

## **January: Your Life's Task PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR MASTERY**

People want power and they want to disguise this wanting of power. And so, they play games. They covertly manipulate and intrigue, all the while presenting a nice even saintly front. I would expose these games.

### **JANUARY 1: Discover Your Calling**

*Everyone holds his fortune in his own hands, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure. But it's the same with that type of artistic activity as with all others: We are merely born with the capability to do it. The skill to mold the material into what we want must be learned and attentively cultivated.*

1. The first move toward mastery is always inward—learning who you really are and reconnecting with that innate force. Knowing it with clarity, you will find your way to the proper career path and everything else will fall into place. It is never too late to start this process.
2. Daily Law: Mastery is a process and discovering your calling is the starting point.

### **JANUARY 2: Reconnect with Your Childhood Obsession (Marie Curie)**

Daily Law: You were obsessed with it as a child for a reason. Reconnect with it.

### **JANUARY 3: The Voice**

*The way to recover the meaning of life and the worthwhileness of life is to recover the power of experience, to have impulse voices from within, and to be able to hear these impulse voices from within.*

1. Know exactly what you like and dislike from a very early age. It is extremely human and powerful.
2. Daily Law: Do something today that you used to love doing as a kid. Try to reconnect with your impulse voices.

### **JANUARY 4: It Is Already within You**

*Sooner or later something seems to call us onto a particular path. You may remember this something as a signal calling in childhood when an urge out of nowhere, a fascination, a peculiar turn of events struck like an annunciation: This is what I must do, this is what I've got to have. This is who I am.*

Daily Law: Ask someone who recalls your childhood what they remember about your interests. Get reacquainted with those early passions.

### **JANUARY 5: Know What You're Drawn to and Immerse Yourself in It**

Daily Law: What's something you've always felt a pull toward? Dive deep into it today.

### **JANUARY 6: Change Is the Law**

1. In dealing with your career and its inevitable changes, you must think in the following way: You are not tied to a particular position; your loyalty is not to a career or a company. You are committed to your Life's Task, to giving it full expression. It is up to you to find it and guide it correctly. It is not up to others to protect or help you. You are on your own. Change is inevitable, particularly in such a revolutionary moment as ours.
2. You don't want to abandon the skills and experience you have gained, but to find a new way to apply them. Your eye is on the future, not the past. Often such creative readjustments lead to a superior path for us—we are shaken out of our complacency and forced to reassess where we are headed.
3. Daily Law: Adapt your inclinations. Avoid having rigid goals and dreams. Change is the law.

#### JANUARY 7: Money and Success

1. If instead we relax and focus on other things, we are more likely to fall asleep or give a great talk or charm people. The most pleasurable things in life occur as a result of something not directly intended and expected.
2. Daily Law: Concentrate on maintaining a high sense of purpose, and the success will flow to you naturally
3. Advance with a Sense of Purpose—The Law of Aimlessness

#### JANUARY 8: Occupy Your Own Niche

Daily Law: Embrace your strangeness. Identify what makes you different. Fuse those things together and become an anomaly.

#### JANUARY 9: Find Inspiration from Your Heroes

1. In order to master a field, you must love the subject and feel a profound connection to it. Your interest must transcend the field and border on the religious. For Coltrane, it was not music but giving voice to powerful emotions.
2. Daily Law: Are there people whose work affects you in a powerful way? Analyze this and use them as models.

#### JANUARY 10: Embrace Your Weirdness

*The most courageous act is still to think for yourself.*

1. They're unique. They embraced what made them different. Yes, it comes with some pain.
2. Daily Law: Always stick to what makes you weird, odd, strange, different. That's your source of power.

#### JANUARY 11: What Makes You Feel More Alive?

1. Sometimes an inclination becomes clear through a particular activity that brings with it a feeling of heightened power.
2. Daily Law: Do something that makes you feel at the peak of your being today.

#### JANUARY 12: The Obstacle Is the Way

1. Some people do not become aware of inclinations or future career paths in their childhood, but instead are made painfully aware of their limitations.
2. If they are not careful, this can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
3. Daily Law: Confront one of your limitations—one of the obstructions in your path—today. Break beyond it, climb over it, think your way around it. Don't run from it. It was created for you.

#### JANUARY 13: Master the Small Things

1. When you are faced with deficiencies instead of strengths and inclinations, this is the strategy you must assume: Ignore your weaknesses and resist the temptation to be more like others. Instead, direct yourself toward the small things you are good at. Do not dream or make grand plans for the future, but instead concentrate on becoming proficient at these simple and immediate skills. This will bring you confidence and become a base from which you can expand to other pursuits.
2. It can appear in the guise of your deficiencies, making you focus on the one or two things that you are inevitably good at. Working at these skills, you learn the value of discipline and see the rewards you get from your efforts. Like a lotus flower, your skills will expand outward from a center of strength and confidence. Do not envy those who seem to be naturally gifted; it is often a curse, as such types rarely learn the value of diligence and focus, and they pay for this later in life. This strategy applies as well to any setbacks and difficulties we may experience. In such moments, it is generally wise to stick to the few things we know and do well, and to reestablish our confidence.
3. Daily Law: When in doubt, focus on the things you know you do well. Expand outward from the center.

#### JANUARY 14: Avoid the False Path

*At the center of your being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want.*

1. A false path in life is generally something we are attracted to for the wrong reasons—money, fame, attention, and so on. If it is attention we need, we often experience a kind of emptiness inside that we are hoping to fill with the false love of public approval
2. If it is money and comfort that dominate our decision, we are most often acting out of anxiety and the need to please our parents

3. Your strategy must be twofold: First, to realize as early as possible that you have chosen your career for the wrong reasons, before your confidence takes a hit. And second, to actively rebel against those forces that have pushed you away from your true path. Scoff at the need for attention and approval—they will lead you astray
4. It is a healthy part of your development to follow a path independent of your parents and to establish your own identity. Let your sense of rebellion fill you with energy and purpose.
5. Daily Law: If you're on the false path, get off. Find energy in rebellion.

#### JANUARY 15: Let a Sense of Purpose Guide You

Just as a well-filled day brings blessed sleep, so a well-employed life brings blessed death.

1. What we lack most in the modern world is a sense of a larger purpose to our lives.
2. Our evolution as a species has depended on the creation of a tremendous diversity of skills and ways of thinking
3. Daily Law: Think back on the moments when you felt deeply and personally connected to an activity. Think about the pleasure it brought you. In such activities are signs of your true purpose.

#### JANUARY 16: There Are No Superior Callings

1. In a world full of people who seem largely interchangeable, you cannot be replaced. You are one of a kind. Your combination of skills and experience is not replicable. That represents true freedom and the ultimate power we humans can possess.
2. Daily Law: No calling is superior to another. What matters is that it be tied to a personal need and inclination, and that your energy moves you toward improvement and continuous learning from experience.

#### JANUARY 17: The True Source of Creativity

Daily Law: Work at what connects to you emotionally and ideas will come to you.

#### JANUARY 18: Stop Being So Nice

*Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.*

1. You must begin by respecting your own opinions more and those of others less
2. Get into the habit in your daily life of asserting yourself more and compromising less.
3. Start caring less what people think of you. You will feel a tremendous sense of liberation.
4. You must offend and even hurt people who block your path, who have ugly values, who unjustly criticize you.
5. Feel free to play the impudent, willful child who mocks the stupidity and hypocrisy of others.
6. Daily Law: Keep in mind that power lies in asserting your uniqueness, even if that offends some people along the way. Study your Shadow side today.

### JANUARY 19: Listen to Your Inner Authority

1. Embrace what makes you different.
2. Daily Law: Reflect on those moments in life when you were active (followed your own path) and those moments when you were passive (followed what others wanted). Compare the emotions you experienced

### JANUARY 20: See Mastery as Salvation

*The misery that oppresses you lies not in your profession but in yourself! What man in the world would not find his situation intolerable if he chooses a craft, an art, indeed any form of life, without experiencing an inner calling?*

1. People get the mind and quality of brain that they deserve through their actions in life.
2. Daily Law: You must see your attempt at attaining mastery as something extremely necessary and positive

### JANUARY 21: Depending on Others Is Misery

1. You must compensate for this by trusting yourself more and others less.
2. Daily Law: It is simple: depending on others is misery; depending on yourself is power.

### JANUARY 22: Use Resistance and Negative Spurs

*Every negative is a positive. The bad things that happen to me, I somehow make them good.*

1. The key to success in any field is first developing skills in various areas, which you can later combine in unique and creative ways.
2. You want to embrace negative experiences, limitations, and even pain as the perfect means of building up your skill levels and sharpening your sense of purpose.
3. Daily Law: Embrace negative experiences. When was the last time you failed, felt embarrassed, got criticized? What were you doing? What did the experience teach you?

### JANUARY 23: Create a Ladder of Descending Goals

1. Operating with long-term goals will bring you tremendous clarity and resolve. These goals—a project or business to create, for instance—can be relatively ambitious, enough to bring out the best in you.
2. Daily Law: Remember that what you are after is a series of practical results and accomplishments, not a list of unrealized dreams and aborted projects. Working with smaller, embedded goals will keep you moving in such a direction.

### JANUARY 24: Combine Your Fascinations

Daily Law: Keep in mind that your calling could be combining several fields that fascinate you. Keep the process open ended; your experience will instruct you as to the way.

#### JANUARY 25: Change Yourself from within, Little by Little<sup>9</sup>

1. What really allows for such dramatic changes are the things that occur inside a person. The slow accumulation of knowledge and skills, the incremental improvements in work habits, and the ability to withstand criticism.
2. Stop fixating on what other people are saying and doing.
3. Instead look inward, focus on the smaller internal changes that lay the groundwork for a much larger change in fortune. It is the difference between grasping at an illusion and immersing yourself in reality. And reality is what will liberate and transform you.
4. Daily Law: What would you work on if no one was looking? If money were no object?

#### JANUARY 26: Avoid the Counter Forces to Mastery

Daily Law: The process of following your Life's Task all the way to mastery can essentially begin at any point in life. The hidden force within you is always there and ready to be engaged, but only if you can silence the noise from others.

#### JANUARY 27: The Real Secret

1. The hunger for the magical shortcuts and simple formulas for success has been a constant throughout history. But in the end all of this searching is centered on something that doesn't exist.
2. This is the real secret: the brain that we possess is the work of six million years of development, and more than anything else, this evolution of the brain was designed to lead us to mastery, the latent power within us all.
3. Daily Law: Work to create the kind of mind you desire. Unleashing the masterful mind within, you will be at the vanguard of those who are exploring the extended limits of human willpower

#### JANUARY 28: The Path Is Not Linear

1. Your skill level will reach a point where you will be able to claim your independence from within the group you work for and move out on your own.
2. You will determine your circumstances. As your own Master, you will no longer be subject to the whims of tyrannical bosses or scheming peers.
3. Daily Law: You must see your career or vocational path more as a journey with twists and turns rather than a straight line.

#### JANUARY 29: Become Who You Are

1. “Become who you are by learning who you are.”
2. You are born with a particular makeup and tendencies that mark you as a piece of fate. It is who you are to the core. Some people never become who they are; they stop trusting in themselves; they conform to the tastes of others, and they end up wearing a mask that hides their true nature.
3. Daily Law: If you allow yourself to learn who you really are by paying attention to that voice and force within you, then you can become what you were fated to become—an individual, a Master.

#### JANUARY 30: Trust the Process

Daily Law: Trust the process—time is the essential ingredient of mastery. Use it to your advantage.

#### JANUARY 31: The Source of All Power

1. Experimenting with the skills and options related to your personality and inclinations is not only the single most essential step in developing a high sense of purpose and attaining mastery, it is perhaps the most important step in life in general.
2. Daily Law: Knowing in a deep way who you are, your uniqueness, will make it that much easier to avoid all of life’s other pitfalls.

#### **February The Ideal Apprenticeship TRANSFORMING YOURSELF**

1. Sometimes I would make mistakes and people would make fun of me or laugh. I decided never to take this personally. The first is that when you want to learn something, motivation is absolutely key.
2. Because of this high motivation factor, my brain absorbed information at a much higher rate. I learned more in one month than in two or three years of university French because I was so excited. I also learned the importance of the intensity of your focus, of being immersed in something. Practicing every single day for hours upon hours, having the language ringing in my ear, dreaming in French, my attention was intense and focused. And because of that, I learned rapidly.
3. But the most important lesson of all was that you really learn in this world by doing things, by practice. Not by reading books or taking tutorials. You need to be out on the street, interacting with people, trying things out, learning from your mistakes, not being afraid to make mistakes or be ridiculed.
4. If you want to start a business, go ahead and start it. Don’t be afraid of making mistakes or failing; you learn best through failures. Find someone who is a master at music or at business and attach yourself to them. Get an education at their feet, doing whatever tasks they assign you. Immerse yourself in the world or the industry that you wish to master. This is better than all the books or courses you could read or take in the world—learning by doing.

## FEBRUARY 1: Submit to Reality

*We receive three educations, one from our parents, one from our school masters, and one from the world. The third contradicts all that the first two teach us.*

1. Every time you change careers or acquire new skills, you're enter this phase of life. The goal of The Apprenticeship is not to make money.
2. The goal of an apprenticeship is to literally transform yourself.
3. You recognize that you're starting over and you're going to immerse yourself in it, so that eventually you're going to be the one who actually rewrites those rules—like all masters do.
4. Daily Law: Learning how to learn is the most important skill to acquire.

## FEBRUARY 2: What the Mentor Needs

1. The mentor-apprentice relationship is a very mutually beneficial relationship. When you are in the inferior position and you are looking for a favor from someone who is powerful, you have to get outside of yourself and think of their needs. Obviously, mentors have a lot to give you. But, more important, you have to have something to give them.
2. Daily Law: Find a master to apprentice under, but instead of thinking about how much they can give you, think about how you can help them with their work.

## FEBRUARY 3: You Have One Goal

*Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.*

Daily Law: Practical knowledge is the ultimate commodity. Evaluate opportunities using one criterion: the greatest possibility for learning

## FEBRUARY 4: Value Learning above Everything Else

1. You will choose a place that has people and mentors who can inspire and teach you. A job with mediocre pay has the added benefit of training you to get by with less—a valuable life skill. You must never disdain an apprenticeship with no pay. In fact, it is often the height of wisdom to find the perfect mentor and offer your services as an assistant for free.
2. Happy to exploit your cheap and eager spirit, such mentors will often divulge more than the usual trade secrets. In the end, by valuing learning above all else, you will set the stage for your creative expansion, and the money will soon come to you.
3. Daily Law: Get one good piece of advice or guidance today from a master of your profession or of life.

## FEBRUARY 5: Accumulate Skills

*There is much to be known, life is short, and life is not life without knowledge.*

Daily Law: Acquiring a set of skills is the key to navigating a turbulent work world. The ability to later combine these skills is the best path to mastery.

#### FEBRUARY 6: Consider Yourself a Builder

1. No matter your field, you must think of yourself as a builder, using actual materials and ideas.
2. You cannot make anything worthwhile in this world unless you have first developed and transformed yourself.
3. Daily Law: Like a builder, develop the highest standards, and the patience for the step by-step process.

#### FEBRUARY 7: The Only Shortcut to Mastery

*Freedom consists not in refusing to recognize anything above us, but in respecting something which is above us; for, by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and, by our very acknowledgement, prove that we bear within ourselves what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it.*

1. Your goal is always to surpass your mentors in mastery and brilliance.
2. Daily Law: Choosing the right mentor is like being able to choose your own parents; the wrong choice is fatal.

#### FEBRUARY 8: The Perfect Mentor

Daily Law: What to look for: Whose work inspires you? Whose style excites you? Who do you want to be like in ten years?

#### FEBRUARY 9: Redefine Pleasure

*One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself.*

1. When you practice and develop any skill you transform yourself in the process. You reveal to yourself new capabilities that were previously latent, that are exposed as you progress. You develop emotionally.
2. Boredom no longer signals the need for distraction, but rather the need for new challenges to conquer.
3. Daily Law: See the fruits of discipline and skill as the richest pleasures of all.

#### FEBRUARY 10: Learn from Everything

*A person of sharp observation and sound judgment rules over things, not they him. . . . There is nothing he cannot discover, notice, grasp, understand.*

1. Every task you are given, no matter how menial, offers opportunities to observe this world at work. No detail about the people within it is too trivial. Everything you see or hear is a sign for you to decode. Over time, you will begin to see and understand more of the reality that eluded you at first.

2. You move from observation to analysis, honing your reasoning skills, but only after months of careful attention.
3. Daily Law: Approach every task, even the most menial, the same: as an opportunity to observe and amass information about your environment.

#### FEBRUARY 11: Enter the Cycle of Accelerated Returns

*That which we persist in doing becomes easier to do, not that the nature of the thing has changed but that our power to do has increased.*

1. The more we speak and practice, the more fluent we become.
2. Daily Law: Everything worth doing has a learning curve. When it gets hard, remember the goal: reaching the cycle of accelerated returns.

#### FEBRUARY 12: Learn by Doing

1. But in the real world, you learn best by doing, by actively trying your hand at the task.
2. He had to develop his skills by watching carefully, and then practicing the same techniques over and over. He would practice in off hours, going over the most intricate motions of the knife.
3. Daily Law: The brain is designed to learn through constant repetition and active, hands on involvement. Through such practice and persistence, any skill can be mastered. Pick a skill to acquire and begin to practice.

#### FEBRUARY 13: How to Learn Quickly and Deeply

*People who cling to their delusions find it difficult, if not impossible, to learn anything worth learning: A people under the necessity of creating themselves must examine everything, and soak up learning the way the roots of a tree soak up water.*

1. You drop all of your preconceptions about an environment or field, any lingering feelings of smugness. You have no fears. You interact with people and participate in the culture as deeply as possible. You are full of curiosity.
2. Your mind will open up and you will have a hunger to learn. This position is of course only temporary. You are reverting to a feeling of dependence, so that within five to ten years you can learn enough to finally declare your independence and enter full adulthood.
3. Daily Law: Revert to a childlike dependence. Today, act like those you interact with know much more than you.

#### FEBRUARY 14: Move Toward Resistance

1. To attain mastery, you must adopt what we shall call Resistance Practice. The principle is simple—you go in the opposite direction of all of your natural tendencies when it comes to practice. First, you resist the temptation to be nice to yourself. You become your own worst critic;

you see your work as if through the eyes of others. You recognize your weaknesses, precisely the elements you are not good at. Those are the aspects you give precedence to in your practice.

2. You find a kind of perverse pleasure in moving past the pain this might bring. Second, you resist the lure of easing up on your focus. You train yourself to concentrate in practice with double the intensity, as if it were the real thing times two. In devising your own routines, you become as creative as possible. In this way, you develop your own standards for excellence, generally higher than those of others.
3. Daily Law: Invent exercises that work upon your weaknesses. Give yourself arbitrary deadlines to meet certain standards, constantly pushing yourself past perceived limits.

#### FEBRUARY 15: Concentrated Practice Cannot Fail

*For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. . . . Men become builders by building and lyreplayers by playing the lyre.*

1. Concentrated practice over time cannot fail but produce results.
2. Daily Law: Put in an hour of concentrated practice today, and tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after that.

#### FEBRUARY 16: Love the Detailed Work

Daily Law: Master the details and the rest will fall into place.

#### FEBRUARY 17: The Painful Truth

*It's like chopping down a huge tree of immense girth. You won't accomplish it with one swing of your axe. If you keep chopping away at it, though, and do not let up, eventually, whether it wants to or not, it will suddenly topple down.*

1. The very desire to find shortcuts makes you eminently unsuited for any kind of mastery.
2. Daily Law: There's no bypassing the Apprenticeship Phase. Rid yourself of the desire to find shortcuts.

#### FEBRUARY 18: Two Kinds of Failure

*A thinker sees his own actions as experiments and questions—as attempts to find out something. Success and failure are for him answers above all.*

Daily Law: Act boldly on one of your ideas today

#### FEBRUARY 19: Choose Time

Daily Law: Time is the critical variable. Take one thing off your plate today to make more time for your Life's Task.

## FEBRUARY 20: Understand How the Brain Works

Daily Law: Put your faith in learning, not technology

## FEBRUARY 21: Create the Need for You

*Make people depend on you. More is to be gained from such dependence than courtesy. He who has slaked his thirst, immediately turns his back on the well, no longer needing it.*

1. Necessity rules the world. People rarely act unless compelled to. If you create no need for yourself, then you will be done away with at the first opportunity.
2. Daily Law: Strive to be the only one who can do what you do and make the fate of those who hire you so entwined with yours that they cannot possibly get rid of you.

## FEBRUARY 22: Absorb Purposeful Energy

1. If possible, collect around you a group of people from different fields, as friends or associates, who have similar energy. You will help elevate one another's sense of purpose. Do not settle for virtual associations or mentors.
2. Daily Law: Make a list of the people in your life who live with purpose. Prioritize spending more time with them.

## FEBRUARY 23: Never Enough Knowledge

1. At the endpoint of his development, he came to possess a remarkable feel for battle and the overall shape of a campaign. In his case, this became known as his infamous coup d'oeil, his ability to assess a situation with a glance of his eye.
2. Daily Law: Find the deepest pleasure in absorbing knowledge and information. Feel like you never have enough.

## FEBRUARY 24: Surpass Your Master

*Poor is the apprentice who does not surpass his Master.*

Daily Law: Beware the illustrious mentor's shadow. Try out their ideas but always transfigure them and differentiate yourself. Your goal is to surpass them.

## FEBRUARY 25: Keep Expanding Your Horizons

1. The reality of the Apprenticeship Phase is no one is really going to help you or give you direction. In fact, the odds are against you. If you desire an apprenticeship, if you want to learn and set yourself up for mastery, you have to do it yourself, and with great energy. When you enter this phase, you generally begin at the lowest position. Your access to knowledge and people is limited by your status.
2. Being exposed to ideas in the wide world, you will tend to develop a hunger for more and more knowledge; you will find it harder to remain satisfied in any narrow corner, which is precisely the

point. The people in your field, in your immediate circle, are like worlds unto themselves—their stories and viewpoints will naturally expand your horizons and build up your social skills. Mingle with as many different types of people as possible. Those circles will slowly widen.

3. Daily Law: Be relentless in your pursuit for expansion. Whenever you feel like you are settling into some circle, force yourself to shake things up and look for new challenges.

#### FEBRUARY 26: Venture Outside Your Comfort Zone

*Our vanity, our passions, our spirit of imitation, our abstract intelligence, our habits have long been at work, and it is the task of art to undo this work of theirs, making us travel back in the direction from which we have come to the depths where what has really existed lies unknown within us.*

1. Often you must force yourself to initiate such actions or experiments before you think you are ready. You are testing your character, moving past your fears, and developing a sense of detachment to your work—looking at it through the eyes of others. You are getting a taste for the next phase in which what you produce will be under constant scrutiny.
2. Daily Law: Try the thing you don't think you're quite ready for.

#### FEBRUARY 27: Establish Your Own Style

1. Never let yourself be seen as following your predecessor's path. If you do you will never surpass him. You must physically demonstrate your difference, by establishing a style and symbolism that sets you apart
2. Daily Law: Follow the master's example, not his path. Demonstrate your difference. Establish your own style.

#### FEBRUARY 28: To the Master Goes the Knife

*One repays a teacher badly if one remains only a pupil.*

1. At each phase of life you must find the appropriate teachers, getting what you want out of them, moving on, and feeling no shame for this. It is the path your own mentor probably took and it is the way of the world.
2. Daily Law: Internalize the important and relevant parts of the Master's knowledge. Apply the knife to everything else.

#### FEBRUARY 29: Take the Hacker Approach

1. You want to learn as many skills as possible, following the direction that circumstances lead you to, but only if they are related to your deepest interests. Like a hacker, you value the process of self-discovery. You avoid the trap of following one set career path. You are not sure where this will all lead, but you are taking full advantage of the openness of information, all of the

knowledge about skills now at our disposal. You see what kind of work suits you and what you want to avoid at all cost. You move by trial and error.

2. You are not wandering about because you are afraid of commitment, but because you are expanding your skill base and your possibilities. At a certain point, when you are ready to settle on something, ideas and opportunities will inevitably present themselves to you. When that happens, all of the skills you have accumulated will prove invaluable. You will be the master at combining them in ways that are unique and suited to your individuality.
3. Daily Law: In this new age, those who follow a rigid, singular path in their youth often find themselves in a career dead end in their forties or overwhelmed with boredom. The wide-ranging apprenticeship will yield the opposite—expanding possibilities.

### **March The Master at Work ACTIVATING SKILLS AND ATTAINING MASTERY**

Anything that is alive is in a continual state of change and movement

#### **MARCH 1: Awaken the Dimensional Mind**

*Learning never exhausts the mind*

1. As you accumulate more skills and internalize the rules that govern your field, your mind will want to become more active, seeking to use this knowledge in ways that are more suited to your inclinations.
2. As your thinking grows more fluid, your mind will become increasingly dimensional, seeing more and more aspects of reality. In the end, you will turn against the very rules you have internalized, shaping and reforming them to suit your spirit. Such originality will bring you to the heights of power.
3. Daily Law: Expand your knowledge to related fields. Pick an auxiliary skill and start practicing.

#### **MARCH 2: Get to the Inside**

Daily Law: If you work hard, you will make your way to the inner circle of knowledge. That is the end goal of mastery: an inside-out understanding.

#### **MARCH 3: Cultivate the Craftsman Ethic**

Daily Law: Retain the craftsman spirit. Keep in mind: the work is the only thing that matters.

#### **MARCH 4: The Creative Process**

1. You must cultivate profound dissatisfaction with your work and the need to constantly improve your ideas, along with a sense of uncertainty—you are not exactly sure where to go next, and this uncertainty drives the creative urge and keeps it fresh.

2. Daily Law: Imagine yourself years in the future looking back at the work you have done. From that future vantage point, the extra months and years you devoted to the process will not seem painful or laborious at all. Time is your greatest ally.

#### MARCH 5: Look Wider and Think Further Ahead

*“Look wider and think further ahead”*

1. Through such mental training, you will smooth the path to mastery while separating yourself ever further from the competition.
2. Daily Law: The person with the more global perspective wins. Expand your gaze.

#### MARCH 6: The Gift of Our Original Mind

Daily Law: Do what the mind wants to do—explore, entertain, and embrace new ideas.

#### MARCH 7: Keep the Mind Moving

1. Do not waste time on things you cannot change or influence.
2. Daily Law: Respond to the moment. Thought to thought, task to task, topic to topic—let the mind be fluid

#### MARCH 8: Retain Your Sense of Wonder

*Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.*

1. Constantly remind yourself of how little you truly know, and of how mysterious the world remains
2. Daily Law: Reality is infinitely mysterious. Let it continually fill you with awe. Remind yourself of how much more you still can learn

#### MARCH 9: Impatience Is Your Enemy

*Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.*

Daily Law: Take the long view. By being patient and following the process, individual expression will flow out of you naturally.

#### MARCH 10: Knowledge Is Your Superior

*What makes the difference between an outstandingly creative person and a less creative one is not any special power, but greater knowledge (in the form of practiced expertise) and the motivation to acquire and use it. This motivation endures for long periods, perhaps shaping and inspiring a whole lifetime.*

Daily Law: Knowledge is always progressing. Don't let your ego fool you. You are always knowledge's inferior.

#### MARCH 11: Intensity of Focus

1. Marcel Proust was like a gardener tending and cultivating the plants that had taken root so many years before.
2. Daily Law: It is not your studies that will bear fruit but the intensity of your attention.

#### MARCH 12: Perfect Yourself through Failure

Daily Law: Malfunctions are a means of education. They are trying to tell you something. You must listen.

#### MARCH 13: Creative Endurance

Daily Law: Creating anything worthwhile is like a marathon, and you must train for it.

#### MARCH 14: Immerse Yourself in the Details

1. Let your study of the details guide your thinking and shape your theories. Think of everything in nature, or in the world, as a kind of hologram—the smallest part reflecting something essential about the whole. Immersing yourself in details will combat the generalizing tendencies of the brain and bring you closer to reality.
2. Daily Law: Uncover the secret to any reality by uncovering the details.

#### MARCH 15: Make Your Work Come to Life

Daily Law: See your work as a living thing. Your task is to bring it alive and make others feel this.

#### MARCH 16: Alter Your Perspective

1. The lesson is simple—what constitutes true creativity is the openness and adaptability of our spirit.
2. Daily Law: Creativity and adaptability are inseparable. Look at things today from every possible angle.

#### MARCH 17: These Powers Can't Come Cheaply

1. When you look at the exceptionally creative work of Masters, you must not ignore the years of practice, the endless routines, the hours of doubt, and the tenacious overcoming of obstacles these people endured.
2. Daily Law: Creative energy is the fruit of the Master's efforts and nothing else. Do not fall for the romantic myths

#### MARCH 18: The Power of Desire and Determination

Daily Law: To rise to the level of mastery requires intense dedication. You have to really want it. What would make you have such commitment and dedication?

#### MARCH 19: The Deadening Dynamic

Daily Law: People are dying for the new, for what expresses the spirit of the time in an original way. By creating something new you will create your own audience and attain the ultimate position of power in culture.

#### MARCH 20: The Master's Brain

*We can now say with confidence that the brain is an extraordinarily plastic biological system that is in a state of dynamic equilibrium with the external world. Even its basic connections are being constantly updated in response to changing sensory demands.*

Daily Law: The more skills you learn, the richer the landscape of the brain. It's up to you.

#### MARCH 21: The Universal Master

Daily Law: Extend your knowledge further and further, leading to wide-ranging connections.

#### MARCH 22: On Meditation

*All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone.*

1. Zen meditation (known as zazen) every morning. In this form of meditation (referred to as shikantaza) the main goal is to learn how to empty the mind, develop superior powers of focus (joriki), and gain access to more unconscious, intuitive forms of thinking.
2. Daily Law: The Master's mind must be able to concentrate on one thing for a long period of time. Develop such habits.

#### MARCH 23: Listen to Your Frustration

1. The mounting frustration and tightness that comes from single-minded devotion to one problem or idea will naturally lead to a breaking point.
2. Daily Law: Walk away when you're blocked. Do something else. The brain will eventually lead you back.

#### MARCH 24: The Mind as a Muscle

Daily Law: Don't get comfortable. Take risks. Change. Try learning about a field you don't know anything about. Or stepping into a viewpoint you've never considered.

#### MARCH 25: Cultivate Negative Capability

1. The ability to endure and even embrace mysteries and uncertainties is what the poet John Keats called "negative capability." All Masters possess this Negative Capability, and it is the source of their creative power.
2. Daily Law: Develop the habit of suspending the need to judge everything that crosses your path. Consider and even momentarily entertain viewpoints opposite to your own, seeing how they feel.

Do anything to break up your normal train of thinking and your sense that you already know the truth.

#### MARCH 26: Pay Attention to Negative Cues

Daily Law: The ability to loosen our mind, to alter our perspective, is a function of our imagination. Learn to imagine more possibilities than you generally consider. Avoid fixating only on what is present. Ponder what is absent.

#### MARCH 27: The Power of Peak Experiences

*The person in peak-experiences feels himself, more than other times, to be the responsible, active, creating center of his activities and of his perceptions. He feels more like a prime mover, more self-determined (rather than caused, determined, helpless, dependent, passive, weak, bossed). He feels himself to be his own boss, fully responsible, fully volitional, with more free-will than at other times, master of his fate, an agent.*

Daily Law: Get into a flow state today. Rid yourself of the distractions and cheap pleasures. Lose yourself in the work.

#### MARCH 28: Move Beyond Intellect

Daily Law: Over time, Masters gain an intuitive feel for the whole of their field. It's an excitement and joy that awaits you if you are patient.

#### MARCH 29: Fuse the Intuitive with the Rational

*Albert Einstein called the intuitive or metaphoric mind a sacred gift. He added that the rational mind was a faithful servant. It is paradoxical that in the context of modern life we have begun to worship the servant and defile the divine.*

Daily Law: This power is what our brains were designed to attain, and we will be naturally led to this type of intelligence if we follow our inclinations to their ultimate ends.

#### MARCH 30: Fuse the Intuitive with the Rational

Daily Law: If you keep to the path, these powers of mastery will come to you

#### MARCH 31: Connect to Your Destiny

*Do not talk about giftedness, inborn talents! One can name great men of all kinds who were very little gifted. They acquired greatness, became "geniuses". . . [T]hey allowed themselves time for it.*

Daily Law: In following this voice you realize your own potential and satisfy your deepest longings to create and express your uniqueness. It exists for a purpose, and it is your Life's Task to bring it to fruition.

1. While appearing the very paragon of elegance, they had to outwit and thwart their own opponents in the subtlest of ways.
2. Everything must appear civilized, decent, democratic, and fair. But if we play by those rules too strictly, if we take them too literally, we are crushed by those around us who are not so foolish.
3. “Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good.”

#### APRIL 1: Never Outshine the Master

*Avoid outshining the master. All superiority is odious, but the superiority of a subject over his prince is not only stupid, it is fatal.*

1. In your desire to please and impress, do not go too far in displaying your talents or you might accomplish the opposite—inspire fear and insecurity. Everyone has insecurities. When you show yourself in the world and display your talents, you naturally stir up all kinds of resentment, envy, and other manifestations of insecurity.
2. You cannot spend your life worrying about the petty feelings of others. With those above you, however, you must take a different approach: When it comes to power, outshining the master is perhaps the worst mistake of all. Make your masters appear more brilliant than they are, and you will attain the heights of power.
3. Daily Law: Always make those above you feel comfortably superior.

#### APRIL 2: Make the Master Feel Glorious and Superior

Daily Law: Not only don't outshine the master but make those above you shine brilliantly.

#### APRIL 3 Find Out Who Holds the Strings

1. Power always exists in concentrated forms. In any organization it is inevitable for a small group to hold the strings. And often it is not those with the titles. In the game of power, only the fool flails about without fixing his target. You must find out who controls the operations, who is the real director behind the scenes.
2. Daily Law: When looking for sources of power to elevate you, look for those who really control the operations. They are not always who you think. Once identified, attach yourself to them.

#### APRIL 4 Know When to Take and Give Credit

1. Be sure you know when letting other people share the credit serves your purpose.
2. He took credit for the work of those below him while graciously giving credit for his own labors to those above. That is the way to play the game
3. Daily Law: Take credit from those below you. Give credit to those above.

#### APRIL 5: Remake Yourself into a Character of Power

Daily Law: Remake yourself into a character of power. Working on yourself like clay should be one of your greatest and most pleasurable life tasks. It makes you, in essence, an artist—an artist creating yourself.

#### APRIL 6: Seem Dumber Than Your Mark

1. *Know how to make use of stupidity: The wisest man plays this card at times. There are occasions when the highest wisdom consists in appearing not to know—you must not be ignorant but capable of playing it.*
2. Appear less intelligent than you are, even a bit of a fool, is the perfect disguise. Look like a harmless pig and no one will believe you harbor dangerous ambitions. They may even promote you since you seem so likable and subservient.
3. Daily Law: In general, always make people believe they are smarter and more sophisticated than you are. They will keep you around because you make them feel better about themselves, and the longer you are around, the more opportunities you will have to deceive them.

#### APRIL 7: Do Not Be the Court Cynic

1. *Wax, a substance naturally hard and brittle, can be made soft by the application of a little warmth, so that it will take any shape you please. In the same way, by being polite and friendly, you can make people pliable and obliging, even though they are apt to be crabbed and malevolent. Hence politeness is to human nature what warmth is to wax.*
2. Express admiration for the good work of others. If you constantly criticize your equals or subordinates, some of that criticism will rub off on you, hovering over you like a gray cloud wherever you go. People will groan at each new cynical comment, and you will irritate them. By expressing modest admiration for other people's achievements, you paradoxically call attention to your own
3. Daily Law: The ability to express wonder and amazement, and seem like you mean it, is a rare and dying talent, but one still greatly valued.

#### APRIL 8: Master Your Emotional Responses

1. *A sovereign should never launch an army out of anger, a leader should never start a war out of wrath.*
2. Angry people usually end up looking ridiculous, for their response seems out of proportion to what occasioned it. They have taken things too seriously, exaggerating the hurt or insult that has been done to them. They are so sensitive to slight that it becomes comical how much they take personally.
3. People may temporarily be cowed by your tantrums, but in the end they lose respect for you. They also realize they can easily undermine a person with so little self-control
4. Daily Law: Displaying anger and emotion are signs of weakness; you cannot control yourself, so how can you control anything?

### APRIL 9: So Much Depends on Reputation

1. This is the reason for the supreme importance of making and maintaining a reputation that is of your own creation. That reputation will protect you in the dangerous game of appearances, distracting the probing eyes of others from knowing what you are really like, and giving you a degree of control over how the world judges you—a powerful position to be in. Reputation has a power like magic: With one stroke of its wand, it can double your strength. It can also send people scurrying away from you.
2. Daily Law: Reputation is the cornerstone of power. Through reputation alone you can intimidate and win; once it slips, however, you are vulnerable, and will be attacked on all sides. Never let others define it for you.

### APRIL 10: Always Say Less Than Necessary

*Undutiful words of a subject do often take deeper root than the memory of ill deeds.*

1. When you are trying to impress people with words, the more you say, the more common you appear, and the less in control.
2. Powerful people impress and intimidate by saying less. The more you say, the more likely you are to say something foolish.
3. Daily Law: By saying less than necessary you create the appearance of meaning and power. Also, the less you say, the less risk you run of saying something foolish, even dangerous.

### APRIL 11: Appeal to People's Self-Interest

*The shortest and best way to make your fortune is to let people see clearly that it is in their interests to promote yours.*

1. Most people never succeed at this, because they are completely trapped in their own wants and desires. They start from the assumption that the people they are appealing to have a selfless interest in helping them. They talk as if their needs mattered to these people—who probably couldn't care less. Sometimes they refer to larger issues: a great cause, or grand emotions such as love and gratitude. They go for the big picture when simple, everyday realities would have much more appeal
2. What they do not realize is that even the most powerful person is locked inside needs of his own, and that if you make no appeal to his self-interest, he merely sees you as desperate or, at best, a waste of time.
3. Daily Law: When asking for anything, uncover something in your request that will benefit the person you are asking, and emphasize it out of all proportion. They will respond enthusiastically when they see something to be gained for themselves.

#### APRIL 12: Use Your Enemies

*Men are more ready to repay an injury than a benefit, because gratitude is a burden and revenge a pleasure.*

1. Whenever you can, bury the hatchet with an enemy, and make a point of putting him in your service.
2. Daily Law: As Lincoln said, you destroy an enemy when you make a friend of him.

#### APRIL 13: Better to Be Attacked Than Ignored

1. Burning more brightly than those around you is a skill that no one is born with. You have to learn to attract attention, “as surely as the lodestone attracts iron.” At the start of your career, you must attach your name and reputation to a quality, an image, that sets you apart from other people. This image can be something like a characteristic style of dress, or a personality quirk that amuses people and gets talked about. Once the image is established, you have an appearance, a place in the sky for your star.
2. Society craves larger-than-life figures, people who stand above the general mediocrity. Never be afraid, then, of the qualities that set you apart and draw attention to you. Court controversy, even scandal. It is better to be attacked, even slandered, than ignored. All professions are ruled by this law, and all professionals must have a bit of the showman about them.
3. Daily Law: Make no distinction between kinds of attention—notoriety of any sort will bring you power. Better to be slandered and attacked than ignored.

#### APRIL 14: View the World as a Vast Interconnected Palace

1. The world is dangerous and enemies are everywhere—everyone has to protect themselves. A fortress seems the safest. But isolation exposes you to more dangers than it protects you from—it cuts you off from valuable information, it makes you conspicuous and an easy target.
2. Daily Law: Because humans are social creatures by nature, power depends on social interaction and circulation. To make yourself powerful, place yourself at the center of things, make yourself more accessible, seek out old allies and make new ones, force yourself into more and more different circles.

#### APRIL 15: Create a Cultlike Following

1. Having a large following opens up all sorts of possibilities for deception; not only will your followers worship you, they will defend you from your enemies and will voluntarily take on the work of enticing others to join your fledgling cult. This kind of power will lift you to another realm: You will no longer have to struggle or use subterfuge to enforce your will.
2. Dangle in front of us some new cause, elixir, get-rich-quick scheme, or the latest technological trend or art movement, and we leap as one from the water to take the bait.

3. Daily Law: People have an overwhelming desire to believe in something. Become the focal point of such desire by offering them a cause, a new faith to follow. In the absence of organized religion and grand causes, your new belief system will bring you untold power.

#### APRIL 16: Do Not Commit to Anyone

*I would rather be a beggar and single than a queen and married.*

1. It is the fool who always rushes to take sides. Do not commit to any side or cause but yourself. By maintaining your independence, you become the master of others—playing people against one another, making them pursue you. If you allow people to feel they possess you to any degree, you lose all power over them.
2. By not committing your affections, they will only try harder to win you over. Stay aloof and you gain the power that comes from their attention and frustrated desire.
3. Daily Law: Play the Virgin Queen: give them hope but never satisfaction.

#### APRIL 17: Stay Above the Fray

*Regard it as more courageous not to become involved in an engagement than to win in battle, and where there is already one interfering fool, take care that there shall not be two.*

1. Do not let people drag you into their petty fights and squabbles. At the same time, you cannot completely stand aside, for that would cause needless offense. To play the game properly, you must seem interested in other people's problems, even sometimes appear to take their side. But while you make outward gestures of support, you must maintain your inner energy and sanity by keeping your emotions disengaged.
2. No matter how hard people try to pull you in, never let your interest in their affairs and petty squabbles go beyond the surface. Give them gifts, listen with a sympathetic look, even occasionally play the charmer—but inwardly keep both the friendly kings and the perfidious tyrants at arm's length.
3. By refusing to commit and thus maintaining your autonomy, you retain the initiative: your moves stay matters of your own choosing, not defensive reactions to the push-and-pull of those around you.
4. Daily Law: Always try to inwardly maintain your independence and avoid entanglements not of your choosing.

#### APRIL 18: Startle the Snakes

1. Say or do something that can be read in more than one way, that may be superficially polite but that could also indicate a slight coolness on your part or be seen as subtle insult. A friend may wonder but will let it pass. The secret enemy, though, will react with anger. Any strong emotion and you will know that there's something boiling under the surface

2. Daily Law: As the Chinese say, beat the grass to startle the snakes.

#### APRIL 19: Tailor Your Flattery

1. Courtiers have to gain the attention of leaders and ingratiate themselves in some way.
2. Mirroring the leader's ideas and values, without using their exact words, can be a highly effective form of indirect flattery
3. Daily Law: Overt flattery can be effective but has its limits; it is too direct and obvious and looks bad to other courtiers. Discreet flattery, tailored to the insecurities of your target, is much more powerful.

#### APRIL 20: Be Royal in Your Own Fashion

*With all great deceivers there is a noteworthy occurrence to which they owe their power. In the actual act of deception they are overcome by belief in themselves: it is this which then speaks so miraculously and compellingly to those around them.*

1. The way you carry yourself will often determine how you are treated: in the long run, appearing vulgar or common will make people disrespect you.
2. Ask for less and that is just what you will get. Ask for more, however, and you send a signal that you are worth a king's ransom. Even those who turn you down respect you for your confidence, and that respect will eventually pay off in ways you cannot imagine.
3. Daily Law: By acting regally and confident of your powers, you make yourself seem destined to wear a crown.

#### APRIL 21: Be Merciless with Your Enemies

*The remnants of an enemy can become active like those of a disease or fire. Hence, these should be exterminated completely. One should never ignore an enemy, knowing him to be weak. He becomes dangerous in due course, like the spark of fire in a haystack.*

1. Your enemies wish you ill. There is nothing they want more than to eliminate you. If, in your struggles with them, you stop halfway or even three-quarters of the way, out of mercy or hope of reconciliation, you only make them more determined, more embittered, and they will someday take revenge. They may act friendly for the time being, but this is only because you have defeated them. They have no choice but to bide their time.
2. Have no mercy. Crush your enemies as totally as they would crush you. Ultimately the only peace and security you can hope for from your enemies is their disappearance.
3. Daily Law: Judge your enemies carefully, looking at their past patterns. Sometimes it is best to convert them into an ally and neutralize them. But with others it only pays to be merciless and crush them totally.

### APRIL 22: Sow the Seeds of Doubt

*It is easier to cope with a bad conscience than with a bad reputation.*

1. Doubt is a powerful weapon: Once you let it out of the bag with insidious rumors, your opponents are in a horrible dilemma.
2. If done correctly, the sowing of rumors can so infuriate and unsettle your rivals that in defending themselves they will make numerous mistakes. This is the perfect weapon for those who have no reputation of their own to work from.
3. Daily Law: Destroy your rivals with rumors.

### APRIL 23: Fear the Power of Infection

1. You can die from someone else's misery—emotional states are as infectious as diseases. You may feel you are helping the drowning man, but you are only precipitating your own disaster. Infectors can be recognized by the misfortune they draw on themselves, their turbulent past, their long line of broken relationships, their unstable careers, and the very force of their character, which sweeps you up and makes you lose your reason.
2. Be forewarned by these signs of an infector; learn to see the discontent in their eye. Most important of all, do not take pity. Do not enmesh yourself in trying to help. The infector will remain unchanged, but you will be unhinged.
3. Daily Law: People sometimes draw misfortune on themselves; they will also draw it on you. Associate with the happy and fortunate instead.

### APRIL 24: Avoid the False Alliance

1. The trick, however, is to recognize the difference between false allies and real ones. A false alliance is created out of an immediate emotional need. It requires that you give up something essential about yourself and makes it impossible for you to make your own decisions. A true alliance is formed out of mutual self-interest, each side supplying what the other cannot get alone. It does not require you to fuse your own identity with that of a group or pay attention to everyone else's emotional needs. It allows you autonomy.
2. Daily Law: Cultivate real allies. Find those with mutual self-interests and make an alliance.

### APRIL 25: Enter Action with Boldness

*Always set to work without misgivings on the score of imprudence.*

1. Understand: If boldness is not natural, neither is timidity. It is an acquired habit, picked up out of a desire to avoid conflict. If timidity has taken hold of you, then root it out. Your fears of the consequences of a bold action are way out of proportion to reality, and in fact the consequences of timidity are worse. Your value is lowered and you create a self-fulfilling cycle of doubt and disaster.

2. Daily Law: Timidity is dangerous: Better to enter with boldness. Any mistakes you commit through audacity are easily corrected with more audacity

#### APRIL 26: Make Your Accomplishments Seem Effortless

*A line [of poetry] will take us hours maybe; Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought, Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.*

Daily Law: Your actions must seem natural and executed with ease. When you act, act as if you could do much more. Avoid the temptation of revealing how hard you work—it only raises questions.

#### APRIL 27: Despise the Free Lunch

1. The powerful never forget that what is offered for free is inevitably a trick. Friends who offer favors without asking for payment will later want something far dearer than the money you would have paid them. The bargain has hidden problems, both material and psychological. What has worth is worth paying for. By paying your own way you stay clear of gratitude, guilt, and deceit. It is also often wise to pay the full price—there is no cutting corners with excellence.
2. Daily Law: Learn to pay and to pay well

#### APRIL 28: There Is No Revenge Like Oblivion

*There is no revenge like oblivion, for it is the entombment of the unworthy in the dust of their own nothingness.*

Daily Law: The harder we try to fix our mistakes, the worse we often make them.

#### APRIL 29: Cultivate an Air of Unpredictability

1. People are always trying to read the motives behind your actions and to use your predictability against you. Throw in a completely inexplicable move and you put them on the defensive. Because they do not understand you, they are unnerved, and in such a state you can easily intimidate them.
2. “The best calculation is the absence of calculation. Once you have attained a certain level of recognition, others generally figure that when you do something, it’s for an intelligent reason. So it’s really foolish to plot out your movements too carefully in advance. You’re better off acting capriciously.”
3. Humans are creatures of habit with an insatiable need to see familiarity in other people’s actions. Your predictability gives them a sense of control. Turn the tables: Be deliberately unpredictable. Behavior that seems to have no consistency or purpose will keep them off-balance. Scrambling your patterns on a day-to-day basis will cause a stir around you and stimulate interest. People will talk about you, ascribe motives and explanations that have nothing to do with the truth, but that keep you constantly in their minds.
4. Daily Law: In the end, the more capricious you appear, the more respect you will garner. Only the terminally subordinate act in a predictable manner. Strategically reveal your human side.

## APRIL 30: Never Appear Too Perfect

*It takes great talent and skill to conceal one's talent and skill*

Daily Law: Appearing better than others is always dangerous, but most dangerous of all is to appear to have no faults or weaknesses. Envy creates silent enemies. Defuse it by occasionally downplaying your virtues.

## May The Supposed Nonplayers of Power RECOGNIZING TOXIC TYPES AND DISGUISED POWER STRATEGIES

1. Power is a social game. To learn and master it, you must develop the ability to study and understand people
2. “Many people spend time studying the properties of animals or herbs; how much more important it would be to study those of people, with whom we must live or die!” To be a master player you must also be a master psychologist. You must recognize motivations and see through the cloud of dust with which people surround their actions.
3. You must beware of such people, for while they express such opinions outwardly, they are often among the most adept players at power. They are what I call “supposed nonplayers.” They utilize strategies that cleverly disguise the nature of the manipulation involved.
4. Power is timeless. People may not be beheaded for making mistakes
5. There are three types of people in this world in dealing with this game. There are, what I call, the deniers, the people who deny this reality exists. They almost want to pretend that we are descended from angels and not from primates. They imagine that what I am talking about here is just cynical. These laws don’t really exist. These hardcore tactics may be used, but only by the nastiest and least moral people out there. Among these deniers, you will find two types. You will find people who are genuinely disturbed by the politicking aspect of human nature. They don’t want any kind of job in which they have to do that
6. The other branch of the deniers are the people that are the passive aggressors—those who consciously don’t want to admit that they ever engage in manipulation, but unconsciously are playing all kinds of games.
7. The second type of person are master manipulators, con artists, and outright aggressors. They don’t understand that there is a whole other side to the game, which requires empathy, cooperation, and seducing people into working with you.
8. The third type is what I call the radical realist.
9. The desire for power is part of our nature. It is a part of how we evolved over millions of years. There is no point in denying our nature. It is who we are. And not only are we not going to deny it, but we are going to accept that this is the human being that we are, the product of evolution.

10. Let's stop fighting it. With such acceptance, it is not that we love it and want to go out in the world and play all these nasty games. It is that we understand they exist. If, occasionally, we have to use the laws in playing offense or defense, we're okay with that, within reason.
11. Instead of being blindsided by the manipulators, we have calmness, power, and the freedom that comes with awareness of the laws.

#### MAY 1: Everyone Is a Player in the Game

*Courts are, unquestionably, the seats of politeness and good breeding; were they not so, they would be the seats of slaughter and desolation. Those who now smile upon and embrace, would affront and stab, each other, if manners did not interpose.*

1. You can recognize supposed nonplayers by the way they flaunt their moral qualities, their piety, their exquisite sense of justice. But since all of us hunger for power, and almost all of our actions are aimed at gaining it, the nonplayers are merely throwing dust in our eyes, distracting us from their power plays.
2. If you observe them closely, you will see in fact that they are often the ones most skillful at indirect manipulation, even if some of them practice it unconsciously. And they greatly resent any publicizing of the tactics they use every day.
3. Daily Law: The world is like a giant scheming court and we are all trapped inside it. There is no opting out of the game. Everyone is playing.

#### MAY 2: Take on the Toxic Types

1. Aggressive, envious, and manipulative people don't usually announce themselves as such. They have learned to appear charming in initial encounters, to use flattery and other means of disarming us. When they surprise us with their ugly behavior, we feel betrayed, angry, and helpless. They create constant pressure, knowing that in doing so they overwhelm our minds with their presence, making it doubly hard to think straight or strategize. Your greatest defense against them is to identify them in advance.
2. You will learn to mentally cut them down to size and focus on the glaring weaknesses and insecurities behind all of their bluster. You will not fall for their myth, and this will neutralize the intimidation they depend on. You will scoff at their cover stories and elaborate explanations for their selfish behavior. Your ability to stay calm will infuriate them and often push them into overreaching or making a mistake.
3. Daily Law: Come to appreciate these encounters as a chance to hone your skills of self mastery. Outsmarting just one of these types will give you a great deal of confidence that you can handle the worst in human nature.

#### MAY 3: Judge Them on Their Behavior, Not on Their Words

*Character is destiny.*

1. You need to train yourself to pay less attention to the words that people say and greater attention to their actions. People will say all kinds of things about their motives and intentions; they are used to dressing things up with words. Their actions, however, say much more about what is going on underneath the surface.
2. You will often notice that they wear this like a mask to hide the opposite. They are blustery because they are inwardly very insecure; they are overly friendly because they are secretly ambitious and aggressive; or they joke to hide a mean-spiritedness. What might seem like small issues—chronically being late, insufficient attention to detail, not returning favors—are signs of something deeper about their character. Nothing is too small to notice.
3. Daily Law: What you want is a picture of a person's character over time. Restrain from the natural tendency to judge right away, and let the passage of time reveal more and more about who people are.

#### MAY 4: The Appearance of Naiveté

*He who poses as a fool is not a fool.*

1. Those who claim to be nonplayers may affect an air of naiveté, to protect them from the accusation that they are after power. Beware, however, for the appearance of naiveté can be an effective means of deceit. And even genuine naiveté is not free of the snares of power.
2. Daily Law: Those who make a show or display of innocence are often the least innocent of all.

#### MAY 5: Be Careful Whom You Offend

1. Never assume that the person you are dealing with is weaker or less important than you are. A man who is of little importance and means today can be a person of power tomorrow. We forget a lot in our lives, but we rarely forget an insult.
2. Daily Law: Swallow the impulse to offend, even if the other person seems weak. The satisfaction is meager compared to the danger that someday he or she will be in a position to hurt you.

#### MAY 6: See Through the False Front

*One who is good at combating the enemy fools it with inscrutable moves, confuses it with false intelligence, makes it relax by concealing one's strength . . . deafens its ears by jumbling one's orders and signals, blinds its eyes by converting one's banners and insignias, . . . confounds its battle plan by providing distorted facts.*

1. The appearance of weakness often brings out people's aggressive side, making them drop strategy and prudence for an emotional and violent attack.
2. Daily Law: Never take appearances for reality

#### MAY 7: The Subtle-Superiority Strategy

1. You must understand that at the root of this is the need to make it clear to themselves and to you that they are in some way superior. If they were to say in so many words that they felt superior to you, they would incur ridicule and shame.
2. Putting you in the inferior position is a form of control, in which they get to define the relationship. You must pay attention to the pattern more than the apologies. They are not really sorry.
3. Daily Law: If this is chronic behavior, you must not get angry or display overt irritation —passive aggressors thrive on getting a rise out of you. Instead, stay calm and subtly mirror their behavior, calling attention to what they are doing, and inducing some shame if possible.

#### MAY 8 Look at Their Past

1. The most significant indicator of people's character comes through their actions over time.
2. you do some research into their past. You look at other actions you have observed that fit into this pattern, now in retrospect. You pay close attention to what they do in the present. You see their actions not as isolated incidents but as parts of a compulsive pattern. If you ignore the pattern it is your own fault.
3. Daily Law: When choosing people to work and associate with, do not be mesmerized by their reputation or taken in by the surface image they try to project. Instead, train yourself to look deep within them, to their past actions, to see their character.

#### MAY 9: See Through the Emotional Outburst

1. If a person explodes with anger at you (and it seems out of proportion to what you did to them), you must remind yourself that it is not exclusively directed at you—do not be so vain. The cause is much larger, goes way back in time, involves dozens of prior hurts, and is actually not worth the bother to understand.
2. Instead of seeing it as a personal grudge, look at the emotional outburst as a disguised power move, an attempt to control or punish you cloaked in the form of hurt feelings and anger. This shift of perspective will let you play the game of power with more clarity and energy.
3. Daily Law: Instead of overreacting and becoming ensnared in people's emotions, turn their loss of control to your advantage: you keep your head while they are losing theirs.

#### MAY 10: Don't Mistake Extra Conviction for Truth

1. When they smile a lot, seem more than friendly, and even are quite entertaining, it is hard for us to not be drawn in and lower ever so slightly our resistance to their influence. Similarly, if people are trying to cover something up, they tend to become extra vehement, righteous, and chatty. They are playing on the conviction bias—if I deny or say something with so much gusto, with an air of being a victim, it is hard to doubt me. We tend to take extra conviction for truth

2. Daily Law: When people try to explain their ideas with so much exaggerated energy, or defend themselves with an intense level of denial, that is precisely when you should raise your antennae.

#### MAY 11: The Pattern

1. If they surround themselves with some alluring myth, as Hughes did, we want to believe in it. Instead of determining people's character—their ability to work with others, to keep to their promises, to remain strong in adverse circumstances—we choose to work with or hire people based on their glittering résumé, their intelligence, and their charm. But even a positive trait such as intelligence is worthless if the person also happens to be of weak or dubious character.
2. Daily Law: Ignore the front that people display, the myth that surrounds them, and instead plumb their depths for signs of their character. This can be seen in the patterns they reveal from their past, the quality of their decisions, how they delegate authority and work with others, and countless other signs.

#### MAY 12: Be Wary of the Noble Gesture

*It is a world not of angels but of angles, where men speak of moral principles but act on power principles; a world where we are always moral and our enemies always immoral.*

Daily Law: People want to believe apparently noble gestures are genuine, for the belief is pleasant. They rarely notice how deceptive these gestures can be.

#### MAY 13: Recognize Deep Narcissists before You Fall for Them

1. You can recognize deep narcissists by the following behavior patterns: If they are ever insulted or challenged, they have no defense, nothing internal to soothe them or validate their worth. They generally react with great rage, thirsting for vengeance, full of a sense of righteousness.
2. They frequently display extreme self-confidence. This always helps to gain attention, and it neatly covers up their gaping inner emptiness and their fragmented sense of self. But beware if this confidence is ever truly put to the test. When it comes to other people in their lives, deep narcissists have an unusual relationship that is hard for us to understand. They tend to see others as extensions of themselves, what is known as self-objects. People exist as instruments for attention and validation. Their desire is to control them like they control their own arm or leg. In a relationship, they will slowly make the partner cut off contact with friends—there must be no competition for attention.
3. Daily Law: In the end, deep narcissists must have everything revolve around them. The best solution is to get out of their way so as not to get entangled in their never-ending dramas, and you can do so by picking up on the warning signs.

#### MAY 14: The Grandiose Leader

1. You will find at the core something quasi-mystical, highly irrational, and quite dangerous in that the grandiose leader now feels licensed to do whatever he or she wants in the name of the public.
2. Daily Law: A simple fact about grandiose leaders: they depend on the attention they are given. Do not feed their egos by giving them what they crave.

#### MAY 15: The Machiavellian Gift

1. The essence of a nonplayer's deception is distraction. Distracting the people they want to deceive gives them the time and space to do something their targets won't notice. An act of kindness, generosity, or honesty is often the most powerful form of distraction because it disarms other people's suspicions.
2. It is a device with infinite practical uses. Perhaps the best, though, is one of generosity. Few people can resist a gift, even from the most hardened enemy, which is why it is often the perfect way to disarm people. A gift brings out the child in us, instantly lowering our defenses.
3. Daily Law: Although we often view other people's actions in the most cynical light, we rarely see the Machiavellian element of a gift, which quite often hides ulterior motives.

#### MAY 16: The Fake Traditionalist

*He who desires or attempts to reform the government of a state, and wishes to have it accepted, must at least retain the semblance of the old forms; so that it may seem to the people that there has been no change in the institutions, even though in fact they are entirely different from the old ones.*

1. A strategy the clever nonplayer uses to disguise change: making a loud and public display of support for the values of the past.
2. Daily Law: Don't let the person who seems to be a zealot for tradition fool you. Notice how unconventional they really are.

#### MAY 17: Deciphering the Shadow

1. In the course of your life you will come upon people who have very emphatic traits that set them apart and seem to be the source of their strength—unusual confidence, exceptional niceness and affability, great moral rectitude and a saintly aura, toughness and rugged masculinity, an intimidating intellect. If you look closely at them, you may notice a slight exaggeration to these traits, as if they were performing or laying it on just a little too thick. As a student of human nature, you must understand the reality: the emphatic trait generally rests on top of the opposite trait, distracting and concealing it from public view.
2. The underlying weakness or antisocial trait is a key component of their Shadow—something denied and repressed. But as the laws of human nature dictate, the deeper the repression, the greater the volatility of the Shadow.

3. Daily Law: Be extra wary around people who display emphatic traits. It is very easy to get caught up in the appearance and first impression. Watch for the signs and emergence of the opposite over time.

#### MAY 18: Look Beneath the Mask

1. Remember that people are generally trying to present the best possible front to the world. This means concealing their possible antagonistic feelings, their desires for power or superiority, their attempts at ingratiating, and their insecurities. They will use words to hide their feelings and distract you from the reality, playing on people's verbal fixation.
2. They will also use certain facial expressions that are easy to put on and that people assume mean friendliness. Your task is to look past the distractions and become aware of those signs that leak out automatically, revealing something of the true emotion beneath the mask.
3. Daily Law: Train yourself to pay no attention to the front that people display.

#### MAY 19: Demanding Equality

1. Another strategy of the supposed nonplayer is to demand equality in every area of life. Everyone must be treated alike, whatever their status and strength. But if, to avoid the taint of power, you attempt to treat everyone equally and fairly, you will confront the problem that some people do certain things better than others. Treating everyone equally means ignoring their differences, elevating the less skillful and suppressing those who excel.
2. Daily Law: Many of those who demand equality across the board are actually deploying another power strategy, redistributing people's rewards in a way that they determine. Judge and reward people on the quality of their work.

#### MAY 20: The Unambitious Front

*Of all the disorders of the soul, envy is the only one no one confesses to.*

1. People cannot envy the power that they themselves have given a person who does not seem to desire it.
2. Daily Law: Be most suspicious of those who seem unambitious.

#### MAY 21: The Aggressive Pleaser

*In those days force and arms did prevail; but now the wit of the fox is everywhere on foot, so hardly a faithful or virtuous man may be found.*

1. There are people who are amazingly accommodating when you first meet them, so much so that you tend to let them into your life rather quickly. They smile a lot. They are upbeat and always willing to help.
2. The truth is that these types realize early on in life that they have aggressive, envious tendencies that are hard to control. They want power. They intuit that such inclinations will make life hard

for them. Over many years they cultivate the opposite facade—their niceness has an almost aggressive edge. Through this stratagem they are able to gain social power.

3. But they secretly resent having to play such a role and be so deferential. They can't maintain it. Under stress or simply worn out by the effort, they will lash out and hurt you. They can do this well now that they know you and your weak spots. They will, of course, blame you for what ensues.
4. Daily Law: Your best defense is to be wary of people who are too quick to charm and befriend, too nice and accommodating at first. Such extreme niceness is never natural.

#### MAY 22: Determine the Strength of People's Character

1. Weak character will neutralize all of the other possible good qualities a person might possess. For instance, people of high intelligence but weak character may come up with good ideas and even do a job well, but they will crumble under pressure, or they will not take too kindly to criticism, or they will think first and foremost of their own agenda, or their arrogance and annoying qualities will cause others around them to quit, harming the general environment.
2. There are hidden costs to working with them or hiring them. Someone less charming and intelligent but of strong character will prove more reliable and productive over the long run. People of real strength are as rare as gold, and if you find them, you should respond as if you had a discovered a treasure.
3. Daily Law: In gauging strength or weakness, look at how people handle stressful moments and responsibility. Look at their patterns: what have they actually completed or accomplished?

#### MAY 23: Don't Always Believe Your Eyes

Daily Law: Nonplayers are masters at visual effects, to distract from their manipulations. Guard yourself by paying more attention to the content and the facts than the form of their message.

#### MAY 24: Easy Money

*This desire to get something for nothing has been very costly to many people who have dealt with me and with other con men. . . . When people learn—as I doubt they will—that they can't get something for nothing, crime will diminish and we shall all live in greater harmony.*

1. Don't let yourself get lured in by the prospect of easy money. As the Yellow Kid said himself: greed does not pay.
2. Daily Law: Be suspicious of anyone dangling the lure of something for nothing. Get-rich quick schemes are scams. The lottery is really a tax on the mathematically illiterate. There are no shortcuts to power

#### MAY 25: Avoid the Drama Magnet

*In anything, it is a mistake to think one can perform an action or behave in a certain way once and no more.*

1. You must realize that their greatest need is to get their hooks into you by any means possible. They will embroil you in their drama to the point that you will feel guilty for disengaging
2. Daily Law: It is best to recognize them as early as possible, before you become enmeshed and dragged down. Examine their past for evidence of the pattern and run for the hills if you suspect you are dealing with such a type.

#### MAY 26: The Sincerity Ploy

1. A trick to be aware of comes from La Rochefoucauld, who wrote, “Sincerity is found in very few men, and is often the cleverest of ruses— one is sincere in order to draw out the confidence and secrets of the other.”
2. Daily Law: By pretending to bare their heart to you, clever nonplayers know they make it more likely that you will reveal your own secrets. They give you a false confession in hopes that you will give them a real one

#### MAY 27: Detect Their True Motives

*Knowing any man's mainspring of motive, you have, as it were, the key to his will.*

1. When you are trying to figure out the motives behind some murky action, look to see whom it really benefits in the end, and then work backward. Self-interest rules the world.
2. Daily Law: Don't be fooled by appearances, by what happens, by what people do and say. Always ask: Cui bono?

#### MAY 28: The Effective Truth

*For the great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities.*

Daily Law: Judge people by the results of their actions and maneuvers, and not by the stories they tell.

#### MAY 29: Nothing Personal

1. A lot of people in life have terrible problems dealing with politics, with disassociating their emotions from the work world or the realm of power. They take everything personally.
2. If someone does something to you that is nasty, get control of your emotions. Don't react. Don't get upset. Look at it as moves on a chessboard. They are moving you. Don't listen to their words, because people will say anything. Look at their moves. Look at their maneuvers. Look at their past actions. Actions tell you who they are, not what they say. That kind of self-control is immensely liberating and empowering.
3. Daily Law: Judging people by their actions and not taking them personally will free you up, help you keep your emotional balance.

### MAY 30: Everyone Wants More Power

1. There's the famous line from Lord Acton that absolute power corrupts absolutely.
2. Having power may corrupt, but having absolutely no power corrupts absolutely.
3. No one wants less power; everyone wants more.
4. Daily Law: When in doubt, assume that people are doing what they are doing and saying what they are saying because they want more power, not less.

### MAY 31: Know Who You're Dealing With

*Be convinced, that there are no persons so insignificant and inconsiderable, but may, some time or other, have it in their power to be of use to you; which they certainly will not, if you have once shown them contempt.*

1. The ability to measure people is the most important skill of all in gathering and conserving power. Without it you are blind: not only will you offend the wrong people, you will choose the wrong types to work on and will think you are flattering people when you are actually insulting them. Before embarking on any move, take the measure of your mark or potential opponent.
2. Otherwise you will waste time and make mistakes. Study people's weaknesses, the chinks in their armor, their areas of both pride and insecurity. Know their ins and outs before you even decide whether or not to deal with them.
3. First, in judging and measuring your opponent, never rely on your instincts. You will make the greatest mistakes of all if you rely on such inexact indicators. Nothing can substitute for gathering concrete knowledge. Study and spy on your opponent for however long it takes; this will pay off in the long run. Second, never trust appearances. Anyone with a serpent's heart can use a show of kindness to cloak it; a person who is blustery on the outside is often really a coward. Never trust the version that people give of themselves—it is utterly unreliable.
4. Daily Law: What possible good can come from ignorance about other people? Learn to tell the lions from the lambs or pay the price.

### **June The Divine Craft MASTERING THE ARTS OF INDIRECTION AND MANIPULATION**

1. Deception is a developed art of civilization and the most potent weapon in the game of power. Deception and masquerade should not be seen as ugly or immoral. All human interaction requires deception on many levels, and in some ways what separates humans from animals is our ability to lie and deceive.
2. Outwardly, you must seem to respect the niceties, but inwardly, unless you are a fool, you learn quickly to be prudent, and to do as Napoleon advised: place your iron hand inside a velvet glove. If you can master the arts of deception and indirection, learning to seduce, charm, deceive, and subtly outmaneuver your opponents, you will attain the heights of power. The month of June will teach you how to make people bend to your will without their realizing what you have done. And if they do not realize what you have done, they will neither resent nor resist you.

3. Playing with your opponent's mind; letting him get ahead, but putting himself in a corner in relation to the final balls on the table; snookering him into impossible positions (the trick bag); or seeing the entire table and how you will run it in short order. In other words, there are layers of angles, all more subtle and artistic as you go up the ladder and improve your game.
4. To play well, to raise your game, your focus must be total. Suckers and beginners are locked into the single ball-at-a-time mentality and get all excited when they knock one in on a clever shot, but leave themselves nowhere to go. They never learn the angles above the angles above the angles. Then there are people who raise their game a little, who give the appearance of knowing how to hustle, who can actually knock in a few shots in a row.
5. An acquaintance of mine who runs his own media business came to me a few years ago with a problem: a high-level employee had leaked something embarrassing about him to other employees. His angle in leaking this was to get the boss's attention and warn him about what else he might do. He was worried the boss was planning to fire him, and so this was his warning shot across the bow.
6. My advice to him was to be aware first of what the leaker was up to, and then to not indicate any kind of negative reaction on his part. He was to continue seeming friendly, as if nothing had happened. This was a front, a distraction. The employee would have to focus on this and figure out what it meant.
7. The world is divided between hustler and sucker. You are either one or the other. The sucker has no angles on life, no sense of the art of indirection, and can only make one stupid play at a time. The hustler always aims for the angles, learns how to play them, and becomes an artist in the game.

#### JUNE 1: Wear the Appropriate Mask

1. You cannot succeed at deception unless you take a somewhat distanced approach to yourself—unless you can be many different people, wearing the mask that the day and the moment require. With such a flexible approach to all appearances, including your own, you lose a lot of the inward heaviness that holds people down.
2. Make your face as malleable as the actor's, work to conceal your intentions from others, practice luring people into traps.
3. Daily Law: Playing with appearances and mastering arts of deception are among the aesthetic pleasures of life. They are also key components in the acquisition of power.

#### JUNE 2: Use Absence to Increase Respect

*If I am often seen at the theater, people will cease to notice me.*

1. Today, in a world inundated with presence through the flood of images, the game of withdrawal is powerful. We rarely know when to withdraw anymore, and nothing seems private, so we are awed by anyone who is able to disappear by choice.
2. Too much circulation makes the price go down. But by withdrawing something from the market, you create instant value.
3. Extend the law of scarcity to your own skills. Make what you are offering the world rare and hard to find, and you instantly increase its value.
4. Daily Law: The more you are seen and heard from, the more common you appear. If you are already established in a group, temporary withdrawal from it will make you more talked about, even more admired. You must learn when to leave. Create value through scarcity.

#### JUNE 3: Take Control of Your Image

*The man who intends to make his fortune in this ancient capital of the world [Rome] must be a chameleon susceptible to reflecting the colors of the atmosphere that surrounds him—a Proteus apt to assume every form, every shape.*

1. People will tend to judge you based on your outward appearance. If you are not careful and simply assume that it is best to be yourself, they will begin to ascribe to you all kinds of qualities that have little to do with who you are but correspond to what they want to see.
2. Internalizing their judgments, you will find it hard to focus on your work. Your only protection is to turn this dynamic around by consciously molding these appearances, creating the image that suits you, and controlling people's judgments. At times you will find it appropriate to stand back and create some mystery around you, heightening your presence.
3. In general, you never settle on one image or give people the power to completely figure you out. You are always one step ahead of the public.
4. Daily Law: Never let people think they have you completely figured out. Create some mystery around you.

#### JUNE 4: Play on People's Instinct to Trust Appearances

*Appearance and intention inevitably ensnare people when artfully used, even if people sense that there is an ulterior intention behind the overt appearance*

1. Basic to an ability to deceive is a simple truth about human nature: our first instinct is to always trust appearances. We cannot go around doubting the reality of what we see and hear—constantly imagining that appearances concealed something else would exhaust and terrify us. This fact makes it relatively easy to deceive.
2. Once their eyes focus on the decoy, they will fail to notice what you are really up to.
3. Daily Law: Hide your intentions behind a cloak of carefully constructed appearances.

### JUNE 5: Create Dramatic Effects

1. Its success in altering the country's mood partly stemmed from Roosevelt's clever pacing and use of dramatic contrast. He held his audience in suspense, then hit them with a series of bold gestures that seemed all the more momentous because they came from nowhere.
2. Daily Law: Use theatrical timing to surprise and divert. Learn to orchestrate events like Roosevelt, never revealing all your cards at once, but unfolding them in a way that heightens their dramatic effect.

### JUNE 6: Play Your Role Well

1. You feel sad when your part calls for it by recalling your own experiences that caused such emotions, or if necessary by simply imagining such experiences. The point is that you have control. In real life it is not possible to train ourselves to such a degree, but if you have no control, if you are continually emoting whatever comes to you in the moment, you will subtly signal weakness and an overall lack of self mastery. Learn how to consciously put yourself in the right emotional mood by imagining how and why you should feel the emotion suitable to the occasion or performance you are about to give. Surrender to the feeling for the moment so that the face and body are naturally animated. Sometimes, by actually making yourself smile or frown, you will experience some of the emotions that go with these expressions. Just as important, train yourself to return to a more neutral expression at a natural moment, careful to not go too far with your emoting.
2. In public, we all wear masks, and this has a positive function. If we displayed exactly who we are and spoke our minds truthfully, we would offend almost everyone and reveal qualities that are best concealed. Having a persona, playing a role well, actually protects us from people looking too closely at us, with all of the insecurities that would churn up.
3. Daily Law: We are all actors in the theater of life and the better you play your role and wear the proper mask, the more power you will accrue.

### JUNE 7: Never Impugn People's Intelligence

*The best way to be well received by all is to clothe yourself in the skin of the dumbest of brutes.*

1. The feeling that someone else is more intelligent than we are is almost intolerable.
2. Given how important the idea of intelligence is to most people's vanity, it is critical never inadvertently to insult or impugn a person's brain power. That is an unforgivable sin. But if you can make this iron rule work for you, it opens up all sorts of avenues of deception. The feeling of intellectual superiority you give them will disarm their suspicion-muscles.
3. Daily Law: Subliminally reassure people that they are more intelligent than you are, or even that you are a bit of a moron, and you can run rings around them.

#### JUNE 8: Distract Them from Your Real Goal

1. Hide your intentions not by closing up (with the risk of appearing secretive and making people suspicious) but by talking endlessly about your desires and goals—just not your real ones. You will kill three birds with one stone: you appear friendly, open, and trusting; you conceal your intentions; and you send your rivals on time-consuming wild-goose chases.
2. Daily Law: Seem to want something in which you are actually not at all interested and your enemies will be thrown off the scent, making all kinds of errors in their calculations.

#### JUNE 9: Give People the Opportunity to Feel Superior

1. Some people will see an appeal to their self-interest as ugly and ignoble. They actually prefer to be able to exercise charity, mercy, and justice, which are their ways of feeling superior to you: when you beg them for help, you emphasize their power and position. They are strong enough to need nothing from you except the chance to feel superior. This is the wine that intoxicates them. They are dying to fund your project, to introduce you to powerful people—provided, of course, that all this is done in public, and for a good cause (usually the more public, the better).
2. Not everyone, then, can be approached through cynical self-interest. Some people will be put off by it, because they don't want to seem to be motivated by such things. They need opportunities to display their good heart. Do not be shy. Give them that opportunity. It's not as if you are conning them by asking for help—it is really their pleasure to give, and to be seen giving.
3. Daily Law: You must figure out what makes others tick. When they ooze greed, appeal to their greed. When they want to look charitable and noble, appeal to their charity.

#### JUNE 10: Infect the Group with Productive Emotions

1. Infect the group with a sense of resolution that emanates from you. You are not upset by setbacks; you keep advancing and working on problems. You are persistent. The group senses this, and individuals feel embarrassed for becoming hysterical over the slightest shift in fortune.
2. Periodically change up routines, surprise the group with something new or challenging. This will wake them up and stir them out of the complacency that can settle into any group that achieves success. Most important, showing a lack of fear and an overall openness to new ideas will have the most therapeutic effect of all. The members will become less defensive, which encourages them to think more on their own, and not operate as automatons.
3. Daily Law: People are naturally more emotional and permeable to the moods of others. Work with human nature and turn this into a positive by infecting the group with the proper set of emotions. People are more susceptible to the moods and attitudes of the leader than of anyone else.

#### JUNE 11: Strike the Shepherd

*When the tree falls, the monkeys scatter.*

1. Within any group, trouble can most often be traced to a single source—the unhappy, chronically dissatisfied one who will always stir up dissension and infect the group with his or her ill ease. Before you know what hit you, the dissatisfaction spreads. Act before it becomes impossible to disentangle one strand of misery from another, or to see how the whole thing started. First, recognize troublemakers by their overbearing presence, or by their complaining nature.
2. Banish them before it is too late. Separate them from the group before they become the eye of a whirlpool. Do not give them time to stir up anxieties and sow discontent; do not give them room to move. Let one person suffer so that the rest can live in peace.
3. Daily Law: When the leader is gone, the center of gravity is gone; there is nothing to revolve around and everything falls apart. Strike at the source of the trouble and the sheep will scatter.

#### JUNE 12: Use the Surrender Tactic

1. When you are weaker, never fight for honor's sake; choose surrender instead. Surrender gives you time to recover, time to torment and irritate your conquerors, time to wait for their power to wane. Do not give them the satisfaction of fighting and defeating you—surrender first
2. People trying to make a show of their authority are easily deceived by the surrender tactic. Your outward sign of submission makes them feel important; satisfied that you respect them, they become easier targets for a later counterattack.
3. Daily Law: If you find yourself temporarily weakened, the surrender tactic is perfect for raising yourself up again—it disguises your ambition; it teaches you patience and self control, key skills in the game.

#### JUNE 13: Lead from the Front

*Hannibal was the greatest general of antiquity by reason of his admirable comprehension of the morale of combat. . . His men were not better than the Roman soldiers. They were not as well-armed, one-half less in number. Yet he was always the conqueror. He understood the value of morale. He had the absolute confidence of his people.*

1. Morale is contagious, and you, as leader, set the tone. Ask for sacrifices you won't make yourself and your troops grow lethargic and resentful; act too nice, show too much concern for their well-being, and you drain the tension from their souls and create spoiled children who whine at the slightest pressure or request for more work.
2. Personal example is the best way to set the proper tone and build morale. When your people see your devotion to the cause, they ingest your spirit of energy and self-sacrifice. A few timely criticisms here and there and they will only try harder to please you, to live up to your high standards. Instead of having to push and pull your army, you will find them chasing after you.
3. Daily Law: In commanding influence in the world, human beings—a devoted army of followers—are more valuable than money. They will do things for you that money cannot buy.

### JUNE 14: Deter with a Threatening Presence

*When opponents are unwilling to fight with you, it is because they think it is contrary to their interests, or because you have misled them into thinking so.*

1. We all have to fit in, play politics, seem nice and accommodating. Most often this works fine, but in moments of danger and difficulty being seen as so nice will work against you: it says that you can be pushed around, discouraged, and obstructed. If you have never been willing to fight back before, no threatening gesture you make will be credible. Understand: there is great value in letting people know that when necessary you can let go of your niceness and be downright difficult and nasty
2. It is more useful to be feared than to be loved. Uncertainty is sometimes better than overt threat: if your opponents are never sure what messing with you will cost, they will not want to find out.
3. Daily Law: Build up a reputation: You're a little crazy. Fighting you is not worth it. Create this reputation and make it credible with a few impressive—impressively violent —acts.

### JUNE 15: The Art of Presence and Absence

*Absence diminishes minor passions and inflames great ones, as the wind douses a candle and fans a fire.*

1. Keep in mind that talking too much is a type of overpresence that grates and reveals weakness. Silence is a form of absence and withdrawal that draws attention; it spells self-control and power; when you do talk, it has a greater effect. In a similar fashion, if you commit a mistake, do not overexplain and overapologize. You make it clear you accept responsibility and are accountable for any failures, and then you move on. Your contrition should be relatively quiet; your subsequent actions will show you have learned the lesson. Avoid appearing defensive and whiny if attacked. You are above that.
2. Daily Law: If you are too present and familiar, always available and visible, you seem too banal. You give people no room to idealize you. But if you are too aloof, people cannot identify with you.

### JUNE 16: Get Others to Play with the Cards You Deal

1. Words like “freedom,” “options,” and “choice” evoke a power of possibility far beyond the reality of the benefits they entail.
2. Setting up a narrow range of choices, then, should always be a part of your deceptions.
3. Daily Law: There is a saying: if you can get the bird to walk into the cage on its own, it will sing that much more prettily. Give people options that come out in your favor, whichever one they choose. Force them to make choices between the lesser of two evils, both of which serve your purpose.

### JUNE 17: The Seductive Visuals

*The people are always impressed by the superficial appearance of things*

1. If you use “gold” in the title of anything you are trying to sell, for example, print it in gold. Since the eye predominates, people will respond more to the color than to the word.
2. Daily Law: Never neglect the way you arrange things visually. Factors like color have enormous symbolic resonance.

#### JUNE 18: Never Reform Too Much at Once

*It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.*

1. Preach change as much as you like, and even enact your reforms, but give them the comforting appearance of older events and traditions.
2. Daily Law: If you are new to a position of power, or trying to build a power base, make a show of respecting the old way of doing things. If change is necessary, make it feel like a gentle improvement on the past.

#### JUNE 19: Make Others Come to You

Daily Law: If on one occasion you make it a point of dignity that others must come to you and you succeed, they will continue to do so even after you stop trying.

#### JUNE 20: Display a Hint of Weakness

1. Learn to transform your vulnerabilities into power. The game is subtle: if you wallow in your weakness, overplay your hand, you will be seen as angling for sympathy, or, worse, as pathetic.
2. That glimpse will humanize you, lowering their suspicions, and preparing the ground for a deeper attachment. Normally strong and in control, at moments you let go, give in to your weakness, let them see it.
3. Daily Law: Do not struggle against your vulnerabilities, or try to repress them, but put them into play

#### JUNE 21: The Slow Power Grab

*Ambition can creep as well as soar.*

Daily Law: Overt manipulation and power grabs are dangerous, creating envy, distrust, and suspicion. Often the best solution is to move slowly.

#### JUNE 22: Control What You Reveal

*Never start moving your own lips and teeth before the subordinates do. The longer I keep quiet, the sooner others move their lips and teeth. As they move their lips and teeth, I can thereby understand their real intentions. . . . If the sovereign is not mysterious, the ministers will find opportunity to take and take.*

1. Power is in many ways a game of appearances, and when you say less than necessary, you inevitably appear greater and more powerful than you are. Your silence will make other people uncomfortable.
2. Your short answers will put them on the defensive, and they will jump in, nervously filling the silence with all kinds of comments that will reveal valuable information about them and their weaknesses. They will leave a meeting with you feeling as if they had been robbed, and they will go home and ponder your every word. This extra attention to your brief comments will only add to your power.
3. Daily Law: Powerful people impress and intimidate by saying less.

#### JUNE 23: Play to Their High Self-Opinion

*The true spirit of conversation consists more in bringing out the cleverness of others than in showing a great deal of it yourself.*

1. If you need a favor from people, do not remind them of what you have done for them in the past, trying to stimulate feelings of gratitude. Gratitude is rare because it tends to remind us of our helplessness, our dependence on others. We like to feel independent. Instead, remind them of the good things they have done for you in the past.
2. Daily Law: Stimulate feelings of a high self-opinion in your targets.

#### JUNE 24: Demonic Language

1. The more you make people focus on your sweet-sounding language, and on the illusions and fantasies it conjures, the more you diminish their contact with reality. You lead them into the clouds, where it is hard to distinguish truth from untruth, real from unreal.
2. Daily Law: Keep your words vague and ambiguous, so people are never quite sure what you mean. Envelop them in demonic, diabolical language and they will not be able to focus on your maneuvers, on the possible consequences of your manipulations.

#### JUNE 25: Create an Air of Mystery

*Mix a little mystery with everything, and the very mystery stirs up veneration*

1. They would beg for his confidence and his company. Everyone wanted to be seen with this mysterious aristocrat. And in the presence of this distracting enigma, they wouldn't even notice that they were being robbed blind.
2. Daily Law: People love mysteries and enigmas, so give them what they want.

#### JUNE 26: Never Conventional

*No one is so brave that he is not disturbed by something unexpected.*

1. You must fight the psychological aging process even more than the physical one, for a mind full of stratagems, tricks, and fluid maneuvers will keep you young. Keep the wheels turning and churning the soil so that nothing settles and clumps into the conventional.
2. Daily Law: Make a point of breaking the habits you have developed, of acting in a way that is contrary to how you have operated in the past; practice a kind of unconventional warfare on your own mind.

#### JUNE 27: Play to People's Fantasies

*The most detested person in the world is the one who always tells the truth, who never romances. . . . I found it far more interesting and profitable to romance than to tell the truth.*

1. The truth is often avoided because it is ugly and unpleasant.
2. To gain power, you must be a source of pleasure for those around you—and pleasure comes from playing to people's fantasies. Never promise a gradual improvement through hard work; rather, promise the moon, the great and sudden transformation, the pot of gold.
3. Daily Law: Life is so harsh and distressing that people who can manufacture romance or conjure up fantasy are like oases in the desert: everyone flocks to them. There is great power in tapping into the fantasies of the masses.

#### JUNE 28: Renew Your Aura of Authority

1. Your authority will grow with each action that inspires trust and respect.
2. The first step in avoiding this danger is to maintain a kind of sensitivity, noting the moods behind people's words, gauging the effect you have on newcomers and young people. Losing that empathy should be your greatest fear, as you will begin to cocoon yourself in your great reputation. The second step is to look for new markets and audiences to appeal to, which will force you to adapt. If possible, expand the reach of your authority. Without making a fool of yourself by attempting to appeal to a younger crowd that you cannot really understand, try to alter your style somewhat with the passing years.
3. Daily Law: Flexibility and adaptability gives you a touch of the divine and immortal—your spirit remains alive and open, and your authority is renewed.

#### JUNE 29: Mirror Their Values

*Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you.*

1. When you go into society, leave behind your own ideas and values, and put on the mask that is most appropriate for the group in which you find yourself. People will swallow the bait because it flatters them to believe that you share their ideas. They will not take you as a hypocrite if you are careful—for how can they accuse you of hypocrisy if you do not let them know exactly what you

stand for? Nor will they see you as lacking in values. Of course you have values—the values you share with them, while in their company.

2. Daily Law: Complete free expression is a social impossibility. Conceal your thoughts, then, telling the prickly and insecure what you know they want to hear.

#### JUNE 30: Play the Honest Rogue

1. And as you get older and achieve success, it often becomes increasingly difficult to disguise your cunning. Everyone knows you practice deception; persist in playing naive and you run the risk of seeming the rankest hypocrite, which will severely limit your room to maneuver. In such cases it is better to own up, to appear the honest rogue, or, better, the repentant rogue. Not only will you be admired for your frankness, but, most wonderful and strange of all, you will be able to continue your stratagems.
2. “*The world wants to be deceived.*”
3. Daily Law: When you can no longer disguise your cunning, reveal your devices

#### July The Seductive Character PENETRATING HEARTS AND MINDS

1. Most of us have known the power of having someone fall in love with us. Our actions, gestures, the things we say, all have positive effects on this person; we may not completely understand what we have done right, but this feeling of power is intoxicating. It gives us confidence, which makes us more seductive.
2. The siren call of seduction is irresistible because power is irresistible, and nothing will bring you more power in the modern world than the ability to seduce. Repressing the desire to seduce is a kind of hysterical reaction, revealing your deep-down fascination with the process; you are only making your desires stronger. Some day they will come to the surface. To have such power does not require a total transformation in your character or any kind of physical improvement in your looks. Seduction is a game of psychology, not beauty, and it is within the grasp of any person to become a master at the game.
3. People are dying for more of this kind of seduction in their lives. They want some enchantment. They want some drama. They want pleasure. They want to be taken on a ride, an adventure. It's a desire cemented in childhood.
4. The sense that someone was taking you somewhere, that you were under their control—it made you laugh, it gave you this incredible joy
5. People don't have enough of that in their lives. It's an amazing power that you could have. It starts with the desire to be a seducer. You might be tempted to think,
6. Now think of a time in your life where you sensed that you had power over another person, that someone was under your spell, that the things you said excited them and interested them. There's electricity in your back and forth. It's amazing. It's powerful. You want more of that. You want to

be able to seduce. You want to penetrate the walls people typically keep around their hearts and minds.

7. People can smell your coldness. We sense that the other person is trying too hard, that they've read *The Art of Seduction*, that they're applying the twenty-four strategies. It doesn't work. You must bring out natural qualities that you have. And I maintain that every person has natural qualities that make him or her authentically seductive. It's in you. It's latent. It wants to come out. And that's what will make you an interesting and good seducer.

#### JULY 1: Look at the World through the Eyes of a Seducer

1. To have seductive power does not require a total transformation in your character or any kind of physical improvement in your looks. Seduction is a game of psychology, not beauty, and it is within the grasp of any person to become a master at the game.
2. A seducer sees all of life as theater, everyone an actor. Most people feel they have constricted roles in life, which makes them unhappy. Seducers, on the other hand, can be anyone and can assume many roles. Seducers take pleasure in performing and are not weighed down by their identity, or by some need to be themselves, or to be natural. This freedom of theirs, this fluidity in body and spirit, is what makes them attractive. What people lack in life is not more reality but illusion, fantasy, play. The clothes that seducers wear, the places they take you to, their words and actions, are slightly heightened—not overly theatrical but with a delightful edge of unreality, as if the two of you were living out a piece of fiction or were characters in a film.
3. Daily Law: Seduction is a kind of theater in real life, the meeting of illusion and reality.

#### JULY 2: Delay Satisfaction

1. The ability to delay satisfaction is the ultimate art of seduction—while waiting, the victim is held in thrall.
2. You must understand a critical property of love and desire: the more obviously you pursue a person, the more likely you are to chase them away. Too much attention can be interesting for a while, but it soon grows cloying and finally becomes claustrophobic and frightening. It signals weakness and neediness, an unseductive combination. How often we make this mistake, thinking our persistent presence will reassure. But Coquettes have an inherent understanding of this particular dynamic. Masters of selective withdrawal, they hint at coldness, absenting themselves at times to keep their victim off balance, surprised, intrigued. Their withdrawals make them mysterious, and we build them up in our imaginations. (Familiarity, on the other hand, undermines what we have built.)
3. A bout of distance engages the emotions further; instead of making us angry, it makes us insecure. Perhaps they don't really like us, perhaps we have lost their interest. Once our vanity is at stake, we succumb to the Coquette just to prove we are still desirable.

4. Daily Law: The essence of the Coquette lies not in the tease and temptation but in the subsequent step back, the emotional withdrawal. That is the key to enslaving desire.

#### JULY 3: Direct Your Gaze Outward

1. Seducers are never self-absorbed. Their gaze is directed outward, not inward. The reasons for this are several. First, self-absorption is a sign of insecurity; it is anti-seductive. Everyone has insecurities, but seducers manage to ignore them, finding therapy for moments of self-doubt by being absorbed in the world. This gives them a buoyant spirit—we want to be around them.
2. Second, getting into someone's skin, imagining what it is like to be them, helps the seducer gather valuable information, learn what makes that person tick, what will make them lose their ability to think straight and fall into a trap. Armed with such information, a seducer can provide focused and individualized attention—a rare commodity in a world in which most people see us only from behind the screen of their own prejudices.
3. Daily Law: When you meet someone your first move is to get inside that person's skin, to see the world through their eyes.

#### JULY 4: The Empathic Attitude

1. The greatest danger you face is your general assumption that you really understand people and that you can quickly judge them. Instead, you must begin with the assumption that you are ignorant and that you have natural biases that will make you judge people incorrectly. Each person you meet is like an undiscovered country, with a very particular psychological chemistry that you will carefully explore. This flexible, open spirit is similar to creative energy—a willingness to consider more possibilities and options.
2. In fact, developing your empathy will also improve your creative powers. The best place to begin this transformation in your attitude is in your numerous daily conversations. Try reversing your normal impulse to talk and give your opinion, desiring instead to hear the other person's point of view. You have tremendous curiosity in this direction. Cut off your incessant interior monologue as best you can. Give full attention to the other. What matters here is the quality of your listening, so that in the course of the conversation you can mirror back to the other person things they said, or things that were left unsaid but that you sensed. This will have a tremendous seductive effect.
3. Daily Law: Let go of your tendency to make snap judgments. Open your mind to seeing people in a new light. Do not assume that you are similar or that they share your values.

#### JULY 5: Stir Up the Transgressive and Taboo

1. People may be straining to remove restrictions on private behavior, to make everything freer, in the world today, but that only makes seduction more difficult and less exciting. Do what you can to reintroduce a feeling of transgression and crime, even if it is only psychological or illusory.

There must be obstacles to overcome, social norms to flout, laws to break, before the seduction can be consummated.

2. It might seem that a permissive society imposes few limits; find some. There will always be limits, sacred cows, behavioral standards—endless ammunition for stirring up the transgressive and taboo. Once the desire to transgress draws your targets to you, it will be hard for them to stop.
3. Daily Law: Take them further than they imagined—the shared feeling of guilt and complicity will create a powerful bond.

#### JULY 6: The Soft Sell

1. Let us say your goal is to sell yourself—as a personality, a trendsetter, a candidate for office.
2. The hard sell (the direct approach) and the soft sell (the indirect approach). In the hard sell you state your case strongly and directly. You tout your achievements, quote statistics, bring in expert opinions, even go so far as to induce a bit of fear if the audience ignores your message. Some people will be offended, resisting your message, even if what you say is true. Others will feel you are manipulating them—who can trust experts and statistics, and why are you trying so hard? The soft sell, on the other hand, has the potential to draw in millions because it is entertaining, gentle on the ears, and can be repeated without irritating people.
3. To peddle their elixirs and alchemic concoctions, they would first put on a show—clowns, music, vaudeville-type routines—that had nothing to do with what they were selling. A crowd would form, and as the audience laughed and relaxed, the charlatan would come onstage and briefly and dramatically discuss the miraculous effects of the elixir.
4. Rudiments of the soft sell remain the same: bring pleasure by creating a positive atmosphere around your name or message.
5. Daily Law: Never seem to be selling something—that will look manipulative and suspicious. Instead, let entertainment value and good feelings take center stage, sneaking the sale through the side door.

#### JULY 7: Appear to Be an Object of Desire

*Most of the time we prefer one thing to another because that is what our friends already prefer or because that object has marked social significance. . . . When we say of a man or woman that he or she is desirable, what we really mean is that others desire them.*

1. Few are drawn to the person whom others avoid or neglect; people gather around those who have already attracted interest. We want what other people want. To draw your victims closer and make them hungry to possess you, you must create an aura of desirability—of being wanted and courted by many.
2. Create triangles that stimulate rivalry and raise your value.

3. Daily Law: Build a reputation that precedes you: if many have succumbed to your charms, there must be a reason.

#### JULY 8: The Anti-Seducer

1. Anti-Seducers come in many shapes and kinds, but almost all of them share a single attribute, the source of their repellence: insecurity. We are all insecure, and we suffer for it. Yet we are able to surmount these feelings at times; a seductive engagement can bring us out of our usual self-absorption, and to the degree that we seduce or are seduced, we feel charged and confident. Anti-Seducers, however, are insecure to such a degree that they cannot be drawn into the seductive process.
2. Anti-Seducers repel, so be repelled—avoid them. Unfortunately, however, many Anti-Seducers cannot be detected as such at first glance.
3. You must look for clues to their self-involvement and insecurity: perhaps they are ungenerous, or they argue with unusual tenacity, or are excessively judgmental.
4. Daily Law: Rid yourself of any anti-seductive tendencies by getting outside yourself and your insecurities and into their spirit.

#### JULY 9: Make Them Want to Spoil You

1. People often mistakenly believe that what makes a person desirable and seductive is physical beauty, elegance, or overt sexuality.
2. Spoiled by her father, she imagined that spoiling her was natural—that all men should do the same. The consequence was that, like a child, she never felt she had to try to please. It was Cora's powerful air of independence that made men want to possess her.
3. It may be too late to be spoiled by a parent, but it is never too late to make other people spoil you. It is all in your attitude. People are drawn to those who expect a lot out of life, whereas they tend to disrespect those who are fearful and undemanding.
4. Daily Law: Wild independence has a provocative effect on us: it appeals to us, while also presenting us with a challenge—we want to be the one to tame it, to make the spirited person dependent on us.

#### JULY 10: Set Off Viral Effects

1. The moment people know you are after something—a vote, a sale—they become resistant. But disguise your sales pitch as a news event and not only will you bypass their resistance, you can also create a social trend that does the selling for you.
2. People essentially persuade themselves to join the crowd without even realizing that a sale has taken place. The feeling of active participation is vital to seduction. No one wants to feel left out of a growing movement. Announce your message as a trend and it will become one. The goal is to

create a kind of viral effect in which more and more people become infected with the desire to have whatever you are offering.

3. Daily Law: Seem to be in the vanguard of a trend or lifestyle and the public will lap you up for fear of being left behind.

#### JULY 11: Friend to Lover

*I do not approach her, I merely skirt the periphery of her existence. . . . This is the first web into which she must be spun.*

1. To move from friendship to love can win success without calling attention to itself as a maneuver. First, your friendly conversations with your targets will bring you valuable information about their characters, their tastes, their weaknesses, the childhood yearnings that govern their adult behavior.
2. Second, by spending time with your targets you can make them comfortable with you. Believing you are interested only in their thoughts, in their company, they will lower their resistance, dissipating the usual tension between the sexes. Now they are vulnerable, for your friendship with them has opened the golden gate to their body: their mind. At this point any offhand comment, any slight physical contact, will spark a different thought, which will catch them off guard: perhaps there could be something else between you
3. Once that feeling has stirred, they will wonder why you haven't made a move, and will take the initiative themselves, enjoying the illusion that they are in control. There is nothing more effective in seduction than making the seduced think that they are the ones doing the seducing
4. Daily Law: Cultivate a relatively neutral relationship, moving gradually from friend to lover.

#### JULY 12: Flout Their Expectations

*Too constant a peace is productive of a deadly ennui. Uniformity kills love, for as soon as the spirit of method mingles in an affair of the heart, the passion disappears, languor supervenes, weariness begins to wear, and disgust ends the chapter.*

1. Familiarity is the death of seduction. If the target knows everything about you, the relationship gains a level of comfort but loses the elements of fantasy and anxiety. Without anxiety and a touch of fear, the erotic tension is dissolved.
2. Reality is not seductive. Maintain some mystery or be taken for granted. You will have only yourself to blame for what follows.
3. Daily Law: Keep some dark corners in your character, flout expectations, use absences to fragment the clinging, possessive pull that allows familiarity to creep in.

#### JULY 13: Make Use of Contrasts

1. At a social affair, for instance, make sure that your target has to chat with the most boring person available. Come to the rescue and your target will be delighted to see you.
2. Daily Law: Make use of contrasts—either develop and display those attractive attributes (humor, vivacity, and so on) that are the rarest in your own social group, or choose a group in which your natural qualities are rare, and will shine.

#### JULY 14: Create Calculated Surprises

1. In seduction, you need to create constant tension and suspense, a feeling that with you nothing is predictable. The moment people feel they know what to expect from you, your spell on them is broken. More: you have ceded them power. The only way to lead the seduced along and keep the upper hand is to create suspense, a calculated surprise.
2. People love a mystery, and this is the key to luring them further into your web. Behave in a way that leaves them wondering, What are you up to? Doing something they do not expect from you will give them a delightful sense of spontaneity—they will not be able to foresee what comes next. You are always one step ahead and in control. Give them a thrill with a sudden change of direction.
3. Daily Law: There are all kinds of calculated surprises you can spring on your victims— sending a message out of the blue, showing up unexpectedly, taking them to a place they have never been. But best of all are surprises that reveal something new about your character.

#### JULY 15: Heighten the Experience

1. The gifts you give and other objects can become imbued with your presence; if they are associated with pleasant memories, the sight of them keeps you in mind and accelerates the poeticization process
2. Daily Law: Any kind of heightened experience, artistic or spiritual, lingers in the mind much longer than normal experience.

#### JULY 16: Enter Their Spirit

*The great, the implacable amorous passions are all linked to the fact that a being imagines he sees his most secret self spying upon him behind the curtain of another's eyes.*

1. You do not have to spend days studying their minds; simply conform to their moods, adapt to their tastes, play along with whatever they send your way. In doing so you will lower their natural defensiveness. Their sense of self-esteem does not feel threatened by your strangeness or different habits. People truly love themselves, but what they love most of all is to see their ideas and tastes reflected in another person. This validates them. Their habitual insecurity vanishes. Hypnotized by their mirror image, they relax.

2. Now that their inner wall has crumbled, you can slowly draw them out, and eventually turn the dynamic around. Once they are open to you, it becomes easy to infect them with your own moods and heat. Entering the other person's spirit is a kind of hypnosis; it is the most insidious and effective form of persuasion known to man.
3. Daily Law: Lure people out of their natural intractability and self-obsession by entering their spirit. Soon you can shift the dynamic: once you have entered their spirit you can make them enter yours, at a point when it is too late to turn back.

#### JULY 17: Create Temptation

*The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.*

1. What people want is to give in to temptation, to yield. That is the only way to get rid of the tension in their lives. It costs much more to resist temptation than to surrender. Your task, then, is to create a temptation that is stronger than the daily variety. It has to be focused on them, aimed at them as individuals —at their weakness.
2. Everyone has a principal weakness, from which others stem. Find that childhood insecurity, that lack in their life, and you hold the key to tempting them. Their weakness may be greed, vanity, boredom, some deeply repressed desire, a hunger for forbidden fruit. They signal it in little details that elude their conscious control: their style of clothing, an offhand comment. Their past, and particularly their past romances, will be littered with clues.
3. Daily Law: Find that weakness of theirs, that fantasy that has yet to be realized, and hint that you can lead them toward it. It could be wealth, it could be adventure, it could be forbidden and guilty pleasures; the key is to keep it vague.

#### JULY 18: Prove Yourself

1. Making your deed as dashing and chivalrous as possible will elevate the seduction to a new level, stir up deep emotions, and conceal any ulterior motives you may have. The sacrifices you are making must be visible; talking about them, or explaining what they have cost you, will seem like bragging. Lose sleep, fall ill, lose valuable time, put your career on the line, spend more money than you can afford.
2. Daily Law: Choose a dramatic, difficult action that reveals the painful time and effort involved.

#### JULY 19: Lure Others into Your Fantasy World

1. Adult Naturals do something similar, particularly if they are artists: they create their own fantasy world, and live in it as if it were the real one. Fantasy is so much more pleasant than reality, and since most people do not have the power or courage to create such a world, they enjoy being around those who do.

2. Daily Law: Learn to play with your image, never taking it too seriously. The key is to infuse your play with the conviction and feeling of a child, making it seem natural. The more absorbed you seem in your own joy-filled world, the more seductive you become.

#### JULY 20: Be a Source of Pleasure

1. Listen to your targets' complaints, but more important, distract them from their problems by giving them pleasure.
2. An energetic presence is more charming than lethargy, which hints at boredom, an enormous social taboo; and elegance and style will usually win out over vulgarity, since most people like to associate themselves with whatever they think elevated and cultured.
3. Daily Law: Being lighthearted and fun is always more charming than being serious and critical.

#### JULY 21: The Law of Covetousness

1. Create an air of mystery around you and your work. Associate it with something new, unfamiliar, exotic, progressive, and taboo. Do not define your message but leave it vague.
2. Daily Law: Create an illusion of ubiquity—your object is seen everywhere and desired by others. Then let the covetousness so latent in all humans do the rest, setting off a chain reaction of desire.

#### JULY 22: Create a Wound

1. Like Eros, you must create a wound in your victim, aiming at their soft spot, the chink in their self-esteem. If they are stuck in a rut, make them feel it more deeply, “innocently” bringing it up and talking about it. What you want is a wound, an insecurity you can expand a little, an anxiety that can best be relieved by involvement with another person, namely you.
2. Daily Law: Try to position yourself as coming from outside, as a stranger of sorts. You represent change, difference, a breakup of routines. Make your victims feel that by comparison their lives are boring and their friends less interesting than they had thought.

#### JULY 23: Pay Attention to Detail

1. In seduction, you are always trying to bring the target back to the golden moments of childhood. A child is less rational, more easily deceived. A child is also more attuned to the pleasures of the senses.
2. Pay attention to detail and you will find yourself assuming a slower pace; your targets will not focus on what you might be after because you seem so considerate, so attentive. In the childish realm of the senses in which you envelop them, they get a clear sense that you are involving them in something distinct from the real world —an essential ingredient of seduction.

3. Daily Law: Lofty words and grand gestures can be suspicious: Why are you trying so hard to please? The details of a seduction—the subtle gestures, the offhand things you do —are often more charming and revealing.

#### JULY 24: Make Them Fetishize You

1. If you see yourself as an object, then others will too. An ethereal, dreamlike air will heighten the effect. Consider yourself a blank screen. Float through life noncommittally and people will want to seize you and consume you. Of all the parts of your body that draw this fetishistic attention, the strongest is the face; so learn to tune your face like an instrument, making it radiate a fascinating vagueness for effect. And since you will have to stand out from other Stars in the sky, you will need to develop an attention-getting style.
2. Daily Law: Your own image and presence are materials you can control. The sense that you are engaged in this kind of play will make people see you as superior and worthy of imitation.

#### JULY 25: Play with Ambiguity

1. To capture and hold attention, you need to show attributes that go against your physical appearance, creating depth and mystery. If you have a sweet face and an innocent air, let out hints of something dark, even vaguely cruel in your character.
2. Do not worry if this underquality is a negative one, like danger, cruelty, or amorality; people will be drawn to the enigma anyway, and pure goodness is rarely seductive
3. Daily Law: No one is naturally mysterious, at least not for long; mystery is something you have to work at, a ploy on your part, and something that must be used early on in the seduction.

#### JULY 26 Know When to Withdraw

*Love never dies of starvation but often of indigestion*

1. Russian seductress Lou Andreas-Salomé had an intense presence; when a man was with her, he felt her eyes boring into him, and often became entranced with her coquettish ways and spirit. But then, almost invariably, something would come up—she would have to leave town for a while, or would be too busy to see him. It was during her absences that men fell hopelessly in love with her, and vowed to be more aggressive next time they were with her.
2. Your absences at this latter point of the seduction should seem at least somewhat justified. You are insinuating not a blatant brush-off but a slight doubt: perhaps you could have found some reason to stay, perhaps you are losing interest, perhaps there is someone else.
3. Daily Law: In your absence, their appreciation of you will grow. They will forget your faults, forgive your sins. The moment you return, they will chase after you as you desire. It will be as if you had come back from the dead.

### JULY 27 Know When to Be Bold

*The more timidity a lover shows with us the more it concerns our pride to goad him on; the more respect he has for our resistance, the more respect we demand of him. We would willingly say to you men. Ah, in pity's name do not suppose us to be so very virtuous; you are forcing us to have too much of it.*

1. In truth, timid people are often self-absorbed, obsessed with the way people see them, and not at all saintly. And humility may have its social uses, but it is deadly in seduction. You need to be able to play the humble saint at times; it is a mask you wear. But in seduction, take it off. Boldness is bracing, erotic, and absolutely necessary to bring the seduction to its conclusion. Done right, it tells your targets that they have made you lose your normal restraint, and gives them license to do so as well. People are yearning to have a chance to play out the repressed sides of their personality.
2. Daily Law: At the final stage of a seduction, boldness eliminates any awkwardness or doubts.

### JULY 28: Communicate to People's Senses

1. Free yourself from the need to communicate in the normal direct manner and you will present yourself with greater opportunities for the soft sell.
2. Express confidence not through facts and figures but through colors and positive imagery, appealing to the infant in everyone. Let the media cover you unguided and you are at their mercy. So turn the dynamic around—the press needs drama and visuals? Provide them. It is fine to discuss issues or “truth” as long as you package it entertainingly. Remember: images linger in the mind long after words are forgotten. Do not preach to the public—that never works. Learn to express your message through visuals that insinuate positive emotions and happy feelings. The audience may focus superficially on the content or moral you are preaching, but they are really absorbing the visuals, which get under their skin and stay there longer than any words or preachy pronouncements.
3. Daily Law: Pay more attention to the form of your message than to the content. Images are more seductive than words, and visuals should actually be your real message.

### JULY 29: The Pursuer Is Pursued

*I retreat and thereby teach her to be victorious as she pursues me. I continually fall back, and in this backward movement I teach her to know through me all the powers of erotic love, its turbulent thoughts, its passion, what longing is, and hope, and impatient expectancy.*

To produce this effect, first reveal an interest in your targets, through letters or subtle insinuation. But when you are in their presence, assume a kind of sexless neutrality. Be friendly, even warm, but no more. You are pushing them into arming themselves with the seductive charms that are natural to their sex—exactly what you want.

Daily Law: Create the illusion that the seducer is being seduced.

### JULY 30: The Thrill of Illusion

1. Your encounters with your targets should also have a sense of drama, achieved through the settings you choose and through your actions. The target should not know what will happen next. Create suspense through twists and turns that lead to the happy ending; you are performing
2. Daily Law: Whenever your targets meet you, give them the vague feeling of being in a play, the thrill of wearing masks, of playing a different role from the one your life has allotted you.

### JULY 31: Poeticize Your Presence

*He who does not know how to poetize himself into a girl so that it is from her that everything proceeds as he wants it—he is and remains a bungler. . . . To poetize oneself into a girl is an art.*

1. People are dying to be given the chance to fantasize about you. Do not spoil this golden opportunity by overexposing yourself or becoming so familiar and banal that the target sees you exactly as you are. You do not have to be an angel, or a paragon of virtue—that would be quite boring. You can be dangerous, naughty, even somewhat vulgar, depending on the tastes of your victim.
2. Daily Law: Never be ordinary or limited. In poetry (as opposed to reality), anything is possible.

### **August The Master Persuader SOFTENING PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE**

1. You have to seduce the reader. You have to persuade them that what you have to say is worth the time. That's why I tell stories.
2. People make the same mistake in the social realm, in trying to persuade or influence others. If you want someone to do you're bidding, to help you, to finance your film or whatever it is—if you come at it only thinking about what you want or deserve, it has no effect. But if you think in terms of how they think, the stories they want to hear, what will please them, what will interest them—the game changes. You have the power to influence them.
3. You have the power to influence people when you start thinking about what they want.

### AUGUST 1: The Hypnotist's Art

1. The goal of persuasive speech is often to create a kind of hypnosis: you are distracting people, lowering their defenses, making them more vulnerable to suggestion. Learn the hypnotist's lessons of repetition and affirmation, key elements in putting a subject to sleep.
2. Seductive language should have a kind of boldness, which will cover up a multitude of sins. Your audience will be so caught up in your bold language that they won't have time to reflect on whether or not it is true.
3. Affirmative language is active language, full of verbs, imperatives, and short sentences.
4. Daily Law: Cut out "I believe," "Perhaps," "In my opinion." Head straight for the heart.

#### AUGUST 2: Play on Their Competitive Spirit

1. The very competitive Dietrich was aghast at their performances and immediately volunteered to do the part herself
2. Daily Law: Your attempts at influence must always follow a similar logic: how can you get others to perceive what you want them to do as something they are choosing to do?

#### AUGUST 3: Make Them the Star of the Show

*Most men . . . seek less to be instructed, and even to be amused, than to be praised and applauded.*

1. What we do not realize is that we are putting all of the attention on ourselves. In a world where people are increasingly self-absorbed, this only has the effect of making others turn more inward in return and think more of their own interests rather than ours.
2. The royal road to influence and power is to go the opposite direction: Put the focus on others. Let them do the talking. Let them be the stars of the show. Their opinions and values are worth emulating. The causes they support are the noblest. Such attention is so rare in this world, and people are so hungry for it, that giving them such validation will lower their defenses and open their minds to whatever ideas you want to insinuate.
3. Daily Law: In conversation, try getting others to do 70 percent of the talking without them noticing, and see the effect.

#### AUGUST 4: Channel Overpowering Emotions

1. The power of this sort of Charismatic comes from his or her expression of dark emotions that have built up over years of oppression. That's the essence of charisma—it's an overpowering emotion that communicates itself in your gestures, in your tone of voice, in subtle signs that are the more powerful for being unspoken. You feel something more deeply than others, and no emotion is more powerful and more capable of creating a charismatic reaction than hatred, particularly if it comes from deep-rooted feelings of oppression. Express what others are afraid to express and they will see great power in you. Say what they want to say but cannot.
2. Daily Law: Learn how to channel your emotions. Nothing is more charismatic than the sense that someone is struggling with great emotion rather than simply giving in to it.

#### AUGUST 5: Win through Your Actions

1. But both men got what they wanted: the mayor could relax, and Wren knew posterity would understand that his original design worked and the columns were unnecessary
2. Daily Law: Demonstrate, do not explicate.

#### AUGUST 6: Keep Them Guessing

1. If you are in the public eye, you must learn from this trick of surprise. People are bored, not only with their own lives but with people who are meant to keep them from being bored. The minute they feel they can predict your next step, they will eat you alive.
2. Daily Law: To keep the public's attention, keep them guessing. Let the moralists accuse you of insincerity, of having no core or center. They are actually jealous of the freedom and playfulness you reveal in your public persona.

#### AUGUST 7: Consider Their Self-Interest

1. Most men are so thoroughly subjective that nothing really interests them but themselves.
2. The quickest way to secure people's minds is by demonstrating, as simply as possible, how an action will benefit them. Self-interest is the strongest motive of all: a great cause may capture minds, but once the first flush of excitement is over, interest will flag—unless there is something to be gained.
3. The causes that work best use a noble veneer to cover a blatant appeal to self-interest; the cause seduces but the self-interest secures the deal.
4. Daily Law: Show people what's in it for them.

#### AUGUST 8: Avoid Argument

*Never argue. In society nothing must be discussed; give only results.*

1. It is not simply a question of avoiding an argument with those who stand above you. We all believe we are masters in the realm of opinions and reasoning.
2. Daily Law: You must be careful to always try to demonstrate the correctness of your ideas indirectly.

#### AUGUST 9: The Moral Effect

1. "The truth is generally seen, rarely heard." The Moral Effect is a perfect way to demonstrate your ideas through action. Quite simply, you teach others a lesson by giving them a taste of their own medicine. In the Moral Effect, you mirror what other people have done to you, and do so in a way that makes them realize you are doing to them exactly what they did to you.
2. Daily Law: Objectify the qualities you want them to feel ashamed of and create a mirror in which they can gaze at their follies and learn a lesson about themselves.

#### AUGUST 10: Anchor Their Ego

1. Think of people's ego and vanity as a kind of front.
2. Use whatever works: subtle flattery, a gift, an unexpected promotion, an offer of alliance, a presentation of you and they as equals, a mirroring of their ideas and values. All these things will

make them feel anchored in their frontal position relative to the world, lowering their defenses and making them like you. Secure and comfortable, they are now set up for persuasion.

3. Daily Law: When people feel secure about themselves, when you anchor the ego they front, they are disarmed and maneuverable.

#### AUGUST 11: Master the Art of Insinuation

1. Polite banter is often the perfect front for this; people are thinking about what they will say next, or are absorbed in their own thoughts. Your insinuations will barely register, which is how you want it. There is too little mystery in the world; too many people say exactly what they feel or want. We yearn for something enigmatic, for something to feed our fantasies. Because of the lack of suggestion and ambiguity in daily life, the person who uses them suddenly seems to have something alluring and full of promise.
2. Daily Law: Insinuation is the supreme means of influencing people. Hints, suggestions, and insinuations bypass people's natural resistance. Make everything suggestive.

#### AUGUST 12: Use Their Emotions

Daily Law: In essence, the idea is not to counter people's strong emotions but move with them and find a way to channel them in a productive direction.

#### AUGUST 13: Penetrate Their Minds

1. Instead of finding their minds slowing and stopping, his readers are infected with the desire to go beyond thought and take action.
2. Daily Law: You may have brilliant ideas, the kind that could revolutionize the world, but unless you can express them effectively, they will have no force, no power to enter people's minds in a deep and lasting way. Be strategic in your messaging.

#### AUGUST 14: Leave People with a Feeling

1. He left them feeling that they would see him again, and he stirred emotions that would erase any suspicion he might be insincere. The end of the conversation was in fact a kind of beginning, for it stayed in their minds and translated into votes.
2. Daily Law: Keep your eyes on the aftermath of any encounter. Think more of the feeling you leave people with—a feeling that might translate into a desire to see more of you.

#### AUGUST 15: Create Compelling Spectacles

1. The words people use to persuade us virtually invite us to reflect on them with words of our own; we mull them over, and often end up believing the opposite of what they say

2. People love what is grand, spectacular, and larger than life. Appeal to their emotions and they will flock to your spectacle in hordes. The visual is the easiest route to their hearts.
3. Daily Law: Stage spectacles for those around you, then, full of arresting visuals and radiant symbols that heighten your presence. Dazzled by appearances, no one will notice what you are really doing.

#### AUGUST 16: Use Their Rigidity

1. You play into their hands if you try with all your advice to encourage change—it gives them something to react against and justifies their rigidity. They become more stubborn. Stop fighting with such people and use the actual nature of their rigid behavior to effect a gentle change that could lead to something greater.
2. Daily Law: People often won't do what others ask them to do, because they simply want to assert their will. If you heartily agree with their rebellion, they will rebel again and assert their will in the opposite direction, which is what you wanted all along—the essence of reverse psychology.

#### AUGUST 17: Persuade with a Light Touch

1. The most anti-seductive form of language is argument. There is a superior way to get people to listen and be persuaded: humor and a light touch.
2. Now that he had warmed people up, he would proceed to refute his enemy, still mixing in amusing comments; or perhaps he would simply move on to another subject, as if he were above it all. His humor took out the sting of any attack on him. Laughter and applause have a domino effect: once your listeners have laughed, they are more likely to laugh again. In this lighthearted mood they are also more apt to listen.
3. Daily Law: A subtle touch and a bit of irony give you room to persuade them, move them to your side, mock your enemies. That is the seductive form of argument.

#### AUGUST 18: Make Them Feel Your Point

1. The power of demonstrating is that your opponents do not get defensive, and are therefore more open to persuasion.
2. Daily Law: Your goal must be to make them literally and physically feel your meaning, rather than pouring words over them.

#### AUGUST 19: Let Them Win on the Minor Points

Daily Law: Learn to lower people's defenses by agreeing to matters that are not so important. This will give you great latitude to move them in the direction you desire and get them to concede to your desires on more important matters.

### AUGUST 20 How to Deal with the Irritating

Daily Law: Teach the irritating a lesson by giving them a taste of their own medicine or showing them you see through them.

### AUGUST 21: The Master Motivator

Daily Law: Motivating people is a subtle art. You must aim indirectly at people's emotions. By setting up your emotional appeal, you will get inside instead of just scratching the surface.

### AUGUST 22: The Lure of the Unfamiliar

1. One of the perverse parts of human nature is that we always desire what we don't have.
2. You have to create that object of desire—in whatever you're creating in life. You have to give people the feeling that there's something a little bit taboo and transgressive about it,
3. Daily Law: When a person or an object is familiar, we have a bit of disdain. But when it's distant and alluring and mysterious and something out there that we don't have—that sparks our desire. That's the key to any sort of marketing or soft sell

### AUGUST 23: Find Their Thumbscrew

*Find out each man's thumbscrew. 'Tis the art of setting their wills in action. It needs more skill than resolution. You must know where to get at anyone. Every volition has a special motive which varies according to taste. All men are idolaters, some of fame, others of self-interest, most of pleasure. Skill consists in knowing these idols in order to bring them into play. Knowing any man's mainspring of motive you have as it were the key to his will.*

1. Some people wear their weaknesses openly, others disguise them. Those who disguise them are often the ones most effectively undone through that one chink in their armor.
2. Daily Law: Everyone has a thumbscrew, a gap in the castle wall. Once found, it is a thumbscrew you can turn to your advantage.

### AUGUST 24: Mix Harshness and Kindness

1. First, create a bond between your soldiers and yourself. They respect you, admire you, even fear you a little. To make the bond stronger, hold yourself back, create a little space around yourself; you are warm yet with a touch of distance. Once the bond is forged, appear less often.
2. Make both your punishments and your praises rare and unexpected, whether for mistakes or for successes that may seem minor at the time but have symbolic meaning. Understand: once people know what pleases you and what angers you, they turn into trained poodles, working to charm you with apparent good behavior.
3. Daily Law: Keep them in suspense—make them think of you constantly and want to please you but never know just how to do it. Once they are in the trap, you will have a magnetic pull over them. Motivation will become automatic.

### AUGUST 25: Cultivate the Third Eye

Daily Law: Create the aura of authority by seeming to possess the godlike ability to read the future. This is a power that can be practiced and developed and applied to any situation.

### AUGUST 26: Appeal to Their Unrealized Greatness

1. Most people believe themselves to be inwardly greater than they outwardly appear to the world. They are full of unrealized ideals: they could be artists, thinkers, leaders, spiritual figures, but the world has crushed them, denied them the chance to let their abilities flourish. This is the key to their seduction—and to keeping them seduced over time. Appeal only to people's physical side, as many amateur seducers do, and they will resent you for playing upon their basest instincts.
2. Daily Law: Make your targets feel elevated, lofty, spiritual, and your power over them will be limitless.

### AUGUST 27: Transform Yourself into a Deep Listener

1. But each person you encounter represents an undiscovered country full of surprises. Imagine for a moment that you could step inside people's minds and what an amazing journey that could be. People who seem quiet and dull often have the strangest inner lives for you to explore.
2. Daily Law: Transforming yourself into a deep listener will not only prove more amusing as you open your mind to their mind but will also provide the most invaluable lessons about human psychology. The secret to this: finding other people endlessly fascinating.

### AUGUST 28: Instill a Feeling of Inner Security

Daily Law: Your task is simple: instill in people a feeling of inner security. Mirror their values, show that you like and respect them, make them feel you appreciate their wisdom and experience.

### AUGUST 29 Infect People with the Proper Mood

1. If you are relaxed and anticipating a pleasurable experience, this will communicate itself and have a mirror-like effect on the other person. One of the best attitudes to adapt for this purpose is one of complete indulgence. You do not judge other people; you accept them as they are.
2. Daily Law: As social animals, we are extremely susceptible to the moods of other people. Use this power to subtly infuse into people the appropriate mood for influencing them.

### AUGUST 30 Imagine Them in the Best Light

1. Keep in mind that your expectations about people are communicated to them nonverbally.
2. By feeling particularly excited when you're meeting someone, you will communicate this to him or her in a powerful way. Some have claimed to get great results by simply thinking the other person is handsome or good-looking.

3. Daily Law: If there is a person of whom you will eventually ask a favor, try imagining him or her in the best light—generous and caring—if that is possible

#### AUGUST 31 Come to Terms with Your Own Self-Opinion

Daily Law: Work at making yourself truly independent and concerned with the welfare of others, as opposed to staying attached to the illusion of your self-opinion.

#### September The Grand Strategist RISING OUT OF TACTICAL HELL

##### SEPTEMBER 1 Elevate Yourself Above the Battlefield

*[Strategy] is more than a science: it is the application of knowledge to practical life, the development of thought capable of modifying the original guiding idea in the light of ever changing situations; it is the art of acting under the pressure of the most difficult conditions*

1. In war, strategy is the art of commanding the entire military operation. Tactics, on the other hand, is the skill of forming up the army for battle itself and dealing with the immediate needs of the battlefield.
2. Daily Law: Tactical people are heavy and stuck in the ground; strategists are light on their feet and can see far and wide. Where are you on that spectrum?

##### SEPTEMBER 2 Control the Entire Chessboard

Daily Law: Maintain control of your emotions and plot your moves in advance, seeing the entire chessboard.

##### SEPTEMBER 3 Attack the Center of Gravity

*The first principle is that the ultimate substance of enemy strength must be traced back to the fewest possible sources, and ideally to one alone. . . . By constantly seeking out the center of his power, by daring all to win all, will one really defeat the enemy.*

1. Hitting the enemy's center of gravity there is the best way to end a conflict definitively and economically. In looking for those centers, it is crucial not to be misled by the intimidating or dazzling exterior, mistaking the outward appearance for what sets it in motion. You will probably have to take several steps, one by one, to uncover this ultimate power source, peeling away layer after layer.
2. Daily Law: When you look at your rivals, search for the center of gravity that holds the entire structure together. That center can be their wealth, their popularity, a key position, a winning strategy. Hitting them there will inflict disproportionate pain.

##### SEPTEMBER 4 Avoid Tactical Hell

1. Get your ego to calm down. Remind yourself that winning an argument or proving your point really gets you nowhere in the long run. Win through your actions, not your words. Start to think again about your long-term goals.
2. Daily Law: Create a ladder of values and priorities in your life, reminding yourself of what really matters to you. If you determine that a particular battle is in fact important, with a greater sense of detachment you can now plot a more strategic response.

#### SEPTEMBER 5 Place Yourself in Shih

Daily Law: Rid yourself of the illusion that strategy is a series of steps to be followed toward a goal. Run in the opposite direction of any expert or guru proclaiming to possess a secret formula for success and power.

#### SEPTEMBER 6 Never Attack Your Opponents Head-On

*"It is by turning the enemy, by attacking his flank, that battles are won."*

1. Attacking from the front is rarely wise. Go for the flank, the vulnerable side. This principle is applicable to conflicts or encounters of any scale. Individuals often show their flank, signal their vulnerability, by its opposite, the front they show most visibly to the world. This front can be an aggressive personality, a way of dealing with people by pushing them around. It can be their most cherished beliefs and ideas; it can be the way they make themselves liked.
2. Daily Law: When you attack people head-on, you stiffen their resistance and make your task that much harder. Instead: distract your opponents' attention to the front, then attack them from the side, where they least expect it

#### SEPTEMBER 7 Divide and Conquer

1. If you let the complexity of the situation confuse you and either hesitate or lash out without thought, you will lose mental control, which will only add momentum to the negative force coming at you. Always divide up the issue at hand, first placing yourself in a central position, then proceeding down the line, killing off your problems one by one. It is often wise to begin with the smallest problem while keeping the most dangerous one at bay. Solving that one will help you create momentum that will help you overwhelm all the rest.
2. Daily Law: Take problems one by one

#### SEPTEMBER 8 Exploit the Chaos

1. Think of your mind as an army. Armies must adapt to the complexity and chaos of modern war by becoming more fluid and maneuverable. The ultimate extension of this evolution is guerrilla warfare, which exploits chaos by making disorder and unpredictability a strategy.

2. The guerrilla army never repeats the same tactic. It responds to the situation, the moment, the terrain where it happens to find itself. There is no front, no concrete line of communication or supply, no slow-moving wagon. The guerrilla army is pure mobility. That is the model for your new way of thinking. Apply no tactic rigidly; do not let your mind settle into static positions, defending any particular place or idea, repeating the same lifeless maneuvers. Staying in constant motion you show your enemies no target to aim at. You exploit the chaos of the world instead of succumbing to it.
3. Daily Law: Attack problems from new angles, adapting to the landscape and to what you're given.

#### SEPTEMBER 9 See the Larger Dangers That Loom in the Future

*Experience shows that, if one foresees from far away the designs to be undertaken, one can act with speed when the moment comes to execute them*

Daily Law: Overcome the natural human tendency to react to things as they happen, and instead train yourself to step back, imagine the larger things taking shape beyond your immediate vision

#### SEPTEMBER 10 Never Seem Defensive

*Man: Kick him—he'll forgive you. Flatter him—he may or may not see through you. But ignore him and he'll hate you.*

1. Remember: the powerful responses to niggling, petty annoyances and irritations are contempt and disdain. Never show that something has affected you, or that you are offended—that only shows you have acknowledged a problem. Contempt is a dish that is best served cold and without affectation
2. Daily Law: By acknowledging a petty problem you give it existence and credibility. The less interest you reveal, the more superior you seem.

#### SEPTEMBER 11 The Warrior's Creed

1. Knowing when to slow down, to renew, to retrench, they outlast their opponents. They play for the long term.
2. Daily Law: Sometimes in strategy you have to ignore your greater strength and force yourself to get the maximum out of the minimum. Even if you have the technology, fight the peasant's war.

#### SEPTEMBER 12 Time Is All You Have

*Space I can recover. Time, never.*

1. To waste your time in battles not of your choosing is more than just a mistake, it is stupidity of the highest order.
2. Daily Law: Resist the urge to respond to trivial annoyances. Time lost can never be regained.

### SEPTEMBER 13 Think of the Unintended Consequences

*The years teach much which the days never know.*

1. You want depth of thinking, to go to several degrees in imagining the permutations, as far as your mind can go.
2. Daily Law: Game out all of the possible consequences of a strategy or line of action.

### SEPTEMBER 14 Crowd Out Panic

1. When circumstances scare us, our imagination tends to take over, filling our minds with endless anxieties. You need to gain control of your imagination. A focused mind has no room for anxiety or for the effects of an overactive imagination.
2. Daily Law: Give yourself such control by forcing the mind to concentrate on something relatively simple—a calming ritual, a repetitive task that you are good at. You are creating the kind of composure you naturally have when your mind is absorbed in a problem.

### SEPTEMBER 15 Drop Your Preconceived Notions

*If you put an empty gourd on the water and touch it, it will slip to one side. No matter how you try, it won't stay in one spot. The mind of someone who has reached the ultimate state does not stay with anything, even for a second. It is like an empty gourd on the water that is pushed around.*

1. The more we lose ourselves in predigested theories and past experiences, the more inappropriate and delusional our response. It can be valuable to analyze what went wrong in the past, but it is far more important to develop the capacity to think in the moment. In that way you will make far fewer mistakes to analyze.
2. Daily Law: Think of the mind as a river: the faster it flows, the better it keeps up with the present and responds to change.

### SEPTEMBER 16 Force Them Off the Negative

1. Your task is to force them off this position by getting them to commit to some positive position. Now, you have a target. If they resist or refuse to do this, you can attack them for this resistance
2. Daily Law: Avoid the temptation to fight back on the same level as the opponent. You must always shift the terms of the battle onto the terrain of your choice. In that moment of shifting, you have the initiative and the upper hand.

### SEPTEMBER 17 Balance Ends and Means

1. Wise generals through the ages have learned to begin by examining the means they have at hand and then to develop their strategy out of those tools.

2. Not only will your strategies be more realistic, they will be more inventive and forceful. Dreaming first of what you want and then trying to find the means to reach it is a recipe for exhaustion, waste, and defeat.
3. Daily Law: Constantly balance ends and means: you might have the best plan to achieve a certain end, but unless you have the means to accomplish it, your plan is worthless.

#### SEPTEMBER 18 The Piecemeal Strategy

*To multiply small successes is precisely to build one treasure after another. In time one becomes rich without realizing how it has come about.*

1. Too often, the magnitude of our desires overwhelms us; taking that small first step makes them seem realizable. There is nothing more therapeutic than action.
2. Daily Law: Have a clear sense of your objective, but then identify the small composite steps. Now, attaining your dreams is easy: step-by-step.

#### SEPTEMBER 19 Make Use of the Cat's-Paw

*Important affairs often require rewards and punishments. Let only the good come from you and the evil from others.*

1. You need a cat's-paw— someone who does the dirty, dangerous work for you. The cat's-paw grabs what you need, hurts whom you need hurt, and keeps people from noticing that you are the one responsible.
2. Daily Law: Let someone else be the executioner, or the bearer of bad news, while you bring only joy and glad tidings.

#### SEPTEMBER 20 Hit from Unexpected Angles

1. People expect your behavior to conform to known patterns and conventions.
2. Daily Law: Operate according to your own rhythms, adapting strategies to your idiosyncrasies, not the other way around. Refusing to follow common patterns will make it hard for people to guess what you'll do next.

#### SEPTEMBER 21 Get Them to Reveal Their Intentions

*If you have reason to suspect that a person is telling you a lie, look as though you believed every word he said. This will give him courage to go on; he will become more vehement in his assertions, and in the end betray himself.*

1. In the realm of power, your goal is a degree of control over future events. Part of the problem you face, then, is that people won't tell you all their thoughts, emotions, and plans. Controlling what they say, they often keep the most critical parts of their character hidden—their weaknesses, ulterior motives, obsessions. The result is that you cannot predict their moves, and are constantly in the dark. The trick is to find a way to probe them, to find out their secrets and hidden intentions, without letting them know what you are up to.

2. Daily Law: Suppress yourself in conversation. Let others talk endlessly.

#### SEPTEMBER 22 Create Maximum Disorder

*So to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence; the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy's army without fighting at all*

1. Your enemy depends on being able to read you, to get some sense of your intentions. The goal of your maneuvers should be to make that impossible, to send the enemy on a wild-goose chase for meaningless information, to create ambiguity as to which way you are going to jump.
2. Daily Law: The more you break down people's ability to reason about you, the more disorder you inject into their system.

#### SEPTEMBER 23 Develop Your Fingerspitzengefühl

1. Presence of mind depends not only on your mind's ability to come to your aid in difficult situations but also on the speed with which this happens. Waiting until the next day to think of the right action to take does you no good at all.
2. Getting a feel for the spirit of men and material, thinking your way into them instead of looking at them from outside, will help to put you in a different frame of mind, less conscious and forced, more unconscious and intuitive.
3. Daily Law: Get your mind into the habit of making lightning-quick decisions, trusting your fingertip feel. And you will develop this by knowing as deeply as possible all the details in any situation.

#### SEPTEMBER 24 Retreat to Gain Perspective

*To remain disciplined and calm while waiting for disorder to appear amongst the enemy is the art of self-possession*

1. The problem we all face in strategy, and in life, is that each of us is unique and has a unique personality.
2. Your task as a strategist is simple: to see the differences between yourself and other people, to understand yourself, your side, and the enemy as well as you can, to get more perspective on events, to know things for what they are. In the hubbub of daily life, this is not easy—in fact, the power to do it can come only from knowing when and how to retreat.
3. Daily Law: Retreating shows not weakness but strength. It is something you must do every now and then, to find yourself and detach yourself from infecting influences

#### SEPTEMBER 25 Stay Away from the Corners

1. What matters in the Sun Tzu universe are not positions of strength and power, but situations in which you have options, full of potential force. On a career level, for instance, I always advise

people to look ahead and be open to changes in direction. That job that seems so good now can easily turn into a nightmare if you do not see the possible corners it can land you in.

2. Daily Law: Strategists think differently than the way many are used to, in which so much revolves around moving toward a goal. That is linear thinking. What you want is to always aim to increase your options for power and mobility.

#### SEPTEMBER 26 Let Go of the Past

*Thus one's victories in battle cannot be repeated—they take their form in response to inexhaustibly changing circumstances*

Daily Law: Think of the mind as a river: the faster it flows, the better it keeps up with the present and responds to change. Obsessional thoughts and past experiences (whether traumas or successes) are like boulders or mud in this river.

#### SEPTEMBER 27 Give Yourself Space to Maneuver

1. The solution is to plan, to have a clear idea what you want, then put yourself in open space and give yourself options to work with. This means not burdening yourself with commitments that will limit your options. It means not taking stances that leave you nowhere to go. The need for space is psychological as well as physical: you must have an unfettered mind to create anything worthwhile
2. Daily Law: You always want open space, never dead positions. Direct the situation but leave room for unexpected opportunities and random events.

#### SEPTEMBER 28 Plan All the Way to the End

*The most ordinary cause of people's mistakes is their being too much frightened at the present danger, and not enough so at that which is remote.*

Daily Law: Ask of every potential action: Will this have unintended consequences? Will I stir up new enemies? Will someone else take advantage of my labors?

#### SEPTEMBER 29 Assume Formlessness

*The consummation of forming an army is to arrive at formlessness. Victory in war is not repetitious, but adapts its form endlessly. . . A military force has no constant formation, water has no constant shape: The ability to gain victory by changing and adapting according to the opponent is called genius.*

Daily Law: Accept the fact that nothing is certain and no law or strategy is fixed. The best way to protect yourself is to be as fluid and formless as water; never bet on stability or lasting order. Everything changes.

#### SEPTEMBER 30 Do Not Go Past the Mark You Aimed For

*The greatest danger occurs at the moment of victory.*

1. First, you owe your success to a pattern that you are apt to try to repeat. You will try to keep moving in the same direction without stopping to see whether this is still the direction that is best for you.
2. Second, success tends to go to your head and make you emotional. Feeling invulnerable, you make aggressive moves that ultimately undo the victory you have gained. The lesson is simple: The powerful vary their rhythms and patterns, change course, adapt to circumstance, and learn to improvise. Rather than letting their dancing feet impel them forward, they step back and look where they are going.
3. Daily Law: The moment of victory is often the moment of greatest peril. Do not allow success to go to your head. There is no substitute for strategy and careful planning. Set a goal, and when you reach it, stop.

### **October The Emotional Self COMING TO TERMS WITH OUR DARK SIDE**

#### **OCTOBER 1 The Primary Law of Human Nature**

Daily Law: Accept the nature you share with others. Stop separating yourself out as special or superior.

#### **OCTOBER 2 There's Nothing Stronger Than Human Nature**

*Man will only become better when you make him see what he is like.*

1. Human nature is stronger than any individual, than any institution or technological invention. It ends up shaping what we create to reflect itself and its primitive roots. It moves us around like pawns. Ignore the laws at your own peril.
2. Daily Law: Refusing to come to terms with human nature simply means that you are dooming yourself to patterns beyond your control and to feelings of confusion and helplessness.

#### **OCTOBER 3 The Inner Athena**

*What I fear is not the enemy's strategy but our own mistakes.*

1. You are not connected to this higher power in the present because your mind is weighed down with emotions.
2. Daily Law: Cultivate your inner Athena and worship her. Rationality is then what you will value the most and that which will serve as your guide.

#### **OCTOBER 4 Analyze, Scrutinize, Question**

*It's just as though one's second self were standing beside one; one is sensible and rational oneself, but the other self is impelled to do something perfectly senseless, and sometimes very funny; and suddenly you notice that you are longing to do that amusing thing, goodness knows why; that is, you want to, as it were, against your will; though you fight against it with all of your might, you want to.*

Daily Law: Look at those emotions that are continually infecting your ideas and decisions. Learn to question yourself: Why this anger or resentment? Where does this incessant need for attention come from?

#### OCTOBER 5 Do Not Let Success Intoxicate You

Daily Law: After any kind of success, analyze the components. See the element of luck that is inevitably there, as well as the role that other people, including mentors, played in your good fortune

#### OCTOBER 6 See into Your Own Nature

Daily Law: Ask yourself, “Where did I pick up this belief?” “Is it true?” “Would I agree with it if I heard it fresh today?”

#### OCTOBER 7 Rationality: A Simple Definition

1. We constantly feel emotions, and they continually infect our thinking, making us veer toward thoughts that please us and soothe our egos. It is impossible to not have our inclinations and feelings somehow involved in what we think.
2. On the other hand, irrational people become highly emotional when challenged about the emotional roots of their decisions. They are incapable of introspection and learning. Their mistakes make them increasingly defensive
3. Daily Law: How would you rate yourself on this scale?

#### OCTOBER 8 The Madness of Groups

*Madness is something rare in individuals—but in groups, parties, peoples, and ages it is the rule.*

1. Whenever you feel unusually certain and excited about a plan or idea, you must step back and gauge whether it is a viral group effect operating on you. If you can detach yourself for a moment from your excitement, you might notice how your thinking is used to rationalize your emotions, to confirm the certainty you want to feel.
2. Daily Law: Never relinquish your ability to doubt, reflect, and consider other options—your rationality as an individual is your only protection against the madness that can overcome a group.

#### OCTOBER 9 The Power of Association

1. Humans are extremely susceptible to the moods, emotions, and even the ways of thinking of those with whom they spend their time.
2. The people you associate with are critical. The risk of associating with infectors is that you will waste valuable time and energy trying to free yourself. Through a kind of guilt by association, you will also suffer in the eyes of others.

3. Daily Law: Be aware of the power those with whom you associate have over you

#### OCTOBER 10 Think for Yourself

1. You need to be fearless. You need to be able to get rid of everything you've ever believed in before. You need to get rid of all the strategies you've used before. All the conventional ideas
2. Commandment: You need to think for yourself and not be tied to what other people have told you is reality.

#### OCTOBER 11 Beware the Fragile Ego

1. Of all the human emotions, none is uglier or more elusive than envy, the sensation that others have more of what we want—possessions, attention, respect.
2. Acting on envy, doing something to harm the other person, brings satisfaction, although the satisfaction is short lived because enviers always find something new to envy.
3. Daily Law: Envy is perhaps the ugliest human emotion. Destroy it before it destroys you. Develop your sense of self-worth from internal standards and not incessant comparisons.

#### OCTOBER 12 See Things as They Are, Not as Your Emotions Color Them

1. Fear will make you overestimate the enemy and act too defensively. Anger and impatience will draw you into rash actions that will cut off your options. Overconfidence, particularly as a result of success, will make you go too far.
2. When you have success, be extra wary. When you are angry, take no action. When you are fearful, know you are going to exaggerate the dangers you face.
3. Daily Law: Life demands the utmost in realism, seeing things as they are. The more you can limit or compensate for your emotional responses, the closer you will come to this ideal

#### OCTOBER 13 Change Your Circumstances by Changing Your Attitude

*The greatest discovery of my generation is the fact that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.*

1. It is we, with our particular perspectives, who add color to or subtract it from things and people. We focus on either the beautiful Gothic architecture or the annoying tourists.
2. Daily Law: We, with our mindset, can make people respond to us in a friendly or unfriendly manner, depending on our anxiety or openness. We shape much of the reality that we perceive, dictated by our moods and emotions.

#### OCTOBER 14 Confront Your Dark Side

*Our whole being is nothing but a fight against the dark forces within ourselves. To live is to war with trolls in heart and soul. To write is to sit in judgment on oneself.*

Daily Law: Recognize and examine the dark side of your character. Once subjected to conscious scrutiny, it loses its destructive power.

#### OCTOBER 15 Create Mental Space from the Group

Daily Law: Be brutally honest with yourself, aware of how your need to fit in can shape and warp your thinking. Does that anxiety or sense of outrage that we feel come completely from within, or is it inspired by the group?

#### OCTOBER 16 Test for Envy

1. People who are envious cannot help feeling some glee when they hear of the bad luck of those they envy.
2. Daily Law: If you see such looks in the first few encounters with someone, and they happen more than once, be on the lookout for a dangerous envier entering your life.

#### OCTOBER 17 See into the Spirit of the Times

*A man's shortcomings are taken from his epoch; his virtues and greatness belong to himself*

1. Catch yourself in the inevitable process of making judgments of good and bad about your generation or the next one, and let go of them. You can develop such a skill through practice. Forging such an attitude will play a key role in your development.
2. Daily Law: With some distance and awareness, you can become much more than a follower of or a rebel against your generation; you can mold your own relationship to the zeitgeist and become a formidable trendsetter.

#### OCTOBER 18 Think Like a Writer

1. By stepping back and imagining their story from the inside, Chekhov demythologized the brutes and aggressors; he cut them down to human size. They no longer elicited hatred but rather pity.
2. Daily Law: Think more like a writer in approaching the people you deal with, even the worst sorts.

#### OCTOBER 19 Accept People as Facts

*If you come across any special trait of meanness or stupidity . . . you must be careful not to let it annoy or distress you, but to look upon it merely as an addition to your knowledge—a new fact to be considered in studying the character of humanity. Your attitude towards it will be that of the mineralogist who stumbles upon a very characteristic specimen of a mineral.*

1. Make your acceptance of human nature as radical as possible. This will calm you down and help you observe people more dispassionately, understanding them on a deeper level. You will stop

projecting your own emotions on to them. All of this will give you more balance and calmness, more mental space for thinking.

2. Daily Law: Examine the faults you see in others and how they are in you as well.

#### OCTOBER 20 See Beyond the Moment

1. Salesmen and demagogues play on this weakness in human nature to con us with the prospect of easy gains and instant gratification. Our only antidote is to train ourselves to continually detach from the immediate rush of events and elevate our perspective.
2. Daily Law: Instead of merely reacting, step back and look at the wider context. Consider the ramifications of any action you take. Realize that is often better to do nothing, to not react, to let time go by and see what it reveals.

#### OCTOBER 21 Recognize Your Aggressive Impulses

*Men are not gentle, friendly creatures wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if attacked. . . . A powerful desire for aggression has to be reckoned as part of their . . . endowment.*

1. All of us understand that humans have been capable of much violence and aggression in the past and in the present. We know that out there in the world there are sinister criminals, greedy and unscrupulous businesspeople, belligerent negotiators, and sexual aggressors. But we create a sharp dividing line between those examples and us.
2. Aggression is a tendency that is latent in every single human individual. It is a tendency wired into our species.
3. Daily Law: Look for signs of your own aggressive impulses in past actions—how they led to friction or success.

#### OCTOBER 22 Lost in Trivia

1. You feel overwhelmed by the complexity of your work. You feel the need to be on top of all the details and global trends so you can control things better, but you are drowning in information.
2. Knowing what you want to accomplish in the end will help you weed out the essential from the nonessential. You do not have to know all the details. Sometimes you need to delegate—let your subordinates handle the information gathering.
3. Daily Law: Remember that greater control over events will come from realistic assessments of the situation, precisely what is made most difficult by a brain submerged in trivia.

#### OCTOBER 23 The Lost Self

1. Do not be afraid to bring out the more sensitive or ambitious sides to your character. These repressed parts of you are yearning to be let out. In the theater of life, expand the roles that you play. Don't worry about people's reactions to any changes in you they sense. You are not so easy to

categorize, which will fascinate them and give you the power to play with their perceptions of you, altering them at will.

2. Daily Law: Return to the harder or softer sides of your character that you have lost or repressed.

#### OCTOBER 24 Know How Little You Know

*When I left him, I reasoned thus with myself: I am wiser than this man, for neither of us appears to know anything great and good; but he fancies he knows something, although he knows nothing; whereas I, as I do not know anything, so I do not fancy I do. In this trifling particular, then, I appear to be wiser than he, because I do not fancy I know what I do not know.*

1. A bit more humility about what we know would make us all more curious and interested in a wider range of ideas.
2. Daily Law: When it comes to the ideas and opinions you hold, see them as toys or building blocks that you are playing with. Some you will keep, others you will knock down, but your spirit remains flexible and playful.

#### OCTOBER 25 Examine Your Emotions to Their Roots

Daily Law: Develop the habit of examining in depth your own emotional responses. You will end up slowly eliminating unnecessary reactions.

#### OCTOBER 26 Resist Simple Explanations

*It is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. . . . My companion stretched out his hand against his friends, he violated his covenant. His speech was smoother than butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.*

Daily Law: It would be of infinite benefit for us to allow more nuances and ambiguity into our judgments of people and events.

#### OCTOBER 27 See Your Shadow

1. It is hard to project onto others our own secret impulses or to overidealize some cause, once we are made aware of the mechanism operating within us.
2. Daily Law: Through self-knowledge we can find a way to integrate the dark side into our consciousness productively and creatively. In doing so, we become more authentic and complete, exploiting to the maximum the energies we naturally possess.

#### OCTOBER 28 Move Closer to What You Envy

*For not many men . . . can love a friend who fortune prospers without envying; and about the envious brain cold poison clings and doubles all the pain life brings him. His own woundings he must nurse, and feel another's gladness like a curse.*

1. The process of moving closer is twofold: on the one hand, try to actually look behind the glittering facades people present, and on the other hand, simply imagine the inevitable disadvantages that go along with their position.
2. Daily Law: Remember that few people are as happy as the image they present. See past their facades and you will appreciate what you have.

#### OCTOBER 29 Manage Your Grandiose Tendencies

Daily Law: Accept your limitations and work with what you have, rather than fantasize about godlike powers you can never attain. Maintain a realistic attitude.

#### OCTOBER 30 The Myth of Progress

1. Do not imagine that the more extreme types of irrationality have somehow been overcome through progress and enlightenment.
2. Technology now inspires religious fervor. People have a desperate need to believe in something and they will find it anywhere. Polls have revealed that increasing numbers of people believe in ghosts, spirits, and angels, in the twenty-first century. As long as there are humans, the irrational will find its voices and means of spreading.
3. Daily Law: Rationality is something to be acquired by individuals, not by mass movements or technological progress. Feeling superior and beyond it is a sure sign that the irrational is at work.

#### OCTOBER 31: You Are the Obstacle

*In this world, where the game is played with loaded dice, a man must have a temper of iron, with armor proof to the blows of fate, and weapons to make his way against men. Life is one long battle; we have to fight at every step; and Voltaire very rightly says that if we succeed, it is at the point of the sword, and that we die with the weapon in our hand.*

1. Everything depends on your frame of mind and on how you look at the world. A shift of perspective can transform you from a passive and confused mercenary into a motivated and creative fighter.
2. Daily Law: As Xenophon said, your obstacles are not rivers or mountains or other people; your obstacle is yourself.

November The Rational Human REALIZING YOUR HIGHER SELF

The lower is the more animal and reactive side of our nature, and one that we easily slip into. The higher is the more truly human side of our nature, the side that makes us thoughtful and self-aware. Because the higher impulse is weaker, connecting to it requires effort and insight.

#### NOVEMBER 1 Hope for Us All

1. The only emotion we can afford is excitement and energy. Other emotions simply make it impossible to concentrate.
2. Daily Law: These moments—as fleeting as a few weeks or hours—reveal the rational self that is waiting to come out. It just requires some awareness and some practice.

#### NOVEMBER 2 Keep Free of the Emotional Whirlpool

1. To succeed, you have to master your emotions. But even if you succeed in gaining such balance and self-control, you can never control the temperamental dispositions of those around you. And this presents a great danger.
2. Daily Law: Remember that you have only so much energy and so much time. Every moment wasted on the dramas of others subtracts from your strength.

#### NOVEMBER 3 Increase Your Reaction Time

*“Trust your feelings!”—But feelings are nothing final or original; behind feelings there stand judgments and evaluations which we inherit in the form of . . . inclinations, aversions. The inspiration born of a feeling is the grandchild of a judgment—and often of a false judgment!—and in any event not a child of your own! To trust one’s feelings—means to give more obedience to one’s grandfather and grandmother and their grandparents than to the gods which are in us: our reason and our experience.*

1. If you find yourself rushing to commit to people, to hire or be hired by them, step back and give it a day. Cool the emotions down. The longer you can take the better, because perspective comes with time.
2. Daily Law: Consider this like resistance training—the longer you can resist reacting, the more mental space you have for actual reflection, and the stronger your mind will become.

#### NOVEMBER 4 Make Envy a Spur to Achievement

1. If we are rigorous and persistent, we will be able to overcome almost any obstacle and elevate our position. People who are lazy and undisciplined are much more prone to feeling envy
2. Daily Law: We cannot stop the comparing mechanism in our brains, so it is best to redirect it into something productive and creative

#### NOVEMBER 5 Know Yourself Thoroughly

*He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened*

1. By knowing and valuing what marks you as different, you will also be able to resist the pull of group bias and effect.
2. Daily Law: Can you look at yourself with some distance and see through the fog of self deception?

#### NOVEMBER 6 Who Is to Blame?

Daily Law: See the role you played in any failure; it can always be found.

#### NOVEMBER 7 Practice Mitfreude

*The serpent that stings us means to hurt us and rejoices as it does so; the lowest animal can imagine the pain of others. But to imagine the joy of others and to rejoice at it is the highest privilege of the highest animals.* Daily Law: Internalize other people's joy. In doing so, we increase our own capacity to feel this emotion in relation to our own experiences.

#### NOVEMBER 8 Supreme Patience

1. Time is an artificial concept that we ourselves have created to make the limitlessness of eternity and the universe more bearable, more human.
2. Learn to stand back when the time is not yet ripe, and to strike fiercely when it has reached fruition.
3. Daily Law: Practice patience. Wait a day before taking action on that pressing problem.

#### NOVEMBER 9 Channel Your Grandiose Impulses

1. Your goal is to see continual improvement in your skill level, which will certainly come from the depth of your focus. Your confidence will rise. That should be enough to keep you advancing.
2. Daily Law: Don't allow yourself to engage in fantasies about other projects on the horizon. You want to channel this grandiose energy by absorbing yourself in your work as deeply as possible.

#### NOVEMBER 10 Transcending Tribalism

Daily Law: We must come to the conclusion that the primary group we belong to is that of the human race. That is our inevitable future. Anything else is regressive and far too dangerous.

#### NOVEMBER 11 Ascend the Mountain

1. Your eyes must be on the larger trends that govern events, on that which is not immediately visible. Never lose sight of your long-term goals. With an elevated perspective, you will have the patience and clarity to reach almost any objective.
2. Daily Law: Manufacture the effect of time by giving yourself an expanded view in the present moment.

### NOVEMBER 12 Break the Codes of Convention

1. Once you show these desires and impulses, they no longer lie hidden in corners of your personality, twisting and operating in secret ways.
2. Daily Law: Show the Shadow. Release your demons and enhance your presence as an authentic human.

### NOVEMBER 13 Suffer Fools Gladly

1. Exhaustion and frustration can ruin your presence of mind.
2. When working alongside fools, do not fight them. Instead think of them the way you think of children, or pets, not important enough to affect your mental balance. The ability to stay cheerful in the face of fools is an important skill.
3. Daily Law: Detach yourself emotionally from fools. And while you're inwardly laughing at their foolishness, indulge them in one of their more harmless ideas.

### NOVEMBER 14 Project Saintliness

1. No matter what historical period we are living through, there are certain traits that are always seen as positive and that you must know how to display.
2. In the modern world, this means showing yourself as progressive, supremely tolerant, and open minded.
3. Daily Law: If people largely judge others by appearances, learn to take control of the dynamic by adopting the appropriate persona. An air of humility, even saintliness, always works well. Avoid any indication of hypocrisy or superiority in this

### NOVEMBER 15 Adopt a Generous Spirit

1. By accepting people, by understanding and if possible even loving them for their human nature, we can liberate our minds from obsessive and petty emotions. We can stop reacting to everything people do and say. We can have some distance and stop ourselves from taking everything personally.
2. Daily Law: When we feel generous toward ourselves and others, they feel drawn to us and want to match our spirit.

### NOVEMBER 16 Integrate the Shadow Side

Daily Law: Your goal must be not only complete acceptance of your Shadow side but also the desire to integrate it into your present personality. By doing so, you will be a more complete human and will radiate an authenticity that will draw people to you.

### NOVEMBER 17 Balance Imagination and Reality

1. Your project begins with an idea, and as you try to hone this idea, you let your imagination take flight, being open to various possibilities. At some point you move from the planning phase to execution. Now you must actively search for feedback and criticism from people you respect or from your natural audience.
2. If you only listen to feedback and try to make the work a complete reflection of what others tell you or want, the work will be conventional and flat. By maintaining a continual dialogue between reality (feedback) and your imagination, you will create something practical and powerful.
3. Daily Law: By continually cycling between your imagination and people's feedback, what you produce will be both unique and connected to your audience—the perfect blend.

#### NOVEMBER 18 Focus Outwardly

1. What drives you is not getting attention but bringing about the best results possible for the most people. You absorb yourself in the work, not your ego. You feel a deep and visceral connection to the group, seeing your fate and theirs as deeply intertwined.
2. Daily Law: If you exude this attitude, people will feel it, and they will be drawn to you by the simple fact that it is rare to encounter a person so sensitive to people's moods and focused so supremely on results.

#### NOVEMBER 19 Destiny

*The true self of each person is the mind. Know therefore that you are a god. For a god is someone who moves, who feels, who remembers, who looks to the future, who rules over and guides and directs the body he is master of, just as that Supreme God directs the universe. And just as this eternal God controls the universe, which is partly mortal, so too your eternal spirit directs your fragile body.*

Daily Law: You're destined to accomplish great things, and by thinking that, you will create a self-fulfilling dynamic.

#### NOVEMBER 20 Focus and Prioritize

*Nothing really belongs to us but time, which even he has who has nothing else. It is equally unfortunate to waste your precious life in mechanical tasks or in a profusion of important work.*

1. Allow yourself the luxury of exploring and wandering creatively, but always with an underlying purpose.
2. Daily Law: In a world full of endless distractions, you must focus and prioritize.

#### NOVEMBER 21 Connect to What Is Nearest to You

1. In general, do not constantly wait and hope for something better, but rather make the most of what you have. Reality beckons you.

2. Daily Law: In the end what you really must covet is a deeper relationship to reality, which will bring you calmness, focus, and practical powers to alter what it is possible to alter.

#### NOVEMBER 22 Embrace Whatever Happens to You

*On hearing of the interesting events which have happened in the course of a man's experience, many people will wish that similar things had happened in their lives too, completely forgetting that they should be envious rather of the mental aptitude which lent those events the significance they possess when he describes them.*

Daily Law: Embrace all obstacles as learning experiences, as means to getting stronger.

#### NOVEMBER 23 Admire Human Greatness

Daily Law: Although it is easier to admire without any taint of envy those who are dead, try to include at least one living person in our pantheon. If we are young enough, such objects of admiration can also serve as models to emulate.

#### NOVEMBER 24 Seek the Upward Pull of the Group

Daily Law: You must have a thorough understanding of the effect groups have on your thinking and emotions. With such awareness, you can attach yourself to groups that exert an upward pull.

#### NOVEMBER 25 Transform Self-Love into Empathy

1. Try to take their perspective, enter their world and value system. You will suddenly become aware of an entire world of nonverbal behavior you never knew existed, as if your eyes could now suddenly see ultraviolet light. Once you sense this power, you will feel its importance and awaken to new social possibilities.
2. Daily Law: We are all narcissists, some deeper on the spectrum than others. Our mission in life is to come to terms with this self-love and learn how to turn our sensitivity outward, toward others, instead of inward.

#### NOVEMBER 26 The Confirmation Bias

*The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.*

Daily Law: Your first impulse should always be to find the evidence that disconfirms your most cherished beliefs and those of others. That is true science.

#### NOVEMBER 27 Assume You're Misjudging the People Around You

1. Each person you meet is like an undiscovered country, with a very particular psychological chemistry that you will carefully explore. You are more than ready to be surprised by what you uncover.

2. Daily Law: This flexible, open spirit is similar to creative energy—a willingness to consider more possibilities and options. In fact, developing your empathy will also improve your creative powers.

#### NOVEMBER 28 Make the Past Come to Life

Daily Law: People were experiencing their present moment within a context that made sense to them. You want to understand that from the inside out.

#### NOVEMBER 29 The Rider and the Horse

Daily Law: We cannot divorce emotions from thinking. The two are completely intertwined. But there is inevitably a dominant factor, some people more clearly governed by emotions than others. Learn to channel your emotions instead of following them where they lead you.

#### NOVEMBER 30 Advance with a Sense of Purpose

Daily Law: In a world where so many people are meandering, those with a sense of purpose spring past the rest with ease and attract attention for this. Find yours and elevate it by making the connection as deep as possible.

### December The Cosmic Sublime EXPANDING THE MIND TO ITS FURTHEST REACHES

#### DECEMBER 1 The Infinite and the Awesome

*Whereas all the other animals have their heads low, eyes fixed upon the ground, the gods desired to give to man a sublime face, a face that could raise its eyes to the heavens above, contemplating the very stars in the sky.*

Daily Law: Pull your mind away from the dramas of the moment and seek the expansion.

#### DECEMBER 2 A Most Improbable Occurrence

Daily Law: This causes us to view our present existence as an individual, something we take for granted, as a most improbable occurrence, considering all of the fortuitous elements that had to fall into place.

#### DECEMBER 3 Turn and Face Your Mortality

*For it's always that way with the sacred value of life. We forget it as long as it belongs to us, and give it as little attention during the unconcerned hours of our life as we do the stars in the light of day. Darkness must fall before we are aware of the majesty of the stars above our heads.*

Daily Law: By becoming deeply aware of our mortality, we intensify our experience of every aspect of life.

#### DECEMBER 4 The Universe Is within You

*I am glad to the brink of fear. . . . Standing on the bare Ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite spaces—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God.*

Daily Law: The grandeur of the Universe is truly within us.

#### DECEMBER 5 Immerse the Mind in the Moment

Daily Law: This is the most powerful point you can reach in sports or any other endeavor—when you are no longer thinking, you are in the moment. Make it a daily practice: to focus intensely on the present moment.

#### DECEMBER 6 Alive Time or Dead Time?

*Vivre sans temps mort. (Live without wasted time.)*

1. The time that you're alive is the only thing you truly possess, and you can give it away.
2. Everything that you do in life is a process of making your own—your time, your ideas, your mental life, and on and on and on.
3. Daily Law: Never waste a minute. Make today your own—whether you're stuck in traffic, sick in bed, or working long hours.

#### DECEMBER 7 The Bullet in the Side

*The reality of death has come upon us and a consciousness of the power of God has broken our complacency, like a bullet in the side. A sense of the dramatic, of the tragic, of the infinite, has descended upon us, filling us with grief, but even above grief, wonder.*

Daily Law: Flannery O'Connor's fate is our fate—we are all in the process of dying, all facing the same uncertainties.

#### DECEMBER 8 Connect to Something Larger Than Yourself

Daily Law: You can try something similar as you age, by returning to places of your youth or childhood, feeling the passage of time all around you, and connecting this to the eternal cycles of nature of which you are a part.

#### DECEMBER 9 Encounters with the Inhuman and the Infinite

*If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is—infinite.*

1. Let the elements of these landscapes fill your mind as far as possible and feel yourself merging with them.
2. Daily Law: Leave the human bubble today.

#### DECEMBER 10 See the Whole

Daily Law: When you look at the world, stop fixating on all the separate forms you see and view it as all one—one throbbing, pulsating web stretching from 4 billion years ago to the present, with you as a tiny but necessary speck on a single thread.

#### DECEMBER 11 The Child's Sense of Scale

Daily Law: Try to encounter the world today with the sense of scale you had as a child.

#### DECEMBER 12 Life and Death

*We are afraid of the old age which we may never attain.*

Daily Law: By connecting to the reality of death, we connect more profoundly to the reality and fullness of life. By separating death from life and repressing our awareness of it, we do the opposite.

#### DECEMBER 13 How to View the World

Daily Law: By opening the mind in this way, you will unleash unrealized creative powers, and you will give yourself great mental pleasure.

#### DECEMBER 14 Release Yourself from Habits and Banality

*Whereas the beautiful is limited, the sublime is limitless, so that the mind in the presence of the sublime, attempting to imagine what it cannot, has pain in the failure but pleasure in contemplating the immensity of the attempt*

Daily Law: In the face of the Sublime, we feel a shiver, a foretaste of death itself, something too large for our minds to encompass. And for a moment, it shakes us out of our smugness and releases us from the deathlike grip of habit and banality.

#### DECEMBER 15 Create Physical Death Awareness

*Always do what you are afraid to do*

Daily Law: We can use our imagination in this as well, by envisioning the day our death arrives, where we might be, how it might come. We must make this as vivid as possible. It could be tomorrow.

#### DECEMBER 16 The Near-Death Experience

*You could leave life right now. Let that determine what you do and say and think.*

Daily Law: We cannot reproduce that experience without risking our lives, but we can gain some of the effect through smaller doses. We must begin by meditating on our death and seeking to convert it into something more real and physical

#### DECEMBER 17 Let the Impermanence of It All Sink In

*If man were never to fade away like the dews of Adashino, never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama, but lingered on forever in the world, how things would lose their power to move us! The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty.*

Daily Law: Today, pretend you are seeing things for the last time.

#### DECEMBER 18 Have a Sense of Urgency and Desperation

*Life is a gift, life is happiness, every minute could have been an eternity of happiness! If youth only knew! Now my life will change; now I will be reborn. Dear brother, I swear that I shall not lose hope. I will keep my soul pure and my heart open. I will be reborn for the better.*

Daily Law: We must think of our mortality as a kind of continual deadline, giving a similar effect as described above to all our actions in life.

#### DECEMBER 19 Feel Reborn

*Life is a constant process of dying.*

Daily Law: Imagine that you have been spared from a death sentence, now every day is one you didn't think you'd get. Live accordingly.

#### DECEMBER 20 Know What Matters

*You act like mortals in all that you fear, and like immortals in all that you desire.*

Daily Law: Let the awareness of the shortness of life clarify our daily actions

#### DECEMBER 21 Let Death Awareness Disperse Our Differences

*Another Plague Year would reconcile all these Differences, a close conversing with Death, or with Diseases that threaten Death, would scum off the Gall from our Tempers, remove the Animosities among us, and bring us to see with differing Eyes*

Daily Law: Experience other people's vulnerability to pain and death, not just your own.

#### DECEMBER 22 The Ultimate in Stupidity

*There are only three events in a man's life; birth, life and death; he is not conscious of being born, he dies in pain and he forgets to live.*

Daily Law: To deny mortality and fight against it is the ultimate form of human stupidity and the ultimate insult to human nature, as if you can transcend nature. You can't transcend nature, it defines you

#### DECEMBER 23 Avoid the False Sublime

Daily Law: The False Sublime comes from external sources and leaves no lasting internal changes except for increased dependency on the substance itself. All of the addictions plaguing twenty-first-century humanity are false and degraded forms of the Sublime.

### DECEMBER 24 Place Yourself on Death Ground

1. People change their behavior only if they have to. They will feel urgency only if their lives depend on it.
2. Daily Law: Put yourself in situations where you have too much at stake to waste time or resources—if you cannot afford to lose, you won’t. Place yourself on “death ground,” where your back is against the wall and you have to fight like hell to get out alive.

### DECEMBER 25 This Too Will Not Last

Daily Law: Let go of the past and feel yourself carried along by the stream of life and all the power and energy that it will bring us in its wake.

### DECEMBER 26 Journey Inside the Global Brain

Daily Law: Instead of using this remarkable instrument as a means to get attention or to vent your rage and display your superiority, see the internet in this different light—an invitation to a fascinating journey inside a global brain and the surprises it can bring you by roaming freely in this vast space and making surprising connections.

### DECEMBER 27 Amor Fati

*My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be other than it is, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity . . . but to love it.*

1. There is much in life we cannot control, with death as the ultimate example of this.
2. Daily Law: We put this into practice by continually seeing events as fateful—everything happens for a reason, and it is up to us to glean the lesson.

### DECEMBER 28 The Sky and the Stars

*The stars. . . . Every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.*

Daily Law: Look at the sky and stars as if seeing them for the first time.

### DECEMBER 29 Meditate on the Mysteries

Daily Law: Contemplate any feelings of uncertainty and even discomfort and hold fast to them. Amid such uncertainty your dormant sense of wonder will begin to stir, and things will start to appear novel and surprising as they did when you were very young.

### DECEMBER 30 Accept Your Insignificance

Daily Law: The fact that you are aware of this insignificance and smallness is paradoxically what renders you powerful and significant. It is an understanding of reality that no other animal is capable of. Such

awareness can begin to restore to you that sense of awe and connection that comes from a proper sense of scale.

**DECEMBER 31 The Ultimate Freedom**

*Premeditation of death is premeditation of freedom. . . . He who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave. Knowing how to die frees us from all subjection and constraint.*

Daily Law: Once we taste some of this freedom, we will want to explore further and expand our possibilities as far as time will allow us.