Foreword by Whitney Johnson, author of *Disrupt Yourself*

SANDIK

reach

Create the Biggest
Possible Audience
for Your Message,
Book, or Cause

BECKY ROBINSON



"Reach delivers a master class in how to create lasting impact with your message. Becky Robinson is as realistic and practical, as she is inspiring. Her time-tested advice about growing online influence will help you reach as many people as possible."

 Fauzia Burke, author of Online Marketing for Busy Authors, founder of FSB Associates, and cofounder of Pub Site

"Becky Robinson has leveraged her decade of experience in building online reach into a practical, concise, and inspiring read that demystifies the process of getting our ideas heard. This is a must-have book for authors, speakers, and anyone who wants to make a bigger impact in the world through their work."

> Dorie Clark, author of *The Long Game* and executive education faculty, Duke University Fuqua School of Business

"I'm often asked how I created a successful global coaching business. I know you need a sustainable approach to online marketing but I don't have a system to share. Then I found Becky Robinson's book, *Reach*, which guides you through the steps so your value will be known worldwide. If you're willing to consistently share your wisdom, this book will bring your vision to life."

 Marcia Reynolds, author of Coach the Person, Not the Problem and recognized as one of the top 5 coaches in the world "I'm a raving fan of Becky Robinson. Her new book, *Reach*, is a how-to guide for creators in search of an audience—but it feels like a conversation with an encouraging friend. Read *Reach* and let Becky show you four key commitments that will help you expand your following so you can share your message with the world."

 Ken Blanchard, coauthor of The New One Minute Manager[®] and Simple Truths of Leadership

"It is rare when a partner comes along who not only lays out a path for your work to make a difference in the world, but inspires and equips you to undertake the journey. Becky enables those of us with a message in us to connect with our audiences, with proven approaches for building a successful online presence and impact. This book is full of her wisdom – don't miss it!"

 Jennifer Brown, Founder/CEO, Jennifer Brown Consulting; author of *Inclusion* and *How to be an Inclusive Leader*

"I resonated with so much of the philosophy in *Reach*. Becky's guidance in these thoughtfully written chapters is practical, specific and bound to encourage and help new and experienced authors (and others). I will enthusiastically reference, recommend and gift this book!"

 Helena Brantley, CEO of Red Pencil Publicity + Marketing

"In this excellent book, Becky Robinson provides aspiring thought leaders a clear framework for getting attention, making their mark and influencing their audiences."

— Allan Dib, author of *The 1-Page Marketing Plan*



BECKY ROBINSON



Contents

Foreword by Whitney Johnson vii
Introduction: How Far Can You Reach? 1
Chapter 1: Evaluating Your Current Approach to Building Traction for Your Message 17
Chapter 2: What Do You Want to Be Known For? 34
Chapter 3: Creating Your Brand 43
Chapter 4: The Four Commitments 52
Chapter 5: The Reach Framework 71
Chapter 6: Your Permission-Based Email List 90
Chapter 7: Content, Your Flexible Asset 106
Chapter 8: Going beyond the Basics 122
Chapter 9: Writing a Book to Expand Your Reach 139
Chapter 10: Reach for Marginalized Voices 151
Conclusion: Reach as Far as Possible 165
Discussion Guide 171
Appendix: Planning a Launch Campaign 173
Notes 193
Acknowledgments 199
Index 204
About the Author 210



Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

When Becky Robinson and I met in 2011, I was working in Boston at the Disruptive Innovation Fund, which I co-founded with Clayton and Matt Christensen. I was about to launch my first book, *Dare, Dream, Do: Remarkable Things Happen When You Dare to Dream.* I had dared to write a book but I didn't know what to do next.

Through a timely stroke of good fortune, Jesse Lyn Stoner, a mutual friend, connected us. Becky lived in Michigan and was in the process of reentering the workforce. First-time author, me, became Becky's first client at Weaving Influence. It was a wonderful partnership for which I will always be grateful.

As Becky taught me how to extend my reach, I watched as she expanded hers.

Becky had joined Facebook and learned social media marketing after several years of being out of the paid workforce. That led to an opportunity as a social media marketing director for a leadership consultant who had just published a book. This led to the founding of her online marketing firm, Weaving Influence. Today, a decade later, her company has twelve employees and as many contractors and is a thriving business that has launched hundreds of books, including some by renowned authors such as Ken Blanchard, Mark Miller, and Cheryl Bachelder.

One of the magical things about Becky Robinson is that she walks her talk. She consistently provides value related to online influence and has for ten years. She is incredibly generous and always willing to share her expertise. She demonstrates the Four Commitments she writes about in her book (value, consistency, generosity, and longevity.) And whether you meet her in person, online, or on the pages of this book, you will feel like you are having a conversation with a personal coach and cheerleader all in one.

What I love most about *Reach* is that Becky isn't hawking fame. Some of you may become famous, but that's not the promise of the book nor is it ultimately the goal. Fame does not guarantee that an individual's work will be of value to others. Becky's goal is for anyone with a message to be heard by the people who want and need to hear it. She wants everyone's voice to have the opportunity to do the job it is meant to do. That's her promise and she keeps it.

If you care deeply about sharing your life's work and message, if you want to make a greater contribution to the world, if you want to reach the people who need to hear what only you can say, start reading, start highlighting, and start following Becky Robinson's advice now.

Whitney Johnson Lexington, Virginia September 6, 2021



How Far Can You Reach?

I landed on the title *Reach* for this book while out running one day. We'd been going back and forth about titles and I'd headed out to run and wait for inspiration. With every footfall, I thought about you, one of the people who would read my book, and what you would most want. When the word "reach" popped into my mind, I stopped my watch, grabbed my phone, and texted my husband. We had found our title.

I'm not sure how you measure and define reach or what it means to you, but I know you want more of it. For the purpose of this book, I'm defining reach in a new way. Reach is not only about creating the biggest possible audience for your work, as the subtitle promises. It's also about the

lasting impact your work can have. Reach means expanding your audience plus having a lasting impact.

This book does not offer a fast path to fame or fortune. If you're looking for that, this book may not be for you. However, if you're willing to invest resources in sharing your valuable work online, consistently over time for a long time and give of yourself generously to others, you'll find that your audience and your impact will expand.



FIGURE 1. The Reach Equation

Reach and Fame

If you're not already famous, it's important to have a realistic view of what is possible, especially if you are just starting out. This is true whether you have a book to promote, an idea you want to draw attention to, or a cause you're passionate about. If you are just beginning, prepare yourself to work over the long term to create lasting impact. There is no express train to reach.

Consider how reach relates to books. There's a reason traditional publishers look carefully at an author's platform to see how many people follow them before they offer a book deal. The survival of publishing companies is tied to making the right bets on which books to publish and which books to pass up.

Most of the books that make it to the *New York Times* best-seller lists each year come from authors whose names were already widely known before their publisher agreed to publish their new book. Publishers want to offer books from well-known authors with a track record of selling thousands of books year after year or books by celebrities or politicians. Barack Obama's first book release after leaving the presidency sold 887,000 copies on the first day.¹

Publishers want to publish a sure thing. If you're not a sure thing, you'll need to make a strong case for your ability to sell books to an existing group of fans or followers. Don't worry, you don't have to be able to prove you can sell a million copies. Many independent or smaller publishers only want you to prove you can make enough money at first to break even on the project. From there, they want to know that your book can be profitable over its lifetime. An initial print run for a nonfiction business title might be 3,000 to 5,000 copies. If you can sell those within the first six to

nine months after publication, you earn a reprint. If you sell out the reprint, you'll be among the more successful titles the publisher releases that year. For the authors we serve in the business book space, selling more than 10,000 copies in a year represents significant success.

The Famous Few

What I find is that almost anyone who has a passion for their work wants to create as much reach as possible. We all want our products to be the next big thing, our causes to be widely recognized and supported, and our ideas to reach the entire globe. Authors look to emulate the success of a small number of hardworking people who have become best sellers.

Fueled by energy and ambition, creators overlook or underplay the huge investment needed to achieve the breakout success they strive toward. They may expect to achieve success at the outset that others accumulate over decades.

The fact is that people typically write more than a few books before they reach the level where they sell millions. John Maxwell, who has written nearly 100 books at the time of this writing, has sold more than 20 million copies of his books. Ken Blanchard, another of the most prolific business book authors in the world, has sold over 13 million copies of the more than 60 books he has in print. Brené Brown, who has authored more than 7 books, has sold nearly 5 million copies.

The most well-known business book authors on the planet—Patrick Lencioni, Stephen Covey, Seth Godin, Simon Sinek, Daniel H. Pink, Adam Grant—have all published multiple books over many years. Even Grant, the youngest on my list at age 40, has four major titles on his résumé.

You might note that every single one of these best-known business book authors is white and male. Marginalized groups face unique challenges in creating reach for their messages. It is imperative that people from dominant identities work to include, support, and celebrate emerging voices.

Every author I meet wants to achieve the success of these famous few and every client I serve who is not an author wants to achieve widespread awareness of their work and ideas. In most instances, they do not want fame and fortune; instead, they seek meaning, purpose, and a desire to make a difference through their life and work. People who bring great passion to their work also bring a deep desire to share their work with others.

Brené Brown (brenebrown.com) is the person the authors, thought leaders, nonprofit leaders, and coaches I've served over the past decade most want to emulate. Brown is well known for having sold many millions of books during her career as an author. She has been on the *New York Times* best-seller list five times, and her TED Talk from 2012 went viral.² Her enviable speaking career has expanded with each book release. Did you know that Brown published her first book in 2004, several years after beginning her work in the field? Her contribution through speaking, researching, teaching, and publishing spans more than two decades.

While Brown is widely known, loved, and followed, hers is not a universally recognized household name despite her tremendous success and contribution.

When first-time authors hope to reach Brown's level of success with their first book release, they are discounting the massive value she has poured into her work consistently over decades to produce the results she now enjoys. Very few of us can catapult to those results without making a similar long-term investment.

It's not unusual for me to meet an author who tells me that their goal is to sell a half a million books in the first two years. Although I don't want to be a dream crusher, a goal of this magnitude is not realistic for most people seeking to build a platform. My company has launched more than 150 books, and even though I've partnered with very smart and interesting people who have huge ambition, I have yet to see a book reach that half million mark in sales. While it's always possible that you could be the one who will write and publish that breakout book—the one that achieves massive sales without decades of preparation on your part—it's not likely.

The big goals many people set get in the way of their working toward more reasonable success in spreading their ideas and selling their books. Creators get so focused on making it big that they neglect the simple, quiet ways to make a difference. They miss the chance to follow through on the everyday activities that will expand the reach of their ideas.

One of the most successful titles I've supported since I began partnering with authors, *Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go: Career Conversations Employees Want (2012)* by Beverly Kaye (bevkaye.com) and Julie Winkle Giulioni (juliewinklegiulioni.com), has been published in two editions, has been translated into six languages, and has sold 120,000 copies—but that happened over eight years. Kaye has sold over a million books in her lifetime, including over 800,000 copies of her classic book *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay* (1999), yet her name is unknown to most outside the career development and

organizational development spaces she's worked in. While Kaye may not be among the famous few and has not landed on any well-known best-seller lists, her work has achieved massive reach by any definition.

When Winkle Giulioni joined Kaye as a first-time author, she did not have an online presence at all. Yet over the years since her book's release, she has chosen to share content online through her own blog and other online publications. Winkle Giulioni has seen that the value she's added through her online presence has created countless opportunities for her to get paid well to do the work she loves: speaking, consulting, and writing.³ Julie is also achieving reach.

How to Create the Greatest Possible Reach for Your Work

What if instead of aspiring to be one of the famous few like Brené Brown, you aspired to influence as many people as you can through your work? Most of the millions of books written and published each year are written by people whose names you don't know. Most nonprofits are led by people whose names you'll never hear. If most people won't ever be famous, why not instead make up your mind to make the largest impact possible through your ideas, books, or cause?

Reach is never static; it is the product of what you do to expand your work and its impact over time.

We tend to think of followers or fans or an audience as a relatively stable commodity attached to a public figure. Reach does not work this way. It is more intangible and dynamic, the interplay of your growing audience and their long-term investment in you. You may have the same size email list as someone else in your field but you will have greater reach if your emails are opened more quickly, with more excitement, and with more follow-up actions over time. Reach is never static; it is the product of what you do to expand your work and its impact over time.

This kind of reach is achievable only when you make four commitments, which I'll weave throughout this book.

In order to create reach, you'll need to commit to value, consistency, longevity, and generosity. The people whose stories I share in the book demonstrate the results you can achieve when you incorporate the commitments. Throughout the book, we'll use the icons below to draw your attention to the concepts of value, longevity, consistency, and generosity.

Defining reach only quantitatively, which people often do, overlooks the ultimate goal of making a difference through their work. Think, for example, about a video that goes viral. The creator has grabbed the attention of millions of people for as long as their momentary fame lasts. But if the impression they have made is not translated into



FIGURE 2. The Reach Commitments Key

an ongoing connection, their success is fleeting. The reach I describe in this book grows, expands, and lasts.

Value

Reach starts with delivering value to people. Clarity is an important component of value. You want to create a message people will remember and you want to be a messenger people will remember. Throughout the book, value is represented by a diamond icon.

Value is determined by the recipient of the content. It is the right message for the right need at the right time. For a parent who is navigating the changes involved as their children graduate from high school and move on to making adult decisions, Grown and Flown Parents, a Facebook group numbering more than 200,000, creates significant value.⁴

Creating value begins with a decision to share your thoughts, ideas, perspectives, approaches, and insights with others. You promote these ideas online in various formats so people will engage with you by reading, listening, or watching what you have to share because they find value in what you're creating. Your work in the world will become meaningful to those who choose to learn from and interact with you.

Consistency

↑ Throughout the book, I'll tell you about people who have successfully created expansive reach for their work. Without fail, you'll see that consistency in creating and sharing value with others is important to their success.

Tiffany Roe (tiffanyroe.com), a counselor and podcaster from Utah who calls herself the original Instagram therapist, demonstrates the value of consistency through her online presence. Since she began her counseling practice in 2015, she has grown a following of over 125,000 people on Instagram. Roe posts positive mental health advice multiple times each day as she seeks to "change the mental health game" and help people "feel, deal, heal."⁵

While consistency sounds like a great idea, good intentions to create a consistent online presence can easily get derailed. The key to creating consistency is creating a sustainable approach. Throughout the book, consistency is represented by a circle made by arrows.

Longevity

The stories I'll share throughout the book illustrate the importance of longevity in creating reach. It takes time to build connections and create momentum for your message, book, or cause. People who seek a quick formula for achieving reach often do not understand the importance and value of sticking around. Many people give up too quickly instead of patiently building to create results.

A long-term view is needed if you want to create lasting impact. Think about the respect and deference we give to long-time employees of a company or to a baseball player who stays with a franchise long enough to become a legend. Throughout the book, longevity is represented by an infinity symbol.

Tim Sackett (timsackett.com), a human resources and talent acquisitions expert, has blogged daily for over a decade. His longevity on his website has helped grow his reach and influence.⁶

Ann Voskamp (annvoskamp.com), the author of four New York Times best sellers, began blogging in 2004.⁷ In 2006, when I sent off an email to her as a fan of her blog, she

was still years away from the release of her debut memoir in 2011. While the value of Ann's work certainly expanded her reach, her longevity has ensured that she continues to have an impact nearly two decades after she began publishing reflections online from her farm in Canada.

Generosity

The journey to creating reach and impact for your work is fueled by generosity, both given and received. Making meaning and making a difference is impossible without a desire to give to others. In this book, you'll hear about different ways of expressing generosity and about how giving more away is a helpful way to reach more people.

Steve Burda, whom *Business Insider* has called the most connected person on LinkedIn, says his commitment and dedication to others' success is responsible for his success. Focusing on others instead of yourself is generosity.⁸

When I sent Ann Voskamp an email in 2006 inquiring about a geography curriculum she'd written for homeschooling parents, she responded by sending me a free copy of the curriculum without any expectation of return. She created a lifelong fan.

Generosity is powerful because it is unexpected, disarming, and unforgettable. Throughout the book, generosity is represented by a heart icon.

Making a Difference without Being Famous

Here's a story from my life about the reach that can be created through an online presence. In the spring of 2016, I hosted a booth at the Association for Talent Development International Conference in Denver, Colorado. Having

previously attended several ATD conferences, I knew there'd be lots of business luminaries there. In past years, I'd met Jim Kouzes, Marshall Goldsmith, and Ken Blanchard, all people I admired and considered famous. I knew I wasn't at all famous.

Imagine my delight when someone stopped me to talk as I walked through the busy exposition. "Becky Robinson," someone said. "I've attended your webinars." A few hours later, the same thing happened again. People I didn't know personally but who had received value from my work in the world cared enough to acknowledge and appreciate me. At an event where plenty of more influential, famous, exciting, or well-known people were present, people cared about talking to me. My work had reached them.

I'm not famous in the world's eyes, but I can make a difference as I share value generously and consistently over time. As I share value day after day, year after year, I am contributing in a way that makes the world a better place for everyone and I am seeing my work have its largest possible impact.

Five Hundred Trees

In 2016, my family and I moved from a subdivision to a home on a five-acre plot not too far from town. We bought the home from the Sitarskis, who bought this land in the early 1990s when a farm field filled the space between the house and the road. The Sitarskis had a vision of creating a peaceful retreat, a private escape. If they had had an unlimited budget, they could have invested in mature trees to quickly create the privacy they desired, but as the parents of three growing kids, their landscaping budget was too small to do that.

Instead, the Sitarskis bought 500 saplings. The kids joined in and painstakingly planted each of the trees around the property. They watered, fertilized, and pruned them. Nearly thirty years later when we drove down the quarter-mile driveway to tour what would become our new home, tall pines stood guard on the edge of the property, oaks and maples lined the driveway, and woods surrounded the large open backyard. Those 500 trees (and likely more over the years) had grown to become the peaceful retreat the Sitarskis had envisioned.

Whatever your goal is, if it involves making a positive difference in the world and contributing to others through your ideas, your message, your book, or your cause, consider the long-term view. If you choose to invest in contributing value to the world over time, you are like the family who planted 500 trees and waited for them to grow. You will certainly enjoy the benefits of contributing along the way. You may also be building value that people will enjoy and appreciate even long after you are gone.

If you choose to be one who plants 500 trees and waits for them to grow, you will become famous to a few who choose to listen to you, read your work, or participate in your cause.

Who This Book Is For

Reach is a book for anyone who wants to create greater impact for their ideas, message, book, or cause. It's okay if you want to have a huge impact. You will if you are willing to commit to a consistent approach over time.

You may be discouraged about your current traction or feel the temptation to compare your current reach to others who seem more influential. We all start somewhere. When you're getting started, you may be famous to only a few. As you show up consistently in online spaces, sharing value with those who most need your message, you be able to influence more and more people over time. When you start, you may know everyone who is paying attention to you online. In the early days of writing my first blog, I could name each person who regularly commented on my posts; they were the few who read my work and knew my name. Yet over time, you will begin to be known by many more people who know, remember, recommend, and celebrate your work—your influence will grow and your reach will expand.

While you may never be famous worldwide, the only way to have the biggest impact for your messages is to do the hard work over time.

This book is for you

- if you are just beginning to share content in online spaces and want to secure greater reach for your work.
- if you have been looking to grow traction for your idea, book, or cause but are frustrated about your results and are not sure how to create additional success.
- if you're making progress with online influence but you want to create a more sustainable and consistent approach to online marketing.
- if you have contributed to the world significantly but haven't invested in sharing content online.

A special note if you have built significant value in the world through your work but haven't invested in building your online presence: You have a choice about whether to invest your time online. You may feel that it's too late or that learning online marketing is too overwhelming and difficult. It's likely that your online footprint consists of

what others have written about you instead of what you yourself have written. Investing in building your own presence online is a chance to tell your own story and highlight what matters most to you so that people can benefit over the long term from your life's work. When you choose to bring the real-world reputation and credibility you've built offline into online spaces, you can secure a lasting legacy for your most important ideas.

How to Read This Book

You can read the book from start to finish or you can skip to the chapters that interest you. As you read, look out for the Four Commitment icons. The questions and resources at the end of each chapter will inform additional study and reflection. I've also included an appendix and a group discussion guide at the end of the book.

Getting Started

Most of us are not famous and will never be. However, you can make a significant difference in the world if you choose to show up in online spaces where you share valuable content and ideas. As you do so, you will create the greatest possible impact for your work. Over time, if you invest patiently and consistently, you will create wider reach for your work and ideas. You'll become more well known and you'll experience the benefits of a growing online presence. Those you are serving will benefit also. The more you give, the more you'll gain.



FOR REFLECTION

- What do you most want to accomplish with your idea, message, book, or cause?
- How do you define success?
- · What does reach mean to you?
- · Who, if anyone, are you reaching now?
- What time, energy, and financial resources are you willing to share to increase the reach of your ideas?
- Would you be willing to plant 500 trees for future generations to enjoy?

About the Author

Becky Robinson is the founder and CEO of Weaving Influence, (weavinginfluence.com) a fullservice digital marketing agency that specializes in supporting authors, business leaders, coaches, trainers, speakers, and thought leaders. Weaving Influence, which was founded in 2012, offers services that include strategic con-



sultation/coaching for authors and thought leaders, social media management, public relations, virtual meeting facilitation, and book launch services. Under Becky's leadership, the firm has worked with clients on more than 150 book launches that have enabled authors to build their brands, acquire more business customers, and increase book sales.

Becky hosts *The Book Marketing Action Podcast*, where she shares actionable advice to help authors achieve their goals of reaching more readers and enhancing their brands. She has created many resources and events to help authors, including the Reach More Readers Workshop.

Becky has an MA in intercultural studies from Wheaton College and a BA in English and creative writing from Miami University. When she's not working or writing, Becky is a distance runner. She has completed ten full and eleven half marathons. She also ran 50K to celebrate her fiftieth birthday. Becky and her husband of nearly thirty years live in Lambertville, Michigan. They have three children.

Order Your Copy Today!















