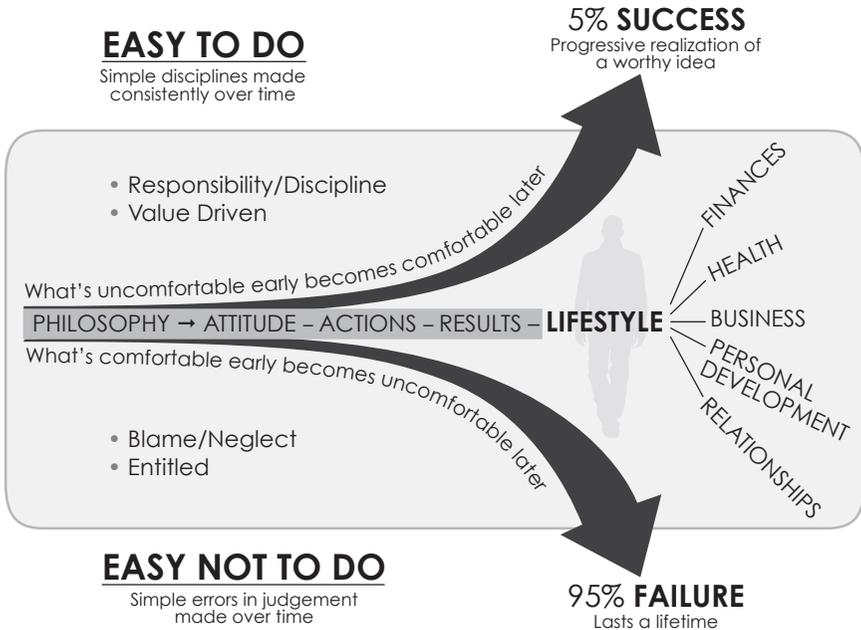
Two of the people I mentored at TPN, Darren Hardy and Kym Yancey, and many others have gone on to do some great things. Darren went on to become the publisher of *SUCCESS* magazine and authored a book *The Compound Effect* based on the Slight Edge philosophy. Kym, along with his wife Sandra, created E-Women Network, recognized as the No. 1 resource for connecting and promoting women and their businesses worldwide. Another good friend, Todd Smith, penned a great book called *Little Things Matter*, based on the Slight Edge principles. These are wonderful books and I encourage you to go buy them to learn more about their interpretation of the Slight Edge philosophy.

Many other readers of *The Slight Edge* have gone on to accomplish amazing things by simply implementing the Slight Edge principles in their lives—many of the stories we will share with you in this revised edition.

## **Origin of *The Slight Edge***

Over the years many people have asked me how *The Slight Edge* was conceived. It began when the book was only a concept. To flesh it out I went to the Mountain Shadow Resort in Phoenix to get away by myself and spent a weekend listening to Jim Rohn and other legendary personal-development icons. Soon I started to see an overall philosophy develop from all that I read and heard that weekend. I didn't have a name for it, and I couldn't write down in words what it meant at the time. The best way to convey it was to simply draw it out.

## Slight Edge Life Paths



Once on paper I came back home and drew it out on my office whiteboard to further flesh out the concept. From this crude drawing I started to teach it out on the road and it soon became known as the Slight Edge.

Everywhere I went people wanted me to give the Slight Edge speech. My next task was to get it out of my head and onto paper so people could read it whenever they wanted. I wrote the first 120 pages and then life got busy and the unfinished manuscript sat on my credenza for years. Eventually I carved out the time to finish it.

What I'm about to say next is going to surprise you. I was never trying to create a best seller with *The Slight Edge*. I was simply trying to get it out of my brain and onto paper as fast as I could so people would stop hounding me about it. This way I could point to the book without having to explain the entire philosophy.

First, I sent the book out to a few friends who wanted it, thinking that would be it. But I received more calls from my friends telling me how much they got out of reading the book, which I laughed at. I discounted much of what they were saying because these were my close friends and I figured they were just being supportive.

But then I started getting calls from people who had received the book from my close friends, and it mushroomed from there. All this time others were telling me this, but I was too busy to notice. That's when it hit me that we were on to something. However, my daughter would say the day she knew we were on to something was when she saw *The Slight Edge* listed on ABC's website as *The Bachelorette* contestant

Roberto Martinez's favorite book. When he went on to win the show and Ali's heart she called me and said "The Slight Edge even helps you win reality TV shows!"

In all seriousness, the amazing thing is we hardly promoted the book. In fact, it never had wide distribution because it could only be purchased by calling a 1-800 number. By simple word-of-mouth the book has exploded at a grassroots level—completely organic. And now that we have seen how it is affecting so many lives I wanted to make it better—to take it to the next level.

And if wasn't for my daughter Amber pushing me to bring some of these stories and testimonials to life, this revised edition wouldn't exist. She was the driving force behind this project and pushed me to make this book even better than it already is.

## The Book That Started It All

The message I want to get across is this book is real. Over the years, people have shared with me how the Slight Edge was working in their life. I told them to give me their business card with the topic (either finances, health, sports, etc) on the back and we would call them to get their story in writing. Let's just say I didn't do a very good job in calling these wonderful people back. Amber finally volunteered to call these people when she saw the drawer spilling over with business cards of people anxious to share their stories.

Again, I want to thank my daughter for finding the time to call these wonderful people and to personally thank them for sharing with me the stories you are about to read.

I would be remiss if I didn't give credit to the time period when *The Slight Edge* debuted. Personal-development sections of bookstores exploded in the '90s and we were a part of that exciting time. People had finally begun to ask themselves, *What I am doing with my life? I want something more.* Today we are experiencing a similar revival. In time of economic distress, people start to prioritize what's most important to them and they want to be educated on how to get ahead.

I tell you all this so that before I start explaining the Slight Edge philosophy you get to see how I came to understand the Slight Edge and how these principles have stood the test of time by themselves—with or without my influence—and have enabled people to accomplish amazing things. The principles you are about to learn are time-tested, and it's my deepest desire that you will embrace them to the fullest.

As a way to thank all of the readers, this revision is dedicated to all the past, present and future readers of *The Slight Edge*. All we have done is plant the seed. You are the ones who have watered and cultivated it to be what it is today.

Thank you,  
Jeff Olson

## What's New in This Revised Edition?

In this revised edition we have meticulously gone through each chapter and expanded it with new stories, as well as updates based upon observation of the Slight Edge principles over the last five years.

There is a new chapter in this edition called 7 Slight Edge Principles. It's a collection of specific, actionable principles and characteristics that will help you in applying the Slight Edge philosophy, which Part Two of the book is all about. It is a good foundation on which to start your own personal-development journey, all the while creating a positive ripple effect, by one action that creates several positive reactions.

The one thing I am most excited about in this revised edition is the chance to share with you the stories of many readers of *The Slight Edge*. We have received thousands of amazing stories from readers explaining how *The Slight Edge* has helped them with their personal relationships, finances, business, health, and life pursuits just by injecting the Slight Edge philosophy into their lives. The results have created a ripple effect having a lasting impact on everyone they meet. Their stories explain the principles and real-life applications far better than I ever could. I hope you will be moved by their stories as much as I was.

My daughter Amber contributed a section addressing the next generation of readers of *The Slight Edge*. She has grown up with *The Slight Edge* and knows the importance of getting this information into the hands of young people to help them understand that the choices they make today will affect the rest of their lives.

*Through my father and others, I have seen the impact of a lifetime full of right and wrong decisions and where they lead you. I am forever grateful to have had the Slight Edge philosophy instilled in me at a young age by my parents, because I was able to end up on the positive side of the Slight Edge curve by being aware that the choices I make on a daily basis matter.*

—Amber Olson

I am excited and honored to announce the brand new Slight Edge online community, an additional resource that gives readers of *The Slight Edge* a voice to share their experiences with other like-minded individuals, as well as share resources and Slight Edge tips, encourage and support one another, and experience additional life-enriching information. **Please come experience the slight edge community at [www.SlightEdge.org](http://www.SlightEdge.org).** I look forward to seeing you there!