

The image is a complex visual composition. In the background, a city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible against a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. In the foreground, a long, straight road with a yellow center line stretches from the bottom towards the city. On this road, four soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets and rifles, are walking away from the viewer towards the city. The entire scene is framed within the face of a large tiger, whose eyes are prominent on the left and right sides, looking directly at the viewer. The tiger's fur is dark and textured, and its mouth is visible at the bottom.

LAW OF AMBITION

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Chapter 1

The World is Broke

This book is for everyone at the bottom. I don't mean the average American living paycheck to paycheck because they bought too much house. I mean mentally, physically, and emotionally rock bottom. The "I don't know if I'm going to eat today" kind of bottom. The "should I spend this money to catch a bus, or should I spend it on food?" bottom. If the thought of starting your own business makes you think to yourself, "Sure, I'd like to do that, but I also need to eat something today," this book is for you.

If you read that first paragraph and thought to yourself, "Damn, that's not me. I've got things way better than that, but I still feel stuck, and I don't know how to get started," that's okay. Because, honestly, everyone feels that way in the beginning. It doesn't matter where you're starting from or where you're trying to go, feeling lost is normal.

If you don't know what to do, but you know you want to change your life, I want to help you do that. I want to help you find the answers you're looking for. Notice I didn't say I'm going to give you the answers. I can't do that. But I can show you how to find them for yourself and within yourself through real-life experience.



This is not a book of theories. This is not a book you'd find in a college classroom. There will be no multiple-choice tests to test your ability to remember facts. This is a book about what it takes to succeed in the real, cold world, as it is. The only test is how well you can take whatever you learn here and apply it to your life to help you get what you want.

Success is not about getting lucky. It's not about knowing the right people. It's about putting your head down and getting to work, even when nobody else believes in you, including yourself. We all start from somewhere.

I started from the gutter. I grew up in North Philadelphia in the hood where most people lived in poverty, a very lower-class environment. When you live in a lower-class urban environment, you face different struggles. Violence, alcohol, and drugs were an ever-present reality in my world.

But when I was growing up, I saw it all as just part of normal life. I didn't look at my situation and surroundings and think, "Damn, I'm poor, and everybody around me is fucked up." I grew up thinking, "Everyone lives like this."

I imagined the whole world was broke, just like me, but I didn't even know what "broke" meant. As a kid, when I saw upper-class lifestyles on TV, I thought it was all an act: the beautiful homes, nice cars, the beach vacations—all just part of the show. I didn't believe that other ways of living, outside of what I experienced every day, actually existed.

I never even conceived of living a different kind of life. I didn't see rich people on TV and assume I could someday be like them if I worked hard. I grew up believing what I knew was all there was to know, and that actors on TV were getting paid to pretend reality was something else.



The only thing that was real to me was my day to day life, and I didn't understand that there were people out there who had it better than me. I was just a kid, so my life felt very routine. I got up in the morning, I went to school, and after school, I came home to my everyday family drama.

When you grow up in the hood, you tend to find yourself always in the middle of some drama. In my mind, drama was a regular part of everybody's life. If you disagree, you argue. You fight for what you want. Fistfights solve small problems, and gunfights solved more significant problems. Because when raw, human emotions are involved, people are inevitably going to lose control and go to war against each other.

That was my world, and I didn't understand what was going on around me for a long time. As I grew up and went through school, I started to realize that not everybody was the same. I began to become aware of the fact that different people came from different places, and they had different backgrounds.

Some were wealthier than others, and they could afford new sneakers and new clothes. I realized things were different for me when I asked my parents for new sneakers and clothes, and they just told me, flat out, "No, you don't need them."

At about ten years old, my sense of the hierarchy of social class around me began to develop. The different factors at play began to become apparent to me. I started to get a sense of the separation that exists in the world. At school, different questions came up with kids in my class like, "Where do you live?"



I started to put the pieces together. I learned that if somebody told me they lived in a neighborhood where my mom's boss lived, they were wealthy. That was my introduction to the whole concept that there were different levels of wealth in the world.

Then I found out some cars were worth \$2,000, and others were worth \$50,000. If I saw somebody driving a Mercedes, my next question was, "What does that person do? How did they get money to buy that car?"

I learned the person driving an expensive car could be a doctor, a lawyer or a business owner, but I didn't know anybody like that. I didn't know anybody personally who was driving a \$50,000 car. My parents couldn't even get their car to start.

Over time, I started to notice all these differences between the way I grew up and the way I saw other people living. These are the things that opened up my eyes and made me want a better life for myself. After I decided I wanted a better life, my next question was, "What do I need to do to get that?"

The most obvious answer was I needed money. So, my next question was, "How do people get money?" My parents worked, so that's what I wanted to do, but I couldn't. I was too young to work, and it pissed me off. I've been told I needed to get a work permit. But even then, I was in school. I couldn't work while I was in school, so I felt stuck.

At 12 years old, I began betting on video games, playing handball for money, playing cards for money, bingo with grandma, and through watching my cousins, I learned how to shoot dice. Soon enough, I was introduced to the concept of selling drugs to make money. I finally had the answer I was searching. I had a way to make money and, therefore, a way to make a better life for myself.



I started small. I realized I could get a bag of weed from the guy selling it on the corner, and then turn around and sell it to my cousin to make \$5. From that point on, I was hooked. The guy I got the weed from laughed in my face when I asked him for it the first time, but he still gave it to me. After I sold it and made some money, my only thought was, “Shit, that’s how it’s done!”

Growing up, I lived with my stepfather and my mom. It didn’t take long for me to figure out what had happened to my biological father—he was locked up. And the reason he was locked up was because he had been a drug dealer.

This didn’t serve as a warning for me. It felt more like a calling. My father, being locked away in prison, didn’t make me fear prison. Instead, I just thought, “If my father was a drug dealer, that must mean I might make a good drug dealer too.” It gave me confidence in my ability to get the job done. Once I had that confidence, I got to work.

My brothers, cousins, and everybody I knew was involved in the streets on some level. I knew that for a fact. There was nobody around to talk me out of getting involved, and if they had tried, I wouldn’t have listened to them. Everybody had at least one hand in the streets, so I decided I might as well join the crowd and fucking go for it.

Selling drugs came naturally to me. I started out selling weed, but I graduated quickly from marijuana to cocaine, rocks, pills, powder—anything I could get my hands on. When I became a teenager and started going to high school, my brothers, friends, and I continued to grow more and more involved with drugs. With that, violence became necessary. Violence became our way of life. Protecting our territory, pride, and proving our dominance called for it.



LAW
OF

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We were violent because we had to be, but we were also violent just for the hell of it. At school, we went around and smacked people who weren't expecting it. We punched kids in the face for entertainment. We grabbed people by the ankles at the top of the stairs and watched them tumble down to the bottom. Once they hit the ground, we jumped on top of them and continued to beat the shit out of them.

We believed doing this stuff was cool. We thought that to be a man, you had to know how to fight. You either knock other people down and put them in their place, or the same thing was going to happen to you. There was no such thing as peace unless you could keep it through force and intimidation.

Fighting was part of our education. Fighting each other was how we learned to survive the streets. My brothers and I slap boxed each other all the time. In my neighborhood, it was normal to physically fight your friends and family, because that's what prepared you to fight against your real enemies in battles that often turned deadly.

A man who couldn't fight got no respect. If you got beat up all the time, you were an embarrassment. A man who could take on anyone and win was somebody that everybody respected. That type of guy impressed the girls too. No girl wanted a weak guy who couldn't defend her.

That was the environment I grew up. That's where I started. I didn't have access to opportunity. I didn't have access to a network of successful people who wanted to help me. I had zero resources, zero money, and zero mentors. My environment taught me something some people go through their entire life and never learn. It taught me emotional intelligence.



It taught me how to read people and recognize when they're maneuvering to get something they want. It taught me how to realize if people had good intentions or bad intentions, and it compelled me to learn how to spot signs of manipulation.

Even my own family manipulated me to get what they wanted. But I didn't hold this against them, and I still don't. I understood why they did what they did. They were trying to survive, just like everybody else, including myself.

When I was a kid, my cousins gave me fake five-dollar bills in exchange for my real bills so they could buy some weed or whatever it was they wanted. In their minds, I didn't need the money. Most of the time, I didn't even realize I had been lied to until much later on.

There were a lot of people who didn't have my best interests in mind, and I found that out at a young age. After being lied to and taken advantage of many times, I started to pay more attention to what was going on around me. I watched people more carefully as they interacted with me, and I waited for them to show any signs that they weren't genuine.

I didn't consciously do this. My subconscious mind made it impossible for me to take anyone's word, and my level of awareness increased naturally. This was all to my benefit because as I got deeper into the drug game, the risk continued to climb higher and higher.

I wasn't just at risk of being tricked out of a five-dollar bill anymore. Now it was a fact that people were going to try to rob me at gunpoint for whatever cash or drugs I had on hand. When you deal drugs, that's the kind of shit that happens to you, and I knew that.



I knew people were going to try to kill me for 500 bucks if they needed that money to eat or avoid going through withdrawals. On the less severe side, I realized that crackheads who offered me \$3 for a \$10 bag of weed, were not ever going to come back later with the rest of the money as they promised.

When I finally became old enough to start working a regular job, I began to take notice of how the rest of society went about their daily lives. That was when I knew, without a doubt in my mind, that I was at the bottom. I couldn't afford anything. Unless I was dealing drugs, I couldn't even afford to buy myself the tacos I made for people all day long at my job at a fast food restaurant.

Why work a 9-5 job, get yelled at by people, and take orders for \$7.25 an hour? Why the would you do that, when even your boss barely makes enough to survive? I found nobody to look up to in that environment. There was nobody for me to emulate.

Most of the people I worked for in various low-wage jobs didn't even know how to manage their personal lives, let alone a business. These people were supposed to be leaders, but they didn't impress me at all.

I wasn't learning anything at these jobs, and I was hardly making any money. At the end of two weeks of work, I'd walk away with a few hundred bucks. It just didn't make any sense why I would continue to work shitty jobs when I knew the money was way better elsewhere.

I was making \$1,500 cash every day, meanwhile, my managers were complaining about how they couldn't afford their car payments. I understood I was putting myself at risk selling drugs, and they weren't. But, to me, the risk



was worth the reward when deciding between not worrying about money and stressing about money. With that in mind, I quit viewing a job as a good way to make money. I realized that wasn't true.

And to make good money, I started selling more and more drugs. I had other jobs like working at a sneaker store and doing door to door sales, but these were just side-gigs to my main thing, which was hustling in the streets.

My mindset became, "I don't want to work for somebody else my entire life, and I never want to settle into some bullshit job." So, I hustled harder and harder to make more and more money to set myself "free."

I started to question the point of going to school. I knew my teachers weren't even making as much money as I was selling drugs. I was misguided but not completely. What I observed was true, even if it meant putting my life at risk because I was so hungry for a better life.

Maybe you can relate to that feeling of hunger. Perhaps you grew up just like I did, with nobody and nothing to save you from being broke except for a life in the streets. You might be in the thick of it right now, querying how you're going to make it out, and disputing whether it's even possible for somebody like you to be prosperous in life.

You might think you have no chance, learned nothing, and don't have enough expertise or resources that could be useful in the real world. But as you go through this book and read my story, I encourage you to think about how it might relate to your own. Take a good look at where you are right now and where you want to go.



Everything we deal with in life prepares us for something valuable. The people who have it the hardest are also the people who learn the most—not just book smarts anyone can get out of a book, but emotional intelligence that can serve as the driving force for REAL success. I don't know what you've been through, what you're going through right now, or what you will face in the future, but I know you have what it takes to change the trajectory of your life and take it to the next level. I say that because I've done it myself, and I'm going to show you how you can do it too.



Chapter 2

Discovering Secrets, Losing Everything

In elementary school, I started selling anything I could get my hands on. I just wanted money to buy the things I wanted, and that was the only way I knew how to get it. I couldn't ask my parents for money. As I already mentioned, they always turned me down.

When I was nine years old, I bought a few crazy balls out of a quarter machine at a store I always walked past on my way to school. I thought they were fun to play with, and one day, I decided to throw one of them in my classroom. It bounced all around the room and ended up hitting my teacher in the head. My whole class started laughing. They absolutely loved it.

After this happened, everybody came up to me and asked where I'd gotten the crazy ball from. Instead of telling them about the quarter machine, I told them I'd sell them as many crazy balls as they wanted for a dollar apiece. The very next day, I left for school a little bit earlier, bought as many crazy balls from the machine as I could, and I sold them to kids all day long for a buck.



Pretty soon, crazy balls were trending at my school. Everybody wanted them, and I made sure everybody got them from me. It was the first stream of revenue I ever created for myself. It was great because it allowed me to buy whatever I wanted, which was mostly candy at that time.

It was the first time I stumbled upon the concept of supply and demand and the raw power of it. I didn't call it by that name at nine years old, but I understood it intuitively. I knew if I could get everyone to buy crazy balls from me instead of the quarter machine, I could make 75 cents on everyone I sold.

This strategy worked because most kids didn't have time before school to go to the store and buy them. I started waking up early and leaving for school before everybody else every single day of the week so that I could get this job done.

I didn't know it at the time, but selling crazy balls was my introduction to marketing. My action—throwing a crazy ball—created the intense emotion of excitement in everyone. That emotion is what made everyone want to have a crazy ball of their own.

Before I created this excitement, crazy balls weren't that exciting at all. You could get them for 25 cents, throw them around a couple of times, and then you'd either lose them behind a piece of furniture or simply lose interest in them.

But since I'd created an emotion (excitement) and channeled that onto a purpose (throwing the balls around the school for fun), I was able to increase the value of the crazy ball to a dollar, and make every kid in my school want to own one. That's the secret of all effective marketing—channeling excitement and purpose onto a product.



Before I created excitement around crazy balls, nobody cared about them. They had no value in the world. But with an emotion tied to them, and a new purpose for them, they became a sensation that allowed me to make money.

Did I know I'd discovered the secret to all effective marketing back then? No fucking way. All I knew was that if I sold something for more than I bought it for, I made money. So, I kept doing that. But I could feel the excitement in the air I'd created, and I've never forgotten what that felt like. In my business today, the same marketing principles I accidentally discovered when I was nine years old still play a significant role in how I make money, but at a much higher level.

Here's the thing most people don't understand. Most of what happens in business, even when it comes to high-level business transactions, operate at a fundamental level. The process of selling something for more than it costs to produce it is how money is generated.

It doesn't matter if you're making 75 cents on each transaction or \$75,000. That's why you don't have to have a genius-level IQ to make money. You just need a product you can sell and make a profit on, and you need a way to generate excitement around it.

Once the excitement has been generated, all you have to do is channel it onto a specific use for your product. That's it. If you can master this process, you can become rich, regardless of your perceived level of intelligence.

Understanding that as long as I can find a creative way to create demand for whatever I have in my possession that I want to sell has changed my life. I know I can make money any time I want if I can create a demand for something I also control the supply of, but it took me a long time to recognize this.



Making money in the streets operated this way too, but there were other things to worry about. I wasn't the kingpin sitting at the top collecting all the money while everybody else risked their lives to make shit happen. I was out there putting it all on the line like a soldier, and I had to watch my friends and family get arrested, shot, and killed.

Many times, friends of mine ended up in a coma in the hospital because they got beat up. I was attacked plenty of times myself, and I attacked other people too. I was shot at by people, and I shot at people. That was our way of life. No hard feelings. It was 'kill or be killed,' and everybody knew that.

You either protected your territory, or someone else was going to take it from you. There was no time to try to negotiate or work things out if somebody wronged you. Attempts to negotiate usually ended in gunshots.

My whole life revolved around selling drugs and protecting my territory. I failed eleventh grade twice because I didn't go to school. When I applied myself and went to school, I did great. Teachers loved me. They said I had potential. But I spent none of my time developing that potential the traditional way. I had too much work to do and money to make—money I thought was going to be my ticket out of the hood.

I spent one summer drug dealing harder than I ever had before. I was doing exceptionally well, so I decided it was time to take the risk and try to expand my business. I wanted to take over somebody else's block who wasn't supplying it as consistently as I knew I could.

A guy I was working with at the time told me he could help me make this happen. He said he had the manpower and the guns we needed to pull it off. He said he knew exactly how we should do it, so we made a plan, and we put it into action. But when we went for it, I realized pretty quickly he didn't



possess the manpower he had promised me would be backing us up. It turned out that it was just him and me trying to take over the entire block by ourselves. I followed his orders, but he didn't come through on his end of the deal. Because of that, I was nearly killed by the block owner we tried to dethrone.

All we were able to do was get some of our own supply out on the new block, but this didn't work out in our favor. It just caused more problems for us than anything. The only reason the block owner didn't kill me was that he was friends with my brother.

I got lucky because a typical response would have been to fight me, throw me in the back of a trunk, stab me 20 times, and let me bleed out and die. This type of retaliation to the threat was typical, and I knew it.

I knew the risk when I set out to try to expand my own operation, but it didn't faze me. You get used to the possibility that you might die at any moment when you're in the environment I was in every day. If you survive long enough in that kind of situation, the threats start to feel less real.

You still do everything you can to size people up and determine your odds. But when push comes to shove, all you can do is fight for what you want—even if that means you might end up dead in the back of a trunk. So be it. That's the game.

If you think a trunk grave sounds extreme, it's not. One of the guys I used to work for suffered this fate. He was stabbed 20 times, thrown into a trunk, and then left to die. But not before they also held him down and raped his wife in front of him.



My brother was locked up for seven years. Somehow, I was spared this fate, but with my brother gone, my world crumbled around me. I lost my brother as a friend and also as a business partner. He was only the person I trusted enough to work with. I couldn't imagine trusting anybody else. I had no idea what my next move was going to be, and I had no other means of making an income.

All of our drugs were gone. All of our money was gone too. At this point in my life, I had to make a decision. I could try to rebuild, or I could look for a new path. I knew the dangers of the lifestyle I had chosen before this, but I had always been too steeped in it to get out. But now I'd lost everything.

It hurt badly, but looking back, I can see this saved my life. It gave me a chance to start over. It allowed me to do something new I would have never even considered doing if this hadn't happened.

I know a lot of people go through experiences like this. It doesn't have to be with selling drugs or losing contact with a family member you love. Sometimes you go through life, and things seem to be going well. You're building momentum, and everything is starting to click.

Then something happens that completely flattens you. You lose all that momentum. You get knocked down, and you have no idea how you're going to stand up again. In moments like this, you have two choices. You can stay down and let life beat you to a pulp, or you can get up and move in a new direction.

I chose to move in a new direction when all I had was taken from me. That choice completely changed the course of my life and led me to where I am today. I can even say I'm grateful I was given a chance to make this change, even though the circumstances that forced the change were challenging to go through.



So, just remember, even if it feels like you've lost everything, you haven't. Because when you lose it all, you gain something that has the power to change your entire life—you gain the ability to make a new decision about what you really want and how you're going to get it.



Chapter 3

The Whole Picture

No money. No drugs. No brother. No one I could trust around me. No way to get food to eat. That was my situation. I didn't know how I was going to survive after the police raided my brother's house and locked him up, but I knew I needed to figure it out fast.

At the time all this happened, my mom was working in real estate. Since I didn't know what I liked to do besides sell drugs, I chose to start studying real estate myself. I thought it could work for me. Since I knew how to sell drugs, I figured I could transfer that ability to sell over to something else, like homes.

Since I was no longer involved in street life, I started going to school again too. I knew I'd failed out only because I'd quit going, not because I wasn't smart enough to get my diploma. I figured the best thing I could do was finish school, and then after that, I could figure out what to do next. I didn't like sitting in school all day, but I only had two years left, so I chose to stick it out.



One day, while I was sitting in class, a Marine came into the room and called for me by name. He pulled me out into the hallway, and I had no idea what was going on. I had never talked to a Marine in my entire life. I didn't even know what a Marine was at the time.

The whole situation was bizarre because he singled me out—I was the only person he came to see at my school that day. I'd seen these guys around the school before, but I didn't know who they were, and they were usually talking to bigger groups of kids.

Now that I was alone with this guy, he told me why he was there. He sat me down, and he said he had come to talk to me because I'd requested information about joining the Marines. I never asked for this information, and no one in my family would have asked for this information on my behalf either.

I was not patriotic, and I had never put in any application with any part of the military whatsoever. All this didn't change the fact that this Marine showed up at my school, and he wanted to talk to me specifically. After we talked for a few minutes, he said he was going to take me to the recruiting station, which was not on school grounds.

I was confused, so I remember asking him, "Don't you have to call my mom or something?"

He just smiled at me and said, "Nope, watch this." Then he walked me down to the principal's office, knocked on the door, opened it up, and said, "I'm taking Luis to the recruiting station with me." The principal nodded his approval, and we loaded up and took off. I still didn't really know what was going on, but it was better than sitting in class, so I went along with it.



Once we got to the recruiting station, this guy, who I finally came to realize was a Marine recruiter, made me take a practice ASVAB test, which is what the military uses to determine if you qualify to enlist. I scored very high on this test, so he asked me very directly, “Are you interested in joining the Marines?”

I had never thought about it at all before that very moment. But he had me watch a badass video about all the cool shit I might get to do if I did decide to join the Marines, so I was interested. It seemed like it could be the answer I was looking for. I needed a new direction in life. I had been selling drugs to make a living and going down the path of destruction. Something had to change. That much was evident to me.

But how I was going to change and what I was going to do next was not so apparent to me. I was trying to transition, and I wanted to learn about real estate, but I still had no idea what the fuck I was doing with my life. I was 19 years old, and like most 19-year-olds, I had no clue what I wanted my future to look like.

Most people don’t have any idea who they are or who they want to be when they’re that young. When you officially become an adult at 18, the only thing you can do is try to decide what the very next step is going to look like. You have no idea where that step is going to take you 10 years down the road. It’s nearly impossible to imagine a future that’s that far off in the distance.

When you’ve just become old enough to buy your own cigarettes, there’s no way you can possibly know what you’re going to do for the rest of your life. You don’t know what skillset you should work on. Even if you know you’re good at something, you probably still don’t know how to make money doing it.



If you grew up in the ghetto as I did, there's even more confusion piled on top of what's already natural for a typical 18-year-old to have when you're trying to make a plan for your life. You've never seen anyone truly succeed in life, so how are you supposed to picture it for yourself, if success is not even real to you?

If you add to that the uncertainty and stress of continually having to wonder if you're going to eat today, or if your family is going to be okay when you step out of the house, it becomes almost impossible to think very far into the future. You're mostly concerned about what's happening right now, what is currently going wrong or might go wrong, and how you're going to get through it.

When all you see is violence around you every single day, you start to wonder if it is even possible not to become involved in it. You might try your hardest to stay away from it, but there's a possibility that you're going to get pulled into a fistfight, a gunfight or some other kind of violence without you even seeking it out.

Life in the hood is like living inside a massive boxing ring. It takes a serious effort not to get punched. It takes even more energy to restrain yourself from throwing punches. Who are you supposed to look up to as an ideal example of how to conduct your life, when all you see around you are screwed up people with screwed-up relationships?

In neighborhoods like the one I grew up in, girls get pregnant at a young age. Everybody has to grow up quickly when this happens. When there are kids' lives hanging in the balance, life gets serious fast. When the people responsible for the children are children themselves, that creates a lot of tension and stress.



If your girl gets pregnant, or you are a girl, and you get pregnant, you have to learn how to handle your responsibilities as a parent. Everybody involved in a situation like that is forced to start acting like an adult immediately. That is not to say you know how or you are ready to.

You have to take on many responsibilities very quickly, with very little knowledge about how to succeed along the way. You get no blueprint to follow. You don't have a single legitimate role model in your life. In the best-case scenario, you might have somebody in your life who has messed up one too many times that will say to you, "Whatever you do, don't do what I did," but that's about it.

If you're lucky, you might have your parents around. But even then, your parents can only do the best job of teaching you how to live based on what they've learned for themselves. If they haven't learned much, you can't rely on them to show you the way. And if they make some bad decisions or get caught in the middle of some trouble, even if it's not their fault, they might not be around for too long.

When these are the conditions you're born into in life, the default thing to do is become a direct product of your environment. When this happens, it's hard to find yourself, and it's hard to assert yourself. You simply become like what you see all around you. You become broken, and you don't look for solutions, because nobody else is looking for solutions either. Instead, you play the game like you see everybody else playing it.

You don't know what you don't know because you haven't been exposed to any other way of life. The only way of life you know is the one that, if you continue to live it, will keep you at the bottom forever. It's nobody's "fault" for being born into this situation. It's just part of the world we live in.



Unless you're somehow shocked out of your default path, either by tragedy or something else, it's challenging to gain the presence of mind necessary to change your life. Everything I went through selling drugs, and watching my brother get locked away gave me the presence of mind to realize I needed to do something to change my life drastically. For that reason, and for that reason alone, I chose to go into the military.

I tried to get into the Marines for two years. But because I'd been arrested for grand theft auto in the past, which is considered a felony crime, the Marines determined I didn't qualify for entry. The grand theft auto case against me was thrown out, but the arrest still stained my record. There was nothing I could do to change that, so I had to choose a different route for my future.

Since I couldn't get into the Marines, I chose to go into the Army instead. After applying, I was processed immediately, and they shoed me right out the door to basic training on September 11, 2012. My life was never the same.

Growing up in the streets, you learn to look out for number one. Since you never know who is for you or who is against you, that's what keeps you safe. You learn you can't just take people at their word. You have to vet them, and you have to make your own moves carefully, or you could end up dead. When I first got into the military, I still had this mindset. I was very focused on myself. My thought was, "Okay, I'm going to get through this basic training, and I don't care what happens to anybody else around me."



This way of looking at things made me hard on the people around me. If my team wasn't winning, I blamed it on them. After all, I was doing everything in my power to make sure I was personally not going to lose. So, if my team was losing, the only thing I could blame that on was the fact that my team, in my naïve mind, was full of idiots who were making stupid decisions.

If my team wasn't pushing hard enough, I got angry. I held myself to the same standards in theory, but I allowed myself to have excuses. If I wasn't as strong as somebody else, I told myself, "It's not your fault. You're not as strong as them because of your genetics."

I used any excuse I could find to justify the way I was performing. But when it came to the way everyone else on my team was performing, I gave them no slack. However, fairly quickly, my military training taught me the importance of knowing how to work with a team and still take personal responsibility.

A sense of personal responsibility doesn't seem to be something we're born with as human beings. If something goes wrong in our lives, our gut reaction is to point the finger at somebody else.

When my brother's house was raided, and we were left with nothing, I could have pointed the finger at an unfair justice system. I could have blamed the rest of society for forcing me to sell drugs to put food on the table. I could have looked at my environment, and my hunger and my pain said to everyone around me, "I didn't have any other choice, so fuck you if you think I'm to blame for the way I've lived my life."

I could have said that, and that could have been the truth. But it still wouldn't have proven a damn thing, except that I was still powerless over my life and my situation. Because unless you accept responsibility for your situation, you will never have power over it.



Accepting responsibility for something wrong that happens to you in your life doesn't mean it's your fault. It also doesn't mean you don't need anybody else in your life to help you get to the other side of it. We all need help from others.

We all need to learn how to learn from people who have a different perspective than we have. Because unless we can do that, we will never see the full picture. And without the whole picture, we will never understand what the right action for us to take in any situation is.

In the end, if you want to change something about your life or your situation, it comes down to you making a decision about what you're going to do and then actually doing it. But unless you also learn how to work with others to figure out what your next steps should be, you will always struggle to make the right decisions.

Without that Marine having pulled me out of class, I don't know where I would be right now. I honestly don't know how it happened that he showed up at my school that day, but I'm thankful he did. A world had been opened up to me. He allowed me to see the bigger picture. And even though my ultimate destination was not the military, the military taught me a hell of a lot about life, I could have never learned on my own.



Chapter 4

The Hell of the March

My experience in the military showed me just how important it is to embrace pain. The ability to endure pain and not even flinch is one of the most important character traits a person can possess. Some people have a higher tolerance for pain than others, but no matter who you are, you can develop this tolerance.

In the Army, I hated ruck marches because I was always the smallest guy in the formation. I was about 100 pounds soaking wet, but when we went on a ruck march, we took everything with us. We wore full uniform and combat boots. We also carried our rifles, kits, helmets, and rucksacks. In our rucksacks, we took another 30 to 100 pounds worth of equipment on top of all this.

During ruck marches, we had to walk at a swift pace for anywhere from two to 25 miles. We never knew how far we were going to have to go starting out. Being a small guy, I was always carrying double my



weight in equipment. Carrying all this extra weight gave me shin splints and blisters within the first mile of the march every single time. That's why I hated these marches. I hated them, even more, when it was raining or cold or when I just didn't feel right.

But after grappling through many of these ruck marches, I finally came to the point where I accepted them as a regular part of my life. I ceased thinking about them so much. I stopped allowing them to cause me mental pain in advance of the unavoidable physical pain they always inflicted. Instead, when I was told to get my ruck equipment, I just went and got my ruck equipment.

Letting go of my resistance to these marches helped me to keep going. There was nothing I could do to escape having to march when I was told I had to march, so I had to find some way of dealing with it. Instead of wasting my energy fighting what I couldn't change, I forced myself to accept it.

I noticed I could keep up this positive mental momentum if I started out with it at the beginning of the march, up to about three miles in. But once we got to about three miles in, that's when the physical pain would always kick in.

I was in excellent physical condition, so I usually had a lot of energy during the first three miles. But once my body started to react to the extreme stress it was being put under, it became impossible to avoid feeling pain any longer.



Sharp pains would start to shoot through my shins, and combined with the sheer exhaustion, the perfect storm of torment was created. This torment only increased in intensity with every step. Old blisters would burst open, and new ones would start to form, but there was no time to make any adjustments to my boots or to the pack on my back to help ease the pain. The only thing I could do was keep moving forward.

Then there was the constant reminder that I was not even being close to done. Once that started to sink in mentally, I would always begin to really hate life and resent the fact that I was the smallest man out there marching. Still, it didn't really matter how much I hated it, I had to pass the miles until we were done with the march, just like everybody else.

Between miles three and seven, every step was grueling. It wasn't just me hurting because I was small and had to move my feet the fastest. Everybody was hurting. The pain we all experienced was similar to what you can imagine it would feel like to have sharp needles stabbed into every part of your body from every angle, and that was just the physical pain. The mental strain was worse. Knowing you've got to make it through mile 25 when you're not sure how you're going to take the next step was the real hell of the march.

However, at about mile seven, a strange thing would always happen. It was like a mental barrier would break for a little while, and the body and mind would go into autopilot. When this happened, the physical and psychological pain receded into the background, and it was possible to become numb to everything for the next seven-mile stretch.



From mile seven to mile 14, all you had to do was be patient and pass the time. But at mile 14, that is when all of the pain would come back even stronger than before. If you thought you were in hell at mile three, you really have not seen anything it. You were just standing outside the gates. From mile 14 onward, it was like being tossed into the flames by Satan himself.

At this point in the march, the last leg, all of your physical energy and vitality would be completely drained. Your ability to be numb to your surroundings and your current situation would totally disappear, and this would leave you face to face with the horrible realization that you still have 11 more miles to go. This is when a lot of guys would start to say stuff like, “Fuck this. This is fucking stupid! My legs hurt. Slow the fuck down. We’re all dying here.”

People would start to fall out of formation at this point. Falling out of structure was never okay during a ruck march. But, at the same time, when it happened, everybody understood why. We were all out there, marching and going through hell together.

The only difference between the guys who stayed in formation and those who failed to was the guys who stayed in formation made a choice not to quit, ever. I thought about quitting all the time. We all thought about it—even the best of the best. There was a lot of pressure to give up. But instead of quitting, those of us who were able to stay in it made a choice to stay in it, keep moving our feet, and get through the pain together, one excruciating step at a time.



The average person doesn't know how to make themselves do anything unless they're having fun with it or getting an immediate reward from it. Most people don't know how to get themselves to do something painful, even if they know it's going to help them get what they want in the long run.

But this is not because we don't all have the same ability to overcome pain. We're all human, and we all have the same capacity to get through it if we make getting through it a priority for ourselves.

We all experience pain at similar levels of intensity because we're all equipped with the same five senses. Claiming that you feel more intense pain than someone else is not the reason you can't make yourself do something hard either.

So, what is the reason most people can't push through the pain? It's straightforward, actually. The only reason most people can't drive themselves through suffering is that they've never learned how. They've never trained themselves how to do it, so they always give up whenever they're required to do something challenging that might cause them temporary pain.

If you give up every time you need to do something hard, that's a form of training. That's training and conditioning yourself to quit, instead of training and conditioning yourself to keep going & keep looking for solutions.

When you're really hurting, both mentally and physically, there aren't a lot of "solutions." What I learned in the military is that there is really only one solution that can provide some level of relief when you're experiencing pain on every level. Thankfully, it's not hard to implement once you know what it is.



I'm going to give it to you now. The only solution to dealing with inescapable, intense pain is to laugh your way through it. When there's no hope for a second wind, and there's no way to make yourself numb to what's going on, just laugh. It's that simple because you've really only got two options.

You can bitch about what you have to do and keep going, or you can laugh about it and keep going. You might as well take the option that's actually going to diminish your pain slightly, because, either way, you have to keep going.

I'm not saying this to be a hard ass. It's just the truth. If you're hating life, bitching about it is only going to make things even harder for you. The more you bitch, the more mental drain you're going to experience. But if you learn to laugh at your pain, even if it makes you feel like an insane person, you will conserve your energy, and time will go by faster.

In the military, when we were out executing a nonstop mission, if we hadn't eaten shit for days if we hadn't had anything to drink, and if we hadn't slept, the task never fucking stopped for us to eat, hydrate or rest up. Not one fucking time did our responsibilities lapse because of the pain we were going through.

When you first get into the military, everybody, including you, bitches about everything. That's just what you do. That's everybody's first reaction to having to do tasks they don't want to do. It's normal.

So, what happens is you start to look for a way to make a joke out of every situation. You learn that if you can find even one stupid ass thing to laugh about while you're in the middle of a 25-mile ruck march with over 100 pounds of shit strapped to your back, it can take you a long way. It can keep your feet moving.



Your pain doesn't just go away when you find a way to laugh, but what happens is your attention is drawn away from how horrible things are in the present moment. This allows you to realize that eventually, even though it doesn't feel like it, your pain will come to an end. This is all you need to help you get through—a small amount of separation from the pain so that it no longer fully possesses you.

Every person who has been through military training knows bitching about stuff only makes things worse. It doesn't shield you from pain at all. That's why on our ruck marches, we always told funny stories as we marched. We gave each other shit and laughed about it. We even barked like dogs at people and vehicles we passed by.

All this stupid stuff actually made what we were doing a little bit more tolerable. It also brought us all together when every single one of us was tempted to focus only on ourselves and how horrible we were feeling. This was huge, because once you start to personalize your pain and think, "Poor me. I've got it so bad," you're fucking toast.

The worst thing you could possibly do is start feeling sorry for yourself when you're dealing with pain because pain doesn't care. Pain feeds off of that and grows significantly when it realizes it's dealing with somebody who views themselves as a victim.

If you don't believe me, test this for yourself. If you're going through something painful, try continually thinking about how you're feeling, how unfair everything is, and how everybody else you know has got it so much better. I guarantee doing this is only going to make you feel worse and keep you down even longer.



Instead, if you are feeling intense pain in your life right now, for whatever reason, just laugh about it. Make a joke out of the situation. If the pain you are feeling cannot be fixed by you doing something to fix it, and it is not going anywhere any time soon, this is your only reasonable option.

The more you practice this, the better you will get at it. Not only that, if you practice this, it will become your default reaction when stress and pressure and the resulting pain pile upon you in your life.

On the one hand, you have to take your responsibilities seriously, so don't think I'm telling you that you can escape painful responsibilities by laughing them off. That's not what I'm saying. What I am saying is, when you're really fucking hurting because something has gone wrong or because the pressure on you is exceptionally intense, just laugh—then keep going.

At that point, so what if you fail? Failure can cause more pain, but this kind of pain is not your enemy. This kind of pain is your best friend. You must learn to view pain this way because the whole reason pain exists is to show you the right direction to go in your life.

Pain shows each and every one of us what we should do and what we should not do. It's literally the best guidance system we can use to get what we want in life. Pain teaches hard lessons, but they're lessons we don't forget.

Pain forces you to remember the mistakes you made in vivid detail, so you never make them again. For example, if you've ever broken a bone in your body, I bet you can remember what happened that caused you to break that bone. I bet you remember exactly where you were, what you did to cause that break, and even what you wish you would have done differently.



If we break a bone in our body, it causes a lot of pain, which is why we never forget how we broke that bone for the rest of our lives. Contrast that with what we might remember about falling down and skinning up one of our knees, and it's easy to see the vast difference the level of pain we experience makes in teaching us what we should and should not do.

If you're running on the sidewalk, and you fall down and scrape up a knee, the worst-case consequence of that is you get a little shaken up by the experience. You don't have to stop what you're doing and immediately go to the emergency room. You can keep running. And if you do that, it's possible that you might forget you even fell down earlier by the time you get back home.

Experiencing a little bit of pain because you scraped up your knee is not going to change your behavior much. If you go out for a run the very next day, you're probably not going to avoid running on that same part of the sidewalk where you fell down. Your routine is not going to change, and neither are any of your decisions.

Case in point, little pain produces little to no inspiration for you to change anything you're doing. Extreme pain forces you to do something else whether you want to or not. If you break your ankle while out for a jog, you're not going to be going out for a jog tomorrow or the next day. You don't have any other choice but to figure out how to cope with that pain, which is going to mean making some adjustments to what you were doing.

This lesson doesn't just apply to physical pain. Pain comes in many different forms. If you've ever suffered from a broken heart, for example, I bet you can remember exactly why, in detail. That's the worst kind of



emotional pain you can experience. There's no denying it hurts, even though it's more challenging to describe this kind of pain.

Still, the same rules apply. You can either use the pain you feel to direct you in the right direction, or you can waste it. No one can avoid pain in their lives forever. That's impossible. Pain is unavoidable, so you might as well do what you can to learn from it. If you're willing to listen, the pain will say to you, "That was the wrong way. This is what the right way looks like."

Pain is a compass that's built right into each and every one of us. Everyone can access this compass to help them find direction in their lives, but very few people are willing to use it.

Most pain does not last forever, even if it feels like it's going to. When comparing moments of pain to moments of pleasure, pain is not a real presence in a lot of people's lives. But when pain does show up, its purpose is actually to help us get through hard times faster. It directs us toward the right path we need to take to get the results we're looking for.

If you can develop the presence of mind when you experience pain to be able to say, "Wow, that fucking hurt. That was probably not the right thing to do. Let me try this direction," you are on your way to success faster than you can probably even fathom right now. The problem is no one lives their life this way. Instead, they just stay stuck repeating the same painful patterns of behavior. They don't even try to take a step in a new direction.

But if you do try to take a step forward in a new direction, this always produces some kind of effect. That effect might be more pain, but you can use this to gain better clarity about where you are, where you're trying to



go, and what you need to do to get there. You will not have this information available to you without trying something new and risking the possibility of pain.

If you want to go somewhere you've never been before, you have to map out the way there for yourself. It's impossible to know where to turn next unless you crack your head open a few times by going full speed in the wrong direction.

Pain is a compass that's built right into each and every one of us. Everyone can access this compass to help them find direction in their lives, but very few people are willing to use it.

But once you've run yourself into a wall a few times, what will naturally happen is the bandwidth of your mind will open up, and you will be able to take in the full picture of your surroundings. Then you can make a better guess about where you need to go and what you need to do next.

Going through this process may feel like hell. But if you stay true to your goals and commit to learning with every step, you will survive. Not only that, you will eventually surpass your own expectations and destroy all of your limiting beliefs, and there is nothing more satisfying than doing that.



Chapter 5

Know Your Why

If you've ever listened to a motivational speaker or any other successful person give advice to other people at all, then you know what I'm about to say. This is the most critical piece of advice any person on the face of this earth could ever receive. That's why I don't dare leave it out. You've probably heard this 1,000 times already, but let's make that 1,001 in case it hasn't sunk in.

If you want to succeed at a high level in life, then you must know your "why." Honestly, if you've heard this before, and you haven't spent time figuring out why you want what you want, or why you are taking on the back-breaking challenge of completely changing your life for the better, do not read another sentence of this book until you've figured your why out.

100% of the time, you have to start with why you want to do something first. If you don't have a purpose for what you're doing, you can experience all the success in the world doing something you actually like, but you will still feel like shit.



If everything you're doing serves no real purpose, you will look back on your life 20 years down the road and feel like you completely wasted it. Believe me, there are a lot of people who appear to be hugely successful in life that experiences the horrible realization that they've been doing everything for all the wrong reasons. This happens to people because they let the rat race run their lives instead of being honest with themselves.

Without a purpose, there is no meaning behind anything you do. That doesn't mean your why has to be complicated. It can be straightforward, and it doesn't have to take long for you to figure out what it is. It can also change over time. But the more significant and more important you make it, the harder it will drive you to pursue your purpose.

To start with, your why might be something as simple as, "I don't want to be hungry and broke." That was my initial why. That's where I started. This why pushed me to where I am today.

I didn't want to go hungry, and I wanted to be able to buy clothes when I needed them. I didn't want to have to ask my mom for \$2 just so I could go buy a sandwich, and I didn't want to have to ask her for \$20 when I tried to order a pizza for myself and my little sisters.

That was my initial why that pushed me to start making my own money. When things got tough for me, this why kept me moving forward. This why kept me moving forward in spite of all the dangers I faced in the beginning when I thought selling drugs was my only chance to make it out of the hood.

Whenever I felt fear, I was able to push it aside because my why was fucking stronger than my fear. It took me no time to figure out what my why was then because it was apparent. If you've ever been broke and hungry, to the point where you don't know where your next meal is going to come from, you know what I'm talking about.



If your why is simply to get out of a situation like that, you know exactly how strong of a desire that is. People kill other people to get out of that type of situation. But that kind of desperate and bloodthirsty action when you're in an extreme spot already is only going to make you more broke than ever before.

However, if you can direct that motivation into productive activities, everybody else better watch out, because you will become an absolute force in your field of expertise. When you learn to use that extreme force inside you that says, "I refuse to live like this anymore," that's when everything changes.

At this breaking point, you can direct all of your aggression into something positive. You can take the anger that burns within you, and you can turn it into fuel to get you where you want to go in the next chapter of your life.

So, if you're starting from a similar place to where I started from, you can look at that as an advantage. Because whatever success you achieve you will be more grateful for, and your drive and a sense of purpose will never leave you.

Once you've made some progress, and you're not completely broke, and your family is doing okay, your why might change. It might change to something as simple as just wanting to do better.

Doing better might mean providing a better life for your family or for yourself. If you have kids, it might mean giving them a better start in life than you had. If you're married or in a serious relationship, it might mean taking care of your significant other, or it might mean helping them find something they're passionate about doing in life.



Once you've taken care of your basic needs, you will probably start to look outside of yourself at the important relationships in your life. What do you need to do to keep these relationships alive and thriving? Do you need to step up even further and provide more opportunities for the people you care about most? These are the type of things that might become your new why.

You might need to take on more responsibility for different areas of your personal relationships. That might mean you will need to start investing in your kids or your significant other. Not in terms of just money, but, more importantly, in terms of your time. If you want to get to the point where you can do that, you might need to build more wealth to put to work for you so you can free up your time to spend it with your loved ones.

How you structure your work and your personal life is totally up to you. Whether you want to work 16 hour days or six-hour days is totally dependent on why you're working in the first place. If you decide you want to make sacrifices and work harder than anybody else you know, you have to do that knowing exactly why it's worth it...

The relationships you have in your life are more valuable than the money you have in your bank account. But if you can't at least be financially independent and take care of yourself when you're in a relationship with somebody else, then you will lose that relationship. You have to find the right balance.

If you're trying to raise a family with somebody, and you can't pull your weight, your partner will come to resent you. Resentment slowly destroys relationships over time. It makes them wither away to nothing. There's nothing worse than watching a relationship that's important to you slowly go bad.



Most of the time, you don't notice it's happening until it's too late, and you're left with nothing. You don't want to wake up one day later in life and realize you've lost the people who were the most important to you, and that all the work you put in was for nothing.

That's why you can't stay focused on you and your needs forever. If all of your relationships are based on what you can personally get out of them, then they're not going to last. If you bring nothing to the table, don't be surprised when one day there's nothing there to eat, or, even worse, nobody there to break your bread with.

You might think you can get away with it. You might think you're doing okay, or that because there was love in your relationships at some point, you're okay now. You might think you don't have to worry about meeting expectations anymore.

But that's not true. What is true is that you get what you put out into the world in every aspect of your life. If you treat people in your personal life like shit, and you always try to take advantage of other people's kindness, you're going to attract people into your life who are going to try to take advantage of you.

There's no separation between how you live your personal life and how you take care of your business. Eventually, even if you try to keep these two things separate, they're going to come together and influence each other, either positively or negatively. No part of your life exists in a vacuum. Everything you do either plays a role in your growth or a role in your decline.

The way you act and the way you treat other people is the way they're going to treat you. If you want to have happy relationships and be able to grow in every area of your life, then your why should reflect that.



You might think all you want is a nice car, a big house and the ability to go on vacation whenever you want. But as soon as you get those things, you're going to want something else. If there's not a stronger why pushing you forward to achieve more, you're just going to quit and fall back into living an average life.

Who cares if you can make a million bucks this year if you're just going to be unhappy and lose it all by next year? Sustainable success is arduous because it requires you never to lose sight of your ultimate purpose and vision.

There are billions of things in this world designed to distract you and take you away from what really matters. There's only one thing that can give you the strength to ignore all of these distractions, and that is your why. If your why is not crystal fucking clear to you right now, do not move on to the next chapter of this book until it is.

Your why is what will bring you strength amid struggle. If you've experienced a windfall of success, and now you're on cloud nine, I'm truly happy for you. But your work isn't over. If you want to have continued success, you're going to have to go through more uncertainty, more doubt, more fear and more cloudy, rainy days. Because the next level of living is always on the other side of hard days of growth.

When you're trying something new, and there are doubts and logical uncertainty in your mind, your why will bring you to the point of execution. It will allow you to make the decision to act in the smartest way you could possibly move at that moment.

If you know what you need to do in life and business, it makes the world quiet. When the world is silent, then you can start moving faster. Knowing what you need to accomplish today allows you to be focused on what you need to do right now to get to where you want to be tomorrow.



To remain in this place of always knowing your next move for an extended period, you have to remove anything in your life that distracts you and steals away your time and energy. What I mean is, if you want to be successful long-term, then you absolutely have to get rid of distractions in your life, even if they give you comfort. Comfort breeds complacency, and complacency leads to failure.

Do an honest audit of your life and make a note of what's keeping you from getting where you want to go. Filter everything you're doing through your why. Is what you're doing helping you or holding you back from achieving your purpose and reaching your potential? You have to be honest when you ask yourself this question.

If something doesn't add value to your life, immediately remove it. There are different levels to this process, and some things are easier to remove from your life than others.

At the first level, there are unnecessary things you spend your time doing or spend your money on that you could easily do without. This could be something like having a Netflix subscription and watching it all the time, or it could be having a Spotify or Apple Music subscription and spending all of your time listening to music.

Just with those few examples, you can see why it's necessary to filter the things you're going to remove from your life through your why and your purpose. If you want to be a music producer or a musician for a reason that is very powerful for you, getting rid of a music streaming service probably doesn't make sense. If you want to be an actor or a film director, you probably don't want to get rid of Netflix completely.



Your why makes visible what you should not be spending your time on, and it allows you to get rid of these things without regret. This becomes more important when you get to the second level of this process, where you have to give up things that are much more difficult to let go.

At this level, you have to examine things like old friendships you have that are no longer fruitful. It might even be a family member or significant other that is holding you back. Sometimes, as you choose to grow and evolve, you find that the people who used to support you now only want to shower you with negativity.

That's a hard thing to go through. But if you have a significant purpose driving you, and you know why you have to achieve it, and that why is extraordinarily compelling and important to you, understand you are going to have to make sacrifices in your life to achieve it.

There's no way around that. The good news is once you gain experience with this process of filtering out everything that's not pushing you toward your purpose, you get better at it. Not only that, you learn the ability to stop negative people, habits, and reckless behavior from stealing your valuable time and energy in the future.

That is the real power of a strong why. It enables you to become the person you need to be to achieve the things you want to happen. Without a strong why, you're like a ship without a rudder. But with your why guiding you, the direction you need to sail to live the life you want to live becomes clear.



Chapter 6

Hearing Voices

If you've ever thought to yourself, "Man, I'm doing all this fucking work, and nothing is happening," you're headed in the right direction, believe it or not. If you feel like no matter what you do, you always come up short, you're on the right track. If you're "right there" all the time, but you can never quite make it, you're really fucking close. You're probably just a few more tries away from the massive success you seek.

If you're just trying to survive this year, this month, this week, this day or this hour, and you're putting all of your blood and sweat into something, but you still can't break out of survival mode, you're only missing one critical piece. Once you have this piece, you will have a breakthrough.

The piece I'm referring to is clarity. If you've been pushing yourself as hard as you can, clarity will help you move past whatever plateau you've reached so far. Clarity will allow you to start experiencing a whole new level of life. Let me give you a straightforward example of the power of clarity, so you understand I'm not bullshitting you.



If you need to cross the street to get to your apartment, but you don't know you need to do that, you're never going to get to your apartment. It doesn't matter how bad you want to get to your apartment, if you don't know it's across the street, you're not just going to magically end up there by standing in one place and doing nothing. Even if that did magically happen, and you were somehow teleported right to your apartment's front door, without clarity, you wouldn't even know you'd made it.

Let's add another layer to this example. Let's say you want to get to your apartment, and you're ready to work and put in the effort to get there. So, you start jumping up and down and racing from one end of the street to the other. Now you're running all over the place, you're sweating your ass off, and you're getting tired.

You're looking around for your apartment, but you still don't know where it is or even what it actually looks like. Meanwhile, it's still right across the street, but you just keep running back and forth on the side of the street your apartment is not on.

You're working hard now. But without the clarity to know you need to cross the street, you're just exhausting yourself. After exhausting yourself completely, you will have no energy to formulate a better plan, so all you can do at that point is to keep running up and down the wrong side of the street.

This causes stress because you're doing so much shit, but you're not getting any closer to your goal. On top of that, it's now starting to get hot outside, and you're getting thirsty. Now you don't even care if you get to your apartment. All you're thinking about is where you might find a place to get a drink of water.



Welcome to distraction—you've been sidetracked. Your goal is no longer to get to your apartment because that feels impossible to you. You just want some water, but you don't even know where to get that. Still, you're running up and down the wrong side of the street, but now you've forgotten why.

This is what happens to people when they don't have clarity. They work ridiculously hard, but they don't get what they want. So, eventually, what they want changes. They start to be alright with settling for less, or maybe even settling for what they've already got, even if their life is horrible.

Clarity is super essential to have at every level, no matter if you're just trying to do well enough to survive, or if you're trying to build a multi-million-dollar company. Without clarity, neither is possible. That's why you need to do everything you can to develop it.

Sure, you can "accidentally" come into money or have some success by chance. It happens to people. You can do something totally random and miraculously get rewarded for it. But that kind of instant success will not amount to anything positive in your life over the long-term if you have no clarity about what to do next.

More importantly, if you don't have clarity about how you should be conducting your life, you're lost. And if you feel lost now, try coming into money overnight and then trying to figure out who your real friends are. That's the real challenge.

You need to find clarity at all costs. You can do this by looking up to and modeling someone who inspires you. Try to live your life based on how they live theirs. There is no shame in doing this.



People sometimes think they're not being "original" if they do this, or that they're not being true to themselves. But that's the wrong way to think. It's effortless to go through life with no direction and no discipline and just to accept everything that happens to you as what was supposed to happen. It's hard to be disciplined and follow through on living your life the right way, even if you have someone in your life pointing you in the right direction.

If someone handed you the most perfect formula for success in the world, even if you followed that method 100%, you still wouldn't end up just like the person who created it. If it were a real success formula, you would just end up being a better, more disciplined, more trustworthy, and more elevated version of yourself.

Every successful person I've ever met has had someone that has helped them along the way. No matter who you are or what you've already accomplished, having positive influences in your life is beneficial. But the kind of people you want to have in your life are people who will help you build your own vision of what you want your life to look like. Otherwise, you can have all the success in the world and still feel very unfulfilled.

You might not even have one successful person in your life right now that you can look up to for advice. I know this is the reality for some people because when I was growing up, that was me.

So, what do you do if you have nothing and no one? What do you do if you don't know who you should trust and take guidance from? What if you don't even trust yourself to know how to detect a successful person when you see one?

What I'm about to share with you is the method I personally use to find clarity in my own life. It's never failed me, and I recommend it to everyone I believe could benefit from it.

No matter who you are, who you know, or what you have in your life, there is one thing you can always do to gain clarity: sit down and talk to yourself. Sometimes when I give people this advice, they give me a weird look and say, "Why would I do that? People are going to think I'm hearing voices or something. I'm not a crazy person."

Here's why: most people think that if they knew the answers to their own questions, they would know that they knew them. Oddly enough, that's not how things work. I can guarantee you there's a lot of stuff you don't know about yourself right now. But if you sat down and just tried to have a conversation with yourself, it would all start to pour out of you.

We can always get to know ourselves on a deeper level. Human beings are incredibly complex. There's more going on inside us than meets the eye because we're constantly distracted by all the noise in our environments. But if we tune in to ourselves by merely attempting to talk to ourselves face to face in a calm environment, we can unwrap the layers of complexity that make us who we are.

Each one of us has much more inner-knowledge than we are conscious of because inner-knowledge has no limit. We can never uncover everything going on inside of us because doing that takes a lifetime. We can only handle knowing so much about the real contents of our minds and hearts at one time.



A lot of people are afraid to dig down into even the first layer of their mind because they're afraid of what they might find. But if you're willing to get acquainted with the real contents of your mind, you will develop self-awareness on a level that will make you notably powerful in a world where everyone else is only conscious of what's happening on TV and on their phone screens. Self-awareness is what points to real, personal, guiding clarity.

To develop this self-awareness, just sit down and ask yourself any question out loud that you'd like to know the answer to. Let's say you're thinking about getting into social media marketing because you know there are people out there, like myself, who are doing very well in this business. Even though you know that, you might still wonder if it's something you would be good at and actually enjoy doing.

If you wanted to know the answer to that question, all you'd have to do is ask yourself, "Is social media marketing something you would be good at and enjoy doing?" Then answer that question for yourself, and be as detailed in your answer as possible. Don't filter out what you have to say. Just let it flow, and write it down if you have to so you can't convince yourself later that you didn't get an answer out of yourself.

If you come to the end of what you have to say, and you don't feel like you've given yourself a definite "yes" or "no" answer, then break it down further. Ask yourself more questions. Continuing with the example above, you might ask yourself, "What parts of social media marketing might you like? What parts might you not like?"

If you answer these types of questions honestly when you're faced with needing to make a choice in life, you will know without a doubt what you should do next. You're going to press into learning more about what you want to do, or you're going to keep asking yourself more questions to gain more clarity about what you actually want to do instead.



You can use this questioning process to learn more about yourself than just what kind of work you might like doing. You can use it to figure out everything from how you feel about a new relationship, to where you should go on vacation, to what you should spend your money on. It's a straightforward process, but don't be fooled. It's compelling. There's nothing magic about it, but it works exceptionally well.

Contrast this process with what most people do when they want an answer to any kind of personal question, and you can begin to see why it can make such a difference in your life. Most people just go online and start Googling random shit when they want to figure out something about themselves. Why the fuck would you do that when you can go straight to the source—you—and ask directly?

People don't ask themselves what they actually want out of life a lot of times until they're on their death bed. That's the most horrible time to think about what you should have done differently—after you have absolutely no power to go back and change a single thing.

But people really torture themselves in life this way because it takes most people a long time and a lot of living before they trust themselves more than they believe other people. Especially in today's world where everything moves at such a fast pace, anybody rarely takes the time to slow down and consider what the consequences of their actions are going to be.

I don't just mean negative consequences, but positive consequences too. If you want to achieve excellent outcomes in your life, then you have to take proper actions. Adverse actions produce adverse results, and bad outcomes provide regret that will hang over you on your deathbed like an uninvited ghost.



If you want to live a good life, you have to get to know yourself better than you know anyone else. If you can't say that you know yourself very well, then you need to start forming a connection with yourself immediately. Right now, stop, put this book down, and talk to yourself about something that's been on your mind. See what you can learn about yourself, and then try to figure out what to do with that knowledge.

Maybe you'll decide it's time for you to make some new decisions. Perhaps you need to make a drastic change. Or maybe you'll decide you're actually doing very well, and you don't need to stress so much about every little thing in your life that's not perfect. Talking to yourself might give you some perspective on your situation to realize it's really not that bad.

So, ask yourself every once in a while, a question as simple as something like, "How are you doing?" And answer that question honestly. There's no point in lying to yourself. You have to begin to understand what actually makes you happy in life before you start running around frantically trying to achieve something that's not even going to do anything positive for you if you realize it.

You can't just do what everybody else says you should do with your life and expect to enjoy it. There is no reason you can't talk to yourself about what you should do. There is no reason you can't figure yourself out, no matter how messed up your life is, given enough time.

If you do have an honest conversation with yourself, and you don't come away with 100% clarity about the direction you should go, that's fine. Remember, you're building a relationship with yourself, and that's going to take time.



Have you ever created a successful, long-term, supportive relationship with someone in your life after having one fucking conversation them? No, because that's impossible. Good relationships take time, effort, patience, and persistence if we want them to develop into something more.

The same rules apply when it comes to developing a relationship with yourself. Don't let that put you off though, because you can still experience some profound and fast results in the very beginning of starting to have honest conversations with yourself. You just have to realize that if you're asking a huge question, you're probably only going to receive 50% of the answer to it, to begin with.

But let that be enough to spur you forward and get you to take action. After you take that first action, more will become apparent to you, and then you can ask better questions to get closer to the heart of what you want and need to know.

Clarity only comes to those who take action and not just any measure, but the right move. Knowing what the right step is, happens by knowing and trusting yourself, and identifying and trusting yourself comes from having regular conversations with yourself and developing that relationship.

You might find that you have a sick sense of humor when you start talking to yourself and listening to what you have to say for the first time. You might feel like you've discovered a whole new world. You might even feel like you finally know what you should do to succeed in your life after years of not knowing.

But then, when you go to take action, you might get your teeth kicked. You might fail miserably and feel worse than you thought when you used to ignore yourself and who you are. But don't give up there, because that's just the beginning of the process.



There is no success without failure, and there is no success without pain. When what you learn about yourself and what you think you should do leads you immediately to new pain and new failure, that means you're going in the right direction. Because now you can go back and ask yourself, "What do you need to learn from this?"

If you always ask yourself this question, even when things go horribly wrong in your life, you will find clarity. And with that kind of clarity, you will eventually get to where you're trying to go. I guarantee it.



Chapter 7

Opinions = Bullshit

Once I determined I wanted to get out of the ghetto and out of harm's way in the military, the next step was to figure out a business I could start that would bring me up and out and make me money. I realized that to pull this off, I needed to start a scalable company. Social media marketing came to mind because I knew it would allow me to have a digital product I could sell.

Digital products and services scale exceptionally well, and they require much less overhead. I didn't have any money available to use to start my business, which means I couldn't invest money into a product. The best option open to me was to create a service so I could leverage and sell my knowledge.

Once I had an idea of what I could offer, I knew if I could make just one sale of my service, then I could put that money back into my business and use it to help me keep scaling things up. Additionally, I realized that by



selling a service, my expenses would continue to be low, even as I continued to sell to a higher volume of clients. This would allow me to continue to leverage my time and my skills as time went on, without requiring me to put any more of my funds into the business.

I wanted to build something that would proceed to be an asset for me in every sense of the word, not just a thriving, resource-hungry liability. I had very limited resources, to begin with, so my business had to center around me as its number one asset for a long time.

I didn't have any funds to invest in my company to start, and I didn't know how to get an angel investor or VC on board. They probably wouldn't have taken me seriously anyway, because I didn't have the knowledge, in the beginning, I would have needed to be taken seriously.

In the very beginning, when I first looked into getting into social media and digital marketing, it seemed like I would never find the answers I was looking for. It was overwhelming.

As I kept digging deeper and deeper, I started to realize there were a million people out there who were all spreading a different message about how to have success as a digital marketer, get clients and actually make money.

At that point, I had to make a decision. I could either spend all of my time trying to learn what I was supposed to do from all the people out there who were claiming they could help me, or I could just quickly learn what I could from some of them, get to work, and see what kind of results I could generate.

The hard part about making this decision was it was really fucking hard to tell who was telling the truth and who was full of shit. This is still a problem today.



In fact, it's probably a more significant problem now than ever. I kept my ear to the ground as far as listening to what people were discussing when it came to social media marketing, but the only way I could decide who to take seriously and who to put on mute was by testing everything I could think of to see what worked and what didn't.

This was an arduous process, especially because social media is continually evolving. Social media networks that don't innovate fast enough end up losing traction, and eventually they die. We've all seen this happen multiple times with sites like Myspace, etc.

As I gained more knowledge by testing everything I could think of, I realized I needed to be way more selective than I was being about who I was going to listen to for advice. I simply didn't have the time to test all the crazy theories and things I heard people talking about.

Once I had generated some results for myself, I decided I would never again listen to anyone who claimed to have the magic bullet or secret sauce ever — unless they could back that claim up with a proven track record and a massive list of results.

I noticed a lot of gurus out there teaching other people to do stuff they didn't even do themselves. When I saw this and actually confirmed these people were not telling the truth through my own experiments, I promptly tuned these people out and went digging for the correct information.

I was lucky to make some connections early on with a few great mentors who not only invested their time and energy in me but also had their own results to speak for, so I knew I could trust their advice. But, even then, when I was getting started in social media, nobody had all the answers.



I had to be creative and come up with solutions to a lot of the problems I faced. You absolutely have to be able to do this if you want to succeed in this industry. Because if you're not playing one step ahead of everybody else, then you're already behind.

I didn't let this scare me away from creating my business, because I saw it as a possible way I could gain an advantage. Most people don't want to have to be creative to succeed. They don't want to take any risks or even deal with the possibility that they might look dumb for trying something nobody else has already thought of. But when I see a chance to do something new, I get excited because that means I've got the rare opportunity to innovate and change the game completely.

You do that enough times, and suddenly all the so-called gurus end up calling on you for advice. I learned early on not to listen to anybody who doubted me. Even now, I still have to close my ears to all the bullshit and just do what I think is going to work. I don't listen to anybody who says to me, "You can't do _____, because that market is too saturated." That's the worst fucking excuse not to do something.

I also don't listen to anybody who says, "You can't do _____, because that only works for people who get lucky." So, what? Even if that were true—and most of the time, it's not—I would still do whatever was required to be the one person who "got lucky."

Statements like "that will never work" and "the market won't support that" are just opinions most of the time. Opinions are not facts based on data. The average person doesn't have access to data that confirms their beliefs. Even if they did, there's still a good chance they'd misinterpret that data. Let's say there was data out there that showed only one in 10 people have success when they try to create a social media marketing business. Let's pretend that it was 100% true. What does it mean? Does it mean you shouldn't even try because you'll just land among the nine losers?



No way. What it means is you should find the one person who has had success online and try to talk to them. See if they're offering a mentorship program, and if they are, jump on it. Do everything you can to figure out what they did to succeed, and then implement everything they did for yourself. If you do this, you increase your odds of having success exponentially. It's that simple.

The sad thing is most people don't make it that far because they're besieged by people who have horribly inaccurate opinions, and they let these incorrect opinions influence their actions as if they were facts. When following these facts to their conclusions gets them zero results, that's when they get frustrated, pissed off and give up.

Then they go around telling everybody how impossible it is to have success, and the whole cycle of spreading incorrect information through opinion starts all over again. Their opinion influences someone else to either do the wrong thing or do nothing at all, and suddenly everybody ends up fucking lost. When someone is telling you what to do, but they're only sharing an opinion that's based on their feelings and not direct experience, they're misleading you, even if they aren't trying to.

When I first got started doing social media marketing, I sold my service for \$50. When I told other people what I was doing and that I was going to sell my service for \$50, they said to me that it was impossible. They backed this claim up with all kinds of bullshit evidence they manufactured out of random observation, not direct experience.

At this point in my life, I had already come to the realization that there were a lot of uncredited opinions and manipulative people out there who would always try to discourage me, so I just ignored what people were telling me. I decided to try to sell my service for \$50 anyway.



It worked. Somebody bought it, and the person was delighted with it. When I told the people who doubted me that this happened, they shared their opinions with me again. They said I just got lucky. They said, sure, I was able to sell it for \$50 one time, but there was no way I was going to sell it again, let alone make a living doing what I was doing.

I ignored people's opinions, and I sold the same service 20 more times. Sure, I'd only made \$1,000 at that point, but that was \$1,000 more than I had when I got started. More valuable than that \$1,000 was the fact that I'd proven to myself what was possible. I believed in what I was doing even more strongly because now I did have data and results to speak for.

Still, everybody told me I would never be able to raise my price, and that I would just have to quit because selling what I was doing for \$50 was not sustainable. They were right about one thing—it was not viable for me to keep selling my service for \$50, so I raised my price to \$5,000.

People told me this would never work. But not too long after raising my price, I made my first sale at \$5,000. At this point, I just had to laugh because I heard the same stuff from people that I heard after I'd sold my service for \$50 the first time. They said there was no way I could sell my service for \$5,000 consistently, but I knew they were wrong.

One after another, I went on to close \$5,000 deals when everybody was telling me that was impossible. It was then that I knew I should never let other people's doubts and opinions stop me from doing something.

I had to focus on the value I was contributing to my clients to make these deals happen. It wasn't just that I was asking more from my clients, but also that I was asking more from myself. It was easier for me to sell something for \$50 at the beginning than \$5,000, but that was only because my level of experience was deficient.



As my level of experience increased, I was able to go after better clientele. Believe me, great clients will pay for excellent service if you can provide it, and they will pay the price you're asking as long as you get them great results.

You aren't going to walk into a Fortune 500 and sell a \$50 service, because they would just assume that for that price, you're only going to provide \$50 worth of value. They don't have time for that. But if you know you're providing an insane amount of value, you can ignore everyone who doubts you, raise your price accordingly, and go after more prominent clients.

If you're just starting out selling a service, you don't want to demand so much money from your clients that they don't feel like they're getting what they paid for. I had to start by offering my service for \$50 because I needed to get experience under my belt. I needed to learn how to make my service more valuable, and I could only do that by providing it to as many people as possible and analyzing my progress.

Nobody in my life even understood what I was doing in the beginning, so I had to develop my own method for valuing my work. I see a lot of people grapple with this when they first start a business, so I'm going to explain my process for determining your price no matter what level you're at. I came up with my price in the beginning based on a few key factors. Things work slightly differently for me now since I'm not a one-man operation anymore, but the same principles more or less still apply.

First, I looked at the time I had available, and then I looked at what my time and skill were worth. Coming up with this estimate of what your time and expertise are worth is the hardest step for most people, even if they intuitively understand this is what they should try to figure out.



I came up with an estimate of what my time and skill were worth by looking at what I could be paid doing work that I'd already done before. Meaning, I looked at what I'd been paid for any work in the past.

You can quickly determine a price for your service this way. Just look at what you've been paid to do something in the past, and come up with the amount you need to charge to earn at least that much. Adjust this price as necessary if you know you need to gain more experience to become more valuable to your customers. Remember, a happy client is worth way more in the beginning than whatever money they might pay you upfront.

Once you've gained some momentum and built up your skill level to the point where you understand what kind of results you can deliver, then it's time to go into phase two of this process. In phase two, you have to look at the opportunity cost of doing what you're doing versus doing something else. Now that you have a skill you can leverage to get people results, you don't have to factor the need for experience into your price anymore. Meaning, your goal is no longer just to gain experience, so you don't have to decrease your rate to attract more opportunities to do work.

Let me give you a real-world example of how this pricing strategy works at this level. Let's say I was managing someone's social media account, and they were paying me \$2,500 to create 10 days' worth of content for them and to post it for them.

Now let's say another client approaches me and asks me to post their existing content for them, but they don't need me to create any content. They're willing to pay me \$2,500 for this as well.

It's clearly a good idea for me to take on the new client who is offering me the same amount of money for less work. But what should I do with the other client? Well, this is the perfect time for me to raise my price for the service I'm providing for them.



Looking at things this way makes it very obvious to know when and how you should raise your prices. It might take a little bit of testing to get a new price settled in, and you typically don't want to raise rates on existing clients unless you can afford to lose them. But any time you're offered more money for less work, it's safe to assume your prices could be adjusted.

Now let's break this down a bit further. Let's say I'm making \$2,500 a week just for posting content, and I'm working five days a week. That means I'm making about \$500 per day. If I want to break away from what I'm doing and do something else, then I need to consider that I need to make at least \$500 a day with whatever I want to do next for it to make sense for me to do it. If I'm not going to make that much or more, then it doesn't make sense for me to give up that time.

If I can't make \$500 a day for the same amount of effort or less, then I shouldn't do whatever I'm considering. If I can make more than \$500 with less effort, then I should do it. That's how black and white things become when you understand opportunity cost.

By looking at the different factors I explained above, it becomes effortless to set your prices and decide what you should be spending your time doing, even if you're just getting started with your business.

Everyone has been paid some amount of money before to do something. So, if you have no experience doing what you want to do, just use that number and adjust your price for your lack of knowledge. The best part about using this method is you don't have to waste a tremendous amount of time analyzing what everybody else in your market is charging, and you don't even have to worry if you're charging less or charging more than what's expected. Just get started. Make some offers to people, and then get a rough idea of what the rest of your market is charging if



necessary. Once you get moving, your other considerations are the amount of demand you have for your services, and also if you're serving a market that has a lot of options, or if you're serving a market that you're somewhat alone in.

Even if your clients could find someone else to do what you do, if you deliver more value with a higher success rate, your price can and should reflect that. If you're the best at what you do, you can charge the highest price. If you're not yet the best at what you do, take a look at what you can do to become the best. Being the best allows you to have a lot of power over the prices in your market because your price becomes the price everyone else wants to beat.

For example, you might find other people in your market charging \$5,000 or \$10,000 for their services. But if you know they suck at what they do in comparison to you, you can view this as an opportunity to charge \$15,000 or \$20,000 for your services.

When you outperform your market's standards, your service becomes worth the premium. But you first have to make sure you're really blowing the competition out of the water. If realistically, you're only able to get the same results as everyone else, then you need to be the one charging less to bring more of the attention in the market to you.

As you can see, no matter where you're at with your business, there's a strategy you can use to continue to scale it. No matter what, your ability to continue to scale your business and its profits start with your ability to provide value to your clients.

You can only become intimately familiar with the factors that affect this variable through hands-on, real-world experience. So, if you're starting from nothing, the experience is the first thing you need to try to get under your belt.



LAW OF AMBITION

You just can't understand yourself, your skills, or your market without it. No amount of Googling will give you the answers you need. To succeed in the real world, you've got to eat, sleep, drink, and breathe your work. That's a high calling, but I know you've got it in you.



Chapter 8

Bloody Internal War

Once you've gained experience and driven some results, your business will likely become inspired by the strength of your relationships with your clients more than your price. If you're unpleasant to work with, clients will not want to keep working with you. On the flip side, if you have rude clients who are paying you well, you might choose to work with someone else.

You can never discount how much being a good person matters. Being able to understand what your clients actually care about plays a considerable role in your ability to maintain successful, long-term relationships with them. If you don't know what they're looking for, you might spend all of your time and effort working on things they don't value.

You should make a regular effort to get in sync with your clients. Ask them questions to determine where they're at now, and help them define where they want to go and how you can help them get there. If you do this, you'll put yourself on an entirely different level. You'll become a valuable part of your clients' teams.



If you understand what someone wants, then you can understand where to meet them. Similarly, if you have to negotiate with someone, having an understanding of what the person wants to get out of that negotiation process will make everything go much more smoothly. This is just as true in personal relationships as it is in business relationships.

When you're dealing with other people, you have to make your own needs clear, but you also have to compromise sometimes. Wise people know how to compromise and still get what they need. A lot of people don't understand this.

I'm not uttering about giving so much that you can barely survive yourself. That's just self-sacrifice, and it's not a good idea because it'll cause you to burn out ultimately. But if you're prepared to give a little bit to other people to help make things run better for everyone, then other people will be willing to do the same for you when necessary.

If you can combine your strengths with the strengths of your clients, then you can both win together. Business and personal relationships always need to lead to win-win situations; otherwise they're just not fruitful. It's still about everybody improving collectively. When you come together with someone else to work on something, it should never be about what just one side stands to gain. That's not what a successful relationship looks like.

A mutually beneficial relationship can only emerge when two people come together to walk a similar path and support each other along the way. People in a healthy relationship don't always have to be going in the exact same direction, but the struggles they face will always be similar. Through dealing with these struggles head-on, both individually and together, each person can offer the other person advice and support.



Running a service-based business requires an in-depth knowledge of how to have successful relationships, and that's why I'm stressing these principles right now. You have to be there to support the overall goals of whoever you're working with. You can never do your business all about meeting only the needs of your personal agenda. That's a recipe for disaster.

You have to give up your pride, your ego, and your desire to make everything about you. That's the most exceptional challenge people face when they start any business if they don't first have a solid understanding of how the world works. If you haven't worked with others at a high level before, then it's easy to fall to the temptation to be self-centered and only look out for yourself.

Most people don't discern that running a successful business requires you to make a massive effort into understanding your own emotions and developing your interpersonal skills. Most people have a hard time with this, and that's why they stay stuck at the bottom, and that's the worst place to be. At the bottom, everybody you come into contact with is just as ruthless and self-seeking as you are. People will chew you up, spit you out and never look back. There's a massive misconception that the most successful people in the world are all horrible, selfish people. That's not even close to being accurate.

Highly successful people understand they could not do what they do without support from other people, and they're willing to invest a considerable amount of time, effort, energy and money into developing a strong team around them. They're never focused on taking the whole pie for themselves. Instead, they're focused on growing the pie with other people, so everybody gets a bigger slice.

If you want to succeed in business, you have to learn how to relate to other people, even if they're different than you. In fact, being able to understand people



who are different than you is critical, because you absolutely need people on your team who have different strengths than you have.

Once you've found people who complement your weaknesses with their strengths, your job is to find different ways to help them succeed and develop their talents even further. If you're only in business to make a name for yourself, you won't. But if you shift your focus to just trying to be of service, you'll get what you need, and your business will not only make a lot of money, it will also help a lot of people.

Business success is all about providing value to other people. Broke people don't understand this. They don't understand the mindset of success. Successful people—I mean really successful, on their own terms, not just accidentally successful or trust fund successful—understand the only difference between them and everybody else is their mindset and what they choose to focus on.

Successful people focus on providing value to everyone they meet and improving their own skills and promoting what they do. Not so they can demand the most attention, but so they can provide the most value to the most people.

Successful people don't waste time on gossip. They don't criticize other people. They understand that people who mistreat others and lie and cheat are not going to survive very long, so they don't waste their time trying to call people out unless they really care about them.

But the most crucial difference between successful people and broke people is successful people value their time more than anything else. You've probably heard the phrase, "We all get the same 24 hours to spend every day." When I was younger, I didn't understand what this meant, but now I get it.



If you want to be successful, then you have to spend a more substantial portion of the 24 hours you get every day providing and creating value for other people. If you're using this time to do self-centered, pointless things, you're not going to achieve success. Period.

To succeed at the level that I do, and provide value to other people at the level that I do, I don't get extra time. I just leverage my time by using it to do what counts. My 24 hours work the same way your 24 hours works, but I keep going and keep increasing the value I provide to others when I want to quit.

It takes a powerful mindset to be able to do this. I've already given you tons of strategies you can use to help you develop a strong mindset. But you absolutely have to understand that developing this mindset isn't just for your own benefit. It's also for the benefit of your team, your clients, your family, and, in the end, society at large.

Most people don't realize running a business is like going into battle. They aren't prepared to face difficult challenges emotionally, so they crumble before they ever succeed. It's not that they're weak, or that they can't be made strong. They just don't know it's worth it to try to be strong, and they don't understand that all strength is mental strength.

When you have the mental strength and endurance to keep going in the face of tremendous challenges, you gain the ability to control your thoughts. Our thoughts are the most potent force we possess, but a lot of people don't realize this. Or, if they do, they don't know how to train themselves to take control of their thoughts. But with practice, it can be done. Everything we see in the world around us came into being because someone first thought of it in their mind. Take a moment to soak that in, because most of the time we don't even recognize this fact as we go about our day.



We take everything for granted because we're so used to it. We don't even think about all the effort and trial and error it took for us to get to the point we're at in human history where we can literally just hop in our car and drive across the country if we want to.

It used to take people months if they wanted to go from one side of the country to another. Going across the country literally meant that someone in your family was probably going to die along the way.

But now we can just hop on a plane and go from one side of the country to the other in a matter of hours. That's a significant accomplishment for humanity, and it's brought us closer together in ways people probably never thought possible.

The seed for every accomplishment is first planted in mind through thought. If we can control our thoughts and focus them on a particular desire, there is plenty of proof in the world around us that our limits are never what they seem. The only limits we have are the limits we allow to exist in our minds. So, if we expand our minds by increasing our thoughts, we can create anything.

Nobody can stop you from pursuing the expansion of your thoughts except for yourself. But if you can't control your emotions, you aren't in control of your thoughts. If you aren't in control of your thoughts, you aren't in control of your reality. And if you aren't in control of your reality, then you will never see your reality turn into what you want it to be.

The capacity to create something truly great in this world that provides value for a lot of people all starts in mind, but it doesn't end in the mind. Whatever plan you create in your brain has to get out into the material world through action, and that action has to be strong enough to inspire other people to come alongside you and join in the work.



You can't change the world by yourself. Nobody can. But you also can't change the world without knowing yourself. Most people are fighting a losing battle outside of their body, and they don't know the most critical battle they should be focused on is the one going on inside.

The entire world is inside your heart and your mind. There are plenty of things in the world designed to distract you from this fact. Millions of attacks on your attention and your emotions happen every day, and over and above these attacks' influence on you is your own conditioning.

But you can win this bloody internal war, and when you do, you win at life. When you win the civil war within yourself, the external war disappears. You're then able to easily connect with the people you need to communicate with to make big things happen, and the success and rewards you seek will come to you soon after that.

It's never what's happening on the outside that's the problem. The problem is always on the inside, and that means it's always something you can control. Don't buy into the distractions and illusions in the outside world. Stay focused on you, and work to develop control over your mind.

When you have strong relationships and control over your mind and actions, that's when you gain control over your reality and your results.

Are you willing to do what it takes to develop this level of self-control? Are you ready to work with others and help them succeed right alongside you? If you are, and you truly commit yourself to these things every day, you will accomplish the impossible. We all have this ability inside of us. It's up to you to claim it.



Chapter 9

Your Business is You

The first company I ever started led me to experience both the worst and the most significant time of my life. After this company's first year, I sold five Instagram accounts for close to a million dollars. This was the first time I'd ever made seven-figures. That was the "greatest" part.

The "worst" part was I went from operating a media agency using these accounts, where I was making a minimum of 40 grand a month and feeling like I was building something great, to being forced to start over with what I was doing entirely.

Before I sold these accounts, I was happy I was finally doing something significant with my business. I was working with Fortune 500 clients, and having a consistent six-figure income changed my life in a lot of positive ways.

But then the trouble started. My business partner and I didn't see eye to eye on how to move forward with our business. I was still pretty



inexperienced in running a business at this time, and I came to feel guilty about some of the decisions I had made. Looking back, I can see this guilt was not warranted, but I couldn't shake the feeling that I'd messed up in some way.

I didn't want to let my partner down, so I chose to exit the business and sell the Instagram accounts I was using to operate it. This was a tough decision to make. Sometimes I look back and wish I'd made a different one, but the opportunity to cash out for seven-figures was significant.

I split this money with another business partner I had at the time, but the payout was still significant. Experiencing this windfall of liquid cash was fun. But at the same time, it hurt to give up the accounts I'd invested so much of my time and energy into turning into assets.

I realized right then that what I was doing was never about the money once I'd gotten myself past the point of starvation. Giving up what I had been working on felt like going back to square one. I felt like I had nothing again.

Sure, I had significantly more financial resources to invest in something new, but I still felt like I'd lost all the leverage I used to have when I owned the accounts I sold. After taking some time to think this over, I learned one of the most important lessons I've ever learned in my entire life.

I discovered that the precious thing I'd gained by putting work into my business wasn't the leverage I'd created for myself or the monthly income I was able to generate. It was the experience itself.

The whole process of making my business successful enough that someone would want to buy it for seven-figures showed me that the value I'm able to create in the world is the direct result of the value I develop within



myself. The whole process of making my business successful enough that someone would want to buy it for seven-figures showed me that the value I'm able to create in the world is the direct result of the value I develop within myself. As I took a step back and looked at what I no longer owned and what I still possessed after giving up my significant assets, I realized the self-awareness, self-realization, and self-discipline I'd developed were worth way more than I could put a price on.

Even better than realizing that was the realization that no one can ever take away my knowledge and experience. By investing my time and energy into creating an incredible business, I had really been investing in creating a better version of myself.

My first business became more successful as time went on because I gained more knowledge and experience as time went on. The money this business made came from what I'd learned. After I realized my business was profitable because I was involved in it, I realized that if I involved myself in another company with the same level of integrity and discipline, that new business would become just as successful, if not more so.

I learned through this entire experience that even if I lost everything today, including my company, my assets, my leverage and my connections, I would not be left with nothing. Having this mindset has changed my entire approach to life. It's enabled me to take risks that other people might shy away from. These risks have paid off a lot of times and helped me grow rapidly without having to worry too much about what could happen if something goes wrong.

When you put your heart and soul into creating a business, that's a significant investment. You're literally putting your life on the line for a chance at success. But it's not a risky investment. It's actually the best investment you could possibly make.



You have to understand that the development of your business and its ultimate success is the direct result of how much time and energy you put into developing yourself as an individual. That's why entrepreneurship and personal development are so closely linked.

You've probably noticed that most of what I've talked about in this book is centered around how to live a successful life. That's because success in life and success in business are tightly interconnected.

No one who makes a lot of money in business or any other way is guaranteed to remain wealthy. Just because you come into wealth at some point in your life doesn't mean you're going to keep it forever. Plenty of insanely successful people have experienced financial struggles and made terrible personal decisions that have cost them big time.

If you're living life and doing business on a massive scale, one small mistake can lead to a considerable loss. Outside of making bad decisions, there are plenty of other things in life that can bankrupt you.

Look at the economic crash that happened in 2008. A lot of people lost everything they had, even though they didn't do anything wrong. They lost their jobs, their retirement savings, and all the value they'd built up in real estate that they owned.

It's pretty evident that formerly well-off people suddenly found themselves at the bottom when this crash happened. But if you look at what happened more carefully, that's not necessarily true. All the knowledge, discipline, principles, and determination these people developed to build their fortunes were not lost in the crash.

When you take any kind of initiative in your life, you take on risk. When you build something valuable, the other side of the coin is you could lose



control of it at some point. That's why becoming a successful person has almost nothing to do with how much money you make. Instead, it's all about the person you become in the process of building something you can be proud of.

It's better to stack and act broke. Forget partying and spending money on designer clothes. Focus on investing in your personal development and protecting the money you make so you can build generational wealth. Build a good reputation with good people who matter. Don't fall for the smoke and mirrors you see on social media—exotic rental cars and overpriced clothes.

I've messed this up myself and learned from it. I didn't pay attention to my finances and credit in the beginning, and I'm still paying for it to this day. It doesn't matter how much money you make if you don't invest it in something that returns actual value to you.

Your number one asset is yourself. I'm not telling you to not buy yourself nice things once in a while if they make you feel good. But make sure you're not just doing that to show off, because nobody cares anyways. If it's not building you or the people around you up in some way, it's probably not worth the money.

Invest in yourself and invest in developing your skillset. Buy things that enable you to achieve something worthwhile. No matter what you do, money is going to go out, and, if you're living right, money is going to come in. So, don't hold onto money too tightly either.

Contrary to popular belief, money is not the most valuable thing you can possess. The most valuable thing every single person on this earth has is their time. When you put your time into developing your own business and going after what you want in life, that's making a worthwhile investment. Because when you do this, you always gain life experience, skills, and more profound knowledge, and that's what life is all about.



It is not the accumulation of things that are going to make you feel good long-term. It is the ability to make a more considerable investment in yourself, your future, your continued success, and the continued prosperity of the people you care about the most. Even when you get handed a shitty deck of cards by life, if you have been investing your time and energy into something that really matters to you, you will still be able to smile through the pain.

When you get knocked down, you can always rebuild. You can always start over from nothing. You will know that's true, especially if you started from nothing, to begin with. If you're doing the work, seeking out the right knowledge, and putting in the hours to get the experience you need to succeed, you have nothing to fear. Failure just means it's time for you to pivot.

Don't ever forget how you do one thing is how you do everything. If you were able to apply yourself to one thing and make it work, then you will be able to apply yourself to another thing and make it work.

When I sold my business, it was hard on me. There's no doubt about that. But all I really lost was the name I'd built up for my brand. In the end, I discovered that my brand name didn't really mean anything. The results I drove for people under that brand name were what people wanted to pay me for.

My work ethic was what clients wanted. My resiliency, persistence, my discipline, and my commitment to generating results are where the value was in my business. When I finally realized that, I felt empowered by the situation I found myself in instead of feeling screwed by it.

Once I took stock of where I was at, everything started to look much better. I had money in the bank, and I could start over fresh and pursue something new. I decided to aim even higher this time.



Before selling my accounts, I was making about \$40,000 a month, but with my very next business, I was able to bring in even more. This boosted my confidence even higher, and I knew I would never again be broke and hungry.

After rebuilding, my business turned into a seven-figure business. Once I hit this level, I had another realization. I realized I would never again operate less than seven-figures per year business. I realized who I had become, and I realized it was now so ingrained into my character to perform at a high level and provide so much value that I could never again return to doing anything less.

My level of experience and my skill set does not allow me to operate below where I'm already at. I have high standards, and I will never lower the bar on them. They allow me to provide value to my clients that are way beyond what they can find anywhere else. And when you offer an insane amount of value to other people in the world, you are always rewarded.

Knowing that my personal character is the foundation for everything gives me the confidence to try new things. I'm not afraid to lose. I'm not afraid to make fast and logical decisions while everybody else lets their emotions dictate what they will and won't do.

I don't act on raw emotion or let it influence me. Making moves based on raw emotion without logical evaluation can be detrimental to personal success and happiness. The most influential person is the one who can harness their emotions and use logic to make effective decisions to achieve the best possible outcomes.

That doesn't mean every decision you make is going to be the right one, but the more experience you have executing decisions, the more you will increase your odds of being right when you make one. You're accountable for



every word you speak and action you take, so make your words and your actions count.

Success is simple, but it's not "easy," even if you've experienced it once before. You have to know when to be patient and when to attack. You have to handle yourself like a professional, and also learn how to manage the emotions of the people you work with daily.

There is a fine line between having a high EQ (emotional quotient) and just being skilled at the art of manipulation. The thing that makes these two things different is the intent behind the action. If the intention behind the action is pure and genuine, and it's done to manage negative emotions, so both parties are impacted positively, that's EQ.

However, if someone takes an action, and its intent is malicious and only benefits one side, that's manipulation. Watch out for the people who play both sides of the fence. They never have your best interest at heart. Don't allow Trojan horses into your house, or you will get slaughtered when you're not even looking.

The ability to spot Trojan horses and know who has your best interest in mind comes only from experience. If I'm feeling "iffy" about someone's intentions, I've learned to follow that intuition, cut them off, and move on. Life is too short to play in toxic environments. It's better to do what you think is right and suffer the consequences than to do nothing at all and live with regret.

In the military, one of the biggest lessons I learned is that when everything goes to shit, that's when you have to fall back on your training. You can consider the experiences you have when you're trying to go from the bottom to the top in business as your training for when things get hard later



on. When the pressure starts to crank up in your life for whatever reason, just remember all that you've learned, and let your inner wisdom take over the controls.

If you do this, you can be confident that you will come through for your clients, your employees, and anyone else whose livelihood is on the line at a critical moment. That's what makes a business so exciting. It's the perfect vehicle to use to deliver massive value to other people in your life, and there is nothing more fulfilling than being able to do that.

If you want to be able to deliver value to everyone around you all the time, you have to go out and start doing it in whatever way you can. Hands-on training is the only way to learn how to do this. The worst thing you could possibly do is expect to read a book and then automatically become a value-providing machine.

That's not how it works. You have to condition your mind, body, and heart to be able to deliver results, even when you're taking enemy fire from every direction. There's no such thing as good advice that doesn't come from direct experience. That's why I don't talk ever talk about anything I haven't proven in my own personal life.

A lot of people are stuck in their lives and in their businesses because they're playing a gigantic game of telephone, and they don't even know it. Everything they're doing in their lives they learned from somebody else, who learned it from somebody else, who learned it from somebody else. That means the information they're acting on 99% of the time is not even accurate.

That's why it's essential to develop your own knowledge through experience, and then you can share it with people. Tell them what you've been through. Tell them where you are right now, and tell them where you



want to go. Tell them what you've tried to do in order to get there, and what has and hasn't worked.

Free yourself from the tendency to over-consume and never produce. Once you've freed yourself from this trap, it doesn't matter who attacks you. It doesn't matter what goes wrong. It doesn't matter how much you gain or how much you lose. Because when you're free to create, you can capture and hold onto your own creative flow. That's when the fun begins because then you realize you are not your business. Your business is you.



Chapter 10

Who Are You?

What do you think about when you have time to think a lot? When your mind is free to wander, where does it go? What things do you wish you could do if you just had the means? If you're stressed right now, I get it. If you're barely getting by, I understand that too. Your mind might not be able to focus on anything else other than how you're going to eat today.

That's the daily reality for some people. I've been there. But when you have even just a moment to relax, and you're able to let your mind go wherever it wants to go and dream even just a little bit, what do you think about?

Do you think about writing your own book? Do you think about writing songs or poetry? Do you think about starting a journal or blog about what's happening in your life? Do you look at photos online and think about traveling to other countries? Do you watch movies and think about how they were made?



When you're doing nothing, and you go to Google, what type of thing do you search for? When you're sitting at home on your phone, and you're scrolling through millions of pages, where do you land? What topics capture your attention?

Are you into fashion? Do you love art? Do you gravitate toward luxury items? Do you like finding cool stuff at thrift shops? Do you care more about sports than anyone you know? Do you like to read and watch spiritual content?

What are you looking at on a daily basis that you're passionate about? What do you want to know everything about? If you're sitting around doing nothing in the hood, and you pull out your phone to cure the boredom, what do you look at?

You might be thinking, "What the is this guy going on about? Who cares about all the stuff I look at in my free time?" Well, honestly, I don't care what you're looking at, but you should. Because paying attention to what you're consuming and absorbing in your free time is the best way to gain an understanding of your actual interests.

If you want to take control of your life, and do something that makes you happy, whether that be starting your own business or working in a specific industry, you have to know what interests you. The sad thing is almost no one takes the time to think about what they're actually interested in when they try to make a plan for their life.

If you ask most people what they want to do with their lives, they have no idea. The vast majority of people, even people in their 40s and 50s, are just going with the flow. They don't even realize they have alternatives about how their life is going to go.

Older people with this problem have typically given up trying to have some control over of their lives after experiencing too much failure. Young people just



don't know it's possible to live a life they enjoy, so they don't even know they should try.

This is why the vast majority of people think their lives are directed by fate. They believe that whatever opportunity they stumble upon to do something that puts food on the table must be the right one for them, even if it's an opportunity that, if they take it, is going to make them unhappy. This is how and why people settle for a mediocre life.

But you don't have to live a mediocre life just because all the opportunities you see around you are average. It doesn't even matter if you see no opportunities around you at all. It's not immediate access to opportunities that matter. It's your ability to focus on your interests that will allow you to become the right person for the right opportunity, even before it shows up in your life.

I started with absolutely no access to opportunity. But this didn't hold me back, and if your situation looks anything like mine did, you don't need to worry that you're going to be held back either. Nobody knows who they need to know in the beginning, and they don't understand what they need to know either.

If you spend your time developing your talent, however you can, you will eventually come into contact with the right people. But to establish any kind of talent at a high level, you have to be doing something you genuinely have an interest in.

The major roadblock for everyone that I talk to daily is not that they don't know the right people, but that they don't know themselves. They don't know what they like and don't like, so they don't know where to begin.

I get hundreds of messages a day from people all over the world asking me, "How do I get started?" It's straightforward. You have to figure out what you're interested in. If



you think you have no interests that could possibly make you any kind of money, I can guarantee you that's not true.

But to begin with, just forget about money. What would you like to do if money, time, and access to the right people or knowledge were not an obstacle for you? If you allow yourself to be free of the mental baggage most people carry around that continually tells them they can't succeed doing something they love, you're headed in the right direction.

You have a unique purpose in this world, and the key to unlocking that purpose is first taking note of the things you always return to thinking about doing over and over. What you dream about does matter. What you gravitated toward as a kid does matter. You have to allow yourself to be a kid again, and just let go of all the conditioning society has beat into your mind.

That's how you get started. If you want to, take a moment right now to write down the things you dream about or have dreamt about doing in the past. And recognize that "I'm just not interested in anything" is an excuse you should never allow yourself to make again.

Once you have a list of a few things you're interested in, you have a good starting point. That's the first simple step you must take to get started with the process of changing your life and bettering your situation.

The next step is to take a look at your skillset. You probably already have a good idea of whether you're better at math or better at reading and writing. Most people are better at one of these areas than they are the other, but it's really a spectrum.

If you're somewhere in the middle, and you like both things equally, there's nothing wrong with that. If you don't like math or reading and writing, but you love to talk to people, that's a great strength to have as well.



After you've decided where you're at when it comes to those areas, the next thing to think about is how you typically view the world. Do you tend to focus more on the past? Or do you tend to focus more on the future? Are you good at understanding history and extracting the lessons from it? Or would you rather spend your time innovating, experimenting, and making projections about what might happen in the future?

Be honest with yourself when you're answering these questions. There's no point in pretending you like something you don't like. If you recognize that you're weak in some areas, there is a simple solution: don't design a life where you have to focus on those areas. Instead, create a life that allows you to focus entirely on things you're already good at, and become the best at those things. That is the secret to success, most people don't know.

Most people expect themselves to excel in every single area of life, but that's just not how it works. If you spend all of your time trying to fix your weaknesses, you will spend not nearly enough time exploiting your strengths. But if you focus on what you're naturally good at, you will only get better at those things with time.

Once you have a list of a few things you're interested in, you have a good starting point. That's the first simple step you must take to get started with the process of changing your life and bettering your situation.

When you do this, you're able to develop your natural ability until you get to the point where you have superhuman strength in that area.

Superhuman strength in just one area of your life is enough to create massive success. Everything you're not good at can be outsourced over time, giving you more freedom to focus on developing your unique abilities.

If you follow this strategy, you will find that everything you're not good at doesn't matter so much. No human being can do everything alone, so don't expect



yourself to be the exception. When you recognize something is difficult for you, but still needs to be done, make a note to hire someone else to do it as soon as you can afford to.

After recognizing even a single thing you might enjoy doing that you are good at, you can start thinking about how to monetize it. Don't think about how you're going to "make a living" doing this thing just yet. Just figure out a way you might be able to make even a small amount of money doing the thing you like doing, then go for it.

Make a plan you can follow that will make you a small amount of money. Even if you only make \$10 doing the thing you love, that could be the most satisfying \$10 you've ever earned. This is how you recondition yourself to enjoy your work and value your personal skill set.

If you can get past the desire to bring in thousands of dollars immediately, you can nurture the demand for whatever you're doing by selling it for a low price. You absolutely do not have to go this route, but if you're lacking confidence in your work, or you know you need to gain more experience, it works.

If you're doing something you love to do and giving it to people for a fantastic price, you will gain momentum with it. Even when the money hasn't shown up yet like you want it to, work as if you were being paid top dollar. This will help you increase the quality of your work faster.

As your pipeline fills up, and you complete more work, you will learn more about your subject than you could possibly learn by just reading about it. When you come to the point where you understand what you don't know and what you'd like to know, that's the time to dig in deeper, with extreme focus. Most people don't get to this point, so if you do, you will start to be better at what you do than most of your competition.



If you're good at writing, for example, you might decide you want to become a content creator for clients. You might not even know what type of clients you'd like to write for, but that shouldn't stop you from getting started with actually creating content. Instead of waiting around for an opportunity, you could go online right now and start your own blog for free.

You could write whatever you want there. You could practice writing for different companies on different topics you find interesting. If you make something you think is exceptional, you could send it to the company you created it for. See what they think. Ask for their feedback. Offer to make more content for them if they like it.

In today's world, you don't have to wait around for somebody else's approval before you get started doing something you love. The tools you need to succeed and maximize your specific skill set are out there and well within your reach.

You could write your own poetry book. You could write a novel. You could write about your experiences growing up. It hasn't always been possible for anyone in the world to do this, but it is now—even if you have minimal resources to put behind it.

Do not let your inexperience with anything hold you back. Do not think you have to do everything correctly on your first try. Do not think you have to start with any level of expertise.

Sure, you might burn through some opportunities in the beginning if you're not 100% prepared, but you won't ever be ready to do anything significant if you just sit around and don't do shit. It doesn't matter where you start from with something because where you start from is only the beginning.



Let's say you want to start a store and sell physical products to customers. There used to be a lot of obstacles standing in front of people who wanted to do this. Setting up this kind of business used to require a loan from the bank, a good store location people want to shop at, and a personal connection to a network of suppliers willing to sell your products at wholesale prices.

These obstacles no longer exist. You can find product suppliers online very quickly. You can create an online store so customers from all over the world can shop with you. And you can do all of this for almost nothing. There's no need to go into debt to start a store anymore. The only major challenge left is figuring out how to bring customers in, and there are tons of free ways you could do that.

Whatever you want to do, you can do. You have to trust that your natural strengths will carry you through to success, and immediately put whatever plan you come up with into action. Forget about whether or not you feel "passionate" about your strengths. I don't believe in passion, because passion fades no matter how much you love something. You have to create your own passion.

Everybody is passionate about making a lot of money for doing only a little bit of work. How many people are passionate about doing the things nobody else wants to do? If you can create a passion for doing the things nobody else will touch, because they just want to get rich quick, you can become a leader in that market extremely fast.

You might find yourself feeling passionate about one thing one day, and then feeling totally uninterested in it the next. For example, I could be passionate about marketing today, and tomorrow, I could change my mind and be passionate about art instead.



I have the power to make that choice if I want to, and so do you. But if you're willing to stay dedicated to one particular thing, no matter what it is, passion for it will follow and continue to build until it's too strong to fade away. You have to make the choice to be passionate about the things you're good at. It doesn't matter what you find interesting as long as you apply yourself. Take control and direct your interests. This is the path that leads to mastery. If you're willing to dedicate yourself to something, good things will happen. Others will start to take notice if you are working harder than anybody else, and that will open up the opportunity for you to do even more of what you love, every single day.



Chapter 11

The Only Shortcut to Success

After you've taken the time to think about what you're interested in, to figure out if it's the "right" thing for you to do, you have to do it. I don't mean just test the waters. I mean going for it, all out. Even if you fail, you will learn the direction you should take much faster by going all out from the get-go versus just sitting around and thinking about what you should do.

For example, if you're interested in skydiving, you could spend a ton of time reading about skydiving and watching videos of other people skydiving. Or, you could just immediately follow that interest, go 3,000 feet up in the air, and get ready to jump out of a plane.

The moment you jump out of that plane is the moment you're going to find out if skydiving is for you or not. Just sitting there on the plane is not enough. If all you do is sit around and think about skydiving, you're never going to know what it's actually like to fall to the earth going 100 to 200 miles per hour.



The only shortcut to success is taking action right now, rather than waiting until tomorrow. Forget about what could happen if you fail. Failure only means you are one step closer to knowing how to succeed. The only way to figure out what you like and what you want to do with your life is to start trying out different paths.

Try anything. Do anything you feel might play to your strengths, and keep going in the direction of your strengths at every turn. If you do this, you will find what out you're actually the best at exceptionally quickly. See what you stick with, and see what sticks to you. After that, find out how you can make money, either directly or indirectly, from this one thing you're the best at. If you love surfing, for example, you might not be able to become a pro surfer, or maybe you will be able to. But if you try to do that and fail, and you find out you need to train harder to reach that level, at that point you can come up with a training plan that will get you there.

Even if what you want to do is beyond your reach for some reason, there are still plenty of ways you can make money by following your interest. Sticking with the surfing example, you could sell surfboards, or you could do marketing for a surfboard company, etc.

Even if you have no marketing experience, if you know everything there is to know about a particular subject, and you know the product you're trying to market better than anybody else, you can absolutely kill it. When you know the exact person, who needs a specific product, marketing that product becomes second nature.

There are so many different avenues you can take one particular interest. When you discover an interest you have by looking at who you are and what you like, that's your first point of clarity. Once you have this first point of clarity, you have to attack it to gain your second point of clarity. This second point of clarity is the wisdom that comes from experience.



These two points of clarity take root and grow out of self-awareness. Self-awareness is a prerequisite for any kind of success. But self-awareness is hard to develop when everything around you is on fire.

Focusing on your long-term goals can feel impossible when nothing you plan seems to work outright. When this is your situation, step back. Breathe. Attack whatever problems you're facing one by one.

Life sucks when you're getting hit from every direction by bills, debt, people using you, friends turning their back, hunger, work, stress, relationship issues, etc. When all this stuff piles upon you, it's normal to feel overwhelmed and anxious.

But, please, remember this: all you have to do is stop, breathe, prioritize and execute. Identify the most immediate threat to your life and goals first, then attack it. Once you've got that taken care of, move on to the next threat.

It's impossible to multi-task and focus on every problem you're facing in your life at the same time. The only way to take control of your life is to teach yourself to attack your problems one by one. Create stability and security first, then and only then can you reevaluate your situation and create bigger long-term goals.

If you're going through a rough time right now, take a second just to appreciate the fact that you're still alive. Be grateful for your next breath. Nothing has been able to stop you from getting this far. You're reading this book right now because you want to change your life, and if that's your desire, it's going to happen.

If you've ever been in love with someone and lost that relationship, recognize the fact that even heartbreak hasn't kept you from moving forward, and heartbreak is one of the hardest things to overcome. If you've ever been in a violent fight, been shot at, or been to war, realize that not even that has stopped you from getting to this moment.



You're a human being, and no failure you've ever experienced in any area of your life has kept you from waking up to live another day and try again. Even if the only thing you can feel in your life right now is pain, the beauty of that is you're still here.

You're still alive. Some people can't even feel pain anymore. So, when you feel pain, smile because you haven't lost that sensitivity, and keep moving forward.

Allow yourself some mental distance from your situation. Try to dig into it from a less personal point of view. If you hate your life, why do you hate it? If you've had nothing but bad luck, have you gotten pissed off about that and turned your bad luck into bad karma by treating the people around you like shit?

Whatever your situation is, realize things can change, but it's going to take some work on your part. I'm not talking about surface-level work. I'm talking about getting to the root of your problems and ripping that root out, so you don't continually find yourself in bad situations for the rest of your life.

95% of the time, getting to the root of any problem you are facing means being completely honest with yourself about the fact that you created the problem yourself. That is why it is always worth taking some time to figure out why you are experiencing what you are experiencing. The most likely answer is you are experiencing stress and all kinds of emotional issues because you did something.

Most people don't like to own up to the fact that they've played any kind of role in their own presently bad situation. That's why people get stuck in unhealthy emotional patterns for years, and in some cases, for their entire lives. They blame everything on other people or situations beyond their control. When they do this, they lose the ability to change anything about their lives.



Then they start to think life is the way it is only because of other people —people they’ve already determined are always out to get them. Once that’s been decided, they look for more evidence to support that as the truth. Unfortunately, they always find it. There is no more hopeless of a situation to be in than this one.

No matter what is happening in your life, the key to turning it all around and changing your situation is in taking ownership of absolutely everything that’s happening. I’m talking about taking ownership of both the good and the bad. To change, you have to accept that most of the things in your life that you don’t want in your life are there because you put them there.

Whether you like the way it feels to acknowledge that or not, it’s the truth. People are quick to take all the credit when good things happen to them in their lives. But nobody wants to take responsibility, even for their own actions, when everything goes to shit.

Sure, you were born into whatever situation you were born into— that’s not your fault, and it wasn’t your choice. But you’re here now, and your life and how you live it is up to you to determine. When you’re faced with different situations in life, you are going to have to make decisions. Every decision you make is a cause, and every cause will produce at least one effect.

If you make one decision, and you do one thing, a lot of times this will produce multiple effects you could have never predicted. It’s easy to forget how powerful the decisions you make really are.

Since just one decision you make can produce multiple positive or negative effects in your life, it’s easy to forget why something positive or negative is happening to you. It’s easy to forget that the primary source of everything you experience in your life is you.



That's why you have to take a step back and analyze how you ended up wherever you've ended up. That's the only way to trace everything you're experiencing in your life back to the root cause, which is almost always something you chose to do or chose not to do.

This is a fundamental explanation of how everything in life works. If everything is going fucking wrong in your life, and you can't think of one positive thing about it, it's apparent that you're doing at least one thing was wrong. That's the honest truth.

The good news is, nothing in life is permanent, and you might not have to make a ridiculous amount of changes to your life if you take the time to find and isolate the root cause of most of your problems. Once you've done that, you can rip that root out and clear up multiple issues in your life at once.

It sounds simple, but you can't just read this, and then move on with your life. That will change nothing. Your only option is to find the root cause of your problems inside of yourself, and then make a change. If you dig for the root that's producing all the adverse effects in your life, most likely what you're going to have to do, once you find it, is change the way you perceive your entire life.

This is a significant change to make. The average person doesn't even know this is possible. But when you change the way you perceive your life, you automatically change the way you live it. When you change the way you live your life, your experience of it also changes dramatically.

It's hard to change the way you perceive life ultimately. It's something I had to do, and it required a lot of work. However, it's absolutely necessary to do this if your entire life is completely fucked up.



To begin the process of changing how you perceive life, it goes back to having a conversation with yourself. Ask yourself why things are so bad. Lay it all out on the table. Write down why nothing is good in your life right now, and admit to yourself that things are fucked up. That's much better than ignoring your problems and hoping they will all go away.

Once you've identified everything that's going wrong that has you stressed to the absolute maximum, to the point where you can barely think, start compartmentalizing. Take all the big problems that look scary and break them down into their smaller parts.

Look at these small parts of your life and say, "This part of my life is fucked up because I did this specific thing." Then figure out how to fix that part of your life, and let everything else go for the time being. You can come back to your other problems later on, once you've gotten at least part of your life in order. As I mentioned earlier, you might find that when you make one positive change in your life, multiple problems in your life will resolve on their own.

For example, let's say you're broke, and you don't have a place to live. What's the cause of you being broke? It might be that you don't have a job. Why don't you have a job? It might be that you don't have any skills. Why don't you have any skills? It might be because you haven't taken the time to sit down and learn any.

When you break down the big problem of not having a place to live this way, the solution becomes way easier to see. The simple answer to this big problem is you need to acquire some skills so you can get a job, make money, and be able to pay for a place to live.

Acquiring skills in today's world is not difficult if you apply yourself. If you really want to learn how to do something, all you have to do is go to Google, type in



what you want to know how to do, and then follow the instructions you find. It's really that easy.

In the past, it was much more difficult for people to figure out how to solve problems like this. People didn't have options when it came to their work and livelihood. If your family was full of farmers, you had to be a farmer. You didn't have the option to learn how to do something else. Whatever your family did, that's what you did. You didn't have a choice.

This has completely changed. Now you have unlimited options. There are experts on the internet willing and able to teach you everything you need to know about anything you're interested in. Don't tell yourself you can't succeed because today's world is too competitive or some other bullshit reason.

Your chances of having success doing something you love right now are 100% better than they've ever been at any point in human history. You have to recognize this and take advantage of it. Don't let people who don't believe in the possibility of success—people in your environment who are stuck in their ways—keep you from going after what you want. The knowledge you need to succeed is available.

There are no good excuses for not developing any skills. Everything you could ever want to know is at your fingertips. All you have to do is sit down, breath, focus, look at what's going on around you, and make a decision. Find out where you fit in the big picture.

Point out to yourself where you have gone wrong, and then decide you're going to get to the root of your problems yourself. Get to the very bottom. Figure out how the bad seeds were planted in your heart and mind. Catch them before they can grow into bigger weeds, and then plant better seeds by changing your actions.



Change your status in your own mind from being somebody that stays caught in a trap as a victim, to someone who has the right mindset and knows how to fix the problems they're faced with in life. Even if it seems like there's a lot that needs fixing, when you focus only on what you can change personally, the whole task becomes a lot less overwhelming.

Some things you can change instantly just by changing the way you look at your problems. Other things take more time. But the important thing to understand that I want to drive home one last time is: you are responsible.

You can change your life. Some people don't want to take ownership of their problems, but if you want your life to get better, that can't be you.

There is no more pointing the finger. There is no more blaming anyone for anything. There's no more walking away from a bad situation in your life and doing nothing about it. From this day forward, the only person you're allowed to point the finger at is yourself.

If you take this advice, you will gain clarity. When you gain clarity, you will increase self-awareness. And when you have self-awareness, no problem you face can't be solved. If and when you encounter a problem, all you have to do is step in, fix it, turn back around, and get back to work—on yourself.



Chapter 12

Plan Ass Backwards

If you're starting out in a negative environment like the one I grew up in, and you currently have nothing, the first thing you have to do is decide what you want immediately. Don't take too much time to think about this. Just quickly create a general end goal, and then focus all of your attention on figuring out what you already know that can help you get there.

If you want to get anywhere at all, you absolutely have to understand where you're at right now. Let's say you want to get to the airport. To do that, you obviously have to figure out where you're at in the airport first. Then you can determine how far you're going to have to go to get there and in what direction you're going to have to travel.

When you make a plan to do anything at all, always plan ass-backward. For example, if you want to get to LA, first you have to look at where you are right now. Let's say you're in Philly.



To go from Philly to LA, you're probably going to need to take a flight. To buy a plane ticket, you're going to need money. To get that money, you're going to have to do some kind of work.

Breaking it down even further: to work, you're going to have to have some kind of job. To get a job, you're going to have to apply for one. To apply for a job, you're going to have to go someplace that's hiring and fill out an application.

Remember, in this example, we wanted to go to LA. Then we figured out that to get there, we needed to get on a flight.

Since we want to go to LA, and we know where we are right now, we have to take one single action to get us a little bit closer. That action is filling out a job application, so we can work. Once we've got a job, the next chain of events happens—we work, we get money, we buy the flight, and we get to LA. Mission accomplished.

If we didn't know where we were, and we didn't know we wanted to get to LA, we might not have taken the action of going to get a job. Or, we might have gone and got a job, worked, made money, and then blown it on something stupid instead of buying a flight to LA.

You may think this example is too simplistic to be useful, but you'd be surprised how many people never get to where they want to go in life, only because they never look at where they are right now, and they never decide where they want to get to. Instead, they have zero goals and zero priorities.

If you have no goals and no priorities, even if you accidentally stumble upon a good opportunity, it's hard to recognize it. When you don't know



where you're trying to go, what happens is you end up taking random action that serves no purpose.

But if you figure out where you are right now, and you have an end goal in mind, you can definitely get there no matter how long it takes you. Even if the only job you can get is one that pays \$7.25 an hour, you could still save enough money over time to buy yourself a flight to LA.

Let us look at another example to drive this point home. Let us say you want to buy a gallon of milk. What do you have to do to do that? Well, assuming you have already got a few dollars to pay for that gallon of milk, all you have to do is go to the store and get it.

But how are you going to get to the store? Most likely, you're going to get in a car and drive there. To drive a car, what do you need? You need your car keys. Once you've got your keys, you can take them to your vehicle, put them in the ignition, and then drive yourself to the store to get the milk.

The importance of having goals is so apparent when we look at typical, everyday situations like the one I just described. Accomplishing a simple goal such as buying a gallon of milk never starts with you saying to yourself, "Shit, I'm at my house right now, and I really want to just hold onto my car keys for a while. Let me grab those. Okay, got them. I guess since I have my keys now, I'll use them in my car. I should go to my car. Okay, now I'm in my car. I guess I'll drive to the store. Here I am at the store. What should I buy? I guess I'll get a gallon of milk."

That's not how life fucking works. Yet people think they can create a satisfying and successful life for themselves using that sort of logic and reasoning. They think they can



create a thriving business without even knowing what kind of value their business is going to provide to other people. As a result, a lot of people end up doing random shit, hoping it works, and going through life blind.

They don't understand the fact that if they simply set a destination, they already have all the intelligence necessary to get themselves there. They just need to stop setting roadblocks in front of their own path.

It's simple for almost anyone to decide they want a gallon of milk and then go get it at the store. It's just as simple for anyone to decide they want to change their lives and then change it. No matter what you want to accomplish, if you think about it in the same way as you might think about going to buy a gallon of milk, you can achieve it.

If you know your starting point, and you have an end goal in mind, the decisions you must make to reach your goal become obvious. Your starting point might be, "Well, right now I'm in the hood," or maybe you're starting from someplace better than that. But wherever you are, what you have around you, good or bad, is what you have to work with.

Your environment does not define who you are or who you have to be. You do. You deserve better than what you allow yourself to have based on your surroundings. You get what you tolerate. When you change what you endure in your life and raise your standards, the direction of your life will change.

The only thing that can keep you from changing your standards in life is distractions. Think about what society wants you to focus on. Society wants you to spend all of your free time watching sports, spending money on entertainment, reading all the latest celebrity gossip, getting involved in drama, and watching negative news about how the whole world is going to shit.



Instead of wasting your time on all of that, and doing nothing about changing your personal situation, start spending your time learning how to add value to the world. This doesn't mean learning how to finesse people into thinking you're providing value to them. That's just learning how to be a good liar, and liars always get what they deserve.

Shortcuts, even if they appear to work, only lead to unsustainable outcomes. When you set a goal, there can be a lot of steps you have to take in between where you are starting from and where you want to go. It can be a long and painful process to reach a goal. But this is not a bad thing. It's through this long and painful processes that you learn the skills and wisdom you need to achieve the success you seek.

If you learn to enjoy expending the effort it takes to sharpen your skills and gain more points of reference, you will take hold of what you need to know to add value to other people in the world. The natural consequence of adding value to others is receiving value in return. That might come in the form of money or some other kind of help you need when you need it.

It might take longer to win the game of life this way, but it's worth it. Instead of giving in to distractions, focus on your skills and your hobbies. Take a good look at your own psychology. Try to understand the people around you.

If all you see are people, who are not good examples for you to follow, figure out how you can be different than them. Seek out different social experiences and different social circles. When you learn something new, implement it in your own life.

Remember, there is nothing in your life you can't change. It's true—you're going to be good at some things and bad at others. A lot of people take that



to mean they're not as good as other people who seem to have it all together. They let their deep knowledge of their own flaws talk them into feeling like a piece of shit, and they allow their superficial knowledge of other people's strengths talk them into putting other people up on a pedestal.

If you get into a habit of always worshipping everybody else, you will lose your sense of self. You won't be able to see anything good about yourself in comparison. You might start to think everybody else is better than you, and that's not fucking true. Everybody, from the greatest athlete in the world to the guy who works at the grocery store stocking the shelves, is just a human being.

You might be a shy person. You might think you can't talk to people, or you might just be too afraid to do anything because you think you'll be judged. Maybe you're worried you won't make a good impression on other people because you prefer to think rather than talk, but that doesn't fucking matter.

Maybe you won't change completely, but if you put in the effort, you can find a way to work around any of the things you think are holding you back. On the other side, your mental barriers are life's most significant rewards.

Ask yourself some personal questions about who you are and what you're capable of, and then really observe the answers you come up with. Decide whether or not who you think you are right now is who you need to be to accomplish your goals. Because, remember, determining where you are right now in life is the first step. The second step is deciding where you want to go and taking action.

I don't care how obvious you think this advice sounds, and I don't care how many times I have to repeat it until you get it. Because anyone who believes they're stuck in life does not understand this, even if they've heard it a million times. Hearing



this advice but not acting on it is the worst possible thing you could do if you don't like your life as it is right now.

A lot of people want to keep their options open. They don't want to do anything until they have a perfect plan that will get them to their goal without any struggle. Chances are other people have done what you want to do and can help you do it. But it will always be on you to decide how hard you're going to work and how long you're going to keep at it until you get the results you're looking for.

Success requires sacrifice, and no matter how successful you become, this reality never goes away. If you're just starting out in business, you probably don't have money, but what you do have is time. You could spend this time doing something relaxing or entertaining, but if you want to be rewarded for how you use it in some way, it has to be sacrificed. It has to be invested into an area that's going to add value to the world and help you grow.

The more successful you become, the more you realize how valuable your time actually is. You have to learn to cut things out and sacrifice them to get what you want. If you're spending time doing things that won't take you where you want to go, you have to stop doing that and start spending your time on things that will.

All gain in life, whether that be financial, relational, physical or emotional, comes from sacrifice. There is no such thing as getting something for nothing in this world. People often fantasize about their plans, but they dread their execution. The magic you're looking for is in the work you're avoiding.

Do you want to win? If you do, put in the work. Don't sit at your computer, stare at your notebook or pretend to be busy while wondering why you're not achieving



anything. If you're doing that kind of thing, stop, and be honest with yourself. Are you really doing anything to push yourself forward?

I used to have the same problem. I'd allow myself to dream and plan and think about how great reaching my end goal was going to be, but I would stop there. Things took a different turn when I stopped fantasizing and started putting in the work. Change happens when you sacrifice for it.

When you work a job to get paid money, you're sacrificing your time and putting it to work for your employer. When you're an individual who has their own business, you have to make these kinds sacrifices in advance of ever getting paid a dime.

You might have to give up hours and hours of your time just to learn how to do something really well before anyone wants to pay you money to do it. That's just the way it works. You have to have a bit of faith that if you put in the work upfront, eventually it will pay off.

I work and sacrifice more of my time as an entrepreneur and business owner than I would have to if I worked a regular job. But I like my work, and what it affords me, so I prefer things to be this way. It can be hard for someone to leave a good 9-5 job. If you're starting from a place of already having an easy job, instead of looking at where you are as a comfortable place to be in life, if you want more, you have to view your situation differently.

You have a set amount of hours you have to be at your job, and you have a guaranteed income you're going to bring in each month. That's a stable place to be, but it can make you complacent. Instead of being satisfied, you have to look for a way to leverage all the time you have leftover after working your full-time job each day or each week.



Life isn't just about money. It's also about your happiness. You can have all the comforts and money you want and still be unhappy if you're doing something you hate. That's due to the inherent nature of life most people don't pay attention to. They don't even think about this until they're in a position where they are doing fine on the outside, but they still can't figure out why they're hating everything. This is an entirely different battle than the battle against going hungry. The nature of the enemy is different, but it's still up to you to defeat it.

No matter who you are, you have to figure out a way to increase your value to the world. That's the bottom line. You have to increase your value by investing whatever you have into yourself. The most valuable thing each of us has is our time. That's why when we invest it, we gain sweat equity, which is the most valuable thing you can acquire in life.

People often get confused about what business and entrepreneurship is all about. Especially in the marketing space, becoming an entrepreneur gets confused with becoming a celebrity. They're not the same fucking thing.

Nobody gives a fuck about how popular you are. It's all about your ability to get results for people. That should be your end goal when you're starting a business. That's what you're shooting for. If you want to provide value at a high level, you have to invest your time into learning how to do that, not invest it into becoming the most popular businessperson on the planet.

You don't even need to make sure everybody knows who you are. You only need to make yourself known to a particular set of people—the people who have money to pay you for your skill. That's fucking it. You could be the least famous person in the world and still make billions every single year.



Don't believe me? Well, how many of the world's wealthiest people can you name off the top of your head? Maybe you know the names of the top two or three, but unless you've studied this list and tried to memorize it, you probably can't name even half of the people on it.

Most of them stay out of the limelight, and that's because money doesn't care if you're a celebrity. It doesn't care if you're famous or cool, and it doesn't even care where the fuck you came from. If you can provide value to other people, you will get paid for it.

Understanding this can change your entire fucking life. Understand where you're at now, and know where you want to go. Where you want to go is to a point where you can provide value to others in some way that's totally unique to you. That's where you need to be if you want to be rewarded.

The biggest reason people fail is they don't understand this. They're confused because everybody out there is spreading a different message about what it takes to be successful. A lot of times, people spreading all the motivational entrepreneur bullshit aren't even successful themselves.

All they're doing is throwing a bunch of advice up against a wall of human beings and watching to see what happens next. But crappy advice will only get you crappy results, so stick to what's true. If you want to be rewarded, provide value. If you want to get somewhere, plan ass backwards.



Chapter 13

Build Your Own Fires

When you first start out in business for yourself or start doing anything new, you may not have a lot of self-confidence. You may not trust yourself because you haven't had any success yet. When this is the case, it can be tempting to take just about any answer or "hack" you come across at face value and start applying it right away.

You will notice I haven't given you any such thing in this book. I don't believe in "hacks." I don't believe in fake advice, meaning any advice that wasn't earned through experience. I've shared my story with you in this book already, so you know I've learned the things I've talked about through my own experience,

I don't care about making my life look perfect to other people. There's nothing wrong with fucking up, making mistakes, losing clients, losing friends, not knowing



We all fuck up in more ways than most of us care to admit, but that's what makes us human. Once you can acknowledge your own issues, you can begin to resolve them. Don't be afraid to admit failure. Take your losses, and use them to get a win.

If you want to be a leader, don't wait for some other person to give you that title. The title isn't what's important. It's your actions that count. If you want to be a leader, you don't complain about any situation without taking action to change it.

You don't ask for handouts. Handouts don't exist. To be a leader, you have to force yourself to escape the mental prison your environment has placed on you—the one that says you're average, and that you'll never be more than that.

We live in a cold world where everybody is looking for a fire to stand next to. But if you ignore this trend, and instead learn how to build your own fires, there will always be people looking up to you. However, it's not about doing anything whatsoever so that other people respect you. If you want to be a true leader, all you have to do is teach other people how you've gotten to where you are now.

Once you see that what you've shared from your own life has helped someone excel in their life, don't block them from having further success. Encourage their continued growth, even if that means they're going to surpass you in some way. Don't let your ego control your actions, no matter how hard it pushes you to take all the glory and credit for yourself.

You have to be mature enough to understand that you might have some toxic traits. Be honest with yourself if you want to grow and lead others. We are all human, and we all have flaws. Do not try to conceal those flaws. Instead, acknowledge them and work through them.



Calling yourself on your own personal issues is the first step to overcoming them. You can't change what you refuse to acknowledge.

I don't want to give you the impression that my life used to suck, and now everything is perfect. I still have personal issues I deal with from day today. For example, I grew up broke. Because of that, due to my own ego, sometimes I buy shit I don't need for ridiculous prices and regret it later.

On the relationship side of things, sometimes I don't care for other people's emotions when I think they're overacting about a situation that's not all that bad. Because of all the shit, I went through growing up, my threshold for pain is higher. That's one of my strengths, but it can make me harder on people than I should sometimes be.

When I look at different traits in myself, I have to recognize my experience of life is not the experience other people have had. Other people have different flaws, different struggles, and different things they need to work through to grow. But we all have these flaws in some form, and we have to deal with them and continue to treat other people with respect.

None of us has any idea what any other person is dealing with while still giving us kindness. When kindness is absent, there is almost always a reason, even if that reason is hard to uncover. To be a leader, you have to stop taking things so personally, and instead learn to look at the big picture.

If someone isn't treating you right, it could be because they're going through something right now that's dragging them down in some area of their lives. Or, it could be that something happened to this person in their childhood that still haunts them, even if they aren't aware of it.

We've all been through shit that's knocked our mindset sideways. Leaders take responsibility to fix the way they're thinking when they recognize it has



by outside circumstances. Some people don't even realize when their behavior or feelings are a direct result of something they've experienced. But good leaders can point these things out to people because they're constantly analyzing themselves as well.

Leaders are not just focused on themselves. The greatest thing I've ever done was to train and fight for the person to my left and right. It's a different culture when you're in the military, and you're put through uncomfortable situations. You grow a different kind of bond with the people around you.

They always told me that once you leave the military, you'll always miss the military. I didn't understand what that meant at first. In my mind, when I first got out, I could only remember having to eat the shitty MREs, or having to listen to some asshole run mission after mission while I was going on very little sleep.

But now that I've been out for a little while, I think I understand what they meant. You miss the culture. You miss the people. You miss how when things got really fucking bad, everybody laughed through the pain together. In the military, nothing can come between you and your team.

In the world of entrepreneurship, the same rules apply. Leadership and ownership are everything. If you're the leader of any type of business or organization, everything your team does or does not accomplish is on you. If you're a solo entrepreneur without a team, here's what you need to recognize now if you haven't already: great things are never accomplished alone. Major success requires building the right team of support around you. To do that, you have to raise the bar on your own integrity and work ethic. If you have any question in your mind about your ability to lead a team, forget all the bullshit lies you've heard about what it takes to be a good leader. You only need to focus on what actually matters.



First, a good leader is usually not the most popular individual in a group. Sometimes good leaders are hated until the pressure is on and everybody looks to them to know what to do.

It doesn't matter if you're a "nobody." It doesn't matter if you don't feel confident all the time. The only thing that matters is your why, because your why is what will give you the determination and ability to push through until you can get the results you and your team need to survive.

I don't give a fuck if I'm a nobody, because I know if I can accomplish my why, that's enough. That's all I need. If I go about trying to do that, in the process, I know I'm going to become a leader for other people. Because to accomplish my why I'm going to have to take responsibility for changing myself. I'm going to literally have to become someone different by the time my mission is complete.

A good leader stays focused on the mission instead of worrying about the way other people are interpreting their actions. When you change, it's normal for other people to respond negatively to you. Most people hate change. They want everyone to remain consistent and predictable so they can feel safe and secure.

But if you're a leader, you have to stay out in front. That means you have to take on 100% responsibility for becoming who you need to become in life to accomplish your goals. A lot of people don't understand this concept. They don't understand that for their life situation to change, they have to change who they are, what they think about, and how they're actually living.

Life isn't just something that happens to you randomly. You don't just get the cards that you're dealt, and that's the end of the game. You have to play them.



You have to respond to different things that happen in your life continually. You can't control everything that happens to you. That much is true. But if you think that tomorrow's life is going to hand you winning cards and play them for you without you lifting a finger, you're wrong.

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We can't control everything that happens to us, but we can always control our response to what happens to us. And when we change our responses, we literally change what happens next in our lives, even though we still can't guess what that might be.

By controlling your emotional response to any event you feel is random, unlucky, or even unfair, you can positively shape your future. So, even if you feel like a nobody, and you think everybody else was given all the advantages from birth and you got nothing, that doesn't matter.

How are you going to respond to that adversity? How are you going to use that to make you a harder worker who is more focused and more determined to succeed than everyone else? How are you going to outplay everybody else using the cards you've got in your hand? Who are you going to have to become to do that?

Nobody has to fucking believe in you for you to be able to accomplish amazing things in your life. Nobody has to pat you on the back and say good job when the goal you're working toward is feeding your family's hungry stomachs.

Hungry stomachs only care about one thing—getting food. If you can find a way to get food for yourself and others, eventually you'll forget all about other people's opinions of you. Then your confidence will rise. You'll become "somebody" to yourself, and that's way more important than earning any label another person might slap on you.

The roof over your head doesn't give a fuck if you feel like you're the best person for the job. It just needs you to do your job, and be responsible enough to put whatever money you make into keeping that roof over your head for one more day.



As a leader in any environment, your team doesn't give a fuck if you "feel" like you were cut out for your position. The only thing that matters is if you are guiding your team and working with them to accomplish the goals you've come together to see through to the end.

There are no feelings involved in leadership. I don't mean you don't have to care about the people you're working with. You have to care about your people more than anyone else, but you can't waste time feeling sorry for yourself because you made a mistake or took your team in the wrong direction. You are responsible for recognizing issues when they become issues, and you are liable to turn things around immediately.

When it comes to your basic survival, if you're at rock bottom, and it's just you leading yourself right now, you have to channel your survival instinct into making a business work for you. You have to do what you have to do to survive. That's the starting point.

Once you have a little bit of stability and consistency, the next thing you can do is work to maintain that and build a decent lifestyle. From there, just keep adding to it. At the bare minimum, you need food, water, shelter, and security. You absolutely have to provide that for yourself as a human being, so you must work out how you're going to get those things.

If you can work that out, all you have to do is keep gaining experience. You won't be confident in yourself in the beginning, but that doesn't fucking matter. Just keep going. Keep doing.

Make mistakes. Pay attention when things go wrong. Try again. Try and try and try some more, until you finally break through whatever ceiling you feel is holding you back. Because just past that ceiling is the place of confidence you're looking for.



You only get to this place by getting out there and doing the fucking work. If you do nothing, everything in your life will stay the same. Your life, sure as hell will not get better. Most likely, if you do nothing, it's actually going to get worse because inactivity leads to atrophy, and atrophy leads to death.

If you're starting from the bottom like I did, choosing not to change at all doesn't mean you get to relax into a dull but comfortable life. You don't get that luxury when you come from the bottom. If you don't make a change, you might end up dead.

The game of life is high stakes when you come from poverty, but that's where the silver lining lies. With the threat of a massive amount of pain hanging over your head, you can bet if you really search within yourself, you will find the strength to run like hell in the other direction. Once you start running, you'll never stop. It's just getting started that's the hardest part.

If you can find a way to win the game or even score just a few points to build up momentum when the stakes are high, you will develop strength and resiliency almost none of your competitors will ever be able to match. When it's life or death, do all you can to press into life by doing what's best for you. Fuck what everyone else thinks.

If you make a choice to do what's best for you in all difficult situations, your success is just a matter of time. Most people never start. They never even try to accomplish something significant in their lives because they're so afraid of fucking failure. Fear of failure holds them back, so they stand at the starting line of life until they die, watching everyone else run the race.

But the fear of failure should not phase you if you've ever been faced with real danger, like the possibility of being shot or stabbed to death. Those are real things to fear when they are a real part of your everyday life and surroundings.



Messing up a project because you just did something new you've never done before? There's no real harm in that. Blowing an introduction to somebody important in your industry? It doesn't actually matter. At the end of the day, you can walk away from these kinds of "failures," and you can start again.

Not only that, if you fail like that, you gain experience. Add that to your belt. Figure out what you should do next time. Keep expanding yourself. Try new things until you learn exactly where the sweet spot is. The sweet spot is the place where you can do your work, get results for others, attract a winning team, and support yourself financially.

There's nothing better than finding this sweet spot in life, but you can only find it if you're willing to take on the responsibilities that come with being a leader. Every person has it in them to do this, but very few people make the choice.

Decide right now, today, if you're willing to make the sacrifices that a leader has to make. If you are, you can experience rewards in life that nobody else gets to experience. But if you aren't, then step out of the way.



Chapter 14

Advice from the Social Media Trenches

If you're reading this book, you know my business centers around social media. Let me show you behind the curtain of this industry and give you an idea of where things are heading at the moment. Because if you aim for where things are headed, you will always stay ahead of your competition.

As social media continues to become more widely accepted as a significant advertising platform, more and more businesses are going to start looking for social media managers. Some companies right now are looking to hire full in-house teams to run social media for them.

If you're not in a position where you can become a full-time entrepreneur, it's very possible to get a job doing social media for a company. Most companies don't care if you have a lot of experience or not. They just want somebody young who knows the platform and can represent them positively.

If you have to work for free or for very little money in the beginning, so be it. That's not a bad thing, because the more work you do, the more you will

learn. Just going in and working on different concepts for an already existing business will teach you many of the skills you may think you lack right now.

Internships are also a great way to gain experience and put yourself in a position to be able to look at real data, learn what matters and what doesn't, and figure out how to get significant results. Once you've generated results for a company, whether you were paid for it or not, you now have a huge piece that most people are missing when they want to get into social media marketing and get their own clients.

If you have results you can speak about, you are guaranteed to be able to sell your work to a client. Since social media is still relatively new, there's no such thing as going to college to study it. Honestly, please don't do this.

The things you will learn in a college classroom about social media are always going to be about 10 years behind what's actually happening in the real world. When you're talking about an industry where 10 years is the equivalent of about 100 in terms of the sheer pace of innovation, going to college to learn about social media is entirely worthless.

The absolute best experience you can get is a real-world experience. To do that, find a mentor if you can. If you can't, go work for any business that will let you show them that you can get the results and conversions. It doesn't matter what kind of business it is, but in an ideal world, you should try to work for a company that aligns with your interests and strengths.

If you're interested in computer software engineering, find a business in that niche and see if you can help them. If you're into art and fashion, find a company which sells clothes online, and help them do more of that with social media. Then, track your results, and use them to show other businesses in the same niche that you know what you're doing.



I followed this exact process when I was getting started. I generated results in the entertainment niche because that's what I was interested in, and then I learned how to track that data and make a positive impact on businesses in that niche consistently.

You don't want to have one home run hit and then tell every potential client you talk to that you can get them that same insane result. But, if you can replicate that home run hit three times, then you know you're on to something good.

If you only get exceptional results once, well, you may have just gotten lucky. Other factors could have played into that success. But if you're able to consistently provide an enormous amount of value to any company you're working with, then you can begin to bet on yourself.

You never, ever want to bet someone else's money on a strategy you haven't proven. But when you have data to back up your plan, that's when you can scale your business quickly.

So many people don't understand that the first step to getting your first client is just playing the numbers game. You have to talk to people. See if they will work with you. If they say "no," then you move on. You talk to someone else.

I sold cable packages door to door at one point in my life. I had to knock on 1,000 doors before one person would want to buy a package from me, but I learned that if I just kept knocking, eventually I would make a sale.

When you're first starting out, you just have to get traction so you can build momentum. Go to mom and pop businesses. Cold call. Knock on doors. You might have to change your offer if you're not having any success, but that's alright. If you can't sell your service for a flat fee, try working for commission only.



There is no shame in working for commission only. I did it when I was just getting started, and it led me to some pivotal opportunities that I capitalized on to get to where I am today. The point is, you don't stop after only a few people tell you "no." You keep going. Every "no" is just one step closer to a "yes."

Once you get a "yes," don't just do what you see everybody else doing. Put your heart and soul into your work. These days, everybody on social media has a Ferrari, travels to Bali every weekend and is the foremost expert in motivating everybody else to live their lifestyle. You have to know what your client is looking for and what their image is. Don't just make them blend in with the crowd and look like they're doing what everyone else is doing.

There's one thing that's never going to go out of style, and that is transparency and adding true value to people. Emotion has to be involved in your process. If you're working with a business, how can you show people what goes on behind the scenes of that business? How can you make the people involved in that business more human and more relatable?

It's no longer about making the most polished content anyone has ever seen. No one cares about that anymore. Raw, authentic content is what people want to engage with. Nobody wants to buy stuff from some big company that has flashy advertising, because everyone has been burned by companies like that. Everybody wants to buy from someone they can relate to and from someone who allows them to feel a part of something when they spend their money with them.

Anybody can look like they run a perfect business or have a perfect life on Instagram, but transparency is the biggest driver of trust. If you're building a personal



brand for your business, talk about your struggles. Talk about what you went through to get to where you are now. Speak from pure experience, and don't try to sell a magic bullet.

I've seen clueless companies try to run the most perfect social media campaigns possible. Everything from the models to the script to the setting they nailed from an aesthetic point of view. But once they released this content for people to see, nobody cared. They went right past it while scrolling through their social feeds to get to the real stuff. Fake just gets ignored.

If you know this, you have a serious advantage, because a lot of people in the advertising world haven't figured this out yet. That's because, for the previous 20 years, perfect looking content did well. It brought a particular lifestyle, however unreal, to the forefront of people's minds, and people bought it because they wanted that.

But now the market has shifted. Now people's bullshit detectors are more sensitive than ever. On top of that, they're looking for something that's specifically tailored to their interests.

If you think you need to go out and buy a \$50,000 camera to shoot some insanely polished content, you're on the wrong track. Social media is the one place where people have the opportunity to show behind the scenes of their real lives, and that's why millions of people access it every day.

When I first got started in social media, brands would reach out to me and tell me they wanted me to get them more followers. Everyone wanted to have a million followers. But now, people realize that followers don't matter. Conversions are the only thing that matter.



A lot of companies learned this the hard way because people scammed them out of money and sold them fake followers. Now everybody wants to know what they stand to gain if they choose to work with you.

There is still a lot of room for growth in this industry. But something you must understand getting into it is that not every client is the client for you. For example, I've had clients I've worked with in my agency who have decided to come on with me for 90 days, only to see if they could figure out my special sauce and then replicate for themselves.

What happens to these people is they try to replicate what I'm doing, but they fail miserably. Then they decide they must not have gotten all of the information they need out of me, so they come back and want to work with me again. But at that point, I know what they're up to.

You can spot when a client is just using you for information. They'll start to go way deeper than they need to with their questions. Instead of asking the right questions about cost and results, they'll start asking you about every specific detail of your work.

Wanting to understand overall strategy is typical, but there are plenty of people out there simply fishing for information so they can chew you up and spit you out. That's the dark side of this business, and you have to be prepared for it.

I was lucky to be exposed to a lot of this type of manipulation when I was a kid growing up in the hood. I learned to take note of people's body language, choice of words, and attitude. If someone was trying to be sneaky and not get caught, they might probe into some subject, then talk around it,



and then go back and try probing again. It's a lot better to work with people who are direct with you when they have a question. That way you know they don't have a hidden agenda.

There are basically two types of business owners you will run into as you gain more experience in this industry. The first type is the ones you want to work with. These business owners care about their business, and they will pay you to get results so they can focus on what they need to focus on.

The second type of business owner wants to cut corners, save on costs, and do everything as cheap as possible. Don't be discouraged and think that every client you get will run their business this way. You'll run into these people on your way to the top, but the only thing you can do is learn to spot them sooner and learn to be grateful for your great clients when you do get to work with them.

Growing up in a poor urban environment, I had to learn quick to look out for myself and predict what was going to happen before it happened. I had to learn how to read people, and I was sometimes forced to deal with people who were only out for themselves.

I learned to spot predators and prey. Predators were always focused and moved slowly toward their prey. They would ball up their fists in their pockets or in their hoodie and get ready to strike as hard and fast as possible when their prey came near.

Other times, a predator would take a different approach. If strong emotion was involved, they might use brute force to win a fight. Smaller predators would have to be more creative. They'd have to look for a better angle to attack, or a better perspective to approach to have a competitive advantage and win a fight.



I saw these same tactics over and over again as a kid. I watched so many fights end in blood and broken bones, including fights I was involved in myself. I understood what was going on in the minds of people who wanted to win at all cost because that was me too. I don't claim to be better than any person from my neighborhood who still has to fight to survive.

At the basic level, I believe all human decisions are based on survival instinct. We all want to experience more love and more pleasure in our lives, and we want to avoid pain. I'm fortunate to have escaped life in the streets, but I'm also grateful for what I learned about life when I was dead broke and couldn't see what was coming next for me in life.

Don't ever deceive yourself into thinking you've learned nothing in your life. It doesn't matter what bullshit you go through, life is always preparing you and setting you up for the next chapter. You have to be the one to step into it and own it and take action, but once you commit to doing that, you're on the path to success.

All you have to do once you get on the right path is to keep marching. The first three miles, you might feel great. You might feel motivated. You might feel like you're going to go out there and just fucking own it. And that's great. But, remember, up next is miles three to seven, and these miles are going to be fucking hard to get through. When the results you want aren't pouring in yet, and everybody is doubting you, and you're even doubting yourself, you're going to want to quit. But you can't. You absolutely can't stop at this point, so you might as well laugh your way through the pain. That's your only option.



If you can make it to mile seven, you will start to build momentum. You will begin to know what to do when to do it, and what kind of return you can expect for your work. This is a great place to be, but you're still not finished. You're really just getting started.

Once you reach mile 14, now you have to have endurance. If something goes wrong, you could bitch about it and quit, or you can remember who you are. You can practice emotional self-discipline. You can laugh at the brutal unfairness of it all. But you absolutely can't quit until you reach mile 25—your unique end goal that your why is pushing you toward with every step.

You now know my story as it's played out so far, but I still have a long way to go. You now know it truly doesn't matter where you're starting from. You could have access to all the opportunities in the world and still fucking blow it, or you could have nothing and no one and still become a great success in life. The choice is 100% yours. But all of this motivational and inspirational shit means nothing if you all you do is read it and still sit on your ass, so get to work.



Chapter 15

Your Final Warning: Fake is Dead

Many people believe you can fake it until you make it in this world. But do you know what happens to people who use this strategy? They eventually get caught in lies. Even when this strategy works for someone, and they somehow impress the right people by putting up a false front, they still haven't gained much. This is because they've compromised their integrity, and integrity is everything in life and business.

Having integrity does not mean you always make the right choices. But it does mean that when you fuck up, you tell the truth about it, and you try to correct it. There is so much room to grow in life if you are vulnerable, transparent, and stay true to yourself. Stay away from doing generic bullshit to try to fit in. That is the worst thing you could possibly do as a person or business owner.

A lot of people tell me my market is saturated. That's not true. It's saturated with generic bullshit, yes, but it's not at all close to being saturated



with valuable, real content people can relate to and connect with. Almost no one is playing in the authentic and vulnerable lane. Everybody is trying to bullshit their way to the top.

But if you're just going to pretend you've made it until you actually make it, you will soon find you can't sustain any success you do have. It's impossible to maintain something that's not real for you. If you have no experience delivering value to other people at a high level, when you're given a chance to do that because of the way you've made yourself look, you won't be able to. You will crumble, no matter how much money or fame is thrown at you.

You have to have built up the mental endurance required to perform at the top of your game and deliver the value that's demanded when large amounts of money come in to play. Sure, sometimes people slip through the cracks, and they're able to build a career off of lies and how popular their face has become.

But almost always these kinds of empires come crashing down given enough time. Just because some people can fake it until they make it doesn't mean that's a good strategy for you to use. And if it's your only strategy, you're really playing against the odds, not with them.

The odds favor those who work hard, tell the truth, build good relationships, and deliver extreme value. If you do these things, you are putting yourself in the best possible position to achieve success, regardless of how rich your lifestyle looks on social media. Building a real business is about standing behind your product or service and gaining practical experience doing something you love to do.



When you build a business on that foundation, if something happens to it that's outside of your control that knocks you down, you can always build back up again. The raw materials you need to succeed never disappear. You can just go grab your axe, head to the forest, get the wood you need, and build your house even better the second time around.

If you earn your confidence and the ability to do this whenever you want, you earn true happiness and fulfillment. Magic money in your bank account, and tons of people who want to be your fake friend will never make you happy.

There's a huge misconception that everyone on social media displaying their lifestyle that seems to have money is satisfied with life. Celebrities, vloggers, models, and other various personalities put a ton of time, work, and effort into the content they put out on social media. Most people think, "Man, it must be super easy to run around all day and post pictures and videos. It must be a pretty damn easy life when you can make five YouTube videos and get paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for it."

The truth is there's nothing easy about it. People who actually do this successfully and make good money spend days and weeks trying to come up with new concepts. It takes an enormous amount of creativity and discipline to create content people are interested in. And there is more to consider than just whether or not people are interested in your content.

You have to consider if people will actually want to engage with it, and also whether or not it's meaningful enough to make people care about it, but not too dramatic to the point where everybody is going to hate you for saying



what you said. It's hard to find the right balance between capturing people's interest while not capturing the interest of all the haters.

Then there's the actual discipline of creating the content in the first place. If there is video involved, and a person doesn't have a full-time editing team behind them, going through the entire process of shooting and editing a video takes a ton of time and work.

Outside of social media entirely, there are real social pressures most people don't expect to deal with when they become successful as an internet personality. It's a tricky business because a lot of people who have success with social media end up very unhappy.

They can no longer find any real friends who aren't just out to take advantage of them to leverage their own brands and accounts. Also, a lot of young people are having success in making content and making a lot of money at a very young age. This forces them to give up having a normal life and instead become an entrepreneur and celebrity at 13 years old.

There are not many kids this age who can handle fame. Once the famous lifestyle comes into play, a lot of the wrong people are attracted to you, especially if you attract fame extremely fast. The faster you draw it, the more of the wrong people you attract into your life as well. You now own a hot commodity, and everybody wants a piece of it. When people want something you have, they'll do almost anything to get it.

There's a lot of truth in the saying, "Be careful what you wish for." A lot of people believe that just because they see someone smiling in front of a Lamborghini and flying on a private jet to Dubai, that they must be the happiest and most fulfilled person in the world. They don't see all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.



They don't see the sacrifices that have been made, the relationships that have been lost, and the usual ups and downs of life that every human being goes through. That type of shit doesn't get put on social media, because for most people, that wouldn't fit with their "brand." But everybody is starting to realize there is more going on behind the scenes, and that's why fake is dead.

It's not about searching for fame and vanity followers. Going that route will only land you in more trouble than it's worth. Buying followers for yourself, or buying followers for anybody you're trying to help as a client won't get you or them any respect or love.

Those days are over. Having a million followers is no longer the benchmark of success. It's your ability to make a positive impact on the people who do follow you or follow your clients that really matters.

There are no shortcuts in this game because shortcuts don't have longevity. Shortcuts take away from you, gaining the experience you absolutely need to have to sustain yourself. Growth hacking is not a thing. It does not work. Just focus on making good fucking content, because good content trumps everything. This goes for all of the accounts you own, and for all the accounts you ever manage for someone else.

Who cares about algorithms. Who cares about all the trends. As long as you're making something that's actually good and engaging, it's going to catch fire no matter what. There is nothing that can stop a powerful message from spreading. Hacks are not even going to help good content spread. They're just going to make you look fake.



Instead of focusing on learning how to cheat your way through the system, focus on figuring out how to make quality content. Good content engages human beings and gives them something they can relate to. It lets them learn about themselves and make new distinctions.

You can't just put something out that doesn't resonate with real human beings and hope real human beings will be attracted to it. You have to understand what people respond to, and then always try to make content that generates a response if you want to have any kind of long-term success with social media. The only way to learn how to do this is to put in the work and learn to make sacrifices that will move you forward inch by inch. This is how I built my business to where it's at now, and I started out at ground fucking zero.

In 2014, I was on deployment with the Army in Afghanistan, and life sucked. I was barely making any money, even with hazard pay and combat pay. The Army changed my life drastically, but I knew it wasn't going to take me where I wanted to go financially. I knew I still had to figure that part of my life out.

When my deployment finished, I was up for reenlistment. This meant I could stay in the Army, or I could do something else. I needed to support my daughter, and I needed to support myself, and the money I was making was not enough to do that. Even if I were promoted a few ranks up, the money still wouldn't have been enough.

While I was still in Afghanistan on deployment, I started thinking about all of this. The only other work I knew anything about was real estate. I had



studied real estate to become an agent prior to leaving for the military, so all I had to do was take the test to become a licensed agent in Pennsylvania.

Real estate was the option that made the most sense for my family and me at the time, so I started looking for a mentor. I found a guy online who was doing real estate investing and wholesaling, and I decided I should try to learn as much as I could from him. So, I networked my way into his circle, and then I reached out to him to see how I could help him with his business and continue learning.

At that time, I was focused on making sales, so I offered to sell one of his products for him as a way to build rapport and provide value to him for free. When I offered to do this for him, he asked me to help out with his social media content, which I had no idea how to do at the time.

To step up to the challenge, I taught myself Photoshop throughout a weekend by watching videos online after being on a 72 hour extended Army mission. I made 1,000 meme posts that weekend. A lot of these posts didn't do that well, but a lot did do well, and I learned.

After having success making a few sales of my mentor's program, I was offered a commission to keep making sales, and I was asked to start managing his Instagram and Facebook content ultimately. As I was learning how to do this, I made contact with a lot of different successful entrepreneurs. My skill set steadily improved as I put more and more content out, and I ended up receiving several job offers from these different entrepreneurs. I chose to go to work full-time for the person I thought I could learn the most from, and this allowed me to continue to grow and learn many new things.

Through this experience, I learned the importance of taking risks. I learned that if you want to find out what works, you have to try a lot of shit. You have to go through different idea generations faster than anyone else, and if everything fails, you still have to keep going.

I learned that achieving success is like figuring out a Rubik's cube. You keep twisting and turning until you find the right answer. The more you go through that process and keep noting down what has worked and what hasn't, the faster you get at figuring out what you should do in the future.

I learned that creating successful content is always in the details, and I learned there is a psychology to creating engaging posts. This psychology functions at the micro-level and the macro level. You have to be consistent in terms of frequency, and you have to be consistent in terms of quality. Otherwise, you're not going to attract any attention.

I learned that speed and quality always have to be maintained. If you work harder and faster than anybody else, it doesn't matter if they're smarter than you. You will get to the right outcome more quickly than them.

I worked 16 hour days in the military when I was trying to plan my transition back into civilian life and civilian work, and once I finished those hours up, I went to work networking and providing value to the people I wanted to have as my mentors. This sacrifice of my time got me to where I am today.

I was lucky to learn the power of sacrifice at an early age. I became the best drug dealer in my area at 16 years old because I didn't stop at standing on the corner selling drugs like everybody else was doing. I made it my goal to get every customer and every connect's number. I networked, and I owned three different phones so I could meet people around the city to do deals.



I made sure everybody I sold to looked like they did drugs. If they didn't, I didn't sell to them. I worked graveyard shifts, and I worked all day, whatever I had to do. I was hungry for success. I wanted to have things because growing up, my family didn't have anything. My clothes were old and stained. Nothing I owned growing up was ever new off the rack.

The only chance I had at success was being willing to grind it out until I got it. The single "warm introduction" I ever got to anybody with money and power was my own reputation for generating exceptional results.

I built my business through sweat equity because I didn't have any other options. I didn't even have the resources necessary to "fake it," and I never saw the point of doing that anyway. Results can't be faked, and that's why serious business people only care about the results you've gotten for people in the past. They don't care about how popular you are on Instagram.

But if you do what's real, and you share what's real, whether a company has to spend a \$100,000 to work with you or million, they won't care as long you make them a return on their investment that's significant. But if they're just paying to work with you because you're the only name they know, they're going to jump ship as soon as they find somebody else who can get them better results.

People ask me for advice or to "pick my brain" all the time in person and on social media. Sometimes I'll give it to them. I'll sit for an hour or so and give people the few missing pieces they don't have in place to achieve what they want.

99.8% of these people never do any of the shit I tell them to do. 1%



actually try, but they give up before they have success. .1% actually take what I teach them, apply it consistently, and keep going until they make it happen. That means 99.8% of people who ask for advice don't actually take it and run with it.

Instead, when I check up on these people, they give me an excuse. They tell me why they couldn't make it happen for themselves, and usually, their reason doesn't have anything to do with them. They tell me things like, "You didn't give me enough information," or, "You must be holding something back."

Sometimes they tell me they thought my advice was too simple, so they didn't act on it. They don't understand that I fucked up thousands of times to earn every piece of simple advice I gave them that they took for granted.

It's sad when people will buy into a simple phrase like "fake it until you make it" and think that's the path to success. But when you tell these same people to "do the work," they think this advice is terrible and too simplistic.

Sure, it's simple, but it's also laborious. It's hard to stay out of your own way and remain focused while everybody is trying to sell you the lie that you can make it rain hundred-dollar bills tomorrow if you give them your credit card number.

It's human nature to want to take the path of least resistance, but the best advice I can give you is to try to find what's true and authentic, and walk that path instead. That's never the easy path, but it's by far the best.

If your life has been anything like mine was growing up, you already



Longevity is promised to no one in this life. It's easy to reach the top, but it takes real work to stay there. Emotional discipline is the key. If it were intellect, more people would be hugely successful, and more people would be able to sustain their success for a long time. But that's not the case. Every day, people are dying in the battle to achieve ultimate fulfillment, purpose, and happiness in their lives.

If you can survive longer than anybody else in this battle, you will win the spoils of war. Your enemy is not "out there," and the battleground is not your neighborhood. Your enemy is you, and the battlefield is your mind. If you want to win, and I know you do, don't focus on dominating your market, your competition, or your future employees. Focus on dominating yourself. Because if you win the battle against yourself, you win the war.