

The Adventures of **JOHNNY BUNKO**

DISCUSSION GUIDE



*By Daniel H. Pink
Illustration by Rob Ten Pas*

Lesson One

1. Do you have a plan? How has it worked out?
2. Does “there is no plan” feel too idealistic or risky to you? When is planning actually wise?
3. A key to Lesson One is the difference between making decisions for instrumental reasons and fundamental reasons. Discuss a time when you chose one type of reason over another—and explain how things turned out.
4. If you were to start making choices for fundamental reasons, what would you do differently?

Lesson Two

5. What are your strengths?
6. Does your current job make the most of your strengths? How could you do more of what you’re good at? If there were an opportunity in your company—like Johnny’s lateral move from accounting to marketing—better suited to your strengths, what would it be?
7. How can you tell the difference between a weakness and something that just needs a little more effort?
8. Describe a time when you felt “flow” on the job.

Lesson Three

9. Is there a risk of becoming too instrumental in your thinking when you’re focused on the needs and feelings of others?

10. Diana advises Johnny that the most valuable people bring out the best in others—helping their bosses and their teammates succeed. Does your organization have a culture that encourages people to bring out the best in others? If not, how might one be cultivated?

Lesson Four

11. Do you agree that persistence trumps talent? When does persistence become annoyance? Or delusion?
12. Diana tells Johnny that musicians and athletes embody Lesson Four because they “show up.” Are there other endeavors besides sports and music that reflect this lesson better? When is “showing up” not enough?
13. Which does your organization reward and encourage? Persistence? Talent? Both? Neither?

Lesson Five

14. When has fear of failure prevented you from trying? Was it fear of disappointing yourself—or others?
15. What’s an excellent mistake you’ve made recently? Did you see it that way at first? Did it result in a later success—like Johnny’s reinvention of his original environmental shoes idea?
16. Can you tell the difference between an excellent mistake and stupid mistake—not in retrospect, but before you act? If so, how?
17. Discuss whether your organization permits—let alone encourages—employees to make excellent mistakes.

Lesson Six

18. What gives you a sense of purpose? How are you pursuing that?
19. Does your organization have a higher purpose? Should it? If you work at a for-profit company, is “purpose” a concept that’s realistic to concern yourself with?
20. What imprint do you hope to leave with your work?
21. How do you square purpose and money?

Overall Questions

22. This is the first American business book in manga. Does the medium detract from the message or enhance it? Why?
23. Do you think the story places too little importance on making money?
24. Which of the six lessons sticks in your memory the most? Why?
25. Which of the six lessons do you think is least important? Why?
26. What’s a really good piece of career advice that you’ve received—or come up with on your own—that you would add to the list?