



FREE EXCERPT

AWAKEN

BOOK I — BECOME • VOLUME 1 OF 3

Complete book: 157 pages

Author: Toussaint Kadio N'GUESSAN

Publisher: BEXTIO Editions

BECOME. BUILD. AUGMENT.



BOOK I — BECOME

AWAKEN

Rediscover Your Potential and Your Capacity to Learn

Toussaint Kadio N'GUESSAN

BEXTIO Editions

BOOK I — BECOME

AWAKEN

Rediscover Your Potential and Your Capacity to Learn

Toussaint Kadio N’GUESSAN

© 2026 Toussaint Kadio N’GUESSAN. All rights reserved.

Published under the BEXTIO Editions imprint.

ENGLISH MASTER MANUSCRIPT — FINAL APPROVED VERSION 1.0 —
11 September 2026

*Translation standard: BEXTIO ENGLISH EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE
V1.0 (locked).*



CONTENTS

PART I — AWAKEN.....	4
CHAPTER 1 — THE HIDDEN POTENTIAL IN EVERY HUMAN BEING.....	4
CHAPTER 2 — UNDERSTANDING WHAT LIMITS US: IDENTITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CIRCUMSTANCES.....	12
CHAPTER 3 — BREAKING FREE FROM AN IMPOSED IDENTITY.....	22
CHAPTER 4 — TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN JOURNEY.....	30
PART II — BUILDING YOURSELF.....	39
CHAPTER 5 — DISCIPLINE: TURNING INTENTION INTO ACTION.....	39
CHAPTER 6 — LEARNING HOW TO LEARN AND BUILDING YOUR SKILLS BASE.....	49
CHAPTER 7 — DEVELOPING YOUR JUDGEMENT.....	62
CHAPTER 8 — MASTERING YOUR ATTENTION.....	76
CHAPTER 9 — PERSEVERING WITHOUT BECOMING STUBBORN.....	89
PART III — THINKING DIFFERENTLY.....	100
CHAPTER 10 — BELIEFS THAT LIMIT ACTION.....	100
CHAPTER 11 — LEARNING FROM FAILURE.....	111
CHAPTER 12 — LEARNING TO TAKE CALCULATED RISKS.....	121
CHAPTER 13 — DECIDING UNDER UNCERTAINTY.....	133
CHAPTER 14 — CHANGING PERSPECTIVE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS DIFFERENTLY.....	146

PART I — AWAKEN

CHAPTER 1 — THE HIDDEN POTENTIAL IN EVERY HUMAN BEING

We tend to confuse what a person is today with what they may become. Imagine two people faced with a task they do not know how to perform. The first says: “I don’t know how to do this.” The second says: “I don’t know how to do this yet.” Only a few letters separate those two statements. Yet they can lead to two very different ways of interpreting difficulty. The first may remain a simple observation: at that precise moment, the person does not possess the necessary skill. But it can also turn, almost imperceptibly, into: I don’t know how to do this → I’m not capable → this field is not for me. The second formulation leaves another possibility open: I don’t know how to do this yet → perhaps this ability can be learned → experience will show how far I can progress. This is where BECOME begins. Not in the claim that anyone could become absolutely anything. Not in the promise that willpower alone could remove every constraint.

But in a more demanding idea: your current level is not necessarily the final measure of your future abilities.

1.1 — THE DANGER OF MISTAKING A SNAPSHOT FOR A DESTINY

When we assess a person, we generally look at what is visible: their knowledge, results, level of education, occupation, skills, achievements, income or failures. These things matter. But they mainly describe a present state. They are a snapshot. A snapshot, however, does not necessarily tell us what that person may be able to accomplish after several years of learning, practice, experience, mistakes and correction. A student who struggles with a subject today is not necessarily destined to struggle with it for the rest of their life. An employee who does not know how to lead a team today is not necessarily incapable of learning to manage. A person who does not know how to sell, use software or manage a project may simply have a low starting level in a skill they have never really developed. That does not mean they will necessarily master it. It means something much more precise: a current lack of mastery is not, by itself,

sufficient evidence of future inability. This distinction may seem simple. Yet it changes the way we can think about our development.

1.2 — POTENTIAL IS NOT YET AN ABILITY

The word potential is often used loosely. “This person has potential.” “This child has enormous potential.” “You need to unlock your potential.” But what does that actually mean? Potential should not be confused with a skill that is already available. A person may have the possibility of developing an ability without yet possessing that ability. The process can be represented as follows:

POTENTIAL — possibility of development → **LEARNING** — acquisition of knowledge and methods → **PRACTICE** — repeated application → **EXPERIENCE** — exposure to real situations → **FEEDBACK** — information about the results obtained → **ADAPTATION** — correction and improvement → **ABILITY** — an ability that can actually be put to use → **RESULT**

Potential is therefore neither a skill nor a result. Here, it refers to a possibility of development whose realisation depends on conditions, learning, action and real constraints.

1.3 — HUMAN POTENTIAL IS NOT UNLIMITED

We must immediately place a limit on our reasoning. Saying that some abilities can be developed does not mean: “Everyone can become anything they want.” Human beings do not begin with the same characteristics or under the same conditions. We do not all have:

- the same predispositions
- the same state of health
- the same education
- the same resources
- the same opportunities
- the same environment
- the same amount of time
- or the same economic and social constraints.

Some limits can be overcome. Some can be compensated for. Some can only be reduced. Others cannot be removed. Any serious view of potential must accept this reality. The right question is therefore not: “Can I become absolutely anything I want?” It is: “What abilities can I

reasonably develop from my real situation, the resources I can access and the work I can do?” The difference is fundamental. The first question seeks a promise.

The second opens an investigation.

1.4 — WE DO NOT KNOW ALL OUR FUTURE ABILITIES IN ADVANCE

How can you know exactly what you might learn in a field you have never studied? How can you know whether you could become an entrepreneur if you have never tried to identify a problem, understand a customer or build a solution? How can you know whether you could learn a technology you have never seriously studied? Part of our future ability cannot be directly observed today. It has to be tested. This leads to an important distinction: not knowing whether you can develop an ability is not the same as knowing that you are incapable of developing it. Sometimes uncertainty has to be resolved through experience.

SINGLE CASE STUDY — William Kamkwamba

1.5 — WILLIAM KAMKWAMBA: LEARNING TO SOLVE A REAL PROBLEM

William Kamkwamba’s story makes this idea concrete. At the age of fourteen in Malawi, a severe famine struck his country. His family could no longer afford his school fees, so he had to leave school. Kamkwamba nevertheless continued studying with the help of the librarian in his village.

In a school textbook about energy, *Using Energy*, he saw a photograph of a wind turbine and realised that wind could be used to generate electricity. His biographical account explains that he did not have complete construction instructions: he had to reason from the principle he had observed. But understanding a principle is not the same as knowing how to build the machine. He had to move from information to experimentation.

Using salvaged parts and materials, he gradually built a wind turbine capable of generating electricity. The process can be summarised as follows:

PROBLEM — no electricity and limited resources → **INFORMATION** — discovery of the wind-turbine principle → **LEARNING** — progressive

understanding of the mechanism → **EXPERIMENTATION** — building with available resources → **ADJUSTMENT** — improving the device → **RESULT** — actual generation of electricity

This case does not demonstrate that every human being can accomplish anything whatsoever. An individual case could not establish such a general proposition in any event. It shows something more precise: Kamkwamba succeeded in building a technical capability he did not initially possess by combining learning, reasoning, experimentation and improvement. Not knowing how to do something today does not demonstrate that you are incapable of learning it. It is this limited conclusion — not a legend about boundless human potential — that matters here.

1.6 — POTENTIAL IS NOT A HIDDEN TREASURE

We sometimes speak about potential as though it were a treasure already buried inside us:

“Discover the talent sleeping within you.” This metaphor can be misleading. It suggests that a complete version of ourselves already exists somewhere and merely needs to be revealed. Yet a large part of our abilities has to be built. We do not simply discover an ability to lead. We learn to listen, decide, communicate, make trade-offs and accept responsibility. We do not simply discover entrepreneurial ability. We learn to observe a problem, understand a need, build a solution, test, sell, manage and correct. We do not simply discover intellectual ability. We study, compare, reason, make mistakes, start again and gradually improve our judgement. Human potential is therefore not merely something we search for inside ourselves. It takes shape in what we become capable of building.

1.7 — HAVE WE REALLY TESTED WHAT WE BELIEVE WE CANNOT DO?

Some people conclude very early: “I’m not good at mathematics.” “I’m not creative.” “I can’t sell.” “I’m not made to lead.” “Technology isn’t for me.” Some of these assessments may be based on genuine difficulties. But before turning them into final verdicts, several questions are worth asking:

Have you actually learned a method? How long have you practised? Have you received relevant feedback? Have you tried another

approach? Have you made progress, even partial progress? Have you experimented enough to distinguish an initial difficulty from a lasting inability? Research on self-efficacy shows that beliefs about our abilities influence our choices, our effort and our persistence when we face difficulty. Bandura identifies direct mastery experience, observing others, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states among the sources that help shape these beliefs. This does not mean that believing is enough to succeed. It means that what we believe to be possible can influence what we are actually willing to try and continue pursuing.

1.8 — EXPERIENCE AS A MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Suppose someone asks: “Am I capable of starting a business?” The question is too broad to receive an immediately reliable answer. Break it down. Can I identify a real problem? Can I meet people who experience that problem? Can I understand how they currently try to solve it? Can I imagine a basic solution? Can I test it? Can I obtain feedback? Can I improve that first attempt?

Every experiment produces information. The person still does not know the upper limit of their abilities. But they know more than they did before acting. They can gradually replace: “I think I’m incapable” with: “Here is what I tried, what I achieved, what failed and what I still need to learn.” Judgement becomes investigation.

1.9 — POTENTIAL GUARANTEES NOTHING

One final distinction is essential. Having a possibility of development does not guarantee that it will be realised. A potential ability may never be developed. It may lack time, resources, learning, opportunities, practice, perseverance, or simply a sufficient reason to pursue it. There is therefore no contradiction between these two propositions: your current level does not fully determine your future level.

And: your potential guarantees no future result. Between the two lies the work of BECOME. Learn. Practise. Experiment. Receive feedback. Correct. Persevere for as long as doing so remains relevant. Stop or change direction when the facts justify it. And gradually build real abilities.

TOOL — MAPPING YOUR REAL POTENTIAL

Choose five important areas of your life. For each one, answer as precisely as possible:

- What can I genuinely do today?
- What can I not yet do?
- What have I genuinely tried?
- For how long?
- What have I learned from my attempts?
- What ability could I develop?
- What concrete experiment would allow me to test it?

The purpose is not to persuade yourself that you are capable of everything.

It is to replace a vague picture of yourself with a more precise analysis of your current position and your possibilities for development.

THE MISTAKE TO AVOID

Do not turn this chapter into a new injunction: “I must prove that I am capable of everything.” That would simply replace one illusion with another. What you need instead is to distinguish between what you genuinely cannot do, what you do not yet know how to do, what you have never seriously tried to learn, and what you may be able to develop through learning and experience. This distinction is more useful than a motivational slogan.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Human potential is neither a magical promise nor a destiny. It represents a possibility of development. Your current level provides information about your present situation. It does not automatically constitute a final verdict on your future. An ability can be built progressively through learning → practice → experience → feedback → adaptation. But none of these stages, by itself, guarantees the result. That is precisely why we need to test, observe and learn rather than simply believe.

REFLECT

What ability might I have abandoned too early because I confused my current level with my future ability?

ACT

Choose one ability you want to test. Over the next seven days, carry out an experiment small enough to be feasible but real enough to produce information. At the end, write down:

- what you assumed before the experiment
- what you actually observed
- what worked
- what failed
- what you are missing
- what you need to learn next.

You are not trying to convince yourself that you will succeed. You are trying to produce better information about what you can learn to do.

REFERENCES

1. Bandura, Albert. *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1997.
2. Bandura, Albert. "Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective." *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 52, 2001, pp. 1–26.
3. Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House, 2006.
4. Kamkwamba, William, and Bryan Mealer. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope*. New York: William Morrow, 2009.
5. Kamkwamba, William. "How I Built a Windmill." TEDGlobal 2007, Arusha, Tanzania, 2007.
6. Kamkwamba, William. "How I Harnessed the Wind." TEDGlobal 2009, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2009.
7. William Kamkwamba / Moving Windmills Project. "About William Kamkwamba." Official biography.

TRANSITION

Discovering that some abilities can be built immediately raises another question. If we do not fully know what we may become capable of, why do we sometimes judge ourselves incapable before we have even tried enough? Why does a failure sometimes become an identity? Why do words heard in childhood sometimes continue to define our possibilities years later? Why can two people facing a

comparable difficulty interpret their chances of progress so differently? To answer these questions, we need to examine how we build our perception of ourselves.

— END OF CHAPTER 1 —

CHAPTER 2 — UNDERSTANDING WHAT LIMITS US: IDENTITY, ENVIRONMENT AND CIRCUMSTANCES

We never assess our abilities from a perfectly neutral position. We view them through the lens of our history. A success can broaden our sense of what we may be able to accomplish. A failure can narrow it. A sentence repeated throughout childhood can become a lasting conviction. An environment can make some paths feel familiar and others almost unimaginable. Two people with comparable abilities can therefore develop very different perceptions of themselves. One thinks: “I can learn.” The other: “This isn’t for me.” Neither statement, on its own, is an objective measure of their abilities. Each also expresses an interpretation. Understanding what limits us therefore requires us to distinguish three realities: what we are able to do today; what we believe we are able to do; and the real constraints within which we live and act.

This distinction is essential. Without it, we risk either turning our difficulties into personal verdicts or falling into the opposite excess: believing that every limit would disappear if only we had more willpower.

2.1 — WE ALSO LEARN TO JUDGE OURSELVES

A child is not born with a complete theory of their abilities. They build one progressively. They try. They succeed. They fail. They observe other people. They receive encouragement, criticism, comparisons and evaluations. From these experiences, conclusions gradually form: “I’m good at this.” “I’m bad at that.” “I learn quickly.” “My brain just doesn’t work that way.” Some of these conclusions reflect genuine differences in current level. The problem begins when a particular experience becomes a broad and permanent definition of the self. Failing an exam becomes: “I’m a bad student.” Finding it difficult to speak in front of a group becomes: “I’m not made for communication.” Failing in a first business venture becomes: “I’m not an entrepreneur.”

The original fact may be accurate. The interpretation drawn from it is not necessarily so. “I failed at this task” describes an event. “I am