

***Lifescal*: How to Live a More Creative, Productive,
and Happy Life**

Reviewed by
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As one of the most prominent thought leaders in digital and emerging technologies, Brian Solis is well-known for his evangelical advocacy for the integration of digital media strategies into innovative business practices. In *Lifescal: How to Live a More Creative, Productive, and Happy Life*, Solis looks at digital media through a more pragmatic lens to examine how those technologies can have unforeseen impacts on our daily lives.

As digital media becomes interwoven into our media consumption habits, it dramatically impacts our productivity and our relationships. We become chained in a perpetual cycle of responding to app notifications, emails, social media posts, and text messages. When we look at the clock, we can often be left scratching our heads, wondering where the day went. Solis addresses research-based insights into the “addictive” nature of digital technology and empowers readers to rethink their media consumption to improve productivity and spark creative potential.

Organization of the Book

Solis presents the chapters of this 304-page book as a journey of self-discovery, complete with a visual roadmap at the very beginning of the book. He begins this exploratory journey by identifying how digital

media is intertwined into our daily activities, why we are motivated to engage so frequently with digital media, and how digital is designed to keep us “hooked.” According to Solis (2019):

Every day we do our best to navigate life and keep up with our personal and professional responsibilities, but at the end of each day, we’re still fighting to complete our self-imposed to-do lists, both at work and at home, a hamster-wheel process that detracts from our longer-term goals and dreams. (p. 14)

As the chapters unfold, Solis continues the journey by leading the reader through various paths of self-discovery (or re-discovery) that focus on personal values, goals, and childlike dreams. What does that have to do with digital media, you might ask? The underlying thread throughout this book is that we often conform to the expectations of digital media (especially social media) as our internal measuring stick to determine our values and behaviors, rather than heeding our inner voice.

In the final chapters, Solis shares how disconnection from our inner purpose can be the Achilles heel that allows distractions, multitasking, and nagging self-doubt to derail us from our goals. He reminds the reader to be mindful and live in the moment to understand we are part of something larger and to reflect on what we want our contribution to be in this world.

He describes the concept of the “pillars of purpose,” how those pillars should be the compass to the roadmap of self-discovery, and how to tap into those pillars to focus personal energy in positive directions. Solis (2019) explains:

Harder than making change is recognizing and accepting our need for it. Doing so requires us to acknowledge that so much of what we’ve been doing has gotten us off course. Deep down, we know that there are ways in which we have not been helping ourselves, or have even been shooting ourselves in the foot. (p. 178)

Strengths and Weaknesses

Solis' writing style is conversational and welcoming. Each chapter feels like having coffee with a cherished mentor. Solis shares self-discovery exercises and unique tools to guide the reader through self-awareness and maximizing creative productivity. *Lifescale* is full of examples that fulfill the three Rs: recognizable, relatable, and relevant. From personal anecdotes to stories of well-known corporate leaders, this book places advice and tips into a real-world context. That strength doubles as a weakness, though. While there are many examples and anecdotes about well-known public figures, there is a lack of representation of the average person. By blending examples of public figures and everyday people (especially young professionals), it might increase the sense that the advice imparted by Solis is accessible to everyone, not just those who have already achieved success in their field.

Contributions of this Book

While not a textbook in the traditional sense, *Lifescale* is an excellent addition to the public relations curriculum because it encourages the reader to "know thyself." This is one of the most important lessons students need to be successful in school, in their careers, and in life.

This book would make an excellent addition to the public relations curriculum in an introductory course, a portfolio or capstone class, or even as a recommended read for PRSSA chapters. The advice, exercises, and tools shared by Solis will enhance students' ability to create a personal brand, effectively balance the demands of student life, and successfully navigate their first industry jobs.