



## Chapter Four

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### Inspiring Your Possibilities

*An interview with...*

**Chris Steely**

**David E. Wright (Wright)**

Today we're talking with Chris Steely. Chris is a business and personal effectiveness coach with global experience in numerous industries. His personal mission is to positively influence as many people as possible through open communication, empathetic understanding, idealism, and contagious commitment to success. Chris has created and developed two executive coaching and search firms and currently travels the world coaching and inspiring business owners to be more effective. He has facilitated teams of hundreds in areas of business success—cross-pollinating ideas and ideals and empowering growth. He holds an MBA from Boston University, he is a United States Marine Corps Logistics Officer, and an NCAA National Rowing Champion.

Chris, welcome to *GPS for Success: Goals and Proven Strategies*.

**Chris Steely (Steely)**

Thanks, David! It's good to be here.

**Wright**

So what do you think is wrong with the world today?

**Steely**

That's a big question—"wrongness" is an interesting perspective. So I'll ask that the reader now to consider the concept of "wrongness," as we will be addressing the dichotomy of "rightness" in a little bit. Make it a point to truly understand and grasp the following information, versus just reading or hearing it.

There are two perfect storms occurring. The first storm involves three thought processes. The first is *entitlement*—too many people feel that they are entitled to things, whether it be a nice car, a big house, or respect from other people. Aggressive capitalism has created a paradigm where people feel that they don't have to work hard to earn things; instead, many feel that they should simply be given them, and be able to have what they see other people having, without working hard to achieve them, hence our problem of out-of-control debt.

The second thought process is *victimization*. We seem to live in a victim-based world, where so many people default to blaming others for their predicaments and situations. Many people actually validate themselves by being victimized, and make excuses that they are not responsible for their lives. Combine entitlement with victimization, and you can see why the legal profession has flourished and become so "popular," yet so disregarded by many.

The third is *obliviousness*. Unfortunately, most people are utterly oblivious to the fact that they exist as entitled victims, and have little regard for other people in their communities and spheres of influence. Too many people exist day-to-day, obliviously unaware of the mindsets and perspectives that are causing division throughout our communities.

These three thought processes comprise one of the storms that are causing our societies to churn and cycle toward chaos and demise.

The other storm involves the concept of three powerful, inherently human character traits. The first of these is *ego*. Ego has evolved from an inherently

necessary aspect of human psychology to a perspective that is caustic to the development of progressive societies. The Free Dictionary defines ego as: 1) The self, especially as distinct from the world and other selves, and 2) An exaggerated sense of self-importance; conceit.

Many people have internalized their distinction from the world and other selves, which influences their behavior so that their personal reality, and exaggerated sense of self-importance, is evolving into heightened levels of conceit.

The second character trait is *power*. Throughout history, powerful societies have won wars, conquered nations, and created the thought processes and ideals that govern our societies. People have become "power vacuums," which they need to fill with more power, whether it is in the workplace, in government, or even in their private homes. The instinct to acquire more power is forcing people to focus on over-powering others.

The third character trait is *greed*. Greed has developed into a self-defeating lifestyle. Peoples' appetites for more, more, and more have become insatiable, partially attributable to the entitlement mindset mentioned in the first storm. Abundance has become inadequate, and people are greedily consuming products and resources at an alarming rate to satisfy a dysfunctional appetite that will never be satisfied. "Keeping up with the Joneses" has been replaced with "leave the Joneses in the dust," and it's become cancerous to the development of true community and progression of society.

These two perfect storms of thought and developed character traits are feeding upon themselves to foster environmental chaos, as their paths wreak havoc within our society, causing people to live lives of desperation and choosing mindsets of isolationism and false superiority.

Take it to the extreme, and people start operating with divisive mindsets: political parties, us versus them, mine versus yours, good versus bad. The grey areas are going away, and people are migrating to separate corners. Fortunately, America's new President seems to have created a "conscientious party" of people who are more oriented toward implementing positive change, as opposed to trying to solve our problems with the same level of divisive thinking that created them.

Take this to the ultimate extreme of how so many of our society's parents are creating generations of people who further foster these beliefs. Children are raised

into these paradigms of thought, lacking awareness and consideration for other people, espousing self-satisfying, immediate-gratifying mindsets, and a “me first” attitude. There is too much taking, and not enough giving.

These collective storms represent the polar dichotomy, which is adversely shaping the future of our cultures and societies. Many have referred to this extreme perspective on the “demise of our society” as an unprecedented opportunity to focus on turning the tide. People are hungry to overcome the dissatisfaction inherent to the symptoms that these thought processes create.

But enough about what’s wrong. Let’s not focus on the wrongness, as the Law of Attraction is a powerful force. I prefer to focus on, and attract, what’s *right*.

The first aspect of “rightness” with the world involves the fact that *you* are in it. We are all, in fact, part of a community of people who exist in this moment in time as a global society, complete with all of its sunrises, sunsets, joys, breaths, and unforgettable moments. We all are experiencing the unique and distinct wonders of life. Every day we all have the opportunity to create ourselves anew, become more aware of our individual opportunities and possibilities, and choose the option of power and wonder in the face of the storms. In fact, opportunities for power and positive potential are more abundant now than ever in our history.

We exist in a dynamic of exponentially expanding and evolving technologies that bring cascades of opportunities, options, and choice, and the ability for us all to implement powerful change. These opportunities to excel and develop bring brilliant potential—potential that we’ve never been faced with until now. Our rapid societal advancements over the past several decades continue to foster more opportunities for us all to step into our own unique power and brilliance. We are now faced with incalculable opportunities to grow and see things from different perspectives. The key is that it’s *your* choice. Every day, *you* have the choice to see the rightness and thereby attract more of it.

So let’s go back to dissatisfaction and the dichotomy of right versus wrong. Let your dissatisfaction with the status quo drive you to achieve more of what you want, versus defaulting to a mindset that will force you to fall victim to what our societal storms seem to be raining down upon our global community, reinforced by the daily news of how bad things are. It fosters fear and bolsters readership and advertising revenues, as people clamor to find goodness and salvation in a

negatively-oriented media blitz. In the face of this “wrongness,” and the drama that seems to validate so many people, choose to step into the “rightness” of your empowered self. In Mahatma Gandhi’s words, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” There’s never been a better time in history, especially because *you* are *here now*.

### **Wright**

With all this potential, how do we make it better?

### **Steely**

First, we have to *want* to make it better. So many people exist in their own personal status quo. They become engulfed and washed away in the flow, maintain their obliviousness, lose sight of how it could be better, and end up not wanting to make it better. They succumb to their “comfort,” which fosters cowardice in actually implementing positive change.

The key to countering the status quo is first to *want* to stretch and implement positive change (versus succumbing to the negative change, which will creep into our lives if we allow it). Each of us has the capability and the power to implement change based on what we *want* to change.

We get to realize that we are put on this earth for a reason. Our lives can become a quest for that reason and a journey of implementing our powerful capabilities. Again, that realization is always a choice. People can choose to realize that they are here on this planet for a reason. All personal power and success stems from this.

Second, eliminate the negative drama—the choice to focus on a perspective of the badness and wrongness that we are encouraged by most of the popular media to embrace. Many of our societies today merely surrender to the storms of demise, and wallow in the “business as usual” perspective of the negative drama. Instead of focusing on this, choose to focus on your positive potential and commit to becoming a “difference-maker” in your community of family, your expanded community of the workplace, and the ultimate global community. Commit to being part of the solution, not part of the problem.

**Wright**

Do you really think that one individual can make a difference?

**Steely**

Definitely, but each individual has to ask if he or she really *wants* to make a difference, and how he or she *can* make a difference. Those are the big questions.

Let me offer some suggestions about what people *could* do: 1) Get involved. Start to really care about other people. Be aware of their situations, being more considerate, and discover what you *can* do to make a difference. This is where the individual has a responsibility to determine what his or her reason for being here is. I will suggest in the context of this discussion that it is about service. How are you here to serve your community, your family, your country, and your planet?

I had the privilege of serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, so I understand what "service" is all about. I'll never forget my father driving me to affirm my commitment, and offering alternatives, testing my resolve (he was a Marine himself). In my early twenties, he told me that I could choose to serve in many ways, not just in the U.S. military service. He told me that I could serve in business, in my community, and in so many other areas. That statement shifted my perspective on what my life was all about. I challenge people to make a list of areas wherein they can serve in their community, in their church, an athletic organization, the business community, or other area. The key is to commit to service.

Make service habitual. Leverage your experience and your strength to truly make a difference for others. After excelling in the sport of rowing, I carried it forward and became a coach for rowing teams in my community. I became president of my local marketing association. After my mother succumbed to cancer when I was twenty-one years old, I began serving cancer causes throughout the community. I began all of this service before the age of twenty-five.

Find things that mean something to you and discover a way to serve in those areas. Don't just do it for money—do it to contribute, make a difference in our society, and build your character in the process. Be aware of how that service affects others. As one person who is conscientious and driving toward goal achievement, you have the responsibility to contribute in the best way you can.

Awareness takes consciousness. Be conscious, and be a 360 degree person (as John Maxwell says). Whether you are boarding a plane, driving a car, or crossing the street, be aware all the time of what's going on around you and consider other people in your space; too many people are not. Instead of pinning yourself up against the baggage carousel waiting for your luggage in the airport, why not back off a few feet, allowing the people whose baggage comes out before yours to be able to retrieve it without climbing over you.

So now that you have the perspective of awareness and consideration, the key is to enhance it—be an idealist, and set the example. This is what an individual can do: follow your ideal and inspire others to emulate your example.

### **Wright**

As an idealist, do you ever feel that you are alone out in a big jaded world?

### **Steely**

I believe that we actually coexist in a global community. My enthusiasm and ability to carry on depends a great deal upon those I surround myself with. If I choose to surround myself with people and messages of entitled victimization, ego, power, and greed, then I can feel alone in my ideal. However, I personally have a knack for team-building by helping other people better realize how they can contribute. I inspire them to do so, thereby building a community of like-minded people with whom I further collaborate.

Fortunately, I never feel lonely. I know that I can choose to feel alone, but it's always my choice—I actually enjoy my “all one-ness,” and seem to thrive on my own. My time of focusing on my personal key tasks—whether I am writing a book, meditating, reading, or listening to good music—is always revitalizing because I choose for it to be so.

I also consciously choose to leverage my capabilities as a team-builder. I inspire groups of people to do the same, as we create and embark on crusades. Over the past several years, I've actually created several business and personal networking organizations that have grown roots and borne a lot of great fruit here in my hometown of Las Vegas. My instinct to do that had been led by my ethic of service above self.

Instead of feeling alone in a big jaded world, I've actually chosen to fulfill and set the example of my ideal of global community by taking deliberate action and going out and catalyzing communities. I've made a deliberate choice not to be alone in it. So can you—so can anyone.

### **Wright**

You talk about team and opportunities, but how can we work together to solve our problems when so many people seem to be only in it for themselves?

### **Steely**

Actually, we're *all* in it for ourselves. Each individual's world revolves around himself or herself. We are all "self-centered" because all we really "know" (i.e., see, hear, taste, touch, smell, and sense) is within our physical space and sphere of influence. The body into which each of us was born exists only in its allotted space, which means that from our individual perspective, everything that happens around us and away from us, orbits close to and further away from our spheres. From this perspective, each individual is the center of his or her universe, thereby "self-centered."

So even though we all exist within a community, we all have individual perspectives. My perspective is based on me and this body I inhabit. From this "self-centered" perspective, we each have the choice to be self-ish or self-ful. Assuming that we are oriented toward taking care of our primary responsibility of keeping our bodies and minds healthy and thriving during this life, let's take the assumption of self-ful—"self-centered," self-actualization—and set it aside for the moment.

So then, what's left? We have communities of selves who are all part of a collective, and whose imperatives are to discover what inspires each of us, do what we're good at and what impassions us, and apply that outside our sphere of influence, thereby effecting and affecting the community. Once you realize that dichotomy of selfishness—from who you are as an individual versus the other extreme of how you effect your community—you can choose your condition and mental state, trust that your physical environment is in harmony with your ability to

survive in it, believe that you as an individual are here for a reason, and refuse to buy into the drama of everything else that's out there that's not you.

It's the dichotomy of the community that we live in. I choose to create team and community based on my ideal. The community actually feeds the individual and vice versa. So the key is to be the individual that's in it for the collective. Now we each get to challenge ourselves to break the paradigm of taking simply to fulfill our needs, and determine how we can fulfill the community, in addition to fulfilling our self-fulness.

### **Wright**

How did you gain these insights?

### **Steely**

I've developed a level of insight that is unique to me. We've all got unique perspectives and insights, based on our upbringings, our challenges, and our developments. I believe that nobody is as necessarily as powerful as anybody else; we each have the opportunity to be aware of our power, and choose to develop and leverage it. I've chosen to recognize my power.

My personal life metaphor is sailing. One of your previous authors Katrina Mikia actually spoke of sailing as a great metaphor for awareness and presence. I used to sail on a lake in Indiana when I was a kid, and that metaphor has carried me through my life. When you're sailing on the water, leveraging the wind against the sail, it's about accepting your situation, letting it be, trusting, and being present, because there are only so many things you can control in the dynamic of the wind, and potentially the storm. The dichotomy of the storm is stillness, and no wind—a condition of peace and quiet, letting it be, being aware, and understanding through experience that you're here on this journey for a reason. My metaphor of sailing—letting it be, and trusting the process—has facilitated my perspective. I've learned that paying attention, being aware, and being present are powerful states of being.

We have all been blessed with our unique spirits—we are not earthly beings trying to be spiritual; rather, we are spiritual beings on an earthly journey. So I've been able to internalize that belief and believe that the equation of life involves adversity, challenge, expansion, and ultimately, personal power.

After the loss of my mother, I had to come to terms with that loss and compensate, so I became independent, self-full, and spirit-full. I unconditionally accepted spirituality as an imperative, not an option in my life. The adversity of serving in the Marine Corps and being challenged beyond my limits allowed me to grow more than most grow in a lifetime.

Many people try to avoid adversity and dilute their character in the process, as character is fostered through adversity. Welcome it, embrace it, and realize that it's part of this journey and is meant to sculpt us to become who we're meant to be.

**Wright**

So what's the key to success?

**Steely**

First, determine what success means to you. Discover yourself and your aspirations by questioning things, not merely accepting the status quo. Study your past and how you became shaped into the person you are. By doing this, doors of opportunity and possibility will open for you.

The key is not just to copy what society sees as success; too many people succumb to trying to be like other people. I mentioned character fostered through adversity; achieve your own perspective of character based on embracing and learning from the challenges with which you are faced, so that when loss happens (and it will), you are prepared to deal with the adversity and leverage it to become stronger. During our lives, we're all going to have loss, pain, and struggle. Leverage these situations to become stronger. Everybody's got a unique story. Allow your unique story to galvanize you, and apply your life's lessons toward how you can contribute to this community allowing others to leverage you, and learn from your character. Embrace change, welcome it, and be goal-oriented.

**Wright**

So how do you inspire a goal-oriented mindset?

## **Steely**

Since the age of fifteen, I've realized the power of being goal-oriented. I think I heard it from Tony Robbins first, when he spoke about setting goals and developing the power of that mindset.

We all want things. Unfortunately, a great deal of our identity is sculpted around the concept that want and desire are actually bad. For much of our society, the love of money is considered the root of evil. Yet our human instinct is to want and need more. The key is to not deny that we want to have these ideals.

The first step is to discover what you want. It's imperative to ask yourself, dig deep, and go deeper from there. Then write those ideas and ideals down, and develop a plan to go for them. Don't be ashamed of striving for more than you have. Ultimately, you will condition yourself to be goal-oriented because you will start striving for and achieving your objectives, which will fulfill your needs and desires.

Most people want immediate gratification, but it just doesn't work that way. Success and goal achievement takes time. Ideally, not a long time, but the key is to respect the fact that time has to pass and to be patient with it.

For example, when I set a goal to become a business leader, my life took on a whole new tack. It's as though I went on remote control. I didn't really enjoy school, but I was put into a situation where I had the opportunity to earn an MBA and I went for it. It was a challenge and a struggle. I did relatively well. I ended up achieving that milestone, obtaining the education and credentials to help me advance toward my goals.

The classic example in my life is that I set a goal to have a great relationship, following the demise of my first marriage. I actually wrote the description of my ideal mate (we all know that a goal is not real until it's written down). Within a matter of weeks, I was given the opportunity of achieving that "goal" by encountering my current wife, who seemed to be exactly as I described—in full detail. The challenge for me was to get out of my own way, overcome my limiting beliefs, and make a deliberate, bold move. Thanks to the opportunity catalyzed by my goal-setting, I am now living that ideal.

Athletic champions experience their own "tacks," as they strive toward their competitive goals, including pain, early mornings, physical discipline, commitment, and the sweet taste of victory. Champions develop character

required to become champions through grit, strife, challenge, and hard work, with the ideal staring them in the face, as they train and strive to be the best. The ideal is what drives them.

When you adopt a deliberate, goal-oriented lifestyle, your life takes on a life of its own that takes you down new pathways toward achieving those goals. Your level of success is always your choice. You can take the path of least resistance and choose to settle for less than you idealize, or you can accept the challenge to become great—as great as you want to be. You have to experience it for yourself to truly understand it, so go for it!

### **Wright**

Of the things that you've done in your life, which is the one you would most like to undo?

### **Steely**

If I undid anything, I wouldn't be who I am now, because it has all happened for a reason. From all of the bad times to all of the great times, I have been sculpted and shaped to become the person I am now, and I am blessed.

If people desire to change something that's happened to them—good, bad, right, or wrong—they are consciously disempowering themselves by wishing that they would have become different people along the way. Everything that has happened to us—everything we have done and every choice that we have made—has made us who we are now. The key now is what do we do with it? What are we to do today, as we are present in this gift of today? How do we influence our future based on our actions of today? We always have that choice.

### **Wright**

For the folks reading this book who are eager to succeed and make a difference in their world, what would you advise?

### **Steely**

From my perspective, the key is to be present and aware of your "condition" in life, based on the decisions you've made so far. Be aware of your identity, which has been sculpted since your birth. Then become conscious of the fact that you can influence your positive, powerful future right now. It really is amazing how

much you can learn about yourself, others, and your "condition" by reading books about personal development and learning more about yourself. So make it a point to read books about personal development, attend seminars, and, as Stephen Covey says, "keep your saw sharp" by continually honing your skills and awareness.

Make it a point to leverage television. So many successful people advise to not watch television, but I say leverage it to broaden your horizons. There are great programs out there that you can tune into and learn about your environment, science, arts, international culture, and so much more. Don't just defer to television for its inherent entertainment and escapism aspects. Instead, escape from the dynamics that can pull you into a hypnotic state of just staring at a screen for purely entertainment processes. Focus on broadening your horizons by turning television into a learning tool.

Become involved in your communities. Whether it be your local neighborhood, business community, your community of family, or any other community of your choosing, increase your involvement.

Learn what's holding you back, confront your fears, and strive to overcome them. Understand yourself because you are the only *you* that you've got. Discover why you are who you are, then leverage your divine capabilities to be happy now. Discover yourself and delve deeper into understanding yourself. What events in your life have sculpted you? Why have you been shaped to become the person you are? Embrace your uniqueness and live it authentically (from the heart). Choose to be passionate.

## **Wright**

So what is passion?

## **Steely**

Passion is actually something that really can't be explained. To try to describe passion in a few words will actually dilute its ideal definition. But allow me to do my best; passion is enthusiasm, excitement, obsession, zeal, and inspiration.

Actually, I think passion is best described metaphorically. Think of what makes you passionate, like a sunrise. Resonate with the concept of a sunrise. In your mind's eye, see the colors, the textures; experience the wonder. You are now visualizing a sunrise in your own unique way. Everyone's vision is different and

everyone's passion is different, in his or her own unique way. For me, the passion of a sunrise reminds me of possibilities—it's the brilliance of the beginning of a new day.

The key is to know what makes you passionate. Is it family? Fame? Animals? Our prerogative is to determine what impassions us and distill it into a metaphor that drives us to do what we do.

**Wright**

So my last question to you is, if today were the last day of your life what would you do with it?

**Steely**

Great question! It's a question that I'd like to deflect back to the reader right now. If today were the last day of your life, what would you do with it? Imagine the possibilities of adventure—its unknowns and values. Strive to live from that space every day. That's the imperative.

Determine how you can be somebody who can serve the world. Too many people exist as part of the problem and seem to thrive off amplifying negative situations. Resolve to make difference in the world and be remembered for something bigger than yourself. Figure out what you want to be remembered for and take action toward implementing that ideal.

**Wright**

This has been very interesting, Chris. I really appreciate the time you've taken with me today to answer all these questions. You've given me a lot to think about. This is going to last me several months—I've taken so many notes. I've learned a lot and I'm sure that our readers will get a lot out of this chapter.

**Steely**

Thanks, David. It's been my pleasure.

**Wright**

Today we've been talking with Chris Steely, a business and personal effectiveness coach. His personal mission is to positively influence as many people as possible through open communication, empathetic understanding, idealism, and contagious commitment to success. I don't know about you, but I believe him. I may try to do some changing today.

Chris, thank you so much for being with us today on *GPS for Success: Goals and Proven Strategies*.

**Steely**

Thank you, David.