



GO

CORY COTTON
cofounder of the YouTube™ basketball sensation **Dude Perfect™**

MAKE YOUR
SHOT COUNT IN THE
CONNECTED
WORLD

BIG



P R A I S E F O R G O B I G

These guys don't just think big—they live and minister big! I love their passion, creativity, and enthusiasm. But most of all, I love that they are using their platform for a cause bigger than themselves.

CRAIG GROESCHEL Author of *WEIRD: Because Normal Isn't Working*

God built us not so we can achieve mediocrity, but so we can achieve extraordinary outcomes. Go Big gives a simple yet powerful path to achieve the extraordinary.

STEVEN K. SCOTT Author of *The Richest Man Who Ever Lived: King Solomon's Secrets to Success, Wealth, and Happiness*

Having a Go Big mind-set isn't an option. It's the only option. Go Big every day!

TAMMY KLING Coauthor of *The Compass*, Founder of Write it Out

Whether your dream is to start a business or star in the NBA, a Go Big mind-set is key.

TYREKE EVANS 2010 NBA Rookie of the Year, Sacramento Kings

MAKE YOUR SHOT COUNT

IN THE CONNECTED WORLD

GO BIG

CORY COTTON

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*To that moment in your life when you finally decide
to do that thing you know you should be doing.*

That moment is now.



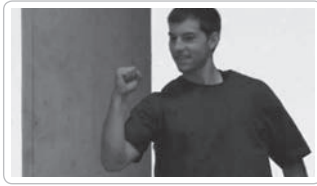


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INTRODUCTION
MAKING YOUR SHOT COUNT

The door slowly opened, and as the bright light poured over us, a booming loudspeaker filled the Los Angeles air:

Please join me in welcoming to the ESPYs the Internet sensation, the premier trick basketball shooting entertainers, Dude Perfect!

As applause took over, it would have been natural to survey the crowd. But at that moment, all I could do was watch my brown Texas boots take their first ever steps on a long red carpet.

It would have been impossible to guess almost two years before, when my five college roommates and I started shooting and filming crazy basketball shots in our backyard, that this was what we'd have to look forward to. We were just ordinary guys with a passion for competition and a basketball hoop. We still went to classes, still hung out with our friends, and still faced the same difficulties that every other college student faces. But after we launched a YouTube video of some of our favorite shots, we were thrilled to see it rapidly gain momentum—so

much momentum, in fact, that it wound up on *Good Morning America* only two days later. At that point, we realized we'd stumbled into a niche in the YouTube world.

Now, two years and more than forty-five million views later, so much has happened that it would take two books this size to explain it all. But as I look back on our journey so far, I realize that from day one, our motto has remained the same: “go big.” This phrase—our overall mind-set—has been the filter through which we've run all our decisions, and it has truly shaped us into who we are.

But before you read any further, I want you to know exactly what you're getting into. The book you're holding is for people who want to go big . . . period. Some people are okay with mediocre. Some people are okay with floating through life. We are not those people. This book is for those who want to pursue excellence, who want to blow it out of the water and chase down their dreams. This book is for those who want to go big—and who refuse to apologize for it.

Our faces may be on the cover, but this book isn't about us; it's about you. Our hope is that as we explain our Go Big approach to life, you will establish the same mind-set and experience the blessing of seeing your most heartfelt dream become a reality.

Do this for me: Compare that dream to one of our trick basketball shots. You could envision it all day, plan it out, and even imagine what it would feel like to make it, but in order to experience it, you have to actually take the shot. Sometimes you miss; sometimes you miss *badly*; sometimes you even break the backboard. But after however many tries it takes, the cool-

GO BIG TIP

If you don't act quickly and wisely to stand out in the crowd, an idea marked with your fingerprint could easily end up with someone else's name on the package.

est thing can happen: you make it. And when you do, there's nothing in the world quite like it.

Unfortunately, few people take their shot. Sometimes that's because they don't know what dream to aim for. More often, though, it's because of fears and obstacles that seem impossible to overcome.

Then, of those who do take their shot, even fewer make it count. Taking your shot is the first step, but making it count is the key. And while making it count is the most critical part, it can also be the most difficult. Why is that? Simply put, the rules have changed. The world that required an adult to work fifteen years to build a business—a brand—is disappearing fast. Today, a real-deal, moneymaking brand can emerge overnight, almost instantly. In this new, connected world, making your shot count requires taking full advantage of the resources this connected world offers.

The good news is that we're here to help. We've just spent two years taking risks, pushing limits, seeking advice, and writing it all down—for you. Now I get to share with you all the exciting things we've learned about leveraging the opportunities of this new, connected world.

From the backyard to the front page, we've created a sustainable business from shooting crazy basketball shots. We've worked with NBA players, filmed internationally broadcasted television commercials, and leveraged our platform to help others. We've experienced the blessing of discovering, chasing, and achieving a dream. Bottom line: we want that for you. We believe there is a purpose for your life, and part of it is to fulfill your dream. Obviously we can't force you to pursue your



MEET THE DUDES

Cory 100% Cotton

Go Big Moment: Dude Perfect winning the Texas A&M dodgeball championship

Go Big Dream: Dunk from the free-throw line. Or from the ground.

My Best Kept Secret: I'm bad at telling time on analog clocks. I was homeschooled for two years. Mom dropped the ball.

Favorite Shot: Ramp Shot. Sketchy, but awesome.



DudePerfect.com/GoBigVideo1

THE FIVE
PRINCIPLES

GET
EXCITED

+ + +

OWN
IT

+ + +

BLINK
LATER

+ + +

INSPIRE
OTHERS

+ + +

GIVE
BACK

dream—that’s your decision—but by the end of this book, we’ll ensure that you know how.

Throughout this book, we’ll explore the five things you need to do in order to go big in the connected world. We’ll look at how these five principles played out in Dude Perfect’s story, and we’ll explore the ways they can play out in yours.

First, we’ll show you how to take your unique passions and strengths and turn them into a profession. Just imagine it—you could actually **Get Excited** about what you do. This is critical for one simple reason: if you don’t love your work, neither will anyone else.

Next, we’ll teach you how to formulate an effective business plan and show you how to bring your dream to reality. We’ll empower you to fully embrace and relentlessly pursue your vision. We’ll teach you how to **Own It**.

Time is often your greatest enemy. From everything we’ve seen, you need to act now or someone else will. We’ll train you in the art of lightning-quick decision making and equip you to make the best use of the most precious resource you have. In this increasingly fast-moving, technological world, your window of opportunity is too short to blink. Because of this, do what we do: **Blink Later**.

Whatever your dream may be, establishing and gaining momentum through your efforts is essential to your success. We’ve discovered that the most powerful way to create lasting momentum is to **Inspire Others**. We’ll explain how to uncover existing inspiration, create more from scratch, and transform every bit of it into lasting momentum.

Finally, we’ll discuss leveraging your platform for a cause greater than yourself. Your opportunity to pursue a dream is

a privilege—one you should be thankful for. We'll explore the concept of taking what you've been uniquely given and using that to benefit others in a powerful way. Both from a personal and a corporate viewpoint, it's important to shift our perspective from inward to outward, to **Give Back**.

In our college backyard only two short years ago, my five buddies and I made a shift from living a normal life to living a Go Big one. We're solid proof that in today's connected world, a lot can happen in a very short time. Even before we realized it, we followed these five principles. And if you'll do the same, it won't matter what age you are, where you're from, or how much money you have; it won't matter what you've been told or what you've told yourself; you can live your dream. That's right, you—not someone else—*you*. You *can* make your shot count in the connected world. You *can* go big. If you're ready, just turn the page.

PART ONE

**GET
EXCITED**





CHAPTER 1

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I got home from class about 2:00 p.m., and the guys were in the backyard playing basketball, or so I thought. I laughed as I heard Tyler shouting victoriously, “Boom!” I walked through the empty house, out the sliding door, and into the backyard. As it turned out, I wasn’t the only one laughing. Sean, too, was almost in tears as Tyler strutted up to and around me, passionately reliving what I’d missed only moments before.

See, Ty does this ridiculous thing where he makes one-sided bets like, “If I throw this pocket knife into that tree all the way across our yard, you owe me twenty bucks.” It’s an obviously-there’s-no-way-I-can-do-this kind of bet because if he misses, he doesn’t owe the other person a dime. I realize I could have done a million different things with that twenty-dollar bill, but it ended up in Ty’s wallet instead. Why we let him do this I don’t know, except that the stuff he says always sounds so ridiculous.



MEET THE DUDES

Garrett Hilbert

Go Big Moment:

Walking the red carpet and meeting Dr. J

Go Big Dream:

Doing trick shots with Rob Dyrdek at his Fantasy Factory

My Best Kept Secret:

I became my high school team's shooting guard after being banned from shooting three-pointers the year before.

Favorite Shot: Fishing Pole Shot



DudePerfect.com/GoBigVideo2

All that to say, this was another one of those sucker moments, and Garrett, like we all have, fell into Tyler's clever trap.

Slapping the basketball repeatedly as he spoke, Ty built up anticipation. "Jimmy John's sandwich. Twenty-yard hook shot. Opposite side of the yard." Garrett couldn't resist. "Deal."

Ty swished it, earned a free lunch, and shared a resounding "boom!" with the once peaceful neighborhood. *That* was the hilarious celebration I'd walked in on. As we laughed in the backyard that sunny afternoon, we had no idea that the next couple of hours would change our lives forever.

But before we go there, I want you to think about something. For us—for Dude Perfect—our journey began in the fun of this one moment. When Tyler made that shot, an abnormal level of excitement welled up in us, and we noticed it. I'm not talking about some magical moment; I'm talking about a simple "ha ha, that was awesome—like, *really awesome*" moment. Others might have smiled and moved on; it might not have struck them the same way. But to us, because of our love for basketball and competition, we thought it was really exciting. And as you'll soon see, the rest of our story—backyard, front page, red carpet, and all—has been a continuation of that initial excitement.

Now, having explained that, I want to ask you two simple but potentially life-changing questions:

- First, have you paid enough attention to the things that excite you? Have you taken notice of the moments that are awesome—like, *really awesome*?
- And second, what are those things? What is it that thrills you? What is it that's almost unnaturally exciting to you?

The reason these questions are so important is that your unique answers are exactly that: unique. Because of who you—and you alone—are, you're wired to be extra passionate about certain things.

Take a moment and think about what this might look like in your life. Maybe people give you a hard time about something you care a lot about, something that isn't nearly as fascinating to them as it is to you. Maybe it's something you used to be passionate about, but because of other responsibilities, you've had to shelve that dream for a little while. Maybe it's something you've never even told anyone else about; it's a closet dream, something you assume others wouldn't understand, something you've kept hidden for a long time.

I've probably never met you, but let me tell you what I already know about you. I know you have an answer to those questions. And I know that, whatever your answer, you've thought a lot about that thing before. What I don't know is what you've done about it.

At some point or another, chances are you've wanted to take your unique passion to the next level. Maybe you've done that; maybe you haven't. But in order to measure that, we have to decide what exactly "the next level" is. In the end, that definition is up to you, but let me show you how it played out for us. After I finish this story, we'll offer you our suggestion, and I think you'll like the sound of it.



6 • GET EXCITED



Before I pulled into the driveway, Garrett, Tyler, and Sean had been shooting around in our grass backyard, breaking in the goal we'd purchased only a few days earlier. Turns out, without a place to dribble, all you can really do with a basketball goal is shoot on it.

As I laughed about the sandwich-winning story, Ty decided to prove it by shooting again from an even farther distance. Wanting to save the moment, Sean grabbed a camera. That, Sean, was a clutch idea. Changing it to video mode, Sean pressed the record button, and a couple of shots later, *swish*. Ty screamed, "Yes!" and threw down his hat in celebration. When we saw the shot on camera, it was obvious what we had to do next.

Camera rolling and competitive juices flowing, we tried to outdo each other. Standing on a rail. Backwards in a chair. Off the chimney. Over the fence. We'd shoot and show, shoot and show. It was a blast: some of the most competitive guys you could meet, a camera, and a basketball.

The defining moment came when Ty stepped up to a tree about thirty yards from the basket. A backwards over-the-header from that distance was ridiculous, and though Sean pointed the camera at him, I knew Ty was wasting our time. He'd already named a few of his shots for the camera, but this one was tougher to define. He simply said, "This shot doesn't even have a name." He let it fly, and with the ball in the air, he said, "Hoo-ha" . . . *swish*. Facing the opposite direction, Ty couldn't see it go in, but our reactions gave it away.



We all rushed toward Sean, dying to see the replay. We were impressed before we watched it again, but seeing it on camera turned out to be the drive for everything that followed. In real life, that shot had looked sweet; on camera, it looked fake. And that was a *very* good thing. Because Ty couldn't see it swish, his blank stare into the lens seemed to say, "No big deal." It looked hilarious. We didn't think anyone would believe it, but we wanted to know for sure. That was when we decided to make a video.

We kept making shots, but it was getting dark. So we soaked up all the time we could, called it a night, and went inside to check out the day's footage. We liked the shots we'd made, but we knew we didn't have enough to make a full video. We thought about other shots we could do the next day, and we smiled when Tyler said what all of us were thinking: "I want to go bigger." We wanted to shoot farther, more difficult shots. For round two, we wanted to go big.

Our classes ended at different times the next day, but we all came home as fast as we could. No one wanted to miss out on our new hobby. And, more important, no one wanted to be outdone. With camera charged, we went to the backyard and started recording. After a few mediocre land shots, our attention turned toward the roof of the house. We had bounced a few off of the roof, but we hadn't shot any *from* it yet. Unsurprisingly, Tyler was the first to scout it out, and with the camera's record light on, he invented what would turn out to be his favorite type of shot. Looking back over his shoulder, Tyler declared, "This is the laser shot." Like the former high school quarterback he is, Tyler took the ball in one hand and unleashed a rocket, sending a frozen rope through the net on his very first try.

TRICK SHOOTING 101

If you try a shot off your roof, consult your local authorities to make sure it's cool with them. Otherwise someone else will.

INSTANT REPLAY

Watching our footage is almost as much fun as filming it. We never know exactly how it's going to look until we see it on a bigger screen. So from the very beginning, crowding around our day's results has been one of our favorite parts of the process.

TRICK SHOOTING 101

When transporting your goal by truck, avoid low hanging branches as they can damage your goal, truck, and passengers.

As the day progressed and our creativity grew, we knew we'd have to move the goal off-site to go even bigger. We headed to a nearby park and unloaded. To say the least, we caused some comical confusion as we rolled our goal past the people playing on the park's outdoor basketball court. *Excuse us, fellas; we brought our own.* After making some sweet shots there, we only needed one more shot to finish our video—a really far one. Distance-wise, we hadn't pulled off anything too impressive yet, so we set our sights on something big.

On our way home, we passed a friend's house, one with a front yard large enough to distance the house at least forty yards from the street. We'd found our big finish: forty yards from our friend's roof into the goal in the back of the truck. We rolled the camera for about ten minutes. It was windy that day, but with a little patience, Tyler nailed it. Somewhere in between excited and exhausted, we called it a wrap.

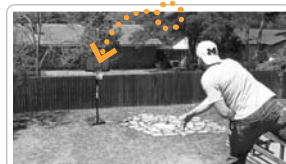
That night, as we crowded around the kitchen table and two days' worth of footage, a certain clip caught our attention. On day two, Sean and Tyler had filmed an introduction to begin our trick shot video. They'd set up two chairs in the backyard, and since they were the only ones there at the moment, Sean had set the camera on the rail of our deck. He pressed the record button, looked at the screen, and the view was exactly what he wanted. Pleased, he said, "Dude, perfect." We instantly loved it. Our name, our brand, and the phrase in all our videos was born.

We didn't set out to create a company, and we had absolutely no idea about the adventure ahead of us. What we did know was that we were doing something that excited us, something that stemmed from our love for competition. We knew we were having fun.

Now I promised you our suggestion to the “next level” question I asked earlier, and here it is. If you’re not consistently getting excited about what you’re doing, maybe you shouldn’t be doing it. We’re just college students, but already we’ve seen too many unenthusiastic answers to the question “What do you do for a living?” So here’s a thought: if you don’t have to fight back the urge to smile when you answer that question, you may need to reevaluate what you do.

Before you roll your eyes, let me explain. First of all, I realize that passion isn’t everything, and not every passion is created equal. There are some passions that might be better if they remained hobbies. But while passion isn’t *everything*, it is crucial. Passion is a good indicator of where your best efforts will be spent. We’ll talk about this over the course of the next two chapters, but it’s worth considering now: are you more likely to go big, to do the hard work necessary to achieve excellence, for something that excites you or for something that bores you? Getting excited puts you in a better position to take your shot and make it count. Passion may not be everything, but it’s definitely worth your careful attention.

I also realize that not everyone is in a position to drop everything immediately and follow where their excitement leads. It’s a lot easier for college guys with limited responsibilities to make trick basketball videos and travel promoting them. For someone working two jobs just to make ends meet, it’s much harder to start chasing a dream. But thinking about what gets you excited is worth doing, whatever your next step is. When you know what it is that gets you excited, you’ll be in a better position, now or in the future, to capitalize on the opportunities that come your way—or to create your own opportunities.



DudePerfect.com/GoBigVideo4

GO BIG TIP**Pay attention
to your
passions.**

Discovering your passion is always the first step, whether you take what you're excited about to the next level immediately or somewhere down the line.

And getting excited isn't about the money. Why? Because this book isn't a get-rich-quick scheme. Do we legitimately believe that you *can* make money doing something you instinctively love? Yes. Have we? Yes. But for anyone who does something they love for a living, the smiling answer to the *what do you do* question almost never comes from the money; it comes from the job itself. We believe that everyone has something significant to offer, and doing something you love may be your best opportunity to offer it. So *that* is our suggestion. In the connected world we live in, we've been able to go big with a passion of ours. In the same way, we want to help you make your shot count and go big with what you love. Now if that feels unrealistic, you need to keep reading. And fast.