

## TWENTY

# THE BLUEFISHING PLAYBOOK

**W**hen people say “the stars are aligned,” or “your ducks are in a row”—you know it’s not luck, right? It’s you.

I can’t stand this idea of luck. That you’re lucky to get that girl, you’re lucky to have such a successful career, or when someone says, “You know, it’s funny. The harder I work, the luckier I get.”

Nope, not luck. What is happening in that moment is this: Everything you’ve been doing, all the hard work that has gone on, beneath the surface, the emotional digging for authenticity, all your efforts to observe and absorb and change and grow and evolve and succeed, all that suddenly leads to a moment when you’re on top of it all.

## STACK YOUR DECK

Bluefishing is a mentality first, and then it's a stack of tools and behaviors that add up to incredible achievements. You start by looking at yourself and running an audit on your life. Then you dig deep into your passion, finding out what it is and listening for it in others. Then you apply perseverance, and layer on a whole lot of real deal authenticity for your own personal brand and all your relationships. At that point, all that's left is to stay on top of your game by practicing saying no, orchestrating talent around you, and remembering to constantly soak in 1 percent more experience and, yes, failure, than you knew yesterday.

What I've laid out in this book is a series of stories, beliefs, and tools for living the life you want to live and getting anything done. It's a book of building blocks, and once you've learned them, you can climb them to the very top of the world. And that, *that* is Bluefishing. You want to know how you knock down walls? You don't even see them anymore, because you're so far above them.

You've got it in you, Bluefisher, but if you ever lose your way, just come back to this Playbook, say the password, and the door will open and you're on your way.

One fish, two fish, red fish . . .

## THE BLUEFISHING PLAYBOOK

1. Throw away the “That could never be me” mentality. Instead, ask, “Why couldn’t it?”
2. No one ever drowned from falling in the water. They drowned from staying there. Don’t be afraid to jump, Bluefisher. Be afraid of standing still.
3. Avoid Analysis Paralysis. While other people are planning things to an early death, Bluefishers have already tried something 4 Different Ways And Learned What Works.
4. There’s a password for every door. You just have to listen for it.
5. Don’t be easy to understand, be impossible to *misunderstand*.
6. Nothing’s ever going to happen if it benefits only you. Work for win-win, every time.
7. Ask Why at Least Three Times: The first why is what they think they think, the second why is what they think you want to hear, the third why is what they feel.

8. The experience beats the cash, every time. Cash gets spent and forgotten. An experience you can give to someone sticks forever.
9. Passion Is Something You Have to Discover. Relax. Try stuff. It takes time. But never stop looking.
10. If you knew that the Earth was going to collide with Mars tomorrow, what would you do right now? Maybe that's your passion.
11. Do Not Believe What People Tell You. Most don't have the ability to communicate effectively. All of their best information is unsaid, somewhere between the lines. Drill down for it.
12. Actually Give a Damn. If *You* don't believe in it, *They* won't believe in it.
13. Failure is just an education in what not to do. For every failure, you're learning. Take pride in your scars.
14. What people think about you is just their perception, it's not a fact about you.
15. What happens to you is not your obituary. Get back up again, Bluefisher.
16. It's not about your IQ. It's about your I Can.
17. A handwritten note beats an email every single time: It takes less than a second to delete an email,

but a minimum of three minutes (and a lot more emotion) to discard something real.

- 18.** Let people know you're thinking about them. It goes far.
- 19.** "Ugly" works. For Bluefishers, ugly means raw, unpolished, quick, and real. It's the opposite of overpolished, CGI and corporate.
- 20.** Do a self-audit, because things don't magically get better. Take an honest look at your strengths and weaknesses. Invest in the strengths and see what weaknesses you need to remove.
- 21.** How Do You Walk into a Room? Personal branding is not marketing and Twitter followers. It's figuring out your core persona. Who you are, not who they want you to be.
- 22.** Don't waste your time counting likes: You'll never be able to pay your bar tab with Facebook likes. . . .
- 23.** Try the Chug Test. If you want to know if someone is a good match for you (as a client, customer, vendor, boss, employee, friend), ask yourself: Would I chug a beer with that person?
- 24.** Master the courage to say no: Remember the more you bring into your life, the more you dilute what you can do well.

25. **Audit Your Inner Circle:** *No* gives you the ability to fire the vampires. You can fire customers. You can even fire friends. Determine who adds energy to your time and who sucks it out.
26. There's a difference between being able to do everything and *doing* everything.
27. You can only grow by giving other people responsibility. That's the only way you and your business will ever manage to scale.
28. **It's About Time:** The real art of delegation, Bluefish style, is actually about learning how to put time into what matters. This means learning how not to spend time on things that slow you down.
29. "Great" is not a goal you can see. If you want to make your business great, first work to make it better than it was yesterday.
30. Get the right people to say the right things about you. That's marketing in a nutshell.
31. You can't concentrate on your friends when you're giving all your time to strangers.
32. Don't let technology set the rules for your communication. If you hide behind emails and tweets, no one will ever hear you.

- 33.** If communication isn't personal, it's not communication.
- 34.** Have someone with credibility at a party telling five people that you're the magical gold dust they need. That's better marketing than sending out twenty-thousand emails.
- 35.** Enter Sponge Mode as often as possible. Walk in to a room to learn something new and say: "Hey, I'm an idiot right now, but I'm here to get just one percent smarter."
- 36.** If you stretch an elastic band five times, then let it go, it will never go back to the same small size it originally was. Same thing with you. Stretch yourself, Bluefisher, and you'll never shrink back to where you started.
- 37.** If you can wrap passion and persistence together, you're invincible.
- 38.** There's a thin line between patience and complacency. Patience can be a cop-out.
- 39.** Have the relationship you want to have. If there were a Top Five List of guidelines for Bluefishing, the number one thing on the list would be to have the relationship you want to have with your clients, colleagues, community, friends, and

family. Then things two through five would be to repeat the first one.

- 40.** Take money out of the equation (if you can).  
Money drives our emotional and physical states, but when you can take money out of the equation, you get to act based on principle.
- 41.** When you do something or give something, make sure you can honestly say: “I did this just for you. Not for anyone else. You.”
- 42.** Someday doesn’t mean anything. Never plan for someday. Today is what matters.
- 43.** Consciously build new habits. Day start off on the wrong foot? Here’s a trick. Write down your so-called losses for the morning on a piece of paper. Then flip the paper over and start fresh. Write down your small wins on that side. Learn to celebrate tiny successes, and put the losses behind you.
- 44.** Negativity is the opposite of passion. It is the silent assassin that kills most people’s motivation.
- 45.** Be as selfish as you have to be. You have a right to recharge yourself. Take it and defend it. That’s the only way you’ll be able to harness your own energy to make things happen.

BLUEFISHING

There you go. That's the secret playbook. Unlocked and there for the taking. The deck is stacked in your favor.

I hope you'll use these tools to open all the doors in your life and make real magic happen.

And when it works for you, drop me a note, master Bluefisher.

—*Steve Sims*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I've been interviewed a lot over the last twenty years. I've been on television, I've been featured in magazines, I've been in the news. But Jayson Gaignard was the first person to ask me to get up on stage *not* to talk about the world of luxury, but to talk about ME—about my experiences and ideas about life and business. I'm really glad he asked.

Then, suddenly, people started saying, "Sims, you should write a book." Then Tucker Max (thanks, Tucker) told me to actually go write the damn thing. Thanks to Philip McKernan for further sealing my fate by telling me I had a *duty* to write the book, to my agents Scott Hoffman and Frank Weimann at Folio for making sure I did, and, of course, to Michele Martin at North Star and Simon & Schuster for making sure the world had the opportunity to read it.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Steve Sims has been running his luxury travel and lifestyle concierge firm, Bluefish, for more than twenty years. With his unique talent for connecting with people's passions, opening doors, and making things happen, Sims has developed an exclusive reputation and impressive client list of the world's rich and famous. Bluefish has offices around the world and has been featured in *Forbes*, the *New York Times*, *Entrepreneur*, *Variety*, *Worth*, CNBC, and many other media outlets. Sims is also a keynote speaker at venues including Harvard and the Pentagon, and has spoken at many top entrepreneurial groups, including Mastermind Talks, Genius Networking Events, and Entrepreneur Society of SF. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, kids, dogs, and a lot of motorcycles.