

NOTES

VOLUME I

FIRST EDITION

SVEN ANDERS ZETTERLUND

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*For my parents, Peter and Debby,
without whom I would be nothing*

NOTES

VOLUME I

Introduction

What is this thing you're ostensibly holding in your hands?

It's a compilation of notes I've taken on a variety of non-fiction books. It's part of my broader drive to assemble and share the best overall advice in an effort to live the best life possible.

I initially only made this book for myself, as I love having the ability to review these notes in one compact book. Then I figured that I might as well make it available to everyone else in case it helps them, too!

Most of the notes were taken from books read between 2014 – 2017. I have notes on about 20 other books but those didn't make the cut.

How should I read this book?

One word after another, just like any other! But you can skip around. If you really want to get the condensed version, you can take 5 minutes to flip through all the pages and just read the dark highlights.

Oh, a word on the highlights: Obviously, all the text in this book I found to be important and helpful. However, I've also highlighted text here and there.

Light highlights are items I found more important than others.

Dark highlights are reserved for the most important pieces of wisdom!

I encourage you to use your own highlighter and mark this book up. (If you prefer, a non-highlighted version is also available online.)

This book is not perfect (SHOCKER!)

Within each book, the order of the notes hasn't been optimized. Nor was any of it edited or proof-read by anyone else.

These notes should not be considered verbatim citations of the works they reference. Much of the text has been edited and moved around, so if you want "source" material, you'll have to go and read the actual sources.

These notes also have a bias toward Business / Professional development, surely a reflection of the state of my life when I took them.

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to the authors who wrote the books that were summarized/referenced in this volume.

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... and all my friends and family who have been so kind to me over the years.

Enjoy!

LIFE

ON THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

(Translated by John W. Basore)

Life is short!

Written in 49 AD by the extremely wealthy Roman philosopher Lucius Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* is the oldest and most important work in this volume.

It's a timeless theme – some of the examples that Seneca gives in the full essay sound shockingly contemporary. Even thousands of years ago, he writes: "Though all the brilliant intellects of the ages were to concentrate upon this one theme, never could they adequately express their wonder at this dense darkness of the human mind."

Make the most of your time!

It is not that we have a short space of time, but that we waste much of it. Life is long enough, and it has been given in sufficiently generous measure to allow the accomplishment of the very greatest things if the whole of it is well invested. But when it is squandered in luxury and carelessness, when it is devoted to no good end, we perceive that it has passed away before we were aware that it was passing. So it is – the life we receive is not short, but we make it so. Just as great and princely wealth is scattered in a moment when it comes into the hands of a bad owner, while wealth however limited, if it is entrusted to a good guardian, increases by use, so our life is amply long for him who orders it properly.

Why do we complain of Nature? She has shown herself kindly; life, if you know how to use it, is long. But one man is possessed by greed that is insatiable, another by a toilsome devotion to tasks that are useless; one man is besotted with wine, another is paralyzed by sloth; one man is exhausted by an ambition that always hangs upon the decision of others, another, driven on by the greed of the trader, is led over all lands and all seas by the hope of gain; some are tormented by a passion for war and are always either bent upon inflicting danger upon others or concerned about their own; some there are who are worn out by voluntary servitude in a thankless attendance upon the great; many are kept busy either in the pursuit of other men's fortune or in complaining of their own; many, following no fixed aim, shifting and inconstant and dissatisfied, are plunged by their fickleness into plans that are ever new; some have no fixed principle by which to direct their course, but Fate takes them unawares while they loll and yawn.

Vices beset us and surround us on every side, and they do not permit us to rise anew and lift up our eyes for the discernment of truth, but they keep us down when once they have overwhelmed us and we are chained to lust. Think you that I am speaking of the wretches whose evils are admitted? Look at those whose prosperity men flock to behold; they are smothered by their blessings.

To how many are riches a burden! From how many do eloquence and the daily straining to display their powers draw forth blood! How many are pale from constant pleasures! To how many does the throng of clients that crowd about them leave no freedom! In short, run through the list of all these men from the lowest to the highest – this man desires an advocate, this one answers the call, that one is on trial, that one defends him, that one gives sentence; no one asserts his claim to himself, everyone is wasted for the sake of another. Ask about the men whose names are known by heart, and you will see that these are the marks that distinguish them: A cultivates B and B cultivates C; no one is his own master.

Men do not suffer anyone to seize their estates, and they rush to stones and arms if there is even the slightest dispute about the limit of their lands, yet they allow others to trespass upon their life – nay, they themselves even lead in those who will eventually possess it. In guarding their fortune men are often closefisted, yet, when it comes to the matter of wasting time, in the case of the one thing in which it is right to be miserly, they show themselves most prodigal.

And so I should like to lay hold upon someone from the company of older men and say: "I see that you have reached the farthest limit of human life, you are pressing hard upon your hundredth year, or are even beyond it; come now, recall your life and make a reckoning. Consider how much of your time was taken up with a moneylender,

how much with a mistress, how much with a patron, how much with a client, how much in wrangling with your wife, how much in punishing your slaves, how much in rushing about the city on social duties. Add the diseases which we have caused by our own acts, add, too, the time that has lain idle and unused. Look back in memory and consider when you ever had a fixed plan, how few days have passed as you had intended, when you were ever at your own disposal, when your face ever wore its natural expression, when your mind was ever unperturbed, what work you have achieved in so long a life, how many have robbed you of life when you were not aware of what you were losing, how much was taken up in useless sorrow, in foolish joy, in greedy desire, in the allurements of society, how little of yourself was left to you."

You live as if you were destined to live forever, no thought of your frailty ever enters your head, of how much time has already gone by you take no heed. You squander time as if you drew from a full and abundant supply, though all the while that day which you bestow on some person or thing is perhaps your last. You have all the fears of mortals and all the desires of immortals. You will hear many men saying: "After my fiftieth year I shall retire into leisure, my sixtieth year shall release me from public duties." And what guarantee, pray, have you that your life will last longer? Who will suffer your course to be just as you plan it? Are you not ashamed to reserve for yourself only the remnant of life, and to set apart for wisdom only that time which cannot be devoted to any business? How late it is to begin to live just when we must cease to live! What foolish forgetfulness of mortality to postpone wholesome plans to the fiftieth and sixtieth year, and to intend to begin life at a point to which few have attained!

You will see that the most powerful and highly placed men let drop remarks in which they long for leisure, acclaim it, and prefer it to

all their blessings. They desire at times to descend from their high pinnacle.

The deified Augustus did not cease to pray for rest and to seek release from public affairs; all his conversation ever reverted to this subject – his hope of leisure. This was the sweet, even if vain, consolation with which he would gladden his labours – that he would one day live for himself. He had discovered how much sweat those blessings that shone throughout all lands drew forth, how many secret worries they concealed. Forced to pit arms first against his countrymen, then against his colleagues, and lastly against his relatives, he shed blood on land and sea.

Marcus Cicero, long flung among men like Catiline and Clodius and Pompey and Crassus, some open enemies, others doubtful friends, as he is tossed to and fro along with the state and seeks to keep it from destruction, to be at last swept away, unable as he was to be restful in prosperity or patient in adversity – how many times does he curse that very consulship of his!

When Livius Drusus, a bold and energetic man, had with the support of a huge crowd drawn from all Italy proposed new laws and the evil measures of the Gracchi, seeing no way out for his policy, which he could neither carry through nor abandon when once started on, he is said to have complained bitterly against the life of unrest he had had from the cradle, and to have exclaimed that he was the only person who had never had a holiday even as a boy. It is a question whether he died by his own hand; for he fell from a sudden wound received in his groin, some doubting whether his death was voluntary, no one, whether it was timely.

It would be superfluous to mention more who, though others deemed them the happiest of men, have expressed their loathing for

every act of their years, and with their own lips have given true testimony against themselves.

Your vices will swallow up any amount of time. The space you have, which reason can prolong, you allow to slip away as if it were something superfluous and that could be replaced. Among the worst I count also those who have time for nothing but wine and lust. Search into the hours of all these people, see how much time they give to accounts, how much to laying snares, how much to fearing them, how much to paying court, how much to being courted, how much is taken up in giving or receiving bail, how much by banquets – for even these have now become a matter of business – and you will see how their interests, whether you call them evil or good, do not allow them time to breathe.

Finally, everybody agrees that no one pursuit can be successfully followed by a man who is preoccupied with many things, since the mind, when distracted, takes in nothing very deeply. There is nothing the busy man is less busied with than living. Of the other arts there are many teachers everywhere; some of them we have seen that mere boys have mastered so thoroughly that they could even play the master. It takes the whole of life to learn how to live, and – what will perhaps make you wonder more – it takes the whole of life to learn how to die. Many very great men, having laid aside all their encumbrances, having renounced riches, business, and pleasures, have made it their one aim up to the very end of life to know how to live; yet the greater number of them have departed from life confessing that they did not yet know. It takes a great man and one who has risen far above human weaknesses not to allow any of his time to be filched from him, and it follows that the life of such a man is very long because he has devoted wholly to himself whatever time he has had. None of it lay neglected and idle; none of it was under the control of another, for, guarding it

most grudgingly, he found nothing that was worthy to be taken in exchange for his time.

All those who summon you to themselves, turn you away from your own self. Everyone hurries his life on and suffers from a yearning for the future and a weariness of the present. But he who bestows all of his time on his own needs, who plans out every day as if it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the morrow. For what new pleasure is there that any hour can now bring? They are all known, all have been enjoyed to the full. Mistress Fortune may deal out the rest as she likes; his life has already found safety.

I am often filled with wonder when I see some men demanding the time of others and those from whom they ask it most indulgent. Men trifle with the most precious thing in the world; but they are blind to it because it is an incorporeal thing, because it does not come beneath the sight of the eyes, and for this reason it is counted a very cheap thing – nay, of almost no value at all. Men set very great store by pensions and doles, and for these they hire out their labour or service or effort. But no one sets a value on time; all use it lavishly as if it cost nothing. But see how these same people clasp the knees of physicians if they fall ill and the danger of death draws nearer, see how ready they are, if threatened with capital punishment, to spend all their possessions in order to live! But if each one could have the number of his future years set before him as is possible in the case of the years that have passed, how alarmed those would be who saw only a few remaining, how sparing of them would they be!

Life will follow the path it started upon, and will neither reverse nor check its course; it will make no noise, it will not remind you of its swiftness. Silent it will glide on; it will not prolong itself at the command of a king, or at the applause of the populace. Just as it was

started on its first day, so it will run; nowhere will it turn aside, nowhere will it delay.

They spend life in making ready to live! They form their purposes with a view to the distant future; yet postponement is the greatest waste of life; it deprives them of each day as it comes, it snatches from them the present by promising something hereafter. You dispose of that which lies in the hands of Fortune, you let go that which lies in your own. All things that are still to come lie in uncertainty; live straightway!

You must vie with time's swiftness in the speed of using it, and, as from a torrent that rushes by and will not always flow, you must drink quickly. Why, to whatever length your greed inclines, do you stretch before yourself months and years in long array, unconcerned and slow though time flies so fast? Old age surprises them while their minds are still childish, and they come to it unprepared and unarmed, for they have made no provision for it; they have stumbled upon it suddenly and unexpectedly, they did not notice that it was drawing nearer day by day. Even as conversation or reading or deep meditation on some subject beguiles the traveller, and he finds that he has reached the end of his journey before he was aware that he was approaching it, just so with this unceasing and most swift journey of life, which we make at the same pace whether waking or sleeping; those who are engrossed become aware of it only at the end. The mind that is untroubled and tranquil has the power to roam into all the parts of its life; but the minds of the engrossed, just as if weighted by a yoke, cannot turn and look behind.

In a word, do you want to know how they do not "live long"? See how eager they are to live long! Decrepit old men beg in their prayers for the addition of a few more years; they pretend that they are

younger than they are; they comfort themselves with a falsehood, and are as pleased to deceive themselves as if they deceived Fate at the same time. But when at last some infirmity has reminded them of their mortality, in what terror do they die, feeling that they are being dragged out of life, and not merely leaving it. They cry out that they have been fools, because they have not really lived, and that they will live henceforth in leisure if only they escape from this illness; then at last they reflect how uselessly they have striven for things which they did not enjoy, and how all their toil has gone for nothing. But for those whose life is passed remote from all business, why should it not be ample? None of it is assigned to another, none of it is scattered in this direction and that, none of it is committed to Fortune, none of it perishes from neglect, none is subtracted by wasteful giving, none of it is unused; the whole of it, so to speak, yields income. And so, however small the amount of it, it is abundantly sufficient, and therefore, whenever his last day shall come, the wise man will not hesitate to go meet death with steady step.

Even the leisure of some men is engrossed; in their villa or on their couch, in the midst of solitude, although they have withdrawn from all others, they are themselves the source of their own worry; we should say that these are living, not in leisure, but in idle preoccupation.

And I would not count these among the leisured class either – the men who have themselves borne hither and thither in a sedan-chair and a litter, and are punctual at the hours for their rides as if it were unlawful to omit them, who are reminded by someone else when they must bathe, when they must swim, when they must dine; so enfeebled are they by the excessive lassitude of a pampered mind that they cannot find out by themselves whether they are hungry! I hear that one of these pampered people – provided that you can call it

pampering to unlearn the habits of human life – when he had been lifted by hands from the bath and placed in his sedan-chair, said questioningly: "Am I now seated?" Do you think that this man, who does not know whether he is sitting, knows whether he is alive, whether he sees, whether he is at leisure? To think that there is anyone who is so lost in luxury that he takes another's word as to whether he is sitting down! This man, then, is not at leisure, you must apply to him a different term – he is sick, nay, he is dead.

It would be tedious to mention all the different men who have spent the whole of their life over chess or ball or the practice of baking their bodies in the sun. It was once a foible confined to the Greeks to inquire into what number of rowers Ulysses had, whether the Iliad or the Odyssey was written first, and various other matters of this stamp. But now this vain passion for learning useless things has assailed the Romans also. In the last few days I heard someone telling who was the first Roman general to do this or that; Duilius was the first who won a naval battle; Curius Dentatus was the first who had elephants led in his triumph; Lucius Sulla was the first to exhibit loosed lions in the Circus, though at other times they were exhibited in chains, and javelin-throwers were sent by King Bocchus to despatch them. There will be no profit in such knowledge, nevertheless it wins our attention by reason of the attractiveness of an empty subject. Whose mistakes will be made fewer by such stories? Whom will they make more brave, whom more just, whom more noble-minded? O, what blindness does great prosperity cast upon our minds!

Of all men they alone are at leisure who take time for philosophy, they alone really live; for they are not content to be good guardians of their own lifetime only. They annex ever age to their own; all the years that have gone before them are an addition to their store. All those men, glorious fashioners of holy thoughts, were born for us; for us

they have prepared a way of life. By other men's labours we are led to the sight of things most beautiful that have been wrested from darkness and brought into light; from no age are we shut out, we have access to all ages, and if it is our wish, by greatness of mind, to pass beyond the narrow limits of human weakness, there is a great stretch of time through which we may roam. We may argue with Socrates, we may doubt with Carneades, find peace with Epicurus, overcome human nature with the Stoics, exceed it with the Cynics. Since Nature allows us to enter into fellowship with every age, why should we not turn from this paltry and fleeting span of time and surrender ourselves with all our soul to the past, which is boundless, which is eternal, which we share with our betters?

We may fairly say that they alone are engaged in the true duties of life who shall wish to have Zeno, Pythagoras, Democritus, and all the other high priests of liberal studies, and Aristotle and Theophrastus, as their most intimate friends every day. No one of these will be "not at home", no one of these will fail to have his visitor leave more happy and more devoted to himself than when he came, no one of these will allow anyone to leave him with empty hands; all mortals can meet with them by night or by day.

From them you will take whatever you wish; it will be no fault of theirs if you do not draw the utmost that you can desire. What happiness, what a fair old age awaits him who has offered himself as a client to these! He will have friends from whom he may seek counsel on matters great and small, whom he may consult every day about himself, from whom he may hear truth without insult, praise without flattery, and after whose likeness he may fashion himself.

We are wont to say that it was not in our power to choose the parents who fell to our lot, that they have been given to men by chance; yet we may be the sons of whomsoever we will. Households there are of noblest intellects; choose the one into which you wish to be adopted; you will inherit not merely their name, but even their property, which there will be no need to guard in a mean spirit; the more persons you share it with, the greater it will become. These will open to you the path to immortality, and will raise you to a height from which no one is cast down. Honours, monuments, all that ambition has commanded by decrees or reared in works of stone, quickly sink to ruin; there is nothing that the lapse of time does not tear down and remove. But the works which philosophy has consecrated cannot be harmed; no age will destroy them, no age reduce them; the following and each succeeding age will but increase the reverence for them, since envy works upon what is close at hand, and things that are far off we are more free to admire.

Those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear for the future have a life that is very brief and troubled; when they have reached the end of it, the poor wretches perceive too late that for such a long while they have been busied in doing nothing. Whenever their distractions fail them, they are restless because they are left with nothing to do, and they do not know how to dispose of their leisure or to drag out the time. And so they strive for something else to occupy them, and all the intervening time is irksome; exactly as they do when a gladiatorial exhibition is been announced, or when they are waiting for the appointed time of some other show or amusement, they want to skip over the days that lie between. All postponement of something they hope for seems long to them. Yet the time which they enjoy is short and swift, and it is made much shorter by their own fault; for

they flee from one pleasure to another and cannot remain fixed in one desire. They lose the day in expectation of the night.

The very pleasures of such men are uneasy and disquieted by alarms of various sorts, and at the very moment of rejoicing the anxious thought comes over them: "How long will these things last?" To maintain prosperity there is need of other prosperity, and in behalf of the prayers that have turned out well we must make still other prayers. For everything that comes to us from chance is unstable, and the higher it rises, the more liable it is to fall. Very wretched, and not merely short, must the life of those be who work hard to gain what they must work harder to keep. By great toil they attain what they wish, and with anxiety hold what they have attained; meanwhile they take no account of time that will never more return. New distractions take the place of the old, hope leads to new hope, ambition to new ambition. They do not seek an end of their wretchedness, but change the cause.

Tear yourself away from the crowd, and, too much storm-tossed for the time you have lived, at length withdraw into a peaceful harbour. And I do not summon you to slothful or idle inaction, or to drown all your native energy in slumbers and the pleasures that are dear to the crowd. That is not to rest; you will find far greater works than all those you have hitherto performed so energetically, to occupy you in the midst of your release and retirement. It is better to have knowledge of the ledger of one's own life than of the corn-market. Recall that keen mind of yours, which is most competent to cope with the greatest subjects, from a service that is indeed honourable but hardly adapted to the happy life, and reflect that in all your training in the liberal studies, extending from your earliest years, you were not aiming at this. Plodding oxen are much more suited to carrying heavy

loads than thoroughbred horses, and who ever hampers the fleetness of such high-born creatures with a heavy pack?

Think you that it is just the same whether you are concerned in having corn from oversea poured into the granaries, in seeing that it does not become heated and spoiled by collecting moisture, or whether you enter upon these sacred and lofty studies with the purpose of discovering what substance, what pleasure, what mode of life, what shape God has; what the principle is that upholds all the heaviest matter in the centre of this world, suspends the light on high, carries fire to the topmost part, summons the stars to their proper changes? You really must leave the ground and turn your mind's eye upon these things! Now while the blood is hot, we must enter with brisk step upon the better course. In this kind of life there awaits much that is good to know – the love and practice of the virtues, forgetfulness of the passions, knowledge of living and dying, and a life of deep repose.

The condition of all who are preoccupied is wretched, but most wretched is the condition of those who labour at preoccupations that are not even their own, who regulate their sleep by that of another, their walk by the pace of another.

Shameful is he whose breath leaves him in the midst of a trial when, advanced in years and still courting the applause of an ignorant circle, he is pleading for some litigant who is the veriest stranger; disgraceful is he who, exhausted more quickly by his mode of living than by his labour, collapses in the very midst of his duties. Meantime, while they break up each other's repose, while they make each other wretched, their life is without profit, without pleasure, without any improvement of the mind.

THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

(Translated by Thomas Cleary)

Life is dangerous!

Written in 1643 AD by a retired Japanese Samurai in the twilight of his life, the lessons in *The Book of Five Rings* overlap to a degree with the lengthier *The Art of War*, with more of an emphasis on physical combat.

Few are as qualified to dispense such advice as author Miyamoto Musashi, who went undefeated and was victorious in over 50 duels and combats.

You will not reach the essence of the martial arts by merely looking at this book. Rather, you should make great efforts to make these principles a physical part of yourself.

The true Way of the Martial Arts is to train so that these skills are useful at any time, and to teach these skills so that they will be useful in all things.

This is the Way for men who want to learn my strategy:

- Do not think dishonestly
- The Way is in training
- Become acquainted with every art
- Know the Ways of professions
- Develop intuitive judgment and understanding for everything
- Perceive those things which cannot be seen
- Do nothing which is of no use

A confrontation between individuals and a confrontation in which ten thousand oppose ten thousand are the same. Enlarging the mind and contracting the mind – you should look at this and examine it well. It is easy to see what is large and difficult to see what is small. The reason for this is that a large group of people is difficult to change

quickly, but an individual has but one mind, and that can change speedily.

When you see things from the straight Way of the mind, taking in the world at large, you will see that each person will have the preferences of his own heart, and each eye will have its own distortions.

Styles which do not have the heart of truth all become injurious to the Way and will be impossible to wipe away even in distant generations. Accordingly, they will corrupt the true Way of the Martial Arts in the world and will be the cause of its abandonment.

If you do not attain the True Way, a small warp of the mind will later become a large one.

There is rhythm in the formless. Concerning the position of a warrior, there is a rhythm to rising in the service of his lord, and a rhythm for retreating from it; there is a rhythm to being in harmony with others, and a rhythm to not being in harmony with them. In the Way of the Merchant, there is a rhythm for becoming a wealthy man, and a rhythm for ruining oneself with wealth. The rhythm is different according to each and every Way. You should discriminate thoroughly between the rhythm of success and the rhythm of failure.

Within the rhythms of large and small, slow and fast, know the rhythm of contact, the rhythm of spacing as well as the rhythm of resistance to rhythm. These are essential to the martial arts. If you are unable to discern the rhythm of resistance to your opponent's rhythm, your martial art will not be correct. In a battle of martial arts, victory is in knowing the rhythms of your various opponents, in using a

rhythm your opponent will be unable to grasp, and in developing a rhythm of emptiness rather than one of wisdom.

Make the everyday body the body for the martial arts.

In the martial arts, when your opponent is going to use some technique on you, it is important that you let him do it if it's a useless one. But, if his action is functional, suppress it and keep him from completing it. While the execution of a technique is still in play, suppress what your opponent might think of doing even before the first letter of the word could be pronounced. Sustain your action over your opponent so that anything he does comes to nothing. Thus you will be an expert and forged in the martial arts.

Establishing hard-and-fast rules is not the Way of Victory. In the Way of Victory through the Martial Arts, you move the other person's stance: you do something your opponent is not expecting, fluster him, make him uncomfortable, threaten him, or grasp the rhythm of his confusion. Even when the action is extraordinarily lively on the battlefield, you should take the principles of the martial arts to the extreme and keep your mind unmoved. In the Way of Victory through the Martial Arts, you are intent on taking the initiative – always the initiative – in all things.

As for chasing your opponent about in battle, it is essential that you get the difficult terrain to his rear, and that you drive him, above all, toward difficult places. In regard to such difficult places, do not let your opponent assess the situation; keep his face from being able to turn by attacking and checking him, leaving no moment unguarded.

When you put your life on the line, you want all of your weapons to be of use. Your real intent should be to not die with weapons uselessly worn at your waist.

There should be no such thing as forceful or weak strokes with the sword. The sword handled with a forceful frame of mind is going to be rough, and it is difficult to win with roughness alone. When you cross swords with an opponent, no matter who he is, do not think about cutting forcefully or weakly. Think only so far as your opponent's dying.

A warrior learns the Way of the Martial Arts with certainty, makes strong efforts in other martial accomplishments, and is not the least bit in the dark about the Way of conducting himself as a warrior. He has no confusion in his mind and is never lazy at any moment of the day. He polishes the two hearts of his mind and will, and sharpens the two eyes of broad observation and focused vision. He is not the least bit clouded, but rather clears away the clouds of confusion. You should know that this is true Emptiness.

Using the Eyes

In using the eyes, do so in a large and encompassing way. There is observation and there is seeing. The eye of observation is strong. The eye of seeing is weak. To see the faraway as nearby and the nearby as faraway is essential to the martial arts. To know your opponent's sword, yet not to "see" it at all is very important in the martial arts.

In the martial arts of both large numbers and one-on-one, do not fix the eye with a narrow focus. If you fix the eye with a detailed, narrow focus, you will miss the large picture, create for yourself a confused mind, and be stripped of a sure victory.

Striking your Opponent in One Count

The Rhythm of Striking an Opponent in One Count means taking a position within which both you and your opponent may strike each other and, before he has settled on a tactic and without moving your body or putting your mind anywhere, striking him quickly and directly.

The No Thought – No Concept Strike

When you think that both you and your opponent are ready to strike, your body becomes a striking body, your mind becomes a striking mind and your hand instantaneously strikes with strength emerging from nothingness and leaving no wake. This is the most important strike, that of No Thought – No Concept.

The Initiative of Attack

In the Initiative of Attack, when you consider attacking, remain calm, then suddenly attack first and quickly. This is an initiative in which you move your body with speed and strength, but leave plenty of margin in your mind. The initiative is quick and vigorous as you approach your opponent. Unfetter your mind and, from beginning to end, be intent on one thing: smashing your opponent. By this, your mind will be strong to its very core, and you will gain the victory. What doubles the chances of winning or losing is whether the other side takes the initiative or you yourself take the initiative.

Pressing Down the Pillow

Pressing Down the Pillow means not letting your opponent's head up. In the way of Martial Arts combat, it is wrong to let your opponent lead you around or push you into a defensive position. Above all, you want to move him around freely.

In the martial arts, you do such things as check your opponent's strike, suppress his stabs, and break away from grappling. In what is called Pressing Down the Pillow, you grasp the True Way and, when in a confrontation, see through the indications of what your opponent is going to do regardless of his actions. When he is going to strike, before the word "strike" could even be pronounced, be intent on suppressing him and prohibiting the rest of his action.

Knowing Conditions

In the main current of the martial arts, Knowing Conditions means knowing where your opponents flourish or fall, knowing the number of their allies, taking in the lay of the land, clearly observing your

opponents' conditions, and – according to the maneuvering of your own allies and these principles of the martial arts – grasping the way of victory with certainty, understanding the degree of initiative to be taken, and going into battle.

Stepping on the Sword

The idea of stepping on your opponent's striking sword with your foot is to defeat him the moment he strikes, preventing him from striking a second time.

You should be intent on not giving your opponent a second chance. It does not mean attacking at the same time as your opponent. Stepping on the Sword is taking your action immediately upon your opponent's action.

Knowing Collapse

In martial arts involving large numbers, it is essential to grasp the rhythm of your opponents' collapse and to hasten your offensive so that they cannot escape that moment. Escaping that moment of collapse, they will likely recover.

In the martial arts of one-on-one as well, you grasp the moment of collapse in your opponent's changing rhythm during the fight. If you are negligent enough to miss this, he will recover and begin anew, and you will make no progress.

It is essential that you grasp the sign of your opponent's collapse and rush him with certainty so that he will be unable to recover. Your rushing attack must be instantaneous and strong, and you must cut him down with such vigor that he cannot recover.

Becoming Your Opponent

You should think in terms of Becoming Your Opponent. If he thinks you have understood the martial arts well, that you are strong in technique and that you are an expert in the Way, he is surely thinking that he is going to lose.

Letting Go of Four Hands

Letting Go of Four Hands comes into play when both you and your opponent are of the same mind, you feel as though the fight has come to a stalemate, and you are making no progress. When you think you've come to a situation of Four Hands, it is essential to change your thinking immediately, assess your opponent, and understand how to gain the victory by another method.

Moving the Shadow

Moving the Shadow is used when you cannot see through your opponent's mind. Even in martial arts situations involving large numbers, when you cannot see through your opponents' situation in any way, act as though you were going to attack vigorously, and you will see their intentions. Once you have seen their intentions, it is an easy thing to take the victory by another method.

Drawing Your Opponent In

Being drawn in is something common to all things. Becoming sleepy is infectious, just as yawns and such are infectious. Time, too, is infectious. If you act slowly with body and mind, and then catch the moment when your opponent slackens, you can take the initiative

vigorously and quickly, and defeat him. "Making them drunk" is something that resembles this. So are the mentalities of boredom, skittishness, and weakening.

Touching the Corner

Touching the Corner refers to the difficulty of forcing your way directly when pressing against anything strong. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, assess the number of your opponents, hit the corner of the place where they have struck out vigorously and you should be able to grasp the advantage. As that corner begins to lose strength, so will the entire body. It is essential that, as that strength fails, you grasp the victory by staying intent on that corner.

Imposing Fear

Fear resides in all things, and the heart of fear is in the unexpected. In martial arts situations involving large numbers, you do not frighten your opponents with what is right before their eyes. People may be frightened by the voices of things, or they may be frightened by making the small seem large. Something frightening coming suddenly from the side also induces fear. You should grasp the rhythm of fear and gain victory by using its advantages.

Causing Confusion

Causing Confusion means acting so that your opponent's mind becomes uncertain. In martial arts situations involving large numbers on the battlefield, gauge your opponent's mind and, with the strength of your own wisdom in the martial arts, send his mind in different

directions, make him think various things, and have him wonder if you will be slow or quick.

Crushing

If your Crushing is weak, they will be able to rally. The heart of this is to grasp what you have in hand and crush them. When you are in one-on-one martial arts situations, if your opponent is inferior to you, or his rhythm has broken, or if he appears as though he is going to retreat, it is essential that you crush him immediately, without letting him catch his breath or even letting him glance at you. It is your primary consideration to not let him recover even a little.

Piercing the Bottom

In fighting your opponent and using the principles of this Way, there may be times when you appear to be winning on the surface, but hostility remains in your opponent's mind. Accordingly, he may be defeated on the surface but not at all in the bottom of his mind. In such situations, it is important that you suddenly adjust your own mind, destroy your opponent's spirit, and make sure that he has been defeated in the very bottom of his heart.

Mountains and Seas

The heart of Mountains and Seas is that it is wrong to use the same tactic repeatedly during a fight between you and your opponent. Using the same tactic twice is unavoidable, but you should not use it three times. If you use a technique on your opponent and it is not successful the first time, it will have no effect to attack him once more with the same move. Attack suddenly with a different technique, and

if that has no effect, you should use yet a different one. Thus, if your opponent is thinking "mountains", attack with "seas"; and if he is thinking "seas", attack with "mountains". This is the heart of the Way of the Martial Arts.

The Body of a Rocky Crag

The Body of a Rocky Crag refers to how, grasping the Way of the Martial Arts, you suddenly become like a rocky crag, unmoving and struck by nothing.

The Way of Walking Alone

- Do not turn your back on the various Ways of this world
- Do not scheme for physical pleasure
- Do not intend to rely on anything
- Consider yourself lightly; consider the world deeply
- Do not ever think in acquisitive terms
- Do not regret things about your own personal life
- Do not envy another's good or evil
- Do not lament parting on any road whatsoever
- Do not complain or feel bitterly about yourself or others
- Have no heart for approaching the path of love
- Do not have preferences
- Do not harbor hopes for your own personal home
- Do not have a liking for delicious food for yourself
- Do not carry antiques handed down from generation to generation
- Do not fast so that it affects you physically
- While it's different with military equipment, do not be fond of material things
- While on the Way, do not begrudge death
- Do not be intent on possessing valuables or a fief in old age
- Respect the gods and Buddhas, but do not depend on them
- Though you give up your life, do not give up your honor
- Never depart from the Way of the Martial Arts

LEARNED OPTIMISM

MARTIN SELIGMAN

"It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words, 'And this too, shall pass away.' How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction!"

– Abraham Lincoln

- Our thoughts are not merely reactions to events; they change what ensues.
 - When you fail, what you think is crucial. The central skill of optimism is changing the destructive things you say to yourself when you experience the setbacks that life deals all of us.
- We all become momentarily helpless when we fail. The psychological wind is knocked out of us. We feel sad, the future looks dismal, and putting out any effort seems overwhelmingly difficult. The difference between those who recover almost at once and those who stay helpless for weeks or longer is the individual's "explanatory styles".
 - Pessimists say: "It's me, it's going to last forever, it's going to undermine everything I do."
 - Optimists say: "It was just circumstances, it's going away quickly, and besides, there's much more in life."
- The belief in self-improvement is a prophecy just as self-fulfilling as the belief that character cannot be changed.
- To succeed in a challenging job, you need three characteristics: aptitude, motivation, and optimism.
- Disputation: Give your beliefs an argument and dispute them. Four ways help make your disputations convincing:
 - Evidence. The negative belief is probably factually incorrect.
 - Alternatives. Most events have many causes. Pessimists have a way of latching onto the worst possible cause.

- Implications. Even if my belief is correct, what are its implications? It probably doesn't imply what you think it implies.
- Usefulness. Sometimes the consequences of holding a belief matter more than the truth of the belief.
- Depressed people often are indecisive, cannot get started on tasks, and give up easily when impeded.
- The optimistic individual succeeds because he perseveres. In the face of routine setbacks, and even of major failures, he persists.
- The society we live in exalts the self. We have more wealth and choice than any other human in history. The waxing of the self in our time coincided with a diminished sense of community and loss of higher purpose (the waning of the commons). These together proved rich soil for depression to grow in.
 - In the second half of the 20th century, events occurred that so weakened our commitment to larger entities as to leave us almost naked before the ordinary assaults of life. Many have shifted their commitment, out of fear and out of despair, from careers in public service to careers in which we could at least make ourselves happy.
 - The national upsurge of depression can be viewed as an epidemic of learned helplessness.
 - When learned optimism is coupled with a renewed commitment to the commons, our epidemic of depression and meaninglessness may end.
 - Exposure to human suffering, while saddening, is not depressing. Experienced volunteers report that a major

surprise for them has been the left they derive from their work.

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHNNY BUNKO

DANIEL H. PINK

The Adventures of Johnny Bunko is a short primer on life oriented toward younger people who are just setting out.

It's written in the unique style of a manga comic, so reading the book itself may be a more enjoyable experience than reading these notes!

"You can read this masterpiece in an hour, but it will take a lifetime to work out the details of those six lessons."

– Kevin Kelly

There Is No Plan

- You can't map it all out. You might think that X will lead to Y, and Y will lead to Z, but life isn't an algebra problem.
- Don't stick with something to "keep your options open".
- You can make careers decisions for different types of reasons:
 - Instrumental reasons – because you think it's going to lead to something else, regardless of whether you enjoy it or it's worthwhile. Instrumental reasons usually don't work. Things are too complicated and unpredictable, and you get stuck.
 - Fundamental reasons – You think it's inherently valuable, regardless of what it may or may not lead to. Successful people – not all of the time, but most of the time – make decisions for fundamental reasons. They take a job because it will let them do interesting work in a cool place.

Think Strengths, Not Weaknesses

- The key to success is to steer around your weaknesses and focus on your strengths. Successful people don't try too hard to improve what they're bad at; they capitalize on what they're good at.

It's Not About You

- The most successful people improve their own lives by improving others' lives. They help their customer solve its problem. They focus their energy outward, not inward.

Persistence Trumps Talent

- The people who achieve the most are often the ones who stick with it when others don't.
- Persistence builds on itself. A little bit of persistence improves performance, which encourages greater persistence, which improves performance even more. And on and on it goes.
- The more intrinsic motivation you have, the more likely you are to persist.

Make Excellent Mistakes

- Most people are so concerned about being wrong, about messing up, that they never try anything – which means they never do anything. Focusing on avoiding failure is a terrible way to achieve success.
- The most successful people make spectacular mistakes. Why? They're trying to do something big, but each time they make a mistake, they get a little bit better and move a little closer to excellence.
- Excellent mistakes come from having high aspirations, from trying to do something nobody else has done.

Leave an Imprint

- When you get older and look back at your life, you'll ask yourself questions like "Did I make a difference? Did I contribute something? Did my being here matter? Did I do something that left an imprint?" Many people get towards the end of their lives and don't like their answers, and by then it's almost too late.
- Think about your purpose. Recognize that your life isn't infinite, and that you should use your limited time here to do something that matters.

HAPPINESS

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

MARTIN SELIGMAN

Throughout the 20th century, much of the field of Psychology was concerned with the study of mental illnesses. Author Martin Seligman is credited with pioneering Positive Psychology, a paradigm which emphasizes "go-for-good" rather than just "avoid-bad".

Among all the books in this volume, *Authentic Happiness* has perhaps the highest potential of appealing to a broad audience and maximizing the wellbeing of those who read it.

Positive Psychology has three pillars:

- Positive Emotions
- Positive Traits; strengths, virtues, and abilities such as intelligence and athleticism
- Positive Institutions, such as democracy, strong families, and free inquiry
- (Institutions support Traits, which in turn support Emotions)

Positive and Negative Emotion

- Feeling positive emotion is important, not just because it is pleasant in its own right, but because it causes much better *commerce* with the world. Developing more positive emotion in our lives will build friendship, love, better physical health, and greater achievement.
- Broadening and building – that is, growth and positive development – are the essential characteristics of a *win-win* encounter. Being in love, making a friend, and raising children are almost always huge win-wins.
- Just as negative feelings are a "here-be-dragons" sensory system, positive feeling is a "here-be-growth" sensory system that tells you that a potential win-win encounter is at hand.

- A positive mood jolts us into an entirely different way of thinking from a negative mood.
 - A chilly, negative mood activates a battle-stations mode of thinking: the order of the day is to focus on what is wrong and then eliminate it.
 - A positive mood, in contrast, buoys people into a way of thinking that is creative, tolerant, constructive, generous, undefensive, and lateral. This way of thinking aims to detect not what is wrong, but what is right.
 - It does not go out of its way to detect sins of omission, but hones in on the virtues of commission.
 - It probably even occurs in a different part of the brain and has a different neurochemistry from thinking under negative mood.
- Treat catastrophic thoughts as if they were uttered by an external person whose mission is to make your life miserable, and then marshal evidence against the thoughts.

Happiness = Biological set points + Conditions of your life + Voluntary activities

- The challenge is not to raise your momentary happiness, but to raise your enduring happiness.
- High heritability does not determine how unchangeable a trait is. Some highly heritable traits (like body weight and sexual orientation) don't change much at all, while other highly heritable traits (like pessimism and fearfulness) are very changeable.

- Wealth, physical attractiveness, and objective physical health all are only barely correlated with happiness.
- How important money is to you, more than money itself, influences your happiness. Materialism seems to be counterproductive: at all levels of real income, people who value money more than other goals are less satisfied with their income and with their lives as a whole.
- If you want to lastingly raise your level of happiness by changing the external circumstances of your life, you should do the following:
 - Live in a wealthy democracy, not an impoverished dictatorship
 - Get married
 - Avoid negative events and negative emotion
 - Acquire a rich social network
 - Get religion
- As far as happiness and life satisfaction are concerned, however, you needn't bother to do the following:
 - Make more money (more materialistic people are less happy)
 - Stay healthy (subjective health, not objective health, matters)
 - Get as much education as possible
 - Change your race or move to a sunnier climate
- Each night before bed, write down up to 5 things that you are grateful for from the last 24 hours.
- "You can't hurt the perpetrator by not forgiving, but you can set yourself free by forgiving." Physical health is likely better in those that forgive than in those that do not.

The Pleasures

- Two kinds of pleasures:
 - Bodily pleasures
 - Higher pleasures
 - High-intensity: rapture, bliss, ecstasy, thrill, hilarity, euphoria
 - Moderate-intensity: vigor, glee, gladness, enthusiasm, attraction, fun
 - Low-intensity: comfort, harmony, satiation, relaxation
- Ways to enhance the pleasures:
 - Habituation
 - Nerves are wired to respond to novel events. The more redundant the event, the more it merges into the unnoticed background.
 - Not only do the pleasures fade quickly, many even have a negative aftermath. Stimulation may set up a feedback loop of craving.
 - **How you spread pleasures out over time is crucial.** If you find that your desire to engage in a particular pleasure goes to zero (or below, to aversion) when you space it far enough apart, you are probably dealing with an addiction and not a pleasure.
 - Take yourself and those you are close to by surprise with "presents" of the pleasures. Such acts are reciprocally contagious.

- Savoring
 - The sheer speed of modern life can sneak up on us and impoverish our present. Savoring is the awareness of pleasure and of the deliberate conscious attention to the experience of pleasure.
 - Five techniques promote savoring:
 - Sharing with others
 - Memory-building
 - Self-congratulations
 - Sharpening perceptions
 - Absorption (don't remind yourself of other things you should be doing or ways in which the event could be improved upon)
 - Four kinds of savoring:
 - Basking (receiving praise and congratulations)
 - Thanksgiving (expressing gratitude for blessings)
 - Marveling (losing the self in the wonder of the moment)
 - Luxuriating (indulging the senses)

But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white
 peace, this stinging exultation;
 And time will come close about me, and my soul stir to the
 rhythm of the daily round.

Yet, having known, life will not press so close,
 And always I shall feel time ravel thin about me.

For once I stood
 In the white windy presence of eternity.

- *Eunice Tietjens*

- Mindfulness

- Mindfulness begins with the observation that *mindlessness* pervades much of human activity. We fail to notice huge swaths of experience.

- Mindful attention to the present occurs much more readily in a slow state of mind than when one is racing future-mindedly through experience. The Eastern practice of meditation comes in many forms, but almost all of them, done regularly, slow down the speeding Western mind.

- Meditation is well-documented to dampen anxiety.

After three years of study, the novice monk arrives at the dwelling of his teacher. He enters the room, bursting with ideas about knotty issues of Buddhist metaphysics, and well-prepared for the deep questions that await him in his examination.

"I have but one question," his teacher intones.

"I am ready, master," he replies.

"In the doorway, were the flowers to the left or to the right of the umbrella?"

The novice retires, abashed, for three more years of study.

The Gratifications

- Some people ask "How can I be happy?" This is the wrong question, because without the distinction between pleasure and gratification it leads all too easily to a total reliance on shortcuts, to a life of snatching up as many easy pleasures as possible.
 - In ordinary English, we use the word "like" and unfortunately do not distinguish between pleasures and gratifications.
- Eudaimonia (gratification) is inseparable from right action. It cannot be derived from bodily pleasure, nor is it a state that can be chemically induced or attained by any shortcuts.
- The gratifications last longer than the pleasures, they involve quite a lot of thinking and interpretation, they do not habituate easily, and they are undergirded by our strengths and virtues.
- Flow
 - It is the total absorption, the suspension of consciousness, and the flow that the gratifications produce that defines liking these activities – not the presence of pleasure. Total immersion, in fact, blocks consciousness, and emotions are completely absent.

- When does time stop for you? When do you find yourself doing exactly what you want to be doing, and never wanting it to end?
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: "Playing a close game of tennis that stretches one's ability is enjoyable, as is reading a book that reveals things in a new light, as is having a conversation that leads us to express ideas we didn't know we had. None of these experiences may be particularly pleasurable at the time, but afterward we think back on them and say, 'That was fun', and wish they would happen again."
- The Psychological components of Gratifications:
 - The task is challenging and requires skill
 - There are clear goals
 - There is a sense of control
 - We get immediate feedback
 - We concentrate
 - We have deep, effortless involvement
 - Our sense of self vanishes
 - Time stops
- High-flow kids perform better on every measure of psychological well-being except one: the high-flow kids think their low-flow peers are having more fun.
- One possible explanation for the increased depression in the wealthier nations is the over-reliance on shortcuts to happiness: television, drugs, shopping, loveless sex, spectator sports, and chocolate to name just a few. A life of easy pleasures, never calling on strengths, sets one up for depression. A determination to

identify and develop personal strengths is therefore the great buffer against depression.

The Strengths and Virtues

- The display of a strength by one person does not diminish other people in the vicinity. Indeed, onlookers are often elevated and inspired by observing virtuous action. For this reason, strengths and virtues are often enacted in win-win situations.
- The brave person is able to decouple the emotional and behavioral components of fear, resisting the behavioral response of flight and facing the fearful situation, despite the discomfort produced by subjective and physical reactions.
- Seligman's formulation of the good life: **Use your signature strengths every day** in the main realms of your life to bring abundant gratification and authentic happiness.
 - *[Identify your signature strengths by taking the "Strengths Survey" in the book or online]*
- 6 Ubiquitous Virtues are comprised of 24 Strengths:

Wisdom and Knowledge

- Creativity: thinking of novel and productive ways to do things
- Curiosity: taking an interest in all of ongoing experience
- Open-mindedness: thinking things through and examining them from all sides

- Love of learning: mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge
- Perspective: being able to provide wise counsel to others

Courage

- Authenticity: speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way
- Bravery: not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain
- Persistence: finishing what one starts
- Zest: approaching life with excitement and energy

Humanity

- Kindness: doing favors and good deeds for others
- Love: valuing close relations with others
- Social intelligence: being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others

Justice

- Fairness: treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice
- Leadership: organizing group activities and seeing that they happen
- Teamwork: working well as a member of a group or team

Temperance

- Forgiveness: forgiving those who have done wrong

- Modesty: letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
- Prudence: being careful about one's choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
- Self-regulation: regulating what one feels and does

Transcendence

- Appreciation of beauty and excellence: noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life
- Gratitude: being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
- Hope: expecting the best and working to achieve it
- Humor: liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people
- Spirituality: having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life

Workplace Happiness

- To maximize work satisfaction, you need to use your signature strengths, preferably every day.
- The Gallup Organization found that the most satisfied workers readily affirmed the statement "Does your job allow you every day to do what you do best?"
- Flow cannot be sustained through an entire eight-hour workday; rather, under the best of circumstances, flow visits you for a few

minutes on several occasions. Flow occurs when the challenges you face perfectly mesh with your abilities to meet them.

- Seligman's recipe for more flow:
 - Identify your signature strengths
 - Choose work that lets you use your signature strengths every day
 - Recraft your present work to use your signature strengths more
 - Choose employees whose signature strengths mesh with the work they will do
- Job vs. Career vs. Calling
 - "Job" Orientation: Individuals who fall into this category tend to view their work as a means to an end. They work to receive the pay and/or benefits to support their hobbies, family, or life outside work. The job serves as a basic necessity in life.
 - "Career" Orientation: An individual with a "career" orientation is more likely to focus on elements related to success or prestige. This individual will be interested in the ability to move upward in his or her career, to receive raises and new titles, and to achieve the social standing which comes from the career.
 - "Calling" Orientation: Individuals with a "calling" orientation often describe their work as integral to their lives and their identity. Individuals with a calling orientation are more likely to find their work as meaningful and will modify their duties and develop relationships to make it more so. They are found to be more satisfied in general with their work and their lives. If you can find a way to use your signature strengths at work

often, and you also see your work as contributing to the greater good, you have a calling.

- What will cause an employee to be steadfastly loyal to the company he or she works for? For what incentive will a worker pour heart and soul into making a quality product?
 - Our economy is rapidly changing from a money economy to a satisfaction economy.
 - Enjoying the state of flow on the job [from deploying your strengths and virtues] will soon, Seligman predicts, overtake material reward as the principal reason for working. Corporations that promote this state for their employees will overtake corporations that rely only on monetary reward.

Happiness in Love

There is a time in life that we age, sicken, lose our looks, money, or power. We become, in short, a bad investment for future payouts. Why are we not immediately set out on the proverbial ice flow to perish? How is it that we are allowed to limp onward, enjoying life often for many years beyond these times? It is because other people, through the selfishness-denying power of love and friendship, support us. Love is the emotion that makes another person irreplaceable to us. Love displays the capacity of human beings to make commitments that transcend "What have you done for me lately?"

- Marriage is a more potent happiness factor than satisfaction with job, or finances, or community.

- David Myers: "There are few stronger predictors of happiness than a close, nurturing, equitable, intimate, lifelong companionship with one's best friend."
- There are three kinds of love (marriage works so well because it gives us all three kinds under one umbrella):
 - Love of the people who give us comfort, acceptance, and help, who bolster our confidence and guide us.
 - Love of the people who depend on us for comfort, acceptance, and help.
 - Romantic love – the idealization of another, idealizing their strengths and virtues and downplaying their shortcomings.
- By almost every criterion, Securely attached people and secure romantic relationships do better [as opposed to the Avoidant and Anxious types].
- Remarkably, the bigger the romantic illusion, the happier and more stable the relationship. Satisfied couples see virtues in their partners that are not seen at all by their closest friends. Positive illusions are self-fulfilling because the idealized partners actually try to live up to them.
- [For relationships, Seligman recommends reading "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" by John Gottman and Nan Silver.]

Happiness in Parenting

- Three principles for parenting emerge from Positive Psychology:

- Positive emotion broadens and builds the intellectual, social, and physical resources that your children draw upon later in life.
- Augmenting positive emotions in your children can start an upward spiral of positive emotion.
- The positive traits that your child displays are just as real and authentic as his or her negative traits.
- Eight techniques for building positive emotion in children:
 - Sleeping with your baby
 - Synchrony Games
 - No and Yes
 - "No" is a very important word in the life of a child, since it signifies limits and dangers. But Seligman believes it is used promiscuously, and to the detriment of the child. Parents easily confuse what is inconvenient to the parents with what is dangerous or limit-setting for the child.
 - Praise and Punishment
 - Praise selectively. Unconditional positive regard is not contingent on anything your child does. Learned helplessness develops not just when bad events are uncontrollable, but also, unfortunately, when good events are uncontrollable. Love, affection and warmth should be delivered unconditionally. But praise your child contingent on a success, not just to make him feel better.
 - Sibling Rivalry
 - Keep attention and affection abundant.
 - Bedtime Nuggets

- "Best Moments" from the day, and planning what to do tomorrow.
- Making a Deal
- New Year's Resolutions (with a Mid-Summer audit)
- Reward all displays of any of your child's strengths. Also, go out of your way to allow your child to display their signature strengths in the course of your normal family activities.

"The pleasant life is wrapped up in the successful pursuit of the positive feelings. The good life is not about maximizing positive emotion, but is a life wrapped up in successfully using your signature strengths to obtain abundant and authentic gratification. The meaningful life uses your signature strengths in the service of something larger than yourself. To live all three lives is to lead a *full* life."

A GUIDE TO THE GOOD LIFE

WILLIAM B. IRVINE

The trees can't grow without the sun in their eye,
And we can't live if we're too afraid to die.

- *The Black Angels*

Although appearing to have the most "depressing" theme of all the books in this volume, *A Guide to the Good Life* is the best write-up of practical applications of Stoic thought into modern life, and should perhaps be required reading for high-schoolers.

- People are unhappy, the Stoics argue, in large part because they are confused about what is valuable. Because of their confusion, they spend their days pursuing things that, rather than making them happy, make them anxious and miserable.
- We need to take steps to prevent ourselves from taking for granted, once we get them, the things we worked so hard to get. And because we have probably failed to take such steps in the past, there are doubtless many things in our life to which we have adapted, things that we once dreamed of having but that we now take for granted, including our spouse, our children, our house, our car, our job.
- [Roman philosopher] Seneca, after advising us to enjoy life, cautions us not to develop "over-much love" for the things we enjoy. To the contrary, we must take care to be "the user, but not the slave, of the gifts of Fortune."

Negative Visualization

- All we have is "on loan" from Fortune, which can reclaim it without our permission – indeed, without even advance notice.
- The Stoics recommended Negative Visualization – that we spend time imagining that we have lost the things we value. Imagining that our wife has left us, our car was stolen, or that we lost our job will make us value our wife, our car, and our job more than we otherwise would.

- "He robs present ills of their power who has perceived their coming beforehand." Misfortune weighs most heavily on those who expect nothing but good fortune.
- Epictetus: When we kiss our child, remember that she is mortal and not something we own – that she has been given to use "for the present, not inseparably nor for ever."
- By contemplating the deaths of those we love, we will remove some of the shock we experience if they die; we will in a sense have seen it coming. Furthermore, if we contemplate the deaths of those we love, we will likely take full advantage of our relationships with them and therefore won't, if they die, find ourselves filled with regrets about all the things we could and should have done with and for them.
- There is a difference between *contemplating* something bad happening and *worrying* about it. Contemplation is an intellectual exercise, and it is possible for us to conduct such exercises without its affecting our emotions.
- While enjoying the companionship of loved ones, we should periodically stop to reflect on the possibility that this enjoyment will come to an end. When we say goodbye to a friend, we should silently remind ourselves that this might be our final parting. If we do this, we will be less likely to take our friends for granted, and as a result, we will probably derive far more pleasure from friendships than we otherwise would.
 - Such periodic reflection will make us appreciate how wonderful it is that we are alive and have the opportunity to fill this day with activity. This in turn will make it less likely that we will squander our days. The goal is not to change our

activities but to change our state of mind as we carry out those activities.

- Negative visualization is a powerful antidote to hedonic adaptation.
 - We are living in what to our ancestors would have been a dream world. We tend to take for granted things like antibiotics, air conditioning, toilet paper, cell phones, television, windows, eyeglasses, and fresh fruit in January.
 - We should keep in mind that it is a lucky accident that we are enjoying whatever it is we are enjoying, that our enjoyment of it might end abruptly, and that we might never be able to enjoy it again. We need, in other words, to learn how to enjoy things without feeling entitled to them and without clinging to them.
 - By consciously thinking about the loss of what we have, we can regain our appreciation of it, and with this regained appreciation we can revitalize our capacity for joy.
- Looking on the bright side of bad things:
 - Sometimes a catastrophe blasts people out of their jadedness. War, disease, and natural disasters are tragic, but they also have the power to transform those who experience them.
 - Negative visualization can be used in reverse: We can imagine that the bad things that happen to us happened instead to others. This will help us appreciate the relative insignificance of the bad things that happen to us.
- We need to keep firmly in mind that everything we value and the people we love will someday be lost to us. If nothing else, our own death will deprive us of them. More generally, we should keep in mind that any human activity that cannot be carried on

indefinitely must have a final occurrence. There will be – or already has been! – a last time in your life that you brush your teeth, cut your hair, drive a car, mow the lawn, or play hopscotch. There will be a last time you hear the sound of snow falling, watch the moon rise, smell popcorn, feel the warmth of a child falling asleep in your arms, or make love. You will someday eat your last meal, and soon thereafter you will take your last breath.

- The joy the Stoics were interested in was enjoyment not of any particular thing but of *all this*. It is a delight in simply being able to participate in life. It is a profound realization that even though all this didn't have to be possible, it *is* possible – wonderfully, magnificently possible.

Self-Denial

- Seneca recommends an extension to the Negative Visualization technique: Besides *contemplating* bad things happening, we should sometimes *live as if* they had happened.
 - If all we know is comfort, we might be traumatized when we are forced to experience pain or discomfort, as we someday almost surely will. Voluntary discomfort can be thought of as a kind of vaccine. Alternatively, voluntary discomfort can be thought of as an insurance premium which, if paid, makes us eligible for benefits: Should we later fall victim to a misfortune, the discomfort we experience then will be substantially less than it otherwise would have been.
 - A person who periodically experiences minor discomforts will grow confident that he can withstand major discomforts as

well, so the prospect of experiencing such discomforts at some future time will not, at present, be a source of anxiety for him.

- A third benefit of voluntary discomfort is that it helps us appreciate what we already have.
- Programs of voluntary discomfort require a great degree of self-discipline and are therefore best left to "advanced Stoics".
- Stoics also counsel us to make a point of sometimes abstaining from other, relatively harmless pleasures. We might, for example, make a point of passing up an opportunity to drink wine – not because we fear becoming an alcoholic but so we can learn self-control.
- What Stoics discover is that willpower is like muscle power: The more they exercise their muscles, the stronger they get, and the more they exercise their will, the stronger it gets. Indeed, by practicing Stoic self-denial techniques over a long period, Stoics can transform themselves into individuals remarkable for their courage and self-control. They will be able to do things that others dread doing, and they will be able to refrain from doing things that others cannot resist doing. They will, as a result, be thoroughly in control of themselves. This self-control makes it far more likely that they will attain the goals of their philosophy of life, and this in turn dramatically increases their chances of living a good life.

The Dichotomy of Control

- Epictetus: "It is impossible that happiness, and yearning for what is not present, should ever be united." A better strategy for getting what you want, he says, is to make it your goal to want only those things that are easy to obtain – and ideally to want only those things that you can be certain of obtaining.
- Virtually every philosopher and religious thinker who has reflected on human desire and the causes of human dissatisfaction agree that if what you seek is contentment, it is better and easier to change yourself and what you want than it is to change the world around you.
- Indeed, says Epictetus, you will become invincible: If you refuse to enter contests that you are capable of losing, you will never lose a contest.
- Three Levels of Control:
 - Things over which we have complete control.
 - Things over which we have some but not complete control.
 - These goals should be internal, not external. For example, if you are concerned with whether your wife loves you, your goal should not be the external goal of making her love you; no matter how hard you try, you could fail and would be quite upset. Instead, your goals should be internal: to behave, to the best of your ability, in a lovable manner. That is a goal you can achieve no matter how your wife reacts to your efforts.
 - Things over which we have no control at all.

Social Relations: On Dealing with Other People

- Epictetus advises us to form "a certain character and pattern" for ourselves when we are alone. Then, when we associate with other people, we should remain true to who we are.
- Marcus advises us to examine each thing we do, determine our motives for doing it, and consider the value of whatever it was we were trying to accomplish. We should continually ask whether we are being governed by our reason or by something else. We should likewise be careful observers of the actions of other people. We can, after all, learn from their mistakes and their successes.
 - Vices, Seneca warns, are contagious: They spread, quickly and unnoticed, from those who have them to those with whom they come into contact. Epictetus echoes this warning: Spend time with an unclean person, and we will become unclean as well. Thus, when it is possible to do so, we should avoid associating with people whose values have been corrupted, the way we would avoid, say, kissing someone who has the flu.
 - Besides being selective about the people we befriend, we should be selective, say the Stoics, about which social functions we attend. Epictetus advises us to avoid banquets given by nonphilosophers. He also advises us, when we do socialize, to be circumspect in conversation. People tend to talk about certain things; back in Epictetus's time, he says, they talked about gladiators, horse races, athletes, eating and drinking – and, most of all, about other people. When we find ourselves in a group that is conversing about such things, Epictetus advises us to be silent or to have few words; alternatively, we might subtly attempt to divert the talk to "something appropriate".

- Marcus thinks it will be easier for us to deal with impudent people if we keep in mind that such individuals do not choose to have the faults they do. Consequently, there is a sense in which the people who annoy us cannot help doing so. It is therefore inevitable that some people will be annoying; indeed, to expect otherwise, Marcus says, is like expecting a fig tree not to yield its juice. Thus, if we find ourselves shocked or surprised that a boor behaves boorishly, we have only ourselves to blame: We should have known better.
- As we make progress in our practice of Stoicism, we will become increasingly indifferent to other people's opinions of us. We will not go through our life with the goal of gaining their approval or avoiding their disapproval, and because we are indifferent to their opinions, we will feel no sting when they insult us. Indeed, a Stoic sage, were one to exist, would probably take the insults of his fellow humans to be like the barking of a dog.

Anger: On Overcoming Anti-Joy

- Anger, says Seneca, is "brief insanity," and the damage done by anger is enormous: "No plague has cost the human race more." Because of anger, he says, we see all around us people being killed, poisoned, and sued; we see cities and nations ruined. And besides destroying cities and nations, anger can destroy us individually. We live in a world, after all, in which there is much to be angry about, meaning that unless we can learn to control our anger, we will be perpetually angry. Being angry, Seneca concludes, is a waste of precious time.
- Marcus also offers advice on anger avoidance. He recommends that we contemplate the impermanence of the world around us. If

we do this, he says, we will realize that many of the things we think are important in fact aren't, at least not in the grand scheme of things. He reflects on the times, almost a century earlier, of Emperor Vespasian. People everywhere were doing the usual things: marrying, raising children, farming, loving, envying, fighting, and feasting. But, he points out, "of all that life, not a trace survives today." By implication, this will be the fate of our generation: What seems vitally important to us will seem unimportant to our grandchildren.

- It can be quite useful to use humor as a defense against anger. One wonderful way to avoid getting angry is to imagine yourself as a character in an absurdist play: Things aren't supposed to make sense, people aren't supposed to be competent, and justice, when it happens at all, happens by accident. Try to think of ways the imaginary absurdist playwright could have made things still more absurd.

Dying: On a Good End to a Good Life

- For the ultimate proof that we have made progress as Stoics, though, we will have to wait until we are faced with death. It is only then, says Seneca, that we will know whether our Stoicism has been genuine.
- Towards the end of our life, the proximity of death, rather than depressing us, can be turned to our advantage. In our youth, because we assumed that we would live forever, we took our days for granted and as a result wasted many of them. In our old age, however, waking up each morning can be a cause for celebration. And after celebrating having been given another day to live, we can

fill that day with appreciative living. It is entirely possible for an octogenarian to be more joyful than her twenty-year-old grandchild.

- A young person might find it baffling that someone would be willing to settle for "mere tranquility"; an octogenarian will probably not only appreciate how precious a thing tranquility is but will realize how few people manage, over the course of a lifetime, to attain it. It is in part for this reason that [ancient Roman philosopher] Musonius counsels us to take up Stoicism while we are young: It is, he thinks, the best way to prepare for old age. Someone who has acted on this advice will be unlikely, as he gets older, to complain about the loss of youth and its pleasures, his body growing weak, his failing health, or being neglected by his relatives, since he would have "an effective antidote against all these things in his own intelligence and in the education he possesses." If someone neglected to study Stoicism in his youth, though, he can always take it up later in life. The aging process might prevent us from, say, boxing or solving differential equations, but only rarely will it prevent us from practicing Stoicism.
- It may seem paradoxical, but having a coherent philosophy of life, whether it be Stoicism or some other philosophy, can make us more accepting of death. Someone with a coherent philosophy of life will know what in life is worth attaining, and because this person has spent time trying to attain the thing in life he believed to be worth attaining, he has probably attained it, to the extent that it was possible for him to do so. Consequently, when it comes time for him to die, he will not feel cheated. Those who have lived without a coherent philosophy of life, though, will desperately want to delay death. They might want the delay so that they can get the thing that – at last! – they have discovered to be of value.

- Someone who thinks he will live forever is far more likely to waste his days than someone who fully understands that his days are numbered, and one way to gain this understanding is periodically to contemplate his own death.
- The most important reason for adopting a philosophy of life is that if we lack one, there is a danger that we will mislive – that we will spend our life pursuing goals that aren't worth attaining or will pursue worthwhile goals in a foolish manner and will therefore fail to attain them.

Practicing Stoicism

- The Stoics thought it possible for a person to retain his tranquility despite being punished for attempting to reform the society in which he lived.
- In your practice of Stoicism, you will also want to become a psychological fatalist about the past and the present – but not about the future. Although you will be willing to think about the past and present in order to learn things that can help you better deal with the obstacles to tranquility thrown your way in the future, you will refuse to spend time engaging in "if only" thoughts about the past and present. You will realize that inasmuch as the past and present cannot be changed, it is pointless to wish they could be different. You will do your best to accept the past, whatever it might have been, and to embrace the present, whatever it might be.
- Become a collector of butterflies. Challenge yourself to psychological discomfort and confront your fears. This will help immunize yourself against future challenges.

- Your Psychological "Opponent"

- When doing things to cause yourself physical and mental discomfort, view yourself as an opponent in a kind of game. This opponent – your "other self" – is on evolutionary autopilot: He wants nothing more than to be comfortable and to take advantage of whatever opportunities for pleasure present themselves. Your other self lacks self-discipline; left to his own devices, he will always take the path of least resistance through life and as a result will be little more than a simple-minded pleasure seeker. He is also a coward. Your other self is not your friend; to the contrary, he is best regarded, in the words of Epictetus, "as an enemy lying in wait."
- To win points in the contest with your other self, you must establish dominance over him. You must cause him to experience discomfort he could easily have avoided, and you must prevent him from experiencing pleasures he might otherwise have enjoyed. When he is scared of doing something, you must force him to confront his fears and overcome them.
- Why play this game against your other self? In part to gain self-discipline. And why is self-discipline worth possessing? Because those who possess it have the ability to determine what they do with their life. Those who lack self-discipline will have the path they take through life determined by someone or something else, and as a result, there is a very real danger that they will mislive.

THE HAPPINESS HYPOTHESIS

JONATHAN HAIDT

Though happiness is an intriguingly elusive thing to "find", *The Happiness Hypothesis* provides a variety of approachable, succinct insights into living a happier life.

- Happiness comes from between. Happiness is not something that you can find, acquire, or achieve directly. You have to get the conditions right and then wait.
 - "The Progress Principle": Pleasure comes more from making progress toward goals than from achieving them.
- The reasoning and planning parts of our brain are newer, and there are still a lot of bugs. Automatic processes, however, have been through thousands of product cycles and are nearly perfect.
 - In evolution, bad is stronger than good. Responses to threats and unpleasantness are faster, stronger, and harder to inhibit than responses to opportunities and pleasures. (Negativity bias)
 - Our minds are loose confederations of parts, but we identify with and pay too much attention to one part: conscious verbal thinking.
- Buddha: "What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: Our life is the creation of our mind."
 - Nothing is miserable unless you think it so; and on the other hand, nothing brings happiness unless you are content with it.
- The elephant learns best from daily practice. You can't win a tug of war with an angry or fearful elephant, but you can – by gradual shaping of the sort the behaviorists talked about – change your automatic thoughts and, in the process, your affective style.

- Three effective means of changing your mind gradually: Meditation, Cognitive Therapy, and Prozac.
 - Meditation has been shown to make people calmer, less reactive to the ups and downs and petty provocations of life.
- Our culture endorses both relentless self-improvement as well as authenticity, but we often escape the contradiction by framing self-improvement as authenticity.
- "Naive Realism": Each of us thinks we see the world directly, as it really is.
 - "The great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities, and are often more influenced by the things that seem than by those that are." – Niccolò Machiavelli
 - "Though you see the seven defects of others, we do not see our own ten defects." – Japanese proverb
 - When you find a fault in yourself it will hurt, briefly, but if you keep going and acknowledge the fault, you are likely to be rewarded with a flash of pleasure. It is the pleasure of taking responsibility for your own behavior. It is the feeling of honor.
- See life as a game and stop taking it so seriously.
- We are bad at "affective forecasting". We grossly overestimate the intensity and the duration of our emotional reactions. "Hedonic adaptation".
- Buddha and Epictetus propose one happiness hypothesis: Happiness comes from within, and it cannot be found by making the world conform to your desires.

- But it's not totally right. Externals matter. There are some external conditions that influence your happiness: Noise, commuting, lack of control, shame, relationships. Relationships are the most important of these.
- A good marriage is one of the life-factors most strongly and consistently associated with happiness.
- People devote themselves to the pursuit of goals that won't make them happier, in the process neglecting the sort of inner growth and spiritual development that could bring lasting satisfaction.
 - People who report the greatest interest in attaining money, fame, or beauty are consistently found to be less happy, and even less healthy, than those who pursue less materialistic goals.
- Gratifications > Pleasures
 - People value "total immersion" more than pleasures.
 - "Flow": There's a clear challenge that fully engages your attention; you have the skills to meet the challenge; and you get immediate feedback about how you are doing at each step.
 - Gratifications can lead to flow. Psychologist Martin Seligman proposes arranging your day and your environment to increase both pleasures and gratifications.
 - Pleasures should be both savored and varied.
- Experiences > Possessions. Activities connect us to others; objects often separate us.
 - The elephant cares about prestige, not happiness, and it looks externally to others to figure out what is prestigious.
- Satisficers > Maximizers. Be happy with the (imperfect) choices you make.

- Passionate love fades over time, but companionate love grows.
- Caring for others is often more beneficial than is receiving help. We need to interact and intertwine with others; we need the give and the take; we need to belong. An ideology of extreme personal freedom can be dangerous because it encourages people to leave homes, jobs, cities, and marriages in search of personal and professional fulfillment, thereby breaking the relationships that were probably their best hope for such fulfillment.
 - "No one can live happily who has regard to himself alone and transforms everything into a question of his own utility."
– Seneca
- The "Adversity Hypothesis": People may need adversity, setbacks, and perhaps even trauma to reach the highest levels of strength, fulfillment, and personal development.
- People benefit from trauma in three primary ways:
 - Rising to a challenge reveals your hidden abilities, and seeing these abilities changes your self-concept. One of the most common lessons people draw from bereavement or trauma is that they are much stronger than they realized, and this new appreciation of their strength then gives them confidence to face future challenges.
 - Adversity strengthens relationships and opens people's hearts to one another.
 - Trauma changes priorities and philosophies toward the present and toward other people. The reality that people often wake up to is that life is a gift that they have been taking for granted, and that people matter more than money.

- Adversity may be necessary for growth because it forces you to stop speeding down along the road of life, allowing you to notice the paths that were branching off all along, and to think about where you really want to end up.
- "When heaven is about to confer a great responsibility on any man, it will exercise his mind with suffering, subject his sinews and bones to hard work, expose his body to hunger, put him to poverty, places obstacles in the paths of his deeds, so as to stimulate his mind, harden his nature, and improve wherever his is incompetent." – Meng Tzu
- "What doesn't kill me makes me stronger." – Nietzsche
- Immediately after trauma, achievement goals often lose their allure. If you shift toward other goals – family, religion, or helping others – you shift to inconspicuous consumption, and the pleasures derived along the way are not fully subject to adaptation (hedonic treadmill) effects. The pursuit of these goals, on average, leads to more happiness but less wealth.
- People who are mentally healthy and happy have a high degree of "vertical coherence" among their goals. The higher-level (long-term) goals and lower-level (immediate) goals all fit together well so that pursuing one's short-term goals advances the pursuit of long-term goals.
- The Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."
- Work on your strengths, not your weaknesses. Often you can use a strength to get around a weakness.

- Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." People who do volunteer work are happier and healthier than those who don't.
- Moral diversity is essentially anomie: a lack of consensus on moral norms and values.
 - Anomie breeds feelings of rootlessness and anxiety and leads to an increase in amoral and antisocial behavior.
 - Conflict, paralysis, and anomie are likely when a community fails to provide coherence, or, worse, when its practices contradict people's gut feelings or their shared mythology and ideology.
- In Walter Pahnke's psilocybin study, he found that most of the people in the psilocybin group reported most of the nine features of mystical experience he had set out to measure. The strongest and most consistent effects included feelings of unity with the universe, transcendence of time and space, joy, a difficulty putting the experience into words, and a feeling of having been changed for the better. Many reported seeing beautiful colors and patterns and having profound feelings of ecstasy, fear, and awe. Awe is *the* emotion of self-transcendence.
- The self is the main obstacle to spiritual advancement.
 - Love and work are crucial for human happiness because, when done well, they draw us out of ourselves and into connection with people and projects beyond ourselves. Happiness comes from getting these connections right.
 - Upanishads: "He who sees all beings in his own self, and his own self in all beings, loses all fear... when a sage sees this great Unity and his Self has become all beings, what delusion and what sorrow can ever be near him?"

- Life is much like a movie we walk into well after its opening scene, and we will have to step out long before most of the story lines reach their conclusions. We are acutely aware that we need to know a great deal if we are to understand the few confusing minutes that we do watch. Of course, we don't know exactly what it is that we don't know, so we can't frame the question well.
 - "Education must be seen as at least partially an effort to produce the good human being, to foster the good life and the good society." – Abraham Maslow
- Most people approach their work in one of three ways: as a job, a career, or a calling. If you see your work as a calling, you find your work intrinsically fulfilling – you are not doing it to achieve something else. You would continue to work, perhaps even without pay, if you suddenly became very wealthy.
- It is worth striving to get the right relationships between yourself and others, between yourself and your work, and between yourself and something larger than yourself. If you get these relationships right, a sense of purpose and meaning will emerge.

SOCIAL HEALTH

NEVER EAT ALONE

KEITH FERRAZZI

I remember laughing at the irony of eating by myself in my company's cafeteria while reading and taking notes on this book.

I've chronically struggled with the impulse of "I want things done right so I'm just going to do everything myself." The concept of "networking" always repelled me, conjuring up images of corporate nodes in a machine. It's why I never joined LinkedIn. However, reading this book helped me realize that maybe I was trying to go it alone for the wrong reasons.

While its lessons are useful in social situations all across life, *Never Eat Alone* is oriented more toward professional development – there are better books out there dedicated purely to social health.

- "Networking" is no longer a dirty word. Today's most valuable currency is social capital. Your relationships with others are your finest, most credible expression of who you are and what you have to offer. Nothing else compares.
- We're not just connected to others. We are the very product of the people and networks to which we are connected. Who you know determines who you are – how you feel, how you act, and what you achieve. *Wired* magazine: "The secret to health and happiness? Healthy and happy friends... A half century of medical data has revealed the infectious power of social networks." Sadly, most people still have a tendency to romanticize independence and see autonomy as a virtue.
- How smart you are matters little if you don't understand one thing: You can't get there alone.
- Connecting is one of the most important business – and life – skill sets you'll ever learn. Why? Because, flat out, people do business with people they know and like. Careers – in every imaginable field – work the same way. Even our overall well-being and sense of happiness is dictated in large part by the support and guidance and love we get from the community we build for ourselves.
 - One problem in today's world isn't that we have too many people in our lives, it's that we don't have enough. With our increased mobility, American emphasis on individualism, and the overwhelming online distractions available to us, we lead lives of relative isolation.

Becoming a Member of the Club

- People who consciously court others to become involved in their lives are seen as schmoozers, brownnosers, smarmy sycophants.
- Success breeds success, and the rich *do* get richer. Poverty isn't only a lack of financial resources; it is isolation from the kind of people who can help you make more of yourself. Life is a game, and the people who know the rules play it best and succeed. And the rule in life that has unprecedented power is that the individual who knows the right people, for the right reasons, and utilizes the power of these relationships, can become a member of the "club".
- Once you're committed to reaching out to others and asking for their help at being the best at whatever you do, you'll realize what a powerful way of accomplishing your goals this can be. Just as important, it will lead to a much fuller, richer life, surrounded by an ever-growing vibrant network of people you care for and who care for you.
- Win-win has become a necessary reality in a networked world. In a hyper-connected marketplace, cooperation is gaining ground on competition.
- Don't Keep Score.
 - Relationships are solidified by trust. Institutions are built on it. You gain trust by asking not what people can do for you, but what you can do for others. The currency of real networking is not greed but generosity.
 - But you have to also be more than willing to accept generosity. Often, you've got to go out and ask for it. Until you become as willing to ask for help as you are to give it, you are only working half the equation.

What's Your Mission?

- The more specific you are about what you want to do, the easier it becomes to develop a strategy to accomplish it. Part of that strategy, of course, is establishing relationships with the people in your universe who can help you get where you're going.
- Every successful person shares a zeal for goal setting. No one becomes an astronaut by accident.
- Have you ever sat down and thought seriously about what you truly love? What you're good at? What you want to accomplish in life? What are the obstacles that are stopping you? Most people don't. They accept what they "should" be doing, rather than take the time to figure out what they want to be doing.
- Your goals must be in writing.
- Once you've taken the time to figure out what your mission is and where you want to get to, the next step is to identify the people who can help you get there.

Build It Before You Need It

- You must reach out to others long before you need anything at all.
- Goethe: "Seize this very minute; what you can do, or dream you can, begin it; Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."
- Too often, we get caught up efficiently doing ineffective things, focusing solely on the work that will get us through the day. The idea isn't to find oneself another environment tomorrow – be it a new job or a new economy – but to be constantly creating the

environment and community you want for yourself, no matter what may occur.

- You can truly gain someone's trust and commitment only little by little over time. Right now, there are countless ways you can begin to create the kind of community that can help further your career. You can:
 - Create a company-approved project that will force you to learn new skills and introduce you to new people within your company.
 - Take on leadership positions in the hobbies and outside organizations that interest you.
 - Join your local alumni club and spend time with people who are doing the jobs you'd like to be doing.
 - Enroll in a class at a community college on a subject that relates to either the job you're doing now or a job you see yourself doing in the future.
- What about the world you inhabit right now? Are you making the most of the connections you already have?

Imagine that all of your family and friends and associates are a part of a garden. Take a stroll through that relationship garden. What do you see? If you're like most people, you see a tiny parcel of cleanly cut grass that represents the usual suspects – the top twenty or thirty people who tend to hover near the top of your email inbox. These are your immediate friends, coworkers, and business partners: the most obvious people. Your real network, however, is an overgrown

jungle with an infinite variety of hidden nooks and crannies that are being neglected. Your potential for connecting is at this moment far bigger than you realize. All around you are golden opportunities to develop relationships with people you know, who know people you don't know, who know even more people. There are a number of things that you can do to harness the power of your preexisting network. Have you investigated the friends and contacts of your parents? How about your siblings? Your friends from college and grad school? What about your church, bowling league, or gym? How about your doctor or lawyer or Realtor or broker?

Warming the Cold Call

- In fifteen seconds on the phone, I use my four rules for what I call *warm* calling:
 - Convey credibility by mentioning a familiar person or institution.
 - State your value proposition. Remember, it's all about them. What can you do for them?
 - Impart urgency and convenience by being prepared to do whatever it takes whenever it takes to meet the other person on his or her own terms.
 - Be prepared to offer a compromise that secures a definite follow-up at a minimum. Psychological research shows how compromise is a powerful force in human relations. So

remember, try for a lot – it will help you settle for what it is you really need.

- Warming It Up Virtually:
 - Live and die by your Subject line. Focus on your strongest hook, either the contact you have in common or the specific value you have to offer. Make them curious.
 - Be brief. Once you've written a draft, the "best" version of it is usually 50 percent shorter.
 - Have a clear call to action. What do you want them to do? Make your first request clear and easy. Request fifteen minutes on the phone, not just a vague phone call. Short-circuit the process as much as you can, and don't make them guess what you're looking for.
 - Read the message before sending it.
- Always respect the gatekeeper's power. Treat them with the dignity they deserve. Acknowledge their help. Thank them by phone, or with flowers or a note.

Share Your Passions

- Shared interests are the basic building blocks of any relationship.
- Friendship is created out of the *quality* of time spent between two people, not the quantity.
- Constantly be looking to include others in whatever it is you're doing. It's good for you, good for them, and good for everyone to broaden their circle of friends.

- When we are truly passionate about something, it's contagious. Our passion draws other people to who we are and what we care about.
- When your day is fueled by passion, filled with interesting people to share it with, reaching out will seem less like a challenge or a chore and more like an effortless consequence of the way you work.
- Make a list of the things you're most passionate about. Use your passions as a guide to which activities and events you should be seeking out. Use them to engage new and old contacts. It doesn't matter what you do, only that it's something you love doing.

Be a Conference Commando

- As a speaker at a conference, you have a special status, making meeting people much easier. Instant credibility and faux fame is bestowed upon you when you're on a stage (and pretty much any stage, at that).
- If you take the first step and get to know the organizer, landing a speaking gig isn't that tough. In the beginning, it's best to start small.
- The more active you become in playing "host" of your own conference within a conference, the better you'll be at helping other people make connections, making you a center of influence. When you meet people at your dinner party or event, don't simply introduce yourself; introduce the folks you meet to other people.
- Most people think a conference is a good time to market their wares. They rush from room to room desperately trying to sell themselves. But a commando knows that you have to get people to

like you first. Now is the time to begin to build trust and a relationship.

The Networking Jerk

- We vote for the people we like and respect. Great companies are built by CEOs who inspire love and admiration.
 - Being liked can be the most potent, constructive force for getting business done. Being disliked will kill your connecting efforts before they begin.
- **Don't come to the party empty-handed.**
- Be transparent. People respond with trust when they know you're dealing straight with them.
- Find common ground that is deeper and richer than what can be discovered in a serendipitous encounter. Armed with knowledge about a person's passions, needs, or interests, you can do more than connect; you'll have an opportunity to bond and impress.
- "The Smarmy Eye Darter": Nothing will give you a bad rap in less time. Be Bill Clinton instead. If you spend only thirty seconds with someone, make it thirty seconds of warmth and sincerity. Nothing will give you a good rap in less time.

Connecting with Connectors

- Some people know many, many more people than the rest of us. Call them super-connectors. Such people should be the cornerstones to any flourishing network.

- Once you become friendly with a super-connector, you're only two degrees away from the thousands of different people they know. You can meet dozens, even hundreds of other people through your relationship with one key connector. Two quick rules of thumb:
 - You and the person you are sharing contacts with must be equal partners who give as much as you get.
 - You must be able to trust your partners because, after all, you're vouching for them, and their behavior within your network is a reflection on you.
- The Strength of Weak Ties: It's not necessarily strong contacts, like family and close friends, that prove the most powerful. Mix it up. Hunt out people who look and act and sound nothing like you do. Seek out ideas from people you don't ordinarily talk to who inhabit professional worlds you don't ordinarily travel in.

The Art of Small Talk

- [In a study] The one trait that was common among an MBA class's most accomplished graduates was "verbal fluency". Those who had built businesses and climbed the corporate ladder with amazing speed were those who could confidently make conversation with anyone in any situation. In front of an audience, at a dinner, or in a cab, these people knew how to talk. The more successfully you use language, the faster you can get ahead in life.
- The first thing small-talk experts tend to do is place rules around what can and can't be said. They claim that when you first meet a person, you should avoid unpleasant, overly personal, and highly controversial issues. Wrong! Don't listen to these people! Nothing

has contributed more to the development of boring chitchatters everywhere. The notion that everyone can be everything to everybody at all times is completely off the mark. When it comes to making an impression, differentiation is the name of the game. Be yourself. Vulnerability is one of the most underappreciated assets in business today.

- The real winners – those with astounding careers, warm relationships, and unstoppable charisma – are those people who put it all out there and don't waste a bunch of time and energy trying to be something (or someone) they're not. Charm is simply a matter of being yourself. Your uniqueness is your power.
- People are wowed by social decisiveness when it's offered with compassion and warmth.
- Learn to touch people. Touching is a powerful act.
- The surest way to become special in others' eyes is to make them feel special. The correlate, of course, is equally true: Make people feel insignificant and your significance to them shall certainly diminish.
- What you talk about is ultimately less important than how. It's edifying and interesting to hear someone talk about something they have a great interest in.
- The Johari Window: remain true to yourself no matter whom you speak with, but deliver your message in a tone and style that fit the person best. Adjust how open or closed your window is depending on whom you are speaking with.
- The only way to get people to do anything is to recognize their importance and thereby make them feel important. What better

way is there to show appreciation and to lavish praise on others than to take an interest in who they are and what their mission is?

Turning Connections into Compatriots

- There are three things that engender deep emotional bonds between people. They are health, wealth, and children.
 - (People's children mean everything to them.)
- Contribute. It's like Miracle-Gro for networks. If you want to make friends and get things done, you have to put yourself out there to do things for other people – things that require time, energy, and consideration.
- Purposeful Giving:
 - Give to other givers.
 - Feed your network first.
 - Purposeful givers consolidate their giving into chunks of energy and attention, which increases their sense of gratification and allows them to protect other time for productive work on their own projects.
- There's a simple way to break through the noise, and that's to carefully target your work. People pay attention when they feel they're receiving intel that's specifically tailored for them; the more granularly you can target, the better.

Pinging

- Print out your master list of contacts that contains all the people in your network under the categories you've placed them in.
- In time, your master list will become too unwieldy to work from directly. **Segment your network into tagged lists.** Your lists will save you time and keep your efforts focused. They can be organized by your number ratings, by geography, by industry, and so on.
- **Ferrazzi's favorite pinging occasion is birthdays.** Everyone cares about his or her own birthday!
- In building a network, remember: Above all, never, ever disappear. Keep your social and conference and event calendars full. As an up-and-comer, you must work hard to remain visible and active among your ever-budding network of friends and contacts.
- Make follow-up a habit.

Tap the Fringe

- Go big – but create a structure to help you curate and filter, along with habits that distinguish signal from noise. And don't follow just anyone.
- Forget the Big Kahuna when you're starting from scratch. Instead, **spend your time trying to suss out tomorrow's Big Kahuna. Don't look where everybody else is looking,** with all the typical filters – formal credentials, Twitter follower counts, expensive Web design. **Instead, look for great ideas, uncommon smarts, fresh faces, and an openness to a two-way relationship.**

Become the King of Content

- Content is how people come to know who you are, what you're about, what you want, what you can provide, whether you're cool, etc.
- Content is the one true vehicle for building trust online.
 - Trust = Generosity + Vulnerability + Accountability + Candor
 - Be Authentic.
 - Too many people make the mistake of thinking that their online content should showcase only how perfect they are.
 - Too many people mistakenly think that broadcasting their successes is the only or best way to establish credibility. Altucher says they're afraid: "You feel like, if I tell people I lost money, or I lost my wife, or I was crying on this one particular day, then people are no longer going to respect me. They no longer are going to want to do business with me." Not at all true, he says – because ultimately it's your humanity that makes people care to listen. And it's your admission that you, too, are human, that makes them trust you about everything else.
 - People are desperate for authenticity. Everywhere you look there's someone lying about something.
- Attention is the scarce resource we all compete for these days. The clarity, efficiency, and effectiveness with which you communicate who you are and why it's relevant is the lynchpin for increasing your influence.
- Try to create your own "schtick," for lack of a better word – a content brand defined by that thing you do that no one else does.

- You want to be uniquely you, by definition irreplaceable; the only way to do that is to risk putting yourself out there.
- The best ideas come from looking around you and constantly asking, "How can I be helpful to people?"
 - Tell people how you're solving a problem they already know they have. Put yourself in your reader's shoes and respond to their needs.
- Go Visual: Photos, infographics, animated gifs, videos – these are much more likely to catch someone's eye and get passed on.

Engineering Serendipity

- Shape your own serendipity:
 - Be open to opportunities delivered by chance.
 - Create a network so broad that it is an incubator of the unexpected.
 - Plant yourself at the geographic center of your chosen community.
 - Become a highly visible leader in associations, giving rise to the kinds of situations where the most fruitful, generous relationships are borne – where information flows free and people trust one another enough to help one another.
- Master the art of serendipity and you'll open crucial channels to rich flows of knowledge and opportunities. Your first step is to constantly ask yourself: How can I foster juxtapositions of really smart people who would normally never have the opportunity to talk to one another but if they did would create amazing value?

- Your ideas don't have to be perfectly refined to reel in fellow enthusiasts. All you have to do is engage people – and chances are, those people will have questions and answers that you could never have imagined, pushing you further.
- The future is dynamic and not fully in your control. Celebrate that fact instead of fighting it, and life gets a lot more interesting. Keep your eyes open, be humble and generous, and save time and attention for the spontaneous, the quirky, and the left field.

Be Interesting!

- Be someone worth talking to and worth talking about. Virtually everyone new you meet in a situation is asking themselves a variation on one question: "Would I want to spend an hour eating lunch with this person?"
- Expertise requires knowing what you have that most others do not. It's your differentiation. It's the message that will make your brand unique, attracting others to become a part of your network.
- Creativity in business is often nothing more than making connections that everyone else has almost thought of. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, just attach it to a new wagon.
- Create a story about your company and the ideas it embodies that readers will care about.
 - Have you ever picked up the phone and actually talked to a reporter about why you think what you do is so special? You cannot outsource this to PR. Who's going to be more passionate and more informed than you?

- You can't replace people who day in and day out offer the kind of content or unique ways of thinking that promise their company an edge.
- In telling a gripping story, the message must be both simple and universal.
 - That doesn't mean your business, your resume, or whatever content you're trying to pitch actually has to be oversimplified or overly universal. But you should figure out how to spin your yarn in a fashion that (a) is simple to understand, and (b) everybody can relate to.
 - Forget bullet points and slide shows. When you've figured out what your content is, tell an inspiring story that will propel your friends and associates into action with spirit and fearlessness, motivated and mobilized by your simple but profound storytelling.

Become an Expert

- There's no better way to learn something, and become an expert at it, than to have to teach it.
- Get out in front and analyze the trends and opportunities on the cutting edge. Know the new technology.
- Ask seemingly stupid questions. Expose yourself to unusual experiences.
- What is your Unique Selling Proposition? What secret sauce can you bring to the table?
- Don't get discouraged.

- If you're going to be creative, cutting edge, out of the mainstream, you'd better get used to rockin' the boat. And guess what – when you're rockin' the boat, there will always be people who will try to push you out. Passion keeps you going through the rough times, come hell or high water – and both will come.
- Develop a niche.
 - Successful small businesses that gain renown establish themselves within a carefully selected market niche that they can realistically hope to dominate. Individuals can do the same thing.

Build Your Brand

- Develop a Personal Branding Message
 - A brand is nothing less than everything everyone thinks of when they see or hear your name. The best brands, like the most interesting people, have a distinct message. Your Personal Branding Message involves finding out what's really in a name – your name. It calls for you to identify your uniqueness and how you can put that uniqueness to work.
 - What do you want people to think when they hear or read your name? What product or service can you best provide?
 - Your positioning message should include a list of words that you want people to use when referring to you. Writing those words down is a big first step in having others believe them. Ask your most trusted friends what words they would use to

describe you, for good and for bad. Ask them what are the most important skills and attributes you bring to the table.

- Package the Brand
 - Let's be real – image counts, so whatever your look, take time to think it through. What is your appearance telegraphing to others?
 - Stand out! **Style matters.** Whether you like it or not, clothing, letterheads, hairstyles, business cards, office space, and conversational style are noticed – big time. The design of your brand is critical.
- Broadcast Your Brand
 - **The world is your stage. Look the part; live the part.**

Find Mentors, Find Mentees

- No process in history has done more to facilitate the exchange of information, skills, wisdom, and contacts than mentoring.
- **Whom you associate with is crucial to who you become. Your network is your destiny. We are the people we interact with.**
- Two crucial components make any mentorship successful:
 - The mentor offers guidance because the mentee promises something return. The mentee works nonstop in an effort to use the knowledge they gain to make the mentor, and his company, more successful.
 - Create a situation that goes beyond utility. The mentor should like the mentee and become emotionally invested in his development.

- Give help first, and not ask for it. If there is someone whose knowledge you need, consider their needs and how you can assist them.

THE DEFINING DECADE

MEG JAY

I found out about this book by simply asking a friend in casual conversation what he had been reading.

The Defining Decade echoes sentiments from other books in this volume (those of "You only have one life to live..."), with an emphasis of "... and your twenties may be the most important decade of it." Perhaps not much consolation to those of us over the age of 30, yet it still contains helpful advice for all stages of life.

When I'm talking with people who are in their late teens, this is what I believe to be some of the best, most well-condensed advice to give.

The Twenties

- The Twenties are the critical period of adulthood.
- As a Twentysomething, life is still more about potential than proof.
- Twentysomethings who make choices are happier than those who tread water.
 - "The Jam Experiment" – too many choices can make us feel vectorless in an ocean. Realistically, you only have a few options; pick from those.
 - Be choosy about the right things when you can still think clearly about claiming your life.
 - Lock-in is the decreased likelihood to search for other options, or change to another option, once an investment in something has been made.
- Stop "should"-ing all over yourself.
 - Goals direct us from the inside, but "should"s are paralyzing judgments from the outside.
- Many studies show that high school and our twenties is when we have our most self-defining memories.
- We put together stories of who we are and why... We repeat these stories to others and to ourselves. Our most intimate self-defining memories can be pieced together in strange, even painful, ways. Research suggests that these untold stories are most often about

shame... Life stories with themes of ruin can trap us. Life stories that are triumphant can transform us.

- "The most difficult thing to cure is the patient's attempt to self-cure... The things that once helped us feel better now get in our way." – Masud Khan

Relationships

- Who you marry is one of the most important decisions of your life.
- Some twentysomethings feel confused about whether they have consciously chosen their mate. Founding a relationship on convenience and ambiguity can interfere with the process of claiming the people we love.
- Focus not only on deal-breakers, but on "match-makers". The more similar two people's personalities are, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their relationship. At the same time, don't be picky about differences that don't matter.
- Focus more on "who you are" than "what you want".
- What we need in marriage changes over time. It is a young couple's job to create a shared vision and a shared life.
- Aristotle: "People love those who are like themselves."
- The more similar two people are, the more they are able to understand each other. Two people who are similar are going to have the same reactions to a rainy day, a new car, a long vacation, an anniversary, a Sunday morning, and a big party.

Networking

- The strengths of weak ties.
 - They are like bridges you cannot see across.
 - The weakness of strong ties.
 - When someone (with weak ties) does a favor for us, they start to like us. Attitudes influence behavior, and behavior can shape attitudes.
- Larger social networks charge our brains for the better as they require us to communicate with more and different others.
 - However, the "grooming" of Facebook turns it into an upward social comparison.
- We become what we hear and see and do every day. We don't become what we don't hear and see and do every day.

Work

- Being smart in school is about how well you solve problems that have correct answers. Being a forward-thinking adult is about how you think and act in uncertain situations.
- Twentysomethings who don't feel anxious and incompetent at work are usually overconfident or underemployed.
- "The art of being wise is knowing what to overlook" – William James
- Older adults are rooted more in the confidence that problems can be solved, or at least survived.

- People feel more confident on the inside when they can point to things they have done well on the outside. Real confidence comes from mastery experiences, which are actual, lived moments of success. For work success to lead to confidence, the job has to be challenging and it must require effort.
- With age comes the positivity effect; we become more interested in positive information, and our brains react less strongly to what negative information we do encounter.

Long-term Goals

- Leonard Bernstein: "To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan, and not quite enough time."
- Twentysomethings are especially prone to "present bias": discounting the future and favoring the rewards of today over the rewards of tomorrow.
- Many twentysomethings have trouble anticipating life. They need something to remind them that life is going to continue on past their twenties, and that it might even be great.
- Love or work can seem far off in time. The future can also seem socially distant when we hang out with people who are not talking about it either. Later can even feel spatially far away if we imagine ultimately settling down in some other place. Distance leads to abstraction, and abstraction leads to distance.
- Begin with the end in mind, and work backwards from there.

NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

ROBERT GLOVER

This is a male-centric self-help book revolving around the psychological construct of the "Nice Guy". Nice Guys are those men who pathologically bend over backward to make life easier for other people at the expense of their own wellbeing.

I suspect that this piece will be largely unhelpful to most readers, but that to a small minority it will be the most helpful thing in this volume.

(I initially purchased the book, read it, and highlighted passages throughout it, but am too lazy to type those out, so I found these unattributed notes online and modified them.)

The Working Paradigm of the Nice Guy

If I can hide my flaws and become what I think others want me to be then I will be loved, get my needs met, and have a problem-free life. Do everything right, don't rock the boat, don't be a problem, hide your flaws and mistakes and you will get the love and approval you're after.

The Nice Guy lives by this credo and if it is ineffective, he only tries harder.

Nice Guys are essentially hiding who they really are. Becoming a Nice Guy is a way of coping with situations where it does not feel safe or acceptable for a boy or man to be just who he is. The theory in the book is that during their formative years, all Nice Guys received messages from their families and the world around them that it was not safe, acceptable, or desirable for them to be who they were, just as they were.

The author posits that abandonment experiences and the naive, ego-centered interpretation of them as a child creates a belief in some young children that it is not acceptable for them to be who they are, just as they are. Nice Guys conclude there must be something wrong with them which causes the important people in their lives to abandon them. They cannot comprehend that their abandonment experiences may not be caused by something about them.

This interpretation of their abandonment experiences creates a psychological state called toxic shame. It's a belief that one is

inherently bad, defective, different or unlovable. It's a deeply held core belief that one is bad. Children learn to hide their internalized toxic shame (or perceived badness) from themselves and others. Trying to be "good" is just one of many possible scripts that a little boy might form as a reaction to the internalization of toxic shame.

Descriptions of Nice Guys

Nice Guys prevent themselves from getting what they want in love and life by:

- Seeking the approval of others (often women, as more and more children are being raised and surrounded by women on a day-to-day basis... how many male teachers did you have up until high school?)
- Trying to hide their perceived flaws and mistakes.
- Putting other people's needs and wants before their own.
- Sacrificing their personal power and playing the role of a victim.
- Disassociating themselves from other men and their own masculine energy.
- Co-creating relationships that are less than satisfying.
- Creating situations in which they do not have very much good sex.
- Failing to live up to their full potential.

Nice Guys are life-preserving but not exactly life-giving. They can be sympathetic to the whole harmony of the universe, but they often have little vitality to offer.

Nice Guys often attach their identity and worth to an attachment (physical appearance, a talent, intellect, nice car, cute child, attractive wife) and use them to convince themselves and others that they are valuable. Without these attachments, Nice Guys don't know what else about themselves would make anyone like or love them. Because of their toxic shame, Nice Guys cannot grasp that people might like and love them just for who they are.

A few ways men might seek approval:

- Being smart.
- Having a pleasant, non-threatening voice.
- Appearing unselfish.
- Being different from other men.
- Being a good worker.
- Having a clean car.
- Dressing well.
- Being nice.

Nice Guys approach the world as if it is a dangerous and overpowering place. As a consequence of playing it safe and avoiding fear, Nice Guys experience a lot of needless suffering:

- Suffering because they avoid new situations and stay with the familiar.
- Suffering because they procrastinate, avoid, and fail to finish what they start.
- Suffering because they make a bad situation worse by doing more of what has never worked in the past.

- Suffering because they expend so much energy trying to control the uncontrollable.

The Integrated Male

The opposite of a Nice Guy is the integrated male. Being integrated means being able to accept all aspects of one's self. An integrated man is able to embrace everything that makes him unique: his power, his assertiveness, his courage, and his passion as well as his imperfections, his mistakes, and his dark side.

- He has a strong sense of self. He likes himself just as he is.
- He takes responsibility for getting his own needs met.
- He is comfortable with his masculinity and his sexuality.
- He has integrity. He does what is right, not what is expedient.
- He is a leader. He is willing to provide for and protect those he cares about.
- He is clear, direct, and expressive of his feelings.
- He can be nurturing and giving without caretaking or problem-solving.
- He knows how to set boundaries and is not afraid to work through conflict.

An integrated male doesn't strive to be perfect or gain the approval of others. Instead, he accepts himself just as he is, warts and all. An integrated male accepts that he is perfectly imperfect.

Nice Guys and Women

Nice Guys seek external validation in just about every social situation, but it is most pronounced in their relationships with women. Nice Guys interpret a woman's approval as the ultimate validation of their worth. Nice Guys see sex as the ultimate form of acceptance and they believe a woman must be in a good mood before she will have sex. These men are constantly diligent to not do anything that might upset a woman whom they desire. Seeking women's approval gives women the power to define men and determine their worth.

Consider this, if you did not care what people thought of you, how would you live your life differently? If you weren't concerned with getting the approval of women, how would your relationships with the opposite sex be different?

Hiding Perceived Flaws

Nice Guys believe they must hide or distract attention from any perceived shortcoming such as:

- If they forget something.
- If they are late.
- If they break something.
- If they don't understand something.
- If they do something wrong.
- If they are depressed.
- If they are in pain.
- If they generally mess up.

The Nice Guy's need to hide is often the most pronounced in areas that are just part of being human and alive. They hide:

- That they are sexual.
- That they have bodily functions.
- That they are getting older.
- That they are losing their hair.
- That they have needs.
- That they are imperfect.

Connecting With Others

Nice Guys build walls that prevent others from getting too close. It affects their ability to be intimate but it also protects them from the consequences of being found out. These walls might include addictions (food, sex, TV, alcohol, work, porn), humor, sarcasm, intellectualism, perfectionism, and isolation.

As much as Nice Guys try to look good and get people to like them, the above defenses keep people at arm's length. While desiring love and connection, his behaviors serve as an invisible force field that keeps people from being able to get close to him. Nice Guys struggle to comprehend that in general, people are not drawn to perfection in others. People are drawn to shared interests, shared problems, and an individual's life energy. Hiding one's humanity and trying to project an image of perfection makes a person vague, slippery, lifeless, and uninteresting. Simultaneously, hiding their humanity reinforces the core belief that they are bad and unlovable.

Seeking Your Own Approval

Nice Guys must begin seeking their own approval. When Nice Guys focus on pleasing themselves, they begin to experience intimacy and connection with others. The author strongly recommends that Nice Guys take trips and retreats by themselves to places where no one knows them. In this context, the Nice Guy has fewer reasons to try to win people's approval and there is less of a need to try to hide faults and mistakes. While alone, Nice Guys can reflect on themselves and their life direction.

Learning That You Have Needs

When a child's needs are not met in a timely, healthy manner, the child may come to believe he is "bad" for having needs. Nice Guys respond to this by developing a number of survival mechanisms:

- Trying to appear needless and wantless.
- Making it difficult for others to give to them.
- Caretaking: focusing attention on other people's needs.

If Nice Guys could eliminate or hide all of their needs, then no one would abandon them.

The Nice Guy's covert contract is this:

"I will do _____ for you, so that you will do _____ for me. We will both act as if we have no awareness of this contract."

There is nothing wrong with asking your partner to tell you she loves you, but saying "I love you" first to get an "I love you, too" in return is indirect, unclear, and manipulative.

Since Nice Guys learned to sacrifice themselves in order to survive, recovery must center on learning to put themselves first and making their needs a priority. It is healthy to have needs. Mature people make getting their needs met a priority. No one was put on this planet to meet your needs except yourself. Helpless, whiny, wimpy, and needy are not attractive on a man. Confidence and self-assurance are attractive. Most folks are attracted to men who have a sense of self. Putting the self first doesn't drive people away, it attracts them. Putting the self first is essential for getting what one wants in love and life.

Caretaking vs. Caring

Caretaking has very little to do with caring.

Caretaking

- Gives to others what the giver needs to give.
- Comes from a place of emptiness within the giver.
- Always has unconscious strings attached (covert contract).

Caring

- Gives to others what the receiver needs.
- Comes from a place of abundance within the giver.
- Has no strings attached.

Nice Guys give in the ways they would like others to give to them. When it doesn't seem that he is getting as much as he gives or he isn't getting what he expected (i.e. the covert contract is understandably not being met), he feels frustrated and resentful. The Nice Guy is the one keeping score of the giving.

Getting Things Done and Embracing Masculinity

Decide what feels right and do it. The alternative approach is a method of decision-making and acting that is based on trying to guess what everyone else would think is right. Following this is the quickest path to confusion, fear, powerlessness, and dishonesty. **The boat may be rocked sometimes but it will be worth it.**

Masculinity empowers a man to create and produce. It also empowers him to provide for and protect those who are important to him. These aspects of masculinity include strength, discipline, courage, passion, persistence, and integrity. Masculine energy also represents the potential for aggressiveness, destructiveness, and brutality. These characteristics frighten Nice Guys – and most women – therefore Nice Guys work especially hard to repress these traits. **Many women say that due to the absence of any discernible life energy in Nice Guys, there is little to be attracted to. They also reveal that their tendency to be attracted to "jerks" is because these men have more of a masculine edge to them.**

As Nice Guys try to avoid the dark side of their masculinity, they also repress many other aspects of this male energy force. As a result, they often lose their sexual assertiveness, competitiveness, creativity, ego, thirst for experience, boisterousness, exhibitionism, and power (basically, little boys on the playground show many of these qualities

that Nice Guys eventually repress). These are good things worth keeping.

Most women do not want a man who tries to please them. They want a man who knows how to please himself. Avoiding relationships with men and seeking the approval of women prevents Nice Guys from getting what they really want in love and life. This process involves believing that it really is a good thing to be a man and embracing masculine traits.

Get strong by embracing your body, power, and spaciousness. Stop putting junk into your body and train yourself to respond to the physical demands of being male. Eat healthy foods, eliminate/reduce drugs and alcohol, work out, drink lots of water, play, relax, and get rest. Embrace the male heritage that you and your father share.

Intimacy

Intimacy requires two people who are willing to courageously look inward and make themselves totally visible to another.

Internalized toxic shame makes this kind of exposure feel life-threatening for Nice Guys. Intimacy, by its nature, would require the Nice Guy to look into the abyss of his most inner self and allow others to peer into these same places. This terrifies Nice Guys because being known means being found out – something all Nice Guys have worked their entire lives to protect and hide. The demands of intimacy represent everything Nice Guys fear most.

Nice Guys can change the way they have relationships by:

- Approving of themselves.
- Putting themselves first.
- Revealing themselves to safe people.
- Eliminating covert contracts.
- Taking responsibility for their own needs.
- Surrendering.
- Dwelling in reality.
- Expressing their feelings.
- Developing integrity.
- Setting boundaries.
- Embracing their masculinity.

The difficulty Nice Guys have with sex can be directly linked to two issues: shame and fear. All Nice Guys have shame and fear about being sexual and about being sexual beings. Nice Guys may avoid or distract themselves from their sexual shame and fear by:

- Avoiding sexual situations and sexual opportunities.
- Trying to be a good lover.
- Hiding compulsive sexual behaviors.
- Repressing their life energy.
- Settling for bad sex.

Being a good lover can be an attachment Nice Guys use to feel valuable. It can be a very effective mechanism for allowing them to have sex while staying distracted from their internalized shame and fear.

The more a Nice Guy seeks approval and tries to "do it right", the tighter he clamps a lid down on any kind of energy that might actually draw a person to him. Once they have repressed all of their life energy, there is little about them to get anyone's attention to turn them on. Even though women may be initially drawn to a Nice Guy's pleasing demeanor, over time they find it difficult to get excited about having sex with him.

No one was put into this world to meet your needs but you. This is especially true with sex. Good sex consists of two people taking full responsibility for meeting their own needs.

Before Nice Guys can have exciting, passionate, and fulfilling sexual experiences with other people, they must learn how to have the same with themselves. By practicing healthy masturbation, recovering Nice Guys can change the most basic dynamics that shape the bigger picture of how they have sex.

Nice Guys can begin to change these dynamics by practicing healthy masturbation. This involves letting sexual energy unfold. It is not necessarily about orgasms. It is about learning to pay attention to what feels good without the use of pornography or fantasy to distract oneself.

The author is not against porn legally or morally but thinks it bad for men for several reasons:

- It creates unrealistic expectations of what people look like and what sex should be.

- It addicts men to bodies and body parts.
- It can become a substitute for a real sexual relationship.
- Until a Nice Guy can be sexual with himself without using pornography or fantasy to distract himself, he won't be able to have sex with someone else without needing similar things to distract him.

Fear, Taking Responsibility, and Changing Things

If there were no limits on your life:

- Where would you live?
- What would you be doing in your leisure time?
- What kind of work would you be engaged in?
- What would your home and surroundings look like?

As you look at the reality of your life, ask yourself two questions: Are you creating the life you want? If not, why not?

There is one common factor at the core of every problem experienced by Nice Guys: fear. Pretty much everything they do or don't do is governed by fear. Fear that prevents a Nice Guy from demanding a raise, fear preventing someone from going back to school, fear that prevents someone from quitting a job he despises, fear preventing someone from living where he really wants to live and doing what he really wants to do. Trying to "do it right" robs Nice Guys of their creativity and productivity. Seeking external validation and approval keeps Nice Guys stuck in mediocrity. Following the rules makes Nice Guys rigid, cautious, and fearful. There are

countless intelligent and talented men wasting their lives and wallowing in the mire of mediocrity.

Acceptance of the self allows Nice Guys to embrace their passions and face their fears. The formation of a more accurate view of the self and the world allows the abundance of the universe to begin flowing freely into their lives.

Most folks, Nice Guys included, do not consciously take responsibility for creating the kind of life they want. Most people just accept where they are and act as if they have little power in shaping an exciting, productive and fulfilling life. It requires a conscious decision to face fears, a conscious decision to not settle for mediocrity, and a conscious decision to make one's own rules.

The only thing stopping you from having the kind of life you really want is you. Nice Guys find numerous creative ways to sabotage their success in life. They waste time, procrastinate, start things but don't finish them, spend too much time fixing other people's problems, distract themselves with trivial pursuits, create chaos, and make excuses. Nice Guys have to, at some point, stop sabotaging themselves and get out of their own way. Due to their early life experiences, Nice Guys tend to be ruled by deprivation thinking. They believe there is only so much to go around. When we come to see the world as a place of abundance, we come to realize that there is plenty for everyone. Everything we need is flowing by us – all we have to do is get out of the way of our own small thinking and let it come.

LEADERSHIP

ON BECOMING A LEADER

WARREN BENNIS

"These are the hard times in which a genius would wish to live... Great necessity calls forth great leaders."

– Thomas Jefferson

Ingredients of Leadership

- Vision
- Passion
- Knowledge
- Integrity

We Need Leaders

- Life is spontaneous, contrary, unexpected, and ambiguous. We need anchors in our lives... a guiding purpose. Leaders fill that need.
- "Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is the society. They can serve as symbols of the moral unity of the society. They can express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts." – John W. Gardner
 - We need people who know how to find problems, because the ones we face today aren't always clearly defined, and they aren't linear.

- There is a pervasive, national concern about the integrity of our institutions.
 - A nation can't progress without a common vision.

Managers vs. Leaders

- The manager maintains; the leader develops.
- The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
- The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.
- The manager has his eye on the bottom line; the leader has his eye on the horizon.
- The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it.

Where do Leaders come from?

- Leaders are made, not born, and made more by themselves than by any external means.
 - Harvard professor Abraham Zaleznik posits that there are two kinds of leaders: once-borns and twice-borns. The once-born's transition from home and family to independence is relatively easy. Twice-borns generally suffer as they grow up, feel different, even isolated, and so develop an elaborate inner life. As they grow older, they become truly independent, relying wholly on their own beliefs and ideas. Leaders who are twice-born are inner-directed, self-assured, and, as a result, truly charismatic.

- No leader sets out to be a leader. People set out to live their lives, expressing themselves fully. When that expression is of value, they become leaders.
 - Good leaders rise to the top in spite of their weaknesses.

Know Thyself

- No leader sets out to be a leader per se, but rather to express himself freely and fully. The key to full self-expression is understanding one's self.
- "Letting the self emerge" is the essential task for leaders.
 - Listening to the inner voice – trusting the inner voice – is one of the most important lessons of leadership.
 - Separate who you are and who you want to be from what the world thinks you are and wants you to be.
 - "The best way to define a man's character would be to seek out the particular mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensively active and alive. At such moments, there is a voice inside which speaks and says, 'This is the real me.'" – William James
- To be authentic is literally to be your own author.

Knowledge

- "If there's anything I really believe in, it's the joy of learning and learning every day." – Frances Hesselbein

- Leaders differ from others in their constant appetite for knowledge and experience, and as their worlds widen and become more complex, so too do their means of understanding.
- You are your own best teacher.
 - Every time we teach a child something, rather than helping him learn, we keep him from inventing himself. By its very nature, teaching homogenizes, both its subjects and its object. Learning, on the other hand, liberates.
 - True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience. To look forward with acuity you must first look back with honesty.
 - "It is a grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion and a sense of duty." – Albert Einstein
 - "I took a good deal o' pains with his education, sir; let him run the streets when he was very young, and shift for his-self. It's the only way to make a boy sharp, sir." – Charles Dickens, Pickwick Papers
- "In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists." – Eric Hoffer
 - "Two things seemed pretty apparent to me. One was, that in order to be a [Mississippi River] pilot a man had got to learn more than any one man ought to be allowed to know; and the other was, that he must learn it all over again in a different way every 24 hours." – Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi

Vision

- Leaders manage the dream.
 - Communicate the vision. Manage the dream by meticulously recruiting, rewarding, retraining, and reorganizing.
 - Mountain climbers don't start climbing from the bottom of the mountain. They look at where they want to go, and work backward to where they're starting from.
- Leaders embrace error.
 - "Failure is not the crime. Low aim is." – John Wooden
- If you learn to anticipate the future and shape events rather than being shaped by them, you will benefit in significant ways.

Action

- "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it." – Kurt Lewin
- "The world can only be grasped by action, not by contemplation."
– Jacob Bronowski, The Ascent of Man
- Leaders learn best by leading in the face of obstacles. As weather shapes mountains, so problems make leaders.
- "The basic difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge, while an ordinary man takes everything as a blessing or a curse." – Carlos Casteneda

Getting People On Your Side

- Ingredients to generate and sustain trust:
 - Constancy. Whatever surprises leaders themselves may face, they don't create any for the group. Leaders are all of a piece; they stay the course.
 - Congruity. Leaders walk their talk. In true leaders, there is no gap between the theories they espouse and the life they practice.
 - Reliability. Leaders are there when it counts; they are ready to support their co-workers in the moments that matter.
 - Integrity. Leaders honor their commitments and promises.
- Volunteers do not need contracts, they need covenants. Covenantal relationships induce freedom, not paralysis.
- Leaders understand the Pygmalion Effect in management: Leaders expect the best of the people around them.
- Leaders encourage dissent.
 - Leaders tend to come in two sizes: those who hire reflectors – clones who will mirror the leader's opinions and desires, and those who hire compensators, people who have complementary views of the organization and the society.
 - "I want you to tell me exactly what's wrong with me and MGM. Even if it means losing your job." – Sam Goldwyn

Organizations Can Help – or Hinder

- Know what your values and priorities are, and what the values and priorities of your organization are. Being in sync with your organization is almost as important as being in sync with yourself.
- "I am tempted to believe that what we call necessary institutions are no more than institutions to which we have become accustomed. In matters of social constitution, the field of possibilities is much more extensive than men living in their various societies are ready to imagine." – Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America
- All organizations, especially those that are growing, walk a tightrope between stability and change, tradition and revision. Therefore they must have some means for reflecting on their own experiences and offering reflective structures to their employees.
- "I have little tolerance for institutional restraints. Institutions should should serve people, but unfortunately it's often the other way around. People give their allegiance to an institution, and they become prisoners of habits, practices, and rules that make them ultimately ineffectual." – Mathilde Krim

THE MAGIC OF THINKING BIG

DAVID J. SCHWARTZ

Written the better part of a century ago, the advice
contained in this book is tried and true.

- Belief in success is the one basic, absolutely essential ingredient in successful people.
 - To do anything, you must believe it can be done.
 - How much we can do depends on how much we think we can do.
- Big ideas and big plans are often easier than small ideas and small plans.
- The ability to know how to get information is more important than using the mind as a garage for facts. The ability to think is of much greater value than the ability to memorize facts.
- How we think is directly affected by the group we're in. Be sure you're in the flock that thinks right.
 - Young successful people observe the behavior of senior executives, and how they approach problems and make decisions. They observe the attitudes of successful people.
 - Successful people are the most ready to help since they want to see that their work lives on.
- Action cures fear and strengthens confidence. Indecision and postponement fertilize fear. Take action promptly and be decisive. Grow the action habit.
- Look at things not as they are, but as they could be. A big thinker always visualizes what can be done in the future.
 - Visualize yourself not as you are, but as you can be.

- Look at the potential of repeat, long-term customers – not just what they buy today.
- Conduct a daily interview with yourself. Ask "what can I do to make myself more valuable today?"
 - Ask yourself every day, "What can I do today to make my wife and family happy?"
- Put yourself in the eyes of the person you want to influence.
 - To sell John Brown what John Brown wants, you've got to see things through John Brown's eyes.
- Join and meet regularly with a professional group. Stimulation from others is excellent mind food.
 - Circulate in new groups, and discover new and stimulating things to do.
- An idea written or drawn has much more selling power than an oral idea.
- Be environment-conscious. Just as body diet makes the body, mind diet makes the mind.
 - A person is a product of his own thoughts. Others see in us what we see of ourselves.
 - To think confidently, act confidently.
 - Practice making eye contact.
 - There's no point in being anxious of other people, as they are just like you.
 - How you think determines how you act. How you act in turn determines how others react to you. To gain the respect of others, you must first think you deserve respect.

- Your physical exterior affects your mental interior. Dress nicely.
- Build a sell-yourself-on-yourself commercial and use it to supercharge yourself.
- The way we think toward our job determines how our subordinates think toward their jobs.
 - In order to get others to be enthusiastic, you must first be enthusiastic yourself.
- Go First-Class in everything you do.
 - Think Improvement in everything you do. Think High Standards in everything you do.
 - In everything you do, Life It Up. Put vitality into your speaking.
- Leaders take the initiative in building friendships.
 - Grow the "You are important" attitude by showing appreciation for and complimenting others.
 - A big source of stress is negative feelings toward other people. So think positive toward people and discover how wonderful, really wonderful this world is.
- The test of a successful person is not an ability to eliminate all problems before they arise, but to meet and work out difficulties when they do arise.
 - How you think when you lose determines how long it will be until you win.
 - Blend persistence with experimentation.

- Goals are essential to success. You must form an image *now* of the person you want to be 10 years from now if you are to become that image.
- Remind yourself that the primary purpose in life is to enjoy it.

TRIBES

SETH GODIN

(Adapted from notes by Helen Hoefele)

I was a reader of author Seth Godin's blog in the late 2000s. He's a marketing "Thought Leader", for lack of a better term, and his consistently-published prose is pleasant to read.

Characteristics of a Leader

- Is Passionate!
 - Has a Cause Worth Fighting For.
 - Motivates and Inspires.
 - Works Hard and Is Generous.
 - Realizes that Being Wrong Isn't Fatal.
- Intent Matters, It's Not About Getting Money or Status, but About a Mission.
- Is Persistent Against Resistance.
 - Is Brave, Challenges Status Quo, Speaks Up.
 - Doesn't Water Down His Message or Try to Please Everyone.
 - Believes He Can Get Where He Says He's Going.
 - Has the Ability To Stick With The Dream For a Long Time.
- Finds a Common Interest and Steps Out of the Way.
 - Shines the Light on the Tribe.
 - Knows When to "Take The Follow".
 - Enables Followers to Become Connected.
 - Finds Other Leaders, Amplifies Their Work & Helps Them Find Followers.

Characteristics of a Tribe

- A Group of Like-Minded People.
- People Belong to Not Just One But Many Tribes.
- Tribe Members Aren't Closed Off or Isolated.
- Every Tribe Is Different.
- Have Active Members That Do More Than Just Show Up.
 - Membership is Voluntary
 - Aren't Blind Sheep, but are Evangelists
- Tribes Don't Do What The Leaders Want, They Do What They Want.
- There are Tribes Out There Waiting to be Coalesced & Led. Look For Passionate Individuals Not Engaged by Other Tribes Yet.

What Doesn't Make a Tribe?

- Factory Mentality (People Content with a Safe Job Only Because That's Better Than Foraging For Food).
- Managers/Employees That Wait To Be Told What To Do (Willingly or Not).
- Crowds Which Have No Momentum or No Leader.

About Sheepwalking

- It's Painful to be Unhappy and Mediocre.
- Sheepwalkers Were Raised to be That Way.
 - It's the Easiest & Quickest Way to Teach Them.
 - Obedient & Fearful Employees.
 - Can Be Well-Educated, but Compliant.
 - Might Have a "Who Cares?" Attitude.
- You Can Always Stop Being a Sheepwalker.
 - Teachers/Employers Should Embrace Non-Sheep Behavior.

About Timing

- There Is No Right Time To Lead. Don't Do Nothing.
- Best Time To Change Business Model Is When It Still Has Momentum.

THE HARD THING ABOUT HARD THINGS

BEN HOROWITZ

Author Ben Horowitz is someone who's been through the entrepreneurial grind and come out a billionaire.

The Hard Thing About Hard Things contains discrete examples of practical advice for high-level executive management.

The CEO always has the answer; just fucking man up and do it!

- The hard thing about hard things is that there's no formula for dealing with them.
- Following conventional wisdom and relying on shortcuts can be worse than knowing nothing at all.
- When raising money privately, look for a market of one.
- It's a good idea to ask, "What am I not doing?"
- Startup CEOs should not play the odds. When you are building a company, you must believe there is an answer and you cannot pay attention to your odds of finding it. You just have to find it. If there's one skill that stands out to be a successful CEO, it's the ability to focus and make the best move when there are no good moves. It's the moments where you feel most like hiding or dying that you can make the biggest difference as a CEO.
- CEOs should tell it like it is. Nobody takes bad news harder than the CEO. Share the problem with people who can not only fix it, but who would also be personally excited and motivated to do so. Telling it like it is builds trust. Also, the more brains working on the hard problems, the better. A healthy company culture encourages people to share bad news.
- There comes a time in every company's life where it must fight for its life. If you find yourself running when you should be fighting, you need to ask yourself, "If our company isn't good enough to win, then do we need to exist at all?"
- When things go wrong in your company, nobody cares. The media don't care, the investors don't care, the board doesn't care,

your employees don't care. All the mental energy you use to elaborate your misery would be far better used trying to find the one seemingly impossible way out of your current mess.

- Take care of the people, the products, and the profits – in that order. People are the most important asset.
 - Training is one of the highest-leverage activities a manager can perform. Functional training and management training.
- Know what you want. "If you don't know what you want, the chances that you'll get it are extremely low." – Tony Robbins
- If you report on the quantitative goals and ignore the qualitative ones, you won't get the qualitative goals, which may be the most important ones. Management purely by numbers is sort of like painting by numbers – it's strictly for amateurs.
- The proper reason to hire a senior person is to acquire knowledge and experience in a specific area. A weak definition of what you are looking for will lead to a bad outcome.
- Hold your executives to a high standard, even if you have no idea how they might achieve it. It's not your job to figure out how to create an incredible brand, tilt the playing field by cutting a transformational deal, or achieve a sales goal that nobody thought possible – that's what you are paying them to do.

- The first rule of organizational design is that all organizational designs are bad. Your goal is to choose the least of all evils. Some basic steps to organizational design:
 - Figure out what needs to be communicated.
 - Figure out what needs to be decided. How can you design the organization to put the maximum number of decisions under the domain of a designated manager?
 - Prioritize the most important communication and decision paths.
 - Decide who's going to run each group. Notice this is not the first step.
 - Identify the paths that you did not optimize. If you ignore them entirely, they will surely come back to bite you. Build a plan for mitigating these issues.
- "The most important thing that I learned as an entrepreneur was to focus on what I needed to get right and stop worrying about all the things that I did wrong or might do wrong."
- The only thing that prepares you to run a company is running a company. If CEOs were graded on a curve, the mean on the test would be 22 out of 100. It is particularly challenging because nobody tells you that the mean is 22.
- CEOs often either take things too personally, or they do not take things personally enough. Ideally, the CEO will be urgent yet not insane. She will move aggressively and decisively without feeling emotionally culpable. If she can separate the importance of the issues from how she feels about them, she will avoid demonizing her employees or herself.

- Focus on the road, not the wall. There are always a thousand things that can go wrong and sink the ship. If you focus too much on them, you will drive yourself nuts and likely crash your company. Focus on where you are going rather than on what you hope to avoid.
- In life, everybody faces choices between doing what's popular, easy, and wrong versus doing what's lonely, difficult, and right. Every time you make the hard, correct decision you become a bit more courageous and every time you make the easy, wrong decision you become a bit more cowardly.
- Look for three key traits in leaders:
 - The ability to articulate the vision.
 - The right kind of ambition (looking out for your followers and being aligned with their interests).
 - The ability to achieve the vision.
- [Peacetime CEO vs. Wartime CEO; Andy Grove books]
- A CEO can most accurately be measured by the speed and quality of her decisions. Great decisions come from CEOs who display an elite mixture of intelligence, logic, and courage. Courage is particularly important, because every decision that a CEO makes is based on incomplete information.
- Can the CEO get the company to do what she knows?
- Embrace the struggle. Embrace your weirdness, your background, your instinct.

BUSINESS

THE ESSENTIAL DRUCKER

PETER F. DRUCKER

The best business book I've ever read, *The Essential Drucker* is itself a distillation of over 60 years of writing from Austrian management expert Peter Drucker.

This broad book covers all aspects of not only business but overall organizational effectiveness. It paints a complete picture of all organizational viewpoints, with an emphasis of keeping an eye on the prize and executing effectively.

(I also read and incorporated notes from Drucker's The Effective Executive, so there may be some duplicate lines that I've missed in editing.)

The Power of Organizations

- Organization is, to a large extent, a means of overcoming the limitations mortality sets to what any one man can contribute. Organization is a means of multiplying the strength of an individual.
- The test of organization is not genius. It is its capacity to make common people achieve uncommon performance. We could certainly use people of much broader knowledge, but not too much can be expected from further efforts. We will have to run our organizations with men, more or less, as they are.
- Organization is the specific instrument to make human strengths redound to performance while human weakness is neutralized and largely rendered harmless. The small businessman who is good at finance but poor at production or marketing is likely to get into trouble. In a somewhat larger business one can easily make productive a man who has true strength in finance alone.
- An enterprise's results exist only on the outside. The result of a business is a satisfied customer.
 - The larger and more successful an organization becomes, the more it focuses on inside events rather than the outside (the customers). What goes on outside is usually not even known firsthand.
 - The effective person looks up from his work and outward toward goals.

- Values of an Organization:
 - Any organization also needs a commitment to values and their constant reaffirmation, as a human body needs vitamins and minerals. There has to be something "this organization stands for," or else it degenerates into disorganization, confusion, and paralysis.
 - The values and the goals of the organization are just as important as a man's professional knowledge and skills. A young man who has the right strength for one organization may be a total misfit in another, which from the outside looks just the same. I have yet to see two large businesses which have the same values and stress the same contributions.
 - An institution better refrain from tackling tasks that do not fit into its value system. No one is likely to do well in areas that he does not respect.

Management

- Not to know how to manage is the single largest reason for the failure of new ventures.
- All managers are responsible to think through the "theory of the business".
- Management's task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant.
 - The essence of management is to make knowledge productive.
- The enterprise must have simple, clear, and unifying objectives. The mission of the organization has to be clear enough and big enough to provide common vision.

- (Non-profits are so successful because of the clear mission.)
- Decisions affecting the entire business and its capacity to perform are made at all levels of the organization, even fairly low ones.
- Each manager must develop and set the objectives of his unit himself.
 - There is no better way to improve an organization's performance than to measure the results of capital appropriations against the promises and expectations that led to their authorization.
- In the effort to create wealth, managers need to allocate human resources as purposefully and as thoughtfully as they do capital.
 - Executives should spend more time on managing people and making people decisions than on anything else.
- The educated person will have to be prepared to live and work simultaneously in two cultures – that of the "intellectual" and that of the manager. If one overbalances the other, there is only nonperformance and frustration.
 - An entrepreneur who does not learn how to manage will not last long; a management that does not learn to innovate will not last long.

Effectiveness

- Effectiveness is a habit, and can always be learned.
- Intelligence, imagination, and knowledge are essential resources, but only effectiveness converts them into results.

- Brilliant men are often strikingly ineffectual; they fail to realize that the brilliant insight is not by itself achievement. Only effectiveness converts resources into results. The greatest wisdom not applied to action and behavior is meaningless.
- Effective executives focus on outward contribution. They gear their efforts to results rather than to work. They start out with the question, "What results are expected of me?" rather than with the work to be done.
 - The person who focuses on contribution turns his head to the outside, the only place where there are results. He will come to think in terms of the customer.
 - The great majority of people are occupied with efforts rather than with results.
- Effective executives concentrate on their strengths. They do not start out with the things they cannot do.
 - Identify where intellectual arrogance causes disabling ignorance. Remedy your bad habits.
 - Waste as little effort as possible on improving areas of low competence.
- Effective executives know where their time goes.
 - They force themselves to set priorities and stay with their priority decisions. They do first things first – and second things not at all.
- One does not "manage" people. The task is to lead people. The goal is to make productive the specific strengths and knowledge of each individual.

- The specialist must think through who is to use his output and what the user needs to know to be able to make productive the fragment the specialist produces.
- Be honest. It is fruitless and a waste of time to worry about what is acceptable and what one had better not say so as not to evoke resistance.
- The Pygmalion Effect: People adjust to the level of the demands made on them.
- People grow according to the demands they make on themselves. If they demand little of themselves, they will remain stunted. If they demand a great deal of themselves, they will grow to giant stature – without any more effort than is expended by the non-achievers.

First Things First

- Effective executives concentrate – their own time and energy as well as that of their organization – on doing one thing at a time, and on doing first things first.
- If the executive lets the flow of events determine what he does, he will fritter himself away "operating". For the pressures always favor the crisis over the opportunity, the immediate and visible over the real, and the urgent over the relevant.
- To get that really productive time requires self-discipline and an iron determination to say "No". The job is not to set priorities. The job is to set "posteriorities" – deciding what tasks not to tackle.
- There are always more productive tasks for tomorrow than there is time to do them and more opportunities than there are capable

people to take care of them. A decision therefore has to be made as to which tasks deserve priority and which are of less importance.

All the Results are on the Outside of the Organization

- There are no results within the organization. All the results are on the outside. But it is the inside of the organization that is most visible to the executive. It is the inside that has immediacy for him.
- Every executive sees the inside – the organization – as close and immediate reality. He sees the outside only through thick and distorting lenses, if at all. Unless he makes conscious efforts to perceive the outside, the inside may blind him to the true reality.
- With the coming of the computer this will become even more important, for the decision-maker will, in all likelihood, be even further removed from the scene of action. Unless he accepts, as a matter of course, that he had better go out and look at the scene of action, he will be increasingly divorced from reality.
- One can quantify only what goes on inside an organization – costs and production figures, patient statistics in the hospital, or training reports. The relevant outside events are rarely available in quantifiable form until it is much too late to do anything about them. The problem is rather that the important and relevant outside events are often qualitative and not in quantifiable form until it is too late to do anything about them. They are not yet "facts."

Focus on Contribution

- "What can I *and no one else* do which, if done really well, would make a real difference to this institution?"
- Executives who do not ask themselves, "What can I contribute?" are not only likely to aim too low, they are likely to aim at the wrong things.
 - The question is not: "What do I want to do?"
 - The question is: "Is this the right thing for the enterprise?"
- Effective executives will ask their men: "What are the contributions for which this organization and I, your superior, should hold you accountable? What should we expect of you? What is the best utilization of your knowledge and your ability?"
- The Effective Executive is effective only if and when other people make use of what he contributes. One of the weaknesses of young, highly educated people today is that they are satisfied to be versed in one narrow specialty and affect a contempt for the other areas. One need not know in detail what to do with "human relations" as an accountant, or how to promote a new branded product if an engineer. But one has a responsibility to know at least what these areas are about, why they are around, and what they are trying to do.
- The knowledge worker is usually a specialist. By itself, however, a specialty is a fragment and sterile. Its output has to be put together with the output of other specialists before it can produce results. The task is not to breed generalists. It is to enable the specialist to make himself and his specialty effective. This means that he must think through who is to use his output and what the user needs to

know and to understand to be able to make productive the fragment the specialist produces.

- It is barbarian arrogance to assume that the layman can or should make the effort to understand him, and that it is enough if the man of knowledge talks to a handful of fellow experts who are his peers. This attitude condemns the expert to uselessness and converts his knowledge from learning into pedantry. If a man wants to be an executive he has to concern himself with the usability of his knowledge. He has to learn enough of the needs, the directions, the limitations, and the perceptions of others to enable them to use his own work.
- For example, if cost accountants asked these questions, they would soon find out which of the figures that to them are important are irrelevant to the operating people and which figures, barely seen by them and rarely reported, are the ones the operating people really need every day.
- The man who asks of himself, "What is the most important contribution I can make to the performance of this organization?" asks in effect, "What self-development do I need? What knowledge and skill do I have to acquire to make the contribution I should be making? What strengths do I have to put to work? What standards do I have to set for myself?"

Focus on Strengths

- To achieve results, one has to use all the available strengths – the strengths of associates, the strengths of the superior, and one's own strengths. These strengths are the true opportunities.
- Effective executives never ask "What can a man not do?" Their question is always "What can he do uncommonly well?"
- The effective executive tries to be himself; he does not pretend to be someone else. He looks at his own performance and at his own results and tries to discern a pattern. "What are the things," he asks, "that I seem to be able to do with relative ease, while they come rather hard to other people?"
- To focus on strength is to make demands for performance. The man who does not first ask, "What can a man do?" is bound to accept far less than the associate can really contribute.

Minimization

- The less an organization has to do to produce results, the better it does its job.
- The fewer people, the smaller, the less activity inside, the more nearly perfect is the organization in terms of its only reason for existence: the service to the environment.
- A well-managed plant is a quiet place. A factory that is "dramatic", a factory in which the "epic of industry" is unfolded before the visitor's eyes, is poorly managed. A well-managed factory is boring. Nothing exciting happens in it because the crises have been anticipated and have been converted into routine.

Stay Lean

- One of the most obvious facts of social and political life is the longevity of the temporary.
- The action plan should be revised often. It is a statement of intentions rather than a commitment. It must not become a straitjacket.
 - After completing the original top-priority task, the executive resets priorities rather than moving on to number two from the original list. He asks, "What must be done now?" This generally results in new and different priorities.
 - Napoleon allegedly said that no successful battle ever followed its plan. Yet Napoleon also planned every one of his battles, far more meticulously than any earlier general had done. Without an action plan, the executive becomes a prisoner of events.
- The first rule for the concentration of executive efforts is to slough off the past that has ceased to be productive.
 - Executives, whether they like it or not, are forever bailing out the past. This is inevitable. Today is always the result of actions and decisions taken yesterday.
 - Sloughing off old activities before starting new ones is necessary in order to keep organizational "weight control". Without it, the organization soon loses shape, cohesion, and manageability. Social organizations need to stay lean and muscular as much as biological organisms.
 - Systematic sloughing off of the old is the one and only way to force the new. There is no lack of ideas in any organization I know. "Creativity" is not our problem.

- It is not size that is an impediment to entrepreneurship and innovation; it is the existing operation itself, and especially the existing successful operation.

Time Management

- Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it can be managed, nothing else can be managed.
- Effective knowledge workers do not start with their tasks. They start with their time. Time cannot be stored, and is always in exceedingly short supply.
- Effective executives do not race. They set an easy pace but keep going steadily.
- To manage one's time, one first has to know where one's time actually goes.
 - One has to find the nonproductive, time-wasting activities and get rid of them. It is amazing how many things busy people are doing that will never be missed.
 - Which of the activities on my time log could be done by somebody else just as well, if not better?
- The higher up a knowledge worker, the larger will be the proportion of time that is not under his control. The larger the organization, the more time will be needed just to keep it together and running, rather than to make it function and produce.
- Don't waste the time of others. Ask, "What do I do that wastes your time without contributing to your effectiveness?"
- Ask yourself a number of diagnostic questions:

- 1) First one tries to identify and eliminate the things that need not be done at all, the things that are purely waste of time without any results whatever. It is amazing how many things busy people are doing that never will be missed. **One rarely overprunes.**
- 2) Which of the activities on my time log could be done by somebody else just as well, if not better?

Lord Heart-of-the-Matter:

A good example was Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's confidential adviser in World War II. A dying, indeed almost a dead man for whom every step was torment, he could only work a few hours every other day or so. This forced him to cut out everything but truly vital matters. He did not lose effectiveness thereby; on the contrary, he became, as Churchill called him once, "Lord Heart of the Matter" and accomplished more than anyone else in wartime Washington.

Decision-Making

- Effective executives do not make a great many decisions. They concentrate on the important ones.
- Decision-making can no longer be confined to the small group at the top. Every knowledge worker in an organization will have to become an effective decision-maker.
- Converting a decision into action requires answering several distinct questions:

- Who has to know of this decision?
- What action has to be taken?
- Who is to take it?
- The effective decision does not flow from a consensus on the facts.
- In decision-making, develop disagreement. Disagreement provides alternatives to a decision.
 - Above all, disagreement is needed to stimulate the imagination. Imagination needs to be challenged and stimulated, or else it remains latent and unused. Disagreement, especially if forced to be reasoned, thought through, and documented, is the most effective stimulus we know.
- The effective person is concerned first with understanding others.
 - For example, in a good law office, the beginner is first assigned to drafting the strongest possible case for the other lawyer's client. It trains him to start out with thinking through what it is that the other side must know, see, or take as probable. No matter how certain he is that the other side is completely wrong and has no case at all, the executive who wants to make the right decision forces himself to see opposition as his means to think through the alternatives.
- A decision is only necessary if the consequences of inaction are large. If the problem will take care of itself, one does not interfere. ("The magistrate does not consider trifles.")
 - Every decision is like surgery. It is an intervention into a system and therefore carries with it the risk of shock.
- A decision requires courage as much as it requires judgment.

- When the decision is ready to be made, it is at this point that most decisions are lost. It becomes suddenly quite obvious that the decision is not going to be pleasant, is not going to be popular, is not going to be easy. There is no inherent reason why medicines should taste horrible – but effective ones usually do.
- The effective decision-maker does not waste the time of good people to cover up his own indecision.
- It's just as important to review decisions periodically – at a time that's been agreed on in advance – as it is to make them carefully in the first place.

Communication

- In communicating, the first question has to be, "Is this communication within the recipient's range of perception?"
- If communication fits in with the aspirations, values, and purposes of the recipient, it is powerful.
- Mutual understanding requires both the superior's willingness to listen and a tool especially designed to make lower managers heard.
- Reports and procedures should be kept to a minimum, and used only when they save time and labor.
- In communication, instead of starting out with what we want to "get across", the executive should begin by finding out what subordinates want to know and are receptive to.
- Communication requires shared experience. It works only from one member of "us" to another.

- Charisma becomes the undoing of leaders. It makes them inflexible, convinced of their own infallibility, unable to change.

Make Meetings Productive

- Meetings are by definition a concession to deficient organization.
- Decide in advance what kind of meeting it will be.
- The effective man always states at the outset of a meeting the specific purpose and contribution it is to achieve. He always, at the end of his meetings, goes back to the opening statement and relates the final conclusions to the original intent.
- Listen first, speak last.

Strategy

- All economic activity requires three kinds of resources: Land, Labor, and Capital. Productivity is the degree to which resources are utilized and their yield.
- Concentrate resources on a very small number of productive efforts.
- In a new venture, cash flow, capital, and controls should be emphasized over profits.
 - Planning for the minimum profitability is necessary over the meaningless "profit maximization".
- Marketing does not ask, "What do we want to sell?" It asks, "What does the customer want to buy?"

- Management has to ask which of the consumer's wants are not adequately satisfied by the products or services offered him today.
- Market standing
 - A company with a small share of the market will eventually become marginal in the marketplace, and thereby exceedingly vulnerable. Market standing is therefore essential.
 - The market standing to aim at is not the maximum but the optimal.
 - The dominant supplier in a rapidly expanding market is likely to do less well than if it shared that market with 1 or 2 other major and competing suppliers. This may seem paradoxical. But the fact is that a new market expands much more rapidly when there are several suppliers rather than only one.
- The entrepreneur in the new and growing venture needs independent, objective outside advice.
- There is a danger that executives will become contemptuous of information and stimuli that cannot be reduced to computer logic and computer language. Executives may become blind to everything that is perception rather than fact. The computer only brings out in sharp relief what has been happening all along.
- A new venture succeeds, more often than not, in a market other than the one it was originally intended to serve.
- Systematically analyze the viability of all existing products and services within the company.
- In asking "What is our business?" management also needs to add "and what *will* it be?" What changes in the environment are already discernible that will have a high impact on our business?

How do we *now* build these anticipations into our theory of the business?

- A growing venture should know twelve months ahead of time how much cash it will need, when, and for what purposes.
- The founder must answer the question "Where do *I* belong in this new venture?"
 - Key activities should be assigned to top team members based on the member's strengths. Perhaps the founder starts to focus more on new products and technology rather than handling people.
- It is necessary to avoid overemphasis on any one key area.

Entrepreneurial Strategies

[Perhaps not the most up-to-date strategic entrepreneurial advice, but this section is still included regardless.]

- "Creative Imitation" Strategy
 - Creative imitators succeed by serving the markets that the pioneers have created but do not adequately service.
 - Creative imitation starts out with markets rather than products. It satisfies a demand that already exists rather than creating one.
 - Risk: creative imitators are tempted to splinter their efforts to hedge their bets. Another danger is imitating what turns out to not be the winning development in the marketplace.
- "Entrepreneurial Judo" Strategy

- Entrepreneurial judo aims first at securing a beachhead, that the established leaders do not defend (low end of the market).
- The newcomers have to make themselves distinct. It is not enough to simply do a better job at a lower price. Entrepreneurial judo "hits them where they ain't".
- Bad habits that enable newcomers to use entrepreneurial judo:
 - The tendency to "cream" a market; taking only larger buyers.
 - The belief in "quality". Quality is not what the supplier puts in. It is what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for.
 - The illusion of the "premium" price. A premium price is an invitation to the competitor. They should be considered a threat and a dangerous vulnerability.
 - Rather than optimizing, they maximize, and try to satisfy every single user through the same product or service.
- "Ecological Niche" Strategy
 - Toll-gate Strategy
 - Specialty skill Strategy
 - Specialty market Strategy

Leadership

- The foundation of effective leadership is thinking through the organization's mission, defining it, and establishing it, clearly and visibly. The leader's first task is to be the trumpet that sounds a clear sound.

- When things go wrong, leaders do not blame others.
- The leader is not afraid of strength in others. He wants strong associates; he encourages them and pushes them.
- "Trust" is the conviction that the leader means what he says. A leader's actions and a leader's professed beliefs must be congruent. Effective leadership is not based on being clever; it is based primarily on being consistent.
- The most important thing about priorities and posteriorities is not intelligent analysis but courage. A good many studies of research scientists have shown that achievement depends less on ability in doing research than on the courage to go after opportunity.

Innovation

- The search for innovation opportunities should be done on a regular, systematic basis.
- Think Big! It is just as risky, just as arduous, and just as uncertain to do something small that is new as it is to do something big that is new. Aim high, aim for something that will make a difference, rather than for something that is "safe" and easy to do.
- Effective executives focus on opportunities rather than problems. They treat change as an opportunity rather than as a threat. They systematically look at changes, inside and outside the corporation, and ask, "How can we exploit this change as an opportunity for our enterprise?"
- The technologies that are likely to have the greatest impact on a company and an industry are technologies outside its own field.

Such outside technologies force an industry to learn, to acquire, to adapt, to change its very mindset.

Continuous Education

- What we need is the ability to understand the various knowledges.
 - What is each one about? What are its central concerns and theories? What are its important areas of ignorance, its problems, its challenges?
- The greatest change in society's future will be the change in knowledge – in its form and content; in its meaning; in its responsibility; and in what it means to be an educated person.
- What knowledge is required for everybody? What is "quality" in learning and teaching? These will, of necessity, become central concerns of the knowledge society, and central political issues.
- In an entrepreneurial society, individuals must continually learn.
 - More and more people in the workforce will have to learn how and when to change what they do, how they do it, and when they do it.
 - What individuals have learned by age twenty-one will begin to become obsolete five to ten years later and will have to be replaced – or at least refurbished – by new learning, new skills, new knowledge.
- The greatest challenge – but also the greatest opportunity – for the school is the continuing relearning of already highly schooled adults.

Organizations Must Stress Self-Development

- Organizations have better people because they motivate to self-development through their standards, through their habits, through their climate.
- The manual worker, so at least the nineteenth century believed, had only economic goals and was content with economic rewards. That ceased to be true the moment pay went above the subsistence level. The knowledge worker demands economic rewards, but their presence is not enough. He needs opportunity, he needs achievement, he needs fulfillment, he needs values.
- The knowledge worker is not poverty-prone. He tends to be affluent. He has high job security and his very knowledge gives him freedom to move. He is in danger of alienation, to use the fashionable word for boredom, frustration, and silent despair.
 - His psychological needs and personal values need to be satisfied in and through his work and position in the organization. The impact an underemployed but overskilled man has on the entire group can only be to make mischief.
 - Self-development of the executive toward effectiveness is the only available answer. It is the only way in which organization goals and individual needs can come together.
- Challenge the worker:
 - The ones who are enthusiastic and who, in turn, have results to show for their work, are the ones whose abilities are being challenged and used. Those that are deeply frustrated all say, in one way or another: "My abilities are not being put to use."

- **People adjust to the level of the demands made on them.** If they demand little of themselves, they will remain stunted. If they demand a good deal of themselves, they will grow to giant stature – without any more effort than is expended by the nonachievers.
- The demands of any job are bound to change. Only if the job is big and demanding to begin with, will it enable a man to rise to the new demands of a changed situation.
- Make each job demanding and big. It should have challenge to bring out whatever strength a man may have. It should have scope so that any strength that is relevant to the task can produce significant results.
- Increasingly, benefits are being used to tie and employee to his employer. People who know that they are working in the wrong place will often stay. If they stay because the penalty for leaving is too great, they resist and resent it. They know that they have been bribed and were too weak to say no. They are likely to be sullen, resentful, and bitter the rest of their working lives.

Society

- The right answer to the question "Who takes care of the social challenges of the knowledge society?" is neither government nor the employing organization. It is a separate and new social sector.

- The greatest contribution that the autonomous community organization makes is as a new center of meaningful citizenship. The megastate has all but destroyed citizenship. To restore it, the post-capitalist polity needs a "third sector"; an autonomous social sector.
- The community that is needed in post-capitalist society has to be based on commitment and compassion rather than being imposed by proximity and isolation.
- A healthy organization cannot exist in a sick society. Management has a self-interest in a healthy society.
 - One is responsible for one's impacts, whether they're intended or not. It is not enough to say, "But the public doesn't object." It is not enough to say that any action to come to grips with a particular problem is going to be "unpopular". Sooner or later society will come to regard any such impact as an attack on its integrity and will exact a high price from those who have not responsibly worked on eliminating the impact.
- Social problems are major sources of opportunity. Social change and social innovation have throughout business history been at least as important as technology.
 - Social innovation may be of greater importance and have much greater impact than any scientific or technical innovation.
- The truly important events on the outside are not the trends. They are changes in the trends.
 - It is the social transformations, running like ocean currents deep below the hurricane-tormented surface of the sea, that have had the lasting effect. They – rather than all the violence

of the political surface – have transformed the society and the economy, the community, the polity we live in.

- Because technology is an extension of human beings, basic technological change always both expresses our worldview and, in turn, changes it.

THE 100 BEST BUSINESS BOOKS OF ALL TIME

JACK COVERT AND TODD SATTERSTEN

In 2012 I was fresh on my entrepreneurial journey. I had some small online businesses that were keeping me alive, but I wasn't excelling like I wanted to be. Thirsty for knowledge after having regrettably shunned formal education, I dropped into the library and randomly selected *The 100 Best Business Books of All Time*.

It contains single-page summaries of (surprise!) 100 different business books. The most useful outcome of reading this book was identifying a sense of a roadmap and deciding to read in depth some of the books that it summarizes.

(I debated whether or not to include this book, as some of the notes overlap with that of other books in this volume. Still, it is a solid business primer.)

Leadership

- Leadership is at its best when the vision is strategic, the voice persuasive, the results tangible.
- The art of leadership lies in polishing and liberating and enabling the gifts that people bring into organizations.
- Leaders should be looking forward into the future.
- As a leader, use stories to bring values to life.
- Successful companies identify and promote leaders who were ambitious – not about their own careers, but rather about the overall success of the company.
- Great companies have a disciplined culture that provides constraints while still allowing individuals to decide the best course of action.
- The "Hedgehog Concept" sits at the intersection of 3 concepts:
 - What you can be the best at in the world.
 - What you are deeply passionate about.
 - What drives your economic engine.
- The Discipline of Execution
 - Execution is a discipline, and integral to strategy.
 - Execution is the major job of the business leader.
 - Execution must be a core element of an organization's culture.

- If a top management team cannot clearly articulate the 5 or 6 fundamental industry trends that most threaten its firm's continued success, it is not in control of the firm's destiny.
- A directional sense for trends sketches a picture of the skills a company will need to compete in the future.

Sales and Marketing

- Marketing is every bit of contact your company has with anyone in the outside world.
- 6 Forms of persuasion from Influence:
 - Reciprocity
 - Making commitments and staying consistent
 - Social Proof
 - Affection
 - Authority
 - Scarcity
- As opposed to looking at the brand as a message created by your marketing department, brand building is a process that every part of the company must be centered around.
- In planning your marketing, don't just think of your business. Think of your skills.
- When everybody zigs, zag. Look for "white space" where nobody currently occupies.
- The prospect is persuaded more by the depth of your conviction than he is by the height of your logic.

- You don't sell what a product is – you sell what a product *does*.
- 3 factors to improve success of a product:
 - Overt benefit.
 - Real reason to believe.
 - Dramatic difference. Without uniqueness, you have a commodity that sells for commodity-like profit margins.

Management

- Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality. Eliminate the need for inspection on a mass basis by building quality into the product in the first place.
 - Eliminate targets for the work force asking for zero defects. This creates an adversarial relationship, as the bulk of the problems lie in the system.
- Create a systems-dependent business, not a people-dependent business.
- We can grow more quickly and get the most satisfaction in our work life when we utilize our strengths (consistent near-perfect performance in an activity).
- **It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage,** both because it is so powerful and so rare.
- All great relationships, the ones that last over time, require productive conflict in order to grow. This is true in marriage, parenting, friendship, and business.
- The Great Game of Business

- Business is a team sport; choose games that build a team.
- Be positive, build confidence.
- Celebrate every win.
- It's got to be a game.
- Give everyone the same set of goals.
- Don't use goals to tell people everything you want them to do.

Entrepreneurship

- Your business is a means rather than an end, a vehicle to enrich your life rather than one that drains the life you have.
- 94% of "hypergrowth" companies were started by two or more people.
- Before you can start any kind of a marketing campaign, your business needs a pre-determined long-term goal that will get everybody within your organization on the same page. To do that, you must have a core concept of what your business is. Jay Levinson believes that the concept needs to be expressed in a maximum of seven words.
- Creativity is about coming out of hiding and exposing yourself.
- Orville Wright did not have a pilot's license.
- When looking for a new career, ask yourself, "What am I good at?"
- What would you be willing to do for the rest of your life?

Takeaways

- Emotional self-control – delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness – underlies accomplishment of every sort.
 - The brain leaves us with "little or no control over when we are swept up by emotion, nor over what emotion it will be." Therefore, being able to control these emotions once they're present is essential.
 - Optimism and creating a positive state of mind are the answers to connecting emotion to successful efforts.
- Much lip service is given to accepting failure in business as a natural phase in the learning process, yet internalizing the idea seems a little more difficult.
 - Not learning from failure forces individuals and organizations to repeat the same mistakes.
 - Humans seem to have a predisposition to be open and curious about new theories, but it also seems true that they do not abandon old theories until convinced the new ones are better – that is, more useful, compact, and accurate.
 - A good businessman is hard to bruise and quick to heal.
- Capitalize on your strengths, whatever they may be, and manage around your weaknesses, whatever they may be.
 - The energy for a healthy career is generated from discovering the talents that are already there, not from filling oneself up with marketable experiences.
- Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation.

- Any organization, in order to survive and achieve success, must have a sound set of beliefs on which it premises all its policies and actions. The most important single factor in corporate success is faithful adherence to those beliefs. If an organization is to meet the challenges of a changing world, it must be prepared to change everything about itself except those beliefs as it moves through corporate life.

THE 22 IMMUTABLE LAWS OF MARKETING

AL RIES AND JACK TROUT

(Adapted from notes by Chris Auman)

My engineering mindset used to be snooty about terms like "Laws" being casually thrown about. But as I get older I realize – screw it, I'm not perfect either!

While some of the principles presented in *The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing* may be dated, others still stand strong in the Internet age.

It's better to be first than it is to be better – marketing is the battle of perception, not products.

When you're first in a category, promote the category. If you can't be first in a category, just create your own new category. (Examples: multimedia computer, magazine for mature women, clothes for tall people, etc.)

Being first in the mind is most important when possible. Apple got off the ground with very little money. They had a simple, easy to remember name and a focused, creative ad plan.

One a mind is made up, it rarely changes. The biggest waste in marketing is trying to change the mind. If you want to make a big impression, you have to BLAST your way into the mind. Once people perceive you one way, that's it.

It's not a battle of products. You won't win on the merits of the product. Do not focus on the facts, "the truth", and the features. This is all good, but marketers need to sell the product around what people want and perceive. Your name, slogan, image, and message all need to factor into this.

Own a word in the mind of your prospect. Simpler words or concepts are the best. Focus on a single, powerful word if possible. (For example: Abortion sides have gone: pro-life and pro-choice. Anti-drug campaign hasn't picked a word; they should pick "loser", like anti-smoking picked "gross".)

It's hard for two competing companies to own the same word in the mind of the consumer. Safe, fast, affordable, etc. If the leader owns the most important word, take the second most important. If the leader ever tries to leave that word, take it.

Trying to get into the mind first is best, but there are strategies to use to play off your competitors if you're behind.

For example, take Avis. For a long time they said "Finest in rental cars". This didn't work because people considered Hertz the top. Then they went with "We try harder", acknowledging their place on the ladder, and sales went up.

Before starting any marketing campaign, consider: Where are we on the ladder in the prospect's mind? Then make sure your campaign acknowledges that and makes it known that you acknowledge the same.

Wherever the leader is strong, there is an opportunity. Turn the strength into the weakness. Don't try to be better, be different. Play off against the leader and offer something similar but opposite to differentiate.

Discover the essence of the leader and present yourself as the opposite. Don't just knock on the competition, but pick a weakness even they'd acknowledge. Scope went with good-tasting because Listerine tasted awful. You can't own the same word as your competitor; you must find your own word. It's much better to search for an opposite word that will help you play off the leader.

Some attributes are more important than others. You must try to own the most important attribute. If your competitor owns the most important attribute, take the second most important. Seize that attribute, dramatize its value, and increase your share.

The market is an ever dividing sea of categories. Find or create a new category and stick with it.

For a leader to maintain dominance in different categories, it uses different brands. For example, General Motors uses Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, and Cadillac. Using a well-known brand in one category for another category is a huge mistake. Volkswagen did well with its Beetle, but then tried to do different types of cars, and "Volkswagen" means small and ugly, so it didn't work. In contrast, Honda decided to go upmarket and used the brand name Acura.

Do not spread yourself too thin and try to be everything for everybody. Development, marketing budget, support, staff, perception, are all affected. Be strong somewhere instead of weak everywhere. Less is more. Narrow your focus.

Minimize product line. Limit your target market. Be consistent. Have a brilliant narrow position and stick with it. Do not become all things to all people.

Kraft lost the mayonnaise market to Hellman's because that's all Hellman's makes. Kraft lost the jelly market to Smucker's because that's all Smucker's makes. Kraft won the cream cheese market because it used the brand name Philadelphia.

Stop changing your strategy when you become successful. White Castle has the same menu as it did 60 years ago, and it's just as successful as ever.

Consider being honest and admit a negative but twist it into a positive.

"With a name like Smucker's, it has to be good."

"Listerine tastes bad but something so strong has to kill a lot of germs." Scope entered the market with a "good-tasting" mouthwash. Listerine could have tried to convince people that its taste wasn't that bad, but that would have been fighting against the obvious and against already-installed notions in the mind. So it went with "The taste you hate twice a day."

Every negative statement you make about yourself is taken as true. Positive statements are looked at dubiously.

Focus on several good marketing avenues. Don't dabble a little in everything. Make a single bold stroke that is least expected by the competition.

In each situation, only one move will produce substantial results. Many marketing people seem to believe that the best way to grow is to get into everything. The only thing that works in marketing is the single, bold stroke.

To find that singular idea, marketing managers have to know what's happening in the marketplace. They have to be down at the front in the mud of the battle. It's hard to find the single broad stroke if you're in headquarters or delegating important marketing decisions.

Market research can be more of a problem than a help. People don't know what they'll do until they face an actual decision.

Try to build an enormous amount of flexibility into your organization so when things change in your industry you're ready to deal with it – and deal with it quickly. Always keep innovating. A company has to be flexible enough to attack itself with a new idea.

Lose your ego and be more objective. Do not substitute your own judgment for what the market truly wants. Do not blind yourself by success. Always think like a prospect thinks and try to base that on trends and real data. Don't try to read your prospect's mind. Do not impose your view of the world on the customer. Never lose touch with the front lines.

The bigger the company, the more likely the CEO has lost touch with the front lines. Too much of a CEO's time is taken up with meetings and learning too much from second-hand perspectives. Instead of talking things over, walk out and see for yourself.

Do not be afraid to take risks. Failure is to be expected and accepted. Do not try to fix things. Recognize a failure early and change fast.

Marketing decisions are often made first with the decision maker's career in mind and second with the impact on competition. It takes a sacrificing leader to judge a concept on merit and not on who will benefit.

Real revolutions don't come down main street with a marching band – they sneak up on you in the middle of the night. Forget the front page. If you're looking for clues to the future, look in the back of the paper for those innocuous little stories.

Do not focus on fads. Focus on trends.

A fad gets a lot of hype, and a trend gets very little. Fad is a short-term phenomenon that might be profitable, but too short to do a company any good.

Even the best idea in the world will not go far without proper funding.

Marketing is fought in the mind of the prospect. You need money to get in the mind and you need money to stay there. Ideas without money are worthless.

ZERO TO ONE

PETER THIEL

Zero to One is about forming exceptional, one-of-a-kind companies instead of marginally-better businesses.

Author Peter Thiel is a billionaire non-conformist mafioso; I love the unique perspective he brings.

First Principles

- Successful people find value in unexpected places, and they do this by thinking about business from first principles instead of formulas.
- The first step to thinking clearly is to question what we think we know about the past.
- Peter Thiel's favorite interview question to ask: "What important truth do very few people agree with you on?"
- Technology is not limited to computers. Properly understood, any new and better way of doing things is technology.
- Startups operate on the principle that you need to work with other people to get stuff done, but you also need to stay small enough so that you actually can. A startup is the largest group of people you can convince of a plan to build a different future.
- What valuable company is nobody building? This question is harder than it looks, because your company could create a lot of value without becoming very valuable itself.
- If you want to create and capture lasting value, don't build an undifferentiated commodity business.

Monopolies

- Every business is successful to the extent that it does something others cannot. Monopoly is therefore not a pathology or an exception. Monopoly is the condition of every successful business.
- To the outside observer, all businesses can seem reasonably alike, so it's easy to perceive only small differences between them. But the reality is much more binary than that. There's an enormous difference between perfect competition and monopoly, and most businesses are much closer to one extreme than we commonly realize. The confusion comes from a universal bias for describing market conditions in self-serving ways.
 - Monopolists lie to protect themselves.
 - Non-monopolists pretend that they're in a league of their own.
- Every monopoly with large cash flows far into the future is unique, but they usually share some combination of the following characteristics: proprietary technology, network effects, economies of scale, and branding.
 - Proprietary technology is the most substantive advantage a company can have because it makes your product difficult or impossible to replicate.
 - Network effects can be powerful, but you'll never reap them unless your product is useful to its very first users when the network is still small.

- Every startup is small at the start. Every monopoly dominates a large share of its market. Therefore, every startup should start with a very small market. Always err on the side of starting too small.
 - Example: PayPal's first product was a peer-to-peer payment system for palm pilots. The market was too big for it to catch on, so they switched to focusing on a few thousand eBay "PowerSellers". It's much easier to reach a few thousand people who really need your product than to try to compete for the attention of millions of scattered individuals.
 - Once you create and dominate a niche market, then you should gradually expand into related and slightly broader markets. Sequencing markets correctly is underrated, and it takes discipline to expand gradually. The most successful companies make the core progression – to first dominate a specific niche and then scale to adjacent markets – a part of their founding narrative.
 - If you truly want to make something new, the act of creation is far more important than the old industries that might not like what you create. As you craft a plan to expand to adjacent markets, don't disrupt: avoid competition as much as possible.
- There is "first mover advantage", but what really matters is generating cash flows in the future. It's much better to be the *last* mover – that is, to make the last great development in a specific market and enjoy years or even decades of monopoly profits. The way to do that is to dominate a small niche and scale up from there, toward your ambitious long-term vision.
 - "You must study the endgame before everything else." – Chess grandmaster Jose Raul Capablanca

Durability

- For a company to be valuable it must grow and *endure*, but many entrepreneurs focus only on short-term growth.
 - They have an excuse: growth is easy to measure, but durability isn't. Those who succumb to measurement mania obsess about weekly active user statistics and monthly revenue targets. However, you can hit those numbers and still overlook deeper, harder-to-measure problems that threaten the durability of your business.
 - If you focus on near-term growth above all else, you miss the most important question you should be asking: will this business still be around a decade from now? Numbers alone won't tell you the answer; instead you must think critically about the qualitative characteristics of your business.
- Indefinite attitudes to the future explain what's most dysfunctional in our world today. Instead of pursuing many-sided mediocrity and calling it "well-roundedness", a definite person determines the one best thing to do and then does it. Instead of working tirelessly to make herself indistinguishable, she strives to be great at something substantive – to be a monopoly of one.
- Finance epitomizes indefinite thinking because it's the only way to make money when you have no idea how to create wealth. In an indefinite world, people actually *prefer* unlimited optionality; money is more valuable than anything you could possibly do with it. Only in a definite future is money a means to an end, not the end itself.
- Indefinite politics: we are more fascinated today by statistical predictions of what the country will be thinking in a few weeks'

time than by visionary predictions of what the country will look like 10 or 20 years from now.

- Long-term planning is often undervalued by our indefinite short-term world. A business with a good definite plan will always be underrated in a world where people see the future as random. Reject the unjust tyranny of Chance. You are not a lottery ticket.
- Leanness is a methodology, not a goal. Making small changes to things that already exist might lead you to a local maximum, but it won't help you find the global maximum. Iteration without a bold plan won't take you from 0 to 1. Darwinism may be a fine theory in other contexts, but in startups, intelligent design works best.
- At college, model students obsessively hedge their futures by assembling a suite of exotic and minor skills. University course catalogs seem designed to reassure you that "it doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do it well." That is completely false. It does matter what you do. You should focus relentlessly on something you're good at doing, but before that you must think hard about whether it will be valuable in the future.

Secrets

- Great companies have secrets: specific reasons for success that other people don't see.
- One social trend that roots out belief in secrets is globalization. Anyone who might have had the ambition to look for a secret will first ask himself: if it were possible to discover something new, wouldn't someone from the faceless global talent pool of smarter and more creative people have found it already? This voice of doubt can dissuade people from even starting to look for secrets in

a world that seems too big a place for any individual to contribute something unique.

- If you think something hard is impossible, you'll never even start trying to achieve it. Belief in secrets is an effective truth. There are many more secrets left to find, but they will yield only to relentless searchers. Great companies can be built on open but unsuspected secrets about how the world works. Look for unaddressed demand (and untapped supply).
- The best projects are likely to be overlooked, not trumpeted by a crowd; the best problems to work on are often the ones nobody else even tries to solve.
 - Are there any fields that matter but haven't been standardized and institutionalized?
- If you find a secret, do you tell anyone? Or do you keep it to yourself? It depends; some secrets are more dangerous than others.

As Faust tells Wagner:

The few who know what might be learned,
Foolish enough to put their whole heart on show,
And reveal their feelings to the crowd below,
Mankind has always crucified and burned.

- So who do you tell? Whoever you need to, and no more. There's always a golden mean between telling nobody and telling everybody – and that's a company. The best entrepreneurs know this: every great business is built around a secret that's hidden from the outside. A great company is a conspiracy to change the world; when you share your secret, the recipient becomes a fellow conspirator.

Culture

- A startup messed up at its foundation cannot be fixed. Bad decisions made early on are very hard to correct after they are made.
- A company does better the less salary it pays the CEO. A cash-poor executive will focus on increasing the value of the company as a whole.
- No company *has* a culture; every company *is* a culture. Taking a merely professional view of the workplace, in which free agents check in and out on a transactional basis, is worse than cold: it's not even rational. Since time is your most valuable asset, it's odd to spend it working with people who don't envision any long-term future together. If you can't count durable relationships among the fruits of your time at work, you haven't invested your time well – even in purely financial terms.
- You should ask yourself, "Why should someone join my company as its 20th employee when she could go work at Google for more money and more prestige?" There are two general kinds of good answers: answers about your mission and answers about your team.

- You'll attract the employees you need if you can explain why your mission is compelling; not why it's important in general, but why you're doing something important that no one else is going to get done.
- However, even a great mission is not enough. The kind of recruit who would be most engaged as an employee will also wonder: "Are these the kind of people I want to work with?" You should be able to explain why your company is a unique match for him personally.
- From the outside in, everyone in your company should be different in the same way – a tribe of like-minded people fiercely devoted to the company's mission.
 - On the inside, every individual should be sharply distinguished by her work. The best thing Thiel did as manager at PayPal was to make every person in the company responsible for doing just one thing. Defining roles reduces conflict. Most fights inside a company happen when colleagues compete for the same responsibilities. Startups face an especially high risk of this since job roles are fluid at the early stages.
- Entrepreneurs should take cultures of extreme dedication seriously. The best startups might be considered slightly less extreme kinds of cults. The biggest difference is that cults tend to be fanatically *wrong* about something important. People at a successful startup are fanatically *right* about something those outside it have missed.
- Companies are complements for humans, not substitutes. The most valuable businesses of coming decades will be built by entrepreneurs who seek to empower people rather than try to make them obsolete.

Sales

- Like acting, sales works best when hidden. If you don't know any sales grandmasters, it's not because you haven't encountered them, but rather because their art is hidden in plain sight. The most fundamental reason that even businesspeople underestimate the importance of sales is the systematic effort to hide it at every level of every field in a world secretly driven by it.
- Superior sales and distribution by itself can create a monopoly, even with no product differentiation. The converse is not true.
- Good enterprise sales strategy starts small, as it must: a new customer might agree to become your biggest customer, but they'll rarely be comfortable signing a deal completely out of scale with what you've sold before. Once you have a pool of reference customers who are successfully using your product, then you can begin the long and methodical work of hustling toward ever bigger deals.
- The total net profit earned from Customer Lifetime Value must exceed the amount you spend to acquire a new customer.
- **One sales method is likely to be far more powerful than every other** for any given business: distribution follows a power law of its own. If you can get just one distribution channel to work, you have a great business. If you try for several but don't nail one, you're finished.
- Your company needs to sell more than its product. You must also sell your company to employees and investors. Selling your company to the media is a necessary part of selling it to everyone else. Nerds who instinctively mistrust the media often make the mistake of trying to ignore it. But just as you can never expect people to buy a superior product merely on its obvious merits

without any distribution strategy, you should never assume that people will admire your company without a public relations strategy.

Strategy

- Today's companies have an insatiable appetite for data, mistakenly believing that more data always creates more value. But big data is usually dumb data. Actionable insights can only come from a human analyst. We have let ourselves become enchanted by big data only because we exoticize technology.
 - The most important task in business – the creation of value – cannot be reduced to a formula.
- Be specific.
 - Indefinitely optimistic investors betting on general ideas that lack specific business plans result in a bubble. The rise and fall of NASDAQ and RENIXX are identical. The 1990s had one big idea: *the internet is going to be big*. But too many internet companies had exactly that same idea and no others. No sector will ever be so important that merely participating in it will be enough to build a great company.
- Don't overestimate your own power as an individual. Founders are important not because they are the only ones whose work has value, but rather because a great founder can bring out the best work from everybody at his company. To believe yourself invested with divine self-sufficiency is not the mark of a strong individual, but of a person who has mistaken the crowd's worship for the truth.

- Any great business plan must address seven key questions:
 - **The Engineering Question:** Can you create breakthrough technology instead of incremental improvements? 10x improvements instead of 2x.
 - **The Timing Question:** Is now the right time to start your particular business?
 - **The Monopoly Question:** Are you starting with a big share of a small market?
 - **The People Question:** Do you have the right team?
 - **The Distribution Question:** Do you have a way to not just create but deliver your product?
 - **The Durability Question:** Will your market position be defensible 10 and 20 years into the future?
 - **The Secret Question:** Have you identified a unique opportunity that others don't see?
- Every entrepreneur should plan to be the last mover in her particular market. That starts with asking yourself: what will the world look like 10 and 20 years from now, and how will my business fit in?
- Only by seeing our world anew, as fresh and strange as it was to the ancients who saw it first, can we both re-create it and preserve it for the future.

APPENDIX

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"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

– Michael Scott