

THE STUDENT'S GUIDE TO TAPPING INTO
THE SUPERPOWER OF MINDSET



**YOUR
NEW
PLAYLIST**

New York Times
Bestselling Author

**JON
ACUFF**

WITH L.E. ACUFF
AND MCRAE ACUFF

YOUR NEW PLAYLIST

THE STUDENT'S GUIDE TO TAPPING INTO
THE SUPERPOWER OF MINDSET

JON ACUFF,
WITH **L.E. ACUFF**
AND **McRAE ACUFF**



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Jon Acuff with L.E. Acuff and McRae Acuff, *Your New Playlist*
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From Jon:

Jenny, it takes a superhero to live
with three authors in the same house.

From L.E.:

Dad, thanks for inviting me into this fun
writing project! Also, thanks for being so tall
and funny and writing half of my dedication.

From McRae:

To the college admissions counselor reading
about this on my application: I wrote a book!



CONTENTS

Introduction	9
1. Who Turned Up the Music?	13
2. The Wrong Songs	23
3. How to Spot a Broken Soundtrack	31
4. QUESTION 1: Is It True?	37
5. QUESTION 2: Is It Helpful?	43
6. QUESTION 3: Is It Kind?	47
7. The Dial and the Switch	51
8. Dials Always Go Two Directions	57
9. Turn-Down Techniques	65
10. All Your Favorite Songs	71
11. You Should Flip It	77
12. There's Great Music Everywhere	81
13. Repeat as Necessary	89



14. SOUNDTRACK 1: Enough Is a Myth	95
15. SOUNDTRACK 2: I'm Capable of More Than I Think	101
16. SOUNDTRACK 3: Be Brave Enough to Be Bad at Something New	105
17. SOUNDTRACK 4: Fear Gets a Voice, Not a Vote	109
18. SOUNDTRACK 5: I'm Just Getting Started! ...	117
19. SOUNDTRACK 6: People in the Game Always Get Criticized by People in the Stands	121
20. SOUNDTRACK 7: Everyone Feels Like This ...	127
21. Change the Sound of the Song	133
22. Gather Evidence	137
23. Get Sticky with a Symbol	147

Conclusion 159

P. S.: 6 Things Parents Never Tell You 161

Acknowledgments 177

Notes 181

About the Authors 183

Introduction

"I wish I knew then what I know now."

If you're an adult, you've said that a few times.

If you're a student, adults are jealous of you.

Why?

Because when you hit your 30s, 40s, or 50s, you learn things that would have made the school and college years so much better. Only you didn't know them then, and you don't have access to a time machine, so you're left with that sentence: "I wish I knew then what I know now."

But if you're a student, you do have access to a time machine. You're holding one in your hands right now.

Inside these pages is the fastest, funnest way to tap into the superpower of mindset.

Inside these pages are easy tools you can use to change the story you tell yourself about yourself.

Inside these pages is everything you need to create new thoughts that push you forward instead of holding you back.

I helped your parents do that when I wrote a book called *Soundtracks*. They read it, started listening to new soundtracks (my word for repetitive thoughts), and then asked me, “Will you write a version for my kid?”

The answer was, “Yes, but not alone.”

I’m 46 years old. I haven’t been a student for 30 years. That’s a long time, and even though I’ve written seven other books, I knew this one had to be different. So I asked my two daughters to help me write it.

McRae is 16 years old and is a junior in high school.

L.E. (short for Laura Elizabeth and pronounced like “Ellie”) is a freshman in college.

We did a collab on this project. (See, even that last sentence sounded like a dad trying to be cool.) They wrote it. I edited it. And the result is a short, powerful book that your parents wish someone had handed them when they were your age.

When you’re an adult and discover that you have the power to write new soundtracks for your life,

you often first have to retire broken soundtracks you've carried for years, maybe even decades.

As a student, you don't have to do that. Your life is fresh and unencumbered by the baggage we adults pick up along the way. Not only do you have less to unlearn, but you're also squarely in the learning portion of your life. From algebra to driving, students are primed to learn new things and develop new skills.

The best news is that truth tends to grow like compound interest. Saving money when you're a student has a different impact on your life than it does when you save money in your forties. A single new soundtrack believed when you're 14 or 18 can change the entire arc of your life in the same way that saving \$1,000 early on can.

It's time to build some new thoughts that turn into new actions and new results.

It's time to discover how your thought life shapes your real life.

It's time to create your new playlist.

Are you ready?

Me too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a smaller loop at the end.

Who Turned Up the Music?

Coach Scott:

Hey kid—unfortunately we aren't going to be able to keep you on the team this year. Sorry for the bad news. I truly appreciate all the hard work you put in and your team-first attitude. Good luck with cross-country.

My name is McRae Acuff. I'm 16 years old, and for two years I dreaded receiving that text.

Sometimes when your phone buzzes with a message, it's good news. A friend liked your latest post. An artist you love released new music. A classmate

is sending the notes you missed when you were absent.

This wasn't that type of message.

I knew I might get cut from the lacrosse team, but I did everything I could to avoid it. I worked on my stamina, jogging miles through our neighborhood with my dad before our team running test. I went to lacrosse camp to work on specific skills in the off season. We bought a rebounder so I could practice throwing and catching in the backyard. I worked with friends in the neighborhood who were better than me.

I made the team as a freshman. I thought there might be a shot as a sophomore. I was wrong, and the 42 words in that text message spelled it out clearly.

It may have been a short message, and my coach was incredibly kind about it, but it caused a chain reaction of thoughts to take place within seconds:

You got cut from the team?

What a loser.

All your friends from lacrosse will never talk to you again.

Everyone at school will think you're a complete loser.

You're a loser.

Who gets cut from the team in tenth grade?

All of your friends are still on the team except you.

*You were the worst on the team, so it makes sense
you got cut.*

Before I could even tell my parents what just happened, a thousand thoughts flooded my head. I felt emotionally overwhelmed and out of control—lost in the flow of negativity. In that moment, I found myself asking a question I've asked hundreds of times:

Who turned up the music so loud?

Sometimes it feels like my thoughts are crashing a party I don't remember inviting any of them to.

My geometry test has parked a car right in the middle of my front yard.

Homecoming is banging pots and pans in the kitchen.

Tryouts for the school play are jumping up and down on my bed so hard that the ceiling is shaking.

I'm trying to do homework. I'm trying to eat dinner with my family. I'm trying to get ready for school. I'm trying to do anything but think about those thoughts, but those thoughts are loud.

Have your thoughts ever felt that way too? Like



**OVERTHINKING
IS WHEN WHAT YOU THINK
GETS IN THE WAY
OF WHAT YOU WANT.**

JON ACUFF

Jon Acuff with J.E. Acuff and McRae Acuff, *Your New Playlist*

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#YourNewPlaylist 

the music you're listening to got stuck and you can't change songs? It's like Spotify Rewind, when they send you your most played songs of the year and the list only has a handful:

1. The ACT is coming up and you're not ready.
2. You didn't get invited to that party that's on all your friends' stories.
3. There's not a good spot to sit at lunch.

Your thoughts might have different words than mine, but every student does this exact same thing sometimes. It's called *overthinking*, and it's when what you think gets in the way of what you want.

You want to enjoy the football game without overthinking why your friend didn't respond to your text yet.

You want to apply to college without overthinking that you should have done more extracurricular activities when you were a freshman.

You want to get your driver's license without overthinking how uncool you look behind the wheel of your mom's minivan.

But overthinking gets in the way.

If you've ever worried that you're the only one who does that, I've got some good news: you're not.

A researcher named Mike Peasley, who has a PhD, recently asked more than 10,000 people if they struggle with overthinking, and more than 99.5 percent of them answered yes.

Isn't that crazy? When I say everyone does it, I mean EVERYONE.

It's not a personality trait. It's not because you did something wrong. It's not because you're weird. Overthinking is something that happens to all of us and causes a lot of trouble.

Overthinking steals your dreams, cripples your confidence, and tangles you up when you least expect it.

But what if it didn't have to?

What if your thoughts could work for you, not against you?

What if you could create a new playlist?

What if—and this next part is going to sound a little too good to be true—you could tap into the superpower of mindset?

You can, and that's what this book is all about.

Though this is my first book, it's my dad's eighth book. His last one was called *Soundtracks: The Surprising Solution to*—you guessed it—*Overthinking*. When it came time to write a version of it for students, he asked me and my sister L.E. to help.

Although he occasionally will say popular phrases

like “dope” or “no cap” (usually years after they’ve gone out of style), he’s not a teenager. He hasn’t been a teenager since 1994, and a lot has changed since then. Smartphones didn’t exist. The internet didn’t exist. Social media didn’t exist. Netflix didn’t exist. The music of the 80s might have been great, but my dad grew up in a very different world from you and me.

It’s easier than ever for you and me to overthink.

So instead of trying to pretend he understood what it meant to be a student in today’s world, he gave us the chance to talk with you. L.E. and I are going to tag team the chapters ahead and will say our names when there’s a specific story one of us is telling.

This is bigger than just our story though. There are hundreds of students represented in these pages. My dad is a public speaker. Companies, colleges, and camps hire him to speak. Ten years ago, at high school presentations, he started teaching students about the power of mindset. At the end of his speeches, he’d ask them to write down the stories they were telling themselves about themselves. Each student would drop off what they anonymously wrote on pieces of paper in boxes at the back of the room.

It was an exercise that gave them a chance to get

something off their chests as well as an opportunity to have their voices heard. We still have boxes of those personal soundtracks in our house. Between those notes and DMs and conversations with friends in the cafeteria, when we started writing about the superpower of mindset, the floodgate of student thoughts opened up.

It turns out L.E. and I aren't the only students who could use a new playlist.

Whether you're a 15-year-old boy in Oklahoma, a 19-year-old girl in Florida, or somewhere in between, you'll be able to see yourself inside this book.

More than likely a parent gave you this. Hopefully there was a \$20 bill slid into the back page as a reward for finishing it. Tell them I said that's part of the official reading plan, because who doesn't want a free \$20?

Inside, we're going to teach you how to do three things:

1. Retire your broken soundtracks.
2. Replace them with new soundtracks.
3. Repeat the new ones so often that they become as automatic as the old ones.

Retire, replace, and repeat.

That's it.

If it sounds simple, that's because it is.

Getting cut from the lacrosse team wasn't easy, but knowing how to deal with my soundtracks changed my mindset in that moment, which changed how I responded and ultimately changed what happened next. (Spoiler alert: The story ends well!)

Tapping into the superpower of mindset can do the same for you.

All it takes is a new playlist.

Let's start building yours.