



HOW TO BALANCE YOUR CRAVINGS  
FOR HUMANITY AND TECHNOLOGY  
IN TODAY'S STARTUP CULTURE

# The NICE Reboot

A Guide to Becoming a Better  
Female Entrepreneur



Penina Rybak



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## Praise for *The NICE Reboot*

“Whether you’re driven by necessity or opportunity, *The NICE Reboot* offers the perfect combination of information and inspiration to put you on the path to entrepreneurial success. Penina Rybak takes the mystery out of business startup. Follow her simple formula: Creativity + Passion + Timing = Entrepreneurial Success and you’ll unlock the secrets of achieving your dreams of business ownership.”

— RIEVA LESONSKY, Founder/CEO of GrowBiz Media

“Penina Rybak is a passionate, thoughtful advocate for women’s entrepreneurship. She has a deep understanding of the tools, resources and models which will help women to launch viable businesses, which is critical to the future success of our economy.”

— PAMELA SLIM, business coach and bestselling author of *Body of Work* and *Escape from Cubicle Nation*

“I enjoyed reading the book and got great ideas from it! Penina’s writing is beautiful and inspirational! She not only tells us how to be successful but how to make the world a better place while feeling complete as a person. Her insightful knowledge of social media and new technology is both refreshing and energizing. I love the way she encourages us to think outside the box and grow. She also uses history and current culture to teach us how to best serve our community and relate in a “NICE” humanitarian way. This is an entertaining read peppered with movie reviews and words of wisdom.”

— ERIN WILSON, Founder, QRCode ID

“*The NICE Reboot* does a great job of motivating and mentoring a large and growing group of entrepreneurs — women! I do believe that women have the edge, with their high emotional IQ, to create the “new business culture” that every worker wants — better role definitions, more effective and productive leadership, and better work-life balance. I like Penina’s idea of convincing them to reboot, if necessary, to achieve that potential.”

— MARTY ZWILLING, Founder & CEO of Startup Professionals, Inc.

“*The NICE Reboot* provides LOTS of information for the wannabe entrepreneur.”

— GERI STENGEL, President of Ventureneer and Stengel Solutions

Sample Book Pages

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Sample Book Pages

ONE

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# Getting Started

N = NICE

## Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Implications

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### KEY WEBSITES

- 🔗 <http://bit.ly/gardner-multiple-intelligences>
  - 🔗 <http://bit.ly/find-your-strengths>
  - 🔗 <http://bit.ly/bgfl-multiple-intelligences>
  - 🔗 <http://bit.ly/learning-styles>
  - 🔗 <http://bit.ly/mbti-personality-types>
-

## Quotes to Ponder

*The woman who thinks she is intelligent, demands equal rights with men.*

— Sidonie Gabrielle Colette

*Anything that is worth teaching can be presented in many different ways. These multiple ways can make use of our multiple intelligences.*

— Dr. Howard Gardner

## Definition

THE THEORY OF *multiple intelligences* suggests that people have various learning styles that affect their intake of information from their five senses (perceiving and processing), and integrate that information with what they already know, store, or remember from events they previously experienced. This information is then paired with the vocabulary associated with that event.

Neuropsychologists call this *episodic memory*, a byproduct of a person's executive functioning skills. Episodic memory is what's responsible for our behavior when we find ourselves out of our element or dealing with the same unwanted situation when we dig into our stored memories of past events and snippets of vocabulary to help us contextually make sense of our current predicament. We use our learned knowledge to navigate uncharted waters—socially, mentally, and even physically. This behavior is learned over time, and our learning styles help feed our episodic memory. So it's crucial for you to be aware of what it is that you're remembering and how it's getting into your memory banks in the first place. Dr. Howard Gardner, a developmental psychologist at Harvard, posited the theory of multiple intelligences in 1983. He stated that you have seven learning styles (some say eight) that affect your cognition (your ability to per-

ceive, recognize, conceive, and reason), your rate and depth of learning, your behavior, and your overall performance or competence.

It's important for entrepreneurs to understand these different learning styles because that understanding gives you insight into the way you perceive, process, and retain memories of how the world works and your role in it. It helps you better master your approach to problem solving and how you pitch your products or services. It helps you more clearly grasp your project collaborators' and/or customers' inner landscapes and any potential pitfalls you might encounter when being asked to respond to a call to action. Educators have long known that learning styles affect your inner landscape, and that they fall into three main categories: auditory, visual, and tactile. What is interesting about Dr. Gardner's research is that it revealed that these three styles contain subcategories that can show cross-pollination in the way the brain learns and retains information about your environment and those in it.

## **Multiple Intelligences — Traits and Implications**

THE IMPLICATIONS OF the concept of multiple intelligences for entrepreneurs are huge (see my pointers below). To help you see the value in understanding the concept here is the list of the eight types of intelligences for you to use as a self-assessment tool to facilitate introspection and self-realization. At the very least, you can use what you've learned as a great conversation starter at your next meeting or interview!

- ☼ **Kinesthetic** (Tactile Learning/Body Awareness): craves touch and sensory input from different textures of clothes and food, etc., so work environment (surroundings, furnishings) is important as well as athletic outlets for stress management, etc.
- ☼ **Visuo-Spatial** (Visual Learning/Gestalt Awareness): creative, artistic, sees the big picture, good at determining

- project trajectories and division of labor for projects; work environment is important (surroundings, furnishings)
- ⊗ **Rhythmic** (Musical Learning): sensitive to mood, time-sequenced movements, and tempos of people and places; good at time management and forestalling missed deadlines for projects; thrives on timed activities, especially when paired with music
  - ⊗ **Verbal/Linguistic** (Auditory Learning): good retention of vocabulary; a wordsmith; good debating, oration, and literacy skills; gravitates toward providing oral presentations and social media marketing campaigns; thrives on conversation or brainstorming in the workplace
  - ⊗ **Naturalist** (Detail-Oriented): adventurous; craves open spaces and the great outdoors; sees connections or patterns in nature and in living things; gravitates toward nature, telecommuting, and travel opportunities in the workplace and toward people who are Kinesthetic
  - ⊗ **Logical** (Analytical): math-oriented; detail-oriented; good reasoning skills; sequential thinker; bottom-line or outcome thinker for projects requiring multiple team players and multiple goals or products to be restructured, reshuffled, and reassigned; gravitates toward Visuo-Spatial people
  - ⊗ **Intrapersonal** (Self-Awareness): understands own theory of mind and drives; encompasses what educators would call metacognition and executive functioning; introspective, reflective, sensitive, and contained; a good listener; gravitates toward taking on a series of tasks that will be thoughtfully completed with extra small touches; tends to like some quiet “me” time to complete tasks

- ☉ **Interpersonal (Social):** empathetic; intuitive to others' needs and wants; charismatic; enjoys group activities; gravitates toward leadership, supervisory, or managerial roles in the workplace and toward people who are Verbal/Linguistic

Years ago an interesting book was published that provided the lay person with insight and self-awareness about episodic memory, learning style, and theory of mind (a term coined by neuropsychologists that refers to your perspective and empathy). The book, in quiz form, relies on your learned vocabulary and stored memories along with practical aspects of the *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* to answer existential questions about your search for meaning and a sense of belonging in an increasingly disconnected and confusing world. It made the rounds in universities, coffee shops, singles events featuring speed-dating, and neighborhood book clubs. Women in particular were fascinated by *The Cube* by Annie Gottlieb and Slobodan Pestic. It's a great example of outside-the-box thinking about relationships, communication, and human nature. I read it, took the quiz, and learned a lot about myself—things that have helped me as an entrepreneur and public speaker today. I challenge you to get the book (probably not in bookstores, but Amazon has it for roughly \$10) and take the quiz, individually or as a group if you don't mind sharing how your mind works! It's on my favorites list and keeper shelf, and I've dusted it off and used it quite a bit to self-evaluate and to mentor others at various points in my career. Try it, and see what I mean!

## Penina's Pointers

### *Multiple Intelligences — Implications for Entrepreneurs*

The nature vs. nurture debate heated up when Dr. Gardner published his MI theory in *Frames of Mind*. There was much interest in his work, especially in education and business. The term *multiple intelligences* has since become a buzzword, signifying your inner landscape that's shaped by the intrinsic, internal traits you're either born with, you've honed over time, or both.

MI reflects what you bring to the table when going through school, applying for a job, completing projects, or contributing to the community at large. Learning styles play a significant role:

- ⊗ When you implement goals and choose the right tool from your toolbox
- ⊗ When you react to sudden changes in your environment
- ⊗ When you recognize and appreciate another's performance (whether it be tangible, such as currency vs. being paid in desserts, or intangible, such as verbal praise)
- ⊗ When you choose your career path (what you gravitate toward)
- ⊗ When you react to obstacles, challenges, and setbacks in your professional or personal voyage to greener pastures

You must consider your own learning styles and those of others (and how they may differ) when thinking about

how to get ahead in business, help others, or influence another human being's perspective, say during a sales pitch. A YouTube video clip I like that points out differences between people is the Heineken beer commercial featuring “his” and “her” closets (<http://bit.ly/heineken-commercial>).

Our learning style affects our perceptions, reactions, and recollections about the world around us and those in it. It influences our choices in life — from friends to collaborators at work, from the way we feather our nest at home to the type of outdoor leisure activity we engage in. I believe that our learning style is inborn but gets honed over time and space. It reveals itself in our personal credo and our work mantra, in our hazy childhood memories and our recent conversations with family. Which brings me to my next point ...

Sample Book Project

# What's On Your Tombstone? Leaving a Legacy Behind

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## KEY WEBSITES

- ☞ <http://bit.ly/helping-others-makes-us-happy>
  - ☞ <http://bit.ly/does-volunteering-help-anyone>
  - ☞ <http://bit.ly/psychology-of-volunteering>
  - ☞ <http://bit.ly/health-benefits-of-volunteering>
- 

## Quotes to Ponder

*It's only when we truly know and understand that we have a limited time on earth, we will then begin to live each day to the fullest.*

— Elizabeth Kübler-Ross

*The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy.*

— Kalu Kalu

## Definition

**Legacy:** Something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.

— *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

WHEN YOU HEAR the word *legacy*, what comes to mind? Something left to you in a will? Teachings and thought leadership lessons that live on, long after the person is gone? Is a legacy tangible or intangible, and why does it matter? Many people today think of a legacy as something tangible. There's an increasing tendency in our youths, especially in Western countries and industrial cultures, to think in terms of "stuff." Amassing stuff—household items, gadgets, and money. I'm not saying money is irrelevant or unimportant. I'm just saying that if you're becoming an entrepreneur to make money quickly and easily, you're in for a rude awakening, especially in this economy! The Great Recession has certainly dented our morale and our ability to leave a legacy for future generations, tangible or intangible. Materialism, altruism, and industrialism have all undergone massive changes in recent years. Some of the lessons and codes of conduct handed down to the next generation no longer apply or will be outdated in another few years or so. The nature of our legacies has been affected. Our economy has been affected. Our collective mood has been affected. And our philanthropic tendencies have certainly been affected.

In the years after the Civil War, when many people came to terms with lives lost, a way of life discontinued, and the need to re-think their plans, there was a huge push, a migration, to settle the untamed Western frontier. A common question was then asked—in saloons, wagon trains, and farms; of family and friends, strangers and neighbors—“What's on your tombstone?”

The question is a valid one. It makes you think: How do you want to be remembered? Leaving a legacy behind is not just a religious, cultural, legal, or business aspiration. So if your days were numbered, what would you want to focus on? I've been thinking of this a lot since I lost my best friend and mentor to cancer and since I became an entrepreneur during one of the worst and longest recessions in recent years. It's something Steve Jobs seemed to have thought about too in preparation for giving the commencement

speech at Stanford University in 2005. He said, “Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.”

A legacy involves having an impact on others. In 2007 the Corporation for National and Community Service published a report entitled *The Health Benefits of Volunteering*. In it, research findings were reported linking increased physical health and acts of volunteering. “While it is undoubtedly the case that better health leads to continued volunteering, these studies demonstrate that volunteering also leads to improved physical and mental health. Thus they are part of a self-reinforcing cycle.”

Volunteering and philanthropy are important in entrepreneurship because they help you maintain emotional equilibrium, happiness, health, and legacy-building behaviors. Not to mention that they give you opportunities to network and practice communication and other skills as well. In July 2013 Bruce DeBoskey, a consultant and strategist for entrepreneurial philanthropy based in Colorado, wrote an article (<http://bit.ly/startups-include-philanthropy>) that makes a case for my concept of a legacy and for the creation of nonprofit advisory boards within existing entrepreneurial business models. He wrote, “By inserting philanthropy into the very DNA of a startup, entrepreneurs make community engagement an organic part of the organization.”

But looking at legacies and volunteering through my NICE lens has made me realize that you can use advisory boards, mentors, and structured moments of giving back to help create a psychological legacy. I want to point out that altruism and volunteer work need not be structured activities all the time. I believe that volunteer work and a desire to give back is part of a person’s legacy. That today engaging in meaningful, humane, and helpful content

curation using social media is a form of volunteering. Staying late at work to complete reports that will benefit others is a form of volunteering. Lending a listening ear and a helping hand amid trying to complete your own to-do list is a form of volunteering. Caring about and promoting sustainability of our resources for the betterment of the environment is a form of volunteering. All contribute to your legacy, your legacy of deeds.

But what is a legacy, really?

As a person who believes that a human being is created in God's image, with the various multiple intelligence traits to inculcate and implement, I ponder this question a lot. I reflect on the concept of a psychic and psycho-social legacy, stemming from the use of one's own talents and contributions to others. Being nice, in the truest sense of the word, means implementing social reform. It means striving for greater achievements and increased performance of feats, small and large, to enrich the lives of others and provide sustainability of our planet for future generations. It means being responsible and accountable for engaging in entrepreneurial efforts that will impact upon innovation of humanitarian efforts, not just global markets and revenue.

I believe that the journey of entrepreneurship, filled with challenges that are ethical, psychological, and spiritual, requires us to ask that question of ourselves — What is a legacy, really? Women in general, female educators, and mothers in particular (being the ones who biologically give birth) are in a great position to nurture and influence children's moral and intellectual compasses. It's in our female DNA to grow, nurture, and care about the welfare of our children and their children. We are hard-wired to measure overall job satisfaction and pride in our performance by calibrating how much of a positive impact we have on our community, not just ourselves.

We are thus particularly receptive to being sensitive to this version of the concept of a legacy. No one can pinpoint the exact moment when a child sees someone do or say something that may be

felt decades later. No one can discount the importance of giving back, contributing to the world somehow in altruistic and sustainable manners, to make it a better place for future generations.

I propose that female entrepreneurs, possessing a neuropsychological skill set that renders us nice and nurturing, among other valuable traits, are in a unique position to leave a meaningful legacy behind, physically and metaphysically. A legacy that has the ability to be self-sustaining and promote change. A legacy that enables others to plot the course of their trajectory, to continue fostering a culture of sustainability, kindness, and giving. That culture is in danger of being extinguished in today's somewhat narcissistic, survivormentality culture that is steadily permeating the way we conduct ourselves, in business and in life.

Altruism, paying it forward, philanthropy, and even sustainability (such as recycling and not littering) are deliberate behaviors that require only minutes of time for us to feel effects that can last for hours, days, or years. Kindness can be verbally and nonverbally demonstrated, quickly! The way we as entrepreneurs talk to employees, potential clients, competitors, and people we meet in our travels is just as crucial as what we do philanthropically. I've made mistakes like other novices and have learned to analyze the *why* (triggers) and increase the *what now* (apologize, change course or strategy).

In the book *Made to Stick*, authors Dan and Chip Heath argue the case for using stories to make your message stick. I'll refer in depth to that book later on, but for now I want you to think about the concept of a story and how it makes a legacy stick. Part of leaving a legacy behind, one that's remembered and valued, involves taking part in (contributing to and sharing the story of) other people's lives. That's why storytelling is so valued. It touches on our quest for immortality, starting with our childhood fascination with tales. It helps us bequeath a psychic and socio-emotional legacy for those we care about. That's why it's such a time-honored tradition in Native American and aboriginal tribes.

The best stories grab our attention and theory of mind (empathy, perspective) from the start, in essence freezing time and allowing us to really harness it by living in the moment. In essence stories develop your theory of mind and group-think tendencies, which is why digital marketing and entrepreneurial gurus now advocate for story integration. That's why a type of storytelling, visual digitalization using videos and photos in social media marketing campaigns to forge an emotional connection with the customer, is now painstakingly taught to entrepreneurs. For an in-depth example read pages 172 – 178 in *Business Model Generation* by Alexander Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur, et al. This groundbreaking book, which I highly recommend, gives you a blueprint for various storytelling techniques, from using visual cues (slideshows, video clips, comic strips, photos) to publicly role playing the protagonist's problem-solving techniques in an interactive way (as you do in the game charades).

It all boils down to one thing — causality. There's a reason we're drawn to stories. At the end of the day, human beings are all struggling to harness time, make it work for us, and restructure the causality loop of our own choices and actions and its impact on our story. The story of the hero's journey, written about so eloquently by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, resonates with this struggle and allows us to collectively tap into our memory banks to recall similar events or feelings we may have experienced and how the outcomes aligned or didn't. We're then spurred to change our behavior, which affects the trajectory of the behaviors of others.

The point I'm making is that a legacy is more than an object we leave behind in a will. A legacy is the result of our attempts to cognitively and deliberately string together moments of time. How? By leading by example while we're living and by leaving an existential blueprint comprising our actions and stories to follow when we're gone. I like to think it's what prompted one of our greatest storytellers of all time, Mark Twain, to say, "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."

Let me give you a true story to hit this point home. I remember the first time I traveled by myself after graduate school, before Facebook and cell phones. I went to visit good friends in Iowa. I offered to help out with dinner and was asked to go grocery shopping. Remember, this was before the Internet, smart phones, and social media. Without arming myself with tips about this store (as people do today with Yelp and Trip Advisor apps or even Angie's List), I braved the supermarket with its unfamiliar aisles and protocols. As I paid for my purchases, a teenage boy, only a few years younger than me, wheeled out my bags past the store's exit. Not knowing where and why he headed out, I chased after him yelling, in true New York tough-city-girl fashion, "Hey you, those are my groceries you're stealing!" He turned around, literally ran back, and collided with several other people who were tripping over themselves to assure me that, no, he was going to meet me at my car and actually place all the bags in the trunk. For free. Right now. And not only for me. He does it for everyone who shops in the store. No matter what. I was shocked. The novice traveler and Manhattan girl in me was floored.

I apologized profusely to the still-smiling boy, who did indeed transfer my groceries to my car's trunk as promised. With a smile and a "here you go, miss." He even refused a tip. Kindness, quick and painless, but it resonated with me for years. He was raised right, and he didn't get mad at my outburst or sulk. I remembered his actions for years. More importantly, they reflected well on his family and place of employment. I recommended that store to other people in the neighborhood. Too bad this was before the days of the Internet. I could have used social media to praise and promote that boy and his future endeavors as well as the supermarket that gave him his start.

Being nice. It's more than just a personality trait. It's a practiced, intentional behavior and an outlook about life. About how to treat those who cross your path while you're living it.

Fast forward to 2013. Another true story. In February, on a domestic flight from Texas to New York, I had an opportunity to pay it

forward, which thankfully I didn't blow. I was on my way back home, on a crowded flight, right after giving a seminar to a large group of educators in a specific school district about the developmental integration of iPad apps into lesson plans for young children with autism and special needs. I had taken out my iPad and was focused on my screen. The woman sitting next to me leaned in and stared at my screen. She kept staring. I decided not to ignore her, despite my looming deadline to submit an article or proposal or such, and began chatting with her. I did a quick show and tell session where I scrolled through various pages of app folders, demonstrating various apps. As the woman saw me turn to page four, then five, all filled with folders of apps, her eyes widened. She looked at me and said, "Excuse me, but I have to ask: Are you a speech therapist?"

She then informed me who she was (also a speech therapist, Shannon Benton MS/CCC-SLP, founder and Executive Director of CLASP International), and we got to talking. She showed me the brochures she had made to distribute at a fundraising dinner she was attending that evening. I asked for a few to distribute at my next seminar. We talked about her organization, and I found myself telling her about mine. The next thing I knew, I donated several free promo codes for my Socially Speaking™ iPad App, which is a social skills development assessment protocol that's fully customizable. Since her work takes her to culturally diverse places such as Zambia and Kenya, she was very interested in new, customizable techniques and products. I then offered to train or mentor her team members, despite that little voice in my head (the one coming from the harried woman with the dollar sign hat who always frowns at me), and the next thing I knew I was training and consulting with the staff at CLASP International's Autism Clinic and loving it. Still am.

One drop raises the sea. One act of kindness, one kind phrase or affirmation, can change your path and the path of countless children you may one day help. Even if you're not an educationally based entrepreneur like myself.