

# The Art of Overcoming

WORKPLACE AND LIFE STRATEGIES

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**COLUMBUS COPELAND**  
Inspirational speaker, author, and trainer

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Book Cover and Interior Design by Daniel Middleton  
[www.scribefreelance.com](http://www.scribefreelance.com)

Set in Century Gothic

ISBN: 978-0-981-71914-6

*Published and Printed in the United States of America*

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# DEDICATION

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TO MY PARENTS, the ultimate over-comers; the late Mrs. Janie Mae and Mr. Johnny Lee Copeland, who laid the foundation in my life and taught me so much about the art of overcoming. Most of all they taught me how to go to God in prayer in the time of need and in the time of thanks.

I miss you guys so much.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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WHAT A JOURNEY this has been for me. I thought my world had collapsed as I sat and listened to my former supervisor, as she was telling me why I was being fired back in 1989, not realizing that God was working things out so that I would meet so many beautiful and inspiring people along the way. You see, for the past twenty years, the faces have been many, their stories equally as compelling, as they each shared with me just how desperately they were seeking to bring more joy and fulfillment into both their personal and professional lives. While traveling throughout this country speaking and training in a variety of organizational, community, corporate and faith-based settings, the life lessons have been numerous. I want to thank every single person who has given me a contract, bought a DVD, CD, book, referred or recommended me for a speaking engagement. Then there were others who supported me through encouragement and love, please accept my sincere gratitude.

There are way too many people to begin naming names, as it would take this entire book, so from the depths of my heart, and with every fiber in my body, I thank you so much.

# FOREWORD

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AS WE ALL JOURNEY through life, there comes a moment in time when we feel as though all hope is gone; we have exhausted every option; that wrong choices, indecision, or repeated failure signal that the time has come to simply stop trying; throw in the towel, to give up, to just settle.

For that fleeting moment, each of us is confronted with a pivotal decision, a life altering destiny choice to make, do I persist and prevail, or do I focus more on possibility and less on the problem? When that moment comes, and it will, we all have to remember that quitting is not an option, and that most of us choose to quit just when our breakthrough awaits on the other side of the door.

So often, even if we have the will to persevere, we just do not have the wherewithal. Do not despair because Columbus Copeland in this thought provoking work, "The Art of Overcoming" offers us all the tools essential for overcoming personal, life and career challenges, as well as strategies for discovering our own unique pathway to fulfillment. In Copeland, you will find someone who has lived what he teaches, and has practiced what he preaches. Having weathered tumultuous storms of his own, Columbus Copeland in this book does not merely offer us yet another fleeting feel good moment garnered from the multitude of inspirational books on shelves, "The Art of Overcoming" is a magnificent blueprint offering genuine solutions for

the truly real challenges that we face in all aspects of our lives.

So remember, it does not matter what it might look like on the surface. Perhaps you may feel as though you are facing unbeatable giants in your personal and work life, but that could not be further from the truth. Just as a hurdler focuses intently with eyes on the finish line, when you choose to focus on your dreams with a similar sense of purpose, no matter the intensity of the winds of change, you will come to know that indeed you can face these peaks and plummets, moreover overcome them straight away, and in this book, Columbus Copeland tells us how.

DR. ANITA DAVIS-DEFOE  
AUTHOR, INSPIRATIONAL TEACHER,  
BUSINESS THOUGHT COACH

I HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED with the game of basketball as a player and as a coach at every level. I love the young men and women who have played for me. They are special; I love to coach the seventh graders just like I love to coach on the university level.

I will never forget that day when a shy young man from Clinton, South Carolina, came to Emmanuel Jr. College (GA) for a basketball try-out. It didn't take long for me as a coach to see that Columbus Copeland was a special player—wow what a shot! I wish we would have had the three-point shot back then! We were able to sign Columbus that day and he became a great player for us.



As great as Columbus was on the court, sometimes he really struggled in the class room. He had a severe stuttering problem which kept him from being the student and person he really wanted to be. But rather than giving up, Columbus grabbed the “bull by the horns” and took charge of his life. He studied hard; he believed in himself and with the support of his parents, teachers, coaches and teammates, he overcame his shyness to become not only a great college basketball player, but a person who now is changing America, as he helps thousands of people achieve their goals in life. As you read this book, “The Art of Overcoming,” you will want to develop the eleven principles that Columbus gives you. These principles will take you to the next level both professionally and personally.

I am proud to have played a small part in the life of Columbus Copeland. Now I want you to become a winner in life—the first step is to read this book, “*The Art of Overcoming*”.

ARLON G. BEADLES  
WOMEN’S BASKETBALL COACH  
SOUTHWESTERN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD UNIVERSITY  
WAXAHACHIE, TEXAS

# INTRODUCTION

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“**A**NYTHING IS POSSIBLE! Anything is possible!” This is what future hall of famer, member of the 2008 world champion Boston Celtics, Kevin Garnett, shouted during the post game interview after defeating the Los Angeles Lakers. He was so overwhelmed with joy and tears; the only thing he could say was anything is possible. Believing in the possibilities is the beginning of overcoming anything. It is not what others believe that's possible for you, but it's what you believe that's possible for yourself.

I enjoy watching award shows, no matter what the occasion; B.E.T, Academy, Oscars, People's Choice, and what I enjoy the most is the acceptance speech, during the acceptance speech, you have the opportunity to learn a lot about a person during the course of 3-5 minutes. During their acceptance speech, you learn about their journey, the things they had to endure and, moreover, what they had to overcome to get to that night.

It is during our journey in the quest of our dreams and goals that ideas are born, inventions are discovered, hope is uncovered and sadly, it is also the journey where so many people make the tragic decision of giving up on their dreams and goals because of the obstacles they face. Many of them gave up not realizing how close they were to reaching their destination. A good indicator that you're close to your goal or dream is the difficulties. It seems the closer you become to reaching your goal the more difficulties you will begin to experi-

ence. Albert Einstein was right when he said “in the middle of difficulties lies opportunities.”

The art of overcoming anything is a process, the process is made up of desire, hope, persistence, patience, preparation, prayer, just to mention a few. It is during this process, that you begin to go from hoping and believing it's possible, to knowing it's possible long before you see the end result. It is during this process, that you begin to have a song in your heart, “I got a feeling that everything's going to be alright.” Gaining an understanding of this is critical, as you must be committed to the process.

I began writing this book five years ago. My desire was to write something that would empower and inspire people in the workplace. As I travel throughout the country speaking and providing training to various companies, agencies, businesses, organizations, colleges, schools, etc., I see and hear far too many people who are dissatisfied with either the work they are currently doing or the place they are currently working. It has gotten to a point where people's jobs are literally making them physically sick. Many of these individuals have spent the majority of their lives going to a place and doing something they do not enjoy or that brings them no satisfaction.

My desire also was to write something that would encourage and inspire people in their personal lives. No longer can we act as if what happens in our personal lives does not affect our performance at work, because it does. We must learn how to overcome obstacles in both places. During 2003, while writing this book, I experienced a major personal

# CHAPTER ONE

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## How to Move Past Not Being Selected

### Do Not Stop

**N**OT BEING SELECTED for promotion can be devastating; it is a form of rejection. In life, all of us will experience rejection in some form or another. Rejection is hurtful and painful, especially after working for a company for years and years, applying for promotion after promotion, only to find ourselves still on the outside looking in; still not quite where we strive to be in that organizational chart.

All too often we make the tragic mistake of stopping when we have been rejected. We stop believing, working hard and performing. We begin to settle at a place called mediocrity. The first thing you might be tempted to do when you have been rejected is do enough just to get by. Your justification for doing mediocre work might be, "Why should I continue to work hard? They've already shown me they don't appreciate me by not promoting me." I can assure you that this mindset will definitely keep you on the outside looking in.

Most of all, after being rejected, far too many people stop growing. John Powell said "human beings, like plants, grow in the soil of acceptance, not in the atmosphere of rejection." He is right with the exception we will not all ways find ourselves in an atmosphere of acceptance.

You must do what Theodore Roosevelt said "*The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the*

*arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”* In this passage, the first twelve words are the most powerful: *“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena...”* When you allow being rejected to make you stop performing and growing, you take yourself out of the arena. You have to make a conscious effort to lift yourself from a place of mediocrity by raising your expectations. Expect more from yourself. Do not allow not being selected to leave you in a place where it takes you out of character.

### **THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF ONE PERSON**

The strange thing about moving past not being selected, is that this is only a small percentage of people, because most find themselves still stuck there. For every workplace, there may be only one person, trust me, it only takes one person to turn a department or a company upside down. Their attitude can change the entire environment.

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to provide training to several school districts throughout the country, and I've witnessed how one student can cause a teacher to lose control of their entire class. Just ask any pastor, and they will tell you, one

send for you. Your job is to keep the same mindset of David. Be open minded; it may or may not be the place where you are currently working that will be sending for you.

Maybe the reason that you were not given the promotion or the business opportunity is because God has something else better for you, so be open minded to opportunities in other places. This does not mean that the place where you are now is a bad place, and it does not mean that the people are bad; it only means this may not be the place for you.

#### **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

- Your experience alone will not guarantee you promotion or a position.
- Seek information that will help you grow personally and professionally.
- Whatever you dwell on, is where your energy and action will be.
- Take full responsibility for your growth and development.
- Holding grudges, being bitter and blaming others hurt you the most.
- You must forgive yourself and others.