

## Part I: Wealth

**Building Wealth:** Making money is not a thing you do—it's a skill you learn

### Chapter #1: Understand How Wealth is Created

1. Getting rich is about knowing what to do, who to do it with, and when to do it. It is much more about understanding than purely hard work. Yes, hard work matters, and you can't skimp on it. But it has to be directed in the right way.
2. The thing I got really good at was looking at businesses and figuring out the point of maximum leverage to actually create wealth and capture some of that created wealth.

#### **How to Get Rich (Without Getting Lucky):**

1. *Seek wealth, not money or status. Wealth is having assets that earn while you sleep. Money is how we transfer time and wealth. Status is your place in the social hierarchy.*
2. *Understand ethical wealth creation is possible. If you secretly despise wealth, it will elude you.*
3. *Ignore people playing status games. They gain status by attacking people playing wealth creation games*
4. *You're not going to get rich renting out your time. You must own equity—a piece of a business—to gain your financial freedom.*
5. *You will get rich by giving society what it wants but does not yet know how to get. At scale.*
6. *Pick an industry where you can play long-term games with long-term people.*
7. *The internet has massively broadened the possible space of careers. Most people haven't figured this out yet.*
8. *Play iterated games. All the returns in life, whether in wealth, relationships, or knowledge, come from compound interest.*
9. *Pick business partners with high intelligence, energy, and, above all, integrity.*
10. *Don't partner with cynics and pessimists. Their beliefs are self-fulfilling.*
11. *Learn to sell. Learn to build. If you can do both, you will be unstoppable.*
12. *Arm yourself with specific knowledge, accountability, and leverage.*
13. *Specific knowledge is knowledge you cannot be trained for. If society can train you, it can train someone else and replace you.*
14. *Specific knowledge is found by pursuing your genuine curiosity and passion rather than whatever is hot right now.*
15. *Building specific knowledge will feel like play to you but will look like work to others.*
16. *When specific knowledge is taught, it's through apprenticeships, not schools.*
17. *Specific knowledge is often highly technical or creative. It cannot be outsourced or automated.*
18. *Embrace accountability, and take business risks under your own name. Society will reward you with responsibility, equity, and leverage*
19. *"Give me a lever long enough and a place to stand, and I will move the earth." —Archimedes*

20. Fortunes require leverage. Business leverage comes from capital, people, and products with no marginal cost of replication (code and media).
21. Capital means money. To raise money, apply your specific knowledge with accountability and show resulting good judgment.
22. Labor means people working for you. It's the oldest and most fought-over form of leverage. Labor leverage will impress your parents, but don't waste your life chasing it.
23. Capital and labor are permissioned leverage. Everyone is chasing capital, but someone has to give it to you. Everyone is trying to lead, but someone has to follow you.
24. Code and media are permissionless leverage. They're the leverage behind the newly rich. You can create software and media that works for you while you sleep.
25. An army of robots is freely available—it's just packed in data centers for heat and space efficiency. Use it
26. If you can't code, write books and blogs, record videos and podcasts.
27. Leverage is a force multiplier for your judgment.
28. Judgment requires experience but can be built faster by learning foundational skills.
29. There is no skill called "business." Avoid business magazines and business classes.
30. Study microeconomics, game theory, psychology, persuasion, ethics, mathematics, and computers.
31. Reading is faster than listening. Doing is faster than watching.
32. You should be too busy to "do coffee" while still keeping an uncluttered calendar.
33. Set and enforce an aspirational personal hourly rate. If fixing a problem will save less than your hourly rate, ignore it. If outsourcing a task will cost less than your hourly rate, outsource it
34. Work as hard as you can. Even though who you work with and what you work on are more important than how hard you work.
35. Become the best in the world at what you do. Keep redefining what you do until this is true.
36. There are no get-rich-quick schemes. Those are just someone else getting rich off you.
37. Apply specific knowledge, with leverage, and eventually you will get what you deserve.
38. When you're finally wealthy, you'll realize it wasn't what you were seeking in the first place. But that is for another day.
39. Summary: Productize Yourself

#### **Your summary says "Productize yourself"—what does that mean?**

1. "Productize" and "yourself." "Yourself" has uniqueness. "Productize" has leverage. "Yourself" has accountability. "Productize" has specific knowledge. "Yourself" also has specific knowledge in there.
2. "Is this authentic to me? Is it myself that I am projecting?" And then, "Am I productizing it? Am I scaling it? Am I scaling with labor or with capital or with code or with media?"

#### **What's the difference between wealth and money?**

1. Money is how we transfer wealth. Money is social credits. It is the ability to have credits and debits of other people's time.

2. Wealth is the thing you want. Wealth is assets that earn while you sleep. Wealth is the factory, the robots, cranking out things. Wealth is the computer program that's running at night, serving other customers. Wealth is even money in the bank that is being reinvested into other assets, and into other businesses.
3. Even a house can be a form of wealth, because you can rent it out, although that's probably a lower productivity use of land than some commercial enterprise.
4. *Technology democratizes consumption but consolidates production. The best person in the world at anything gets to do it for everyone.*
5. Society will pay you for creating things it wants. But society doesn't yet know how to create those things, because if it did, they wouldn't need you. They would already be stamped out.
6. If you want to be wealthy, you want to figure out which one of those things you can provide for society that it does not yet know how to get but it will want and providing it is natural to you, within your skill set, and within your capabilities
7. Then, you have to figure out how to scale it because if you only build one, that's not enough. You've got to build thousands, or hundreds of thousands, or millions, or billions of them so everybody can have one. Steve Jobs (and his team, of course) figured out society would want smartphones. A computer in their pocket that had all the phone capability times one hundred and was easy to use. So, they figured out how to build it, and then they figured out how to scale it.
8. *Become the best in the world at what you do , keep redefining what you do until this is true*

## Chapter #2: Find and Build Specific Knowledge

1. Sales skills are a form of specific knowledge. But you can improve sales skills. You can read Robert Cialdini, you can go to a sales training seminar, you can do door-to-door sales. It is brutal but will train you very quickly.
2. *Specific knowledge cannot be taught, but it can be learned.* Examples of what your specific knowledge could be: Sales skills, Examples of what your specific knowledge could be: Sales skills, Playing a lot of games, you understand game theory pretty well, Gossiping, digging into your friend network. That might make you into a very interesting journalist.
3. The specific knowledge is sort of this weird combination of unique traits from your DNA, your unique upbringing, and your response to it. It's almost baked into your personality and your identity.
4. *No one can compete with you on being you. Most of life is a search for who and what needs you the most.*
5. *Society, business, & money are downstream of technology, which is itself downstream of science. Science applied is the engine of humanity. Corollary: Applied Scientists are the most powerful people in the world. This will be more obvious in the coming years.*
6. Specific knowledge is found much more by pursuing your innate talents, your genuine curiosity, and your passion.

7. Very often, specific knowledge is at the edge of knowledge. It's also stuff that's only now being figured out or is really hard to figure out. If you're not 100 percent into it, somebody else who is 100 percent into it will outperform you. And they won't just outperform you by a little bit—they'll outperform you by a lot because now we're operating the domain of ideas, compound interest really applies and leverage really applies.
8. *The internet has massively broadened the possible space of careers. Most people haven't figured this out yet.*
9. You can go on the internet, and you can find your audience. And you can build a business, and create a product, and build wealth, and make people happy just uniquely expressing yourself through the internet.
10. "How to Get Rich" "Escape competition through authenticity." Basically, when you're competing with people, it's because you're copying them. It's because you're trying to do the same thing. But every human is different. Don't copy.
11. *The best jobs are neither decreed nor degreed. They are creative expressions of continuous learners in free markets*
12. The most important skill for getting rich is becoming a perpetual learner. You have to know how to learn anything you want to learn.
13. Foundations are super important. Basic arithmetic and numeracy are way more important in life than doing calculus. Being able to convey yourself simply using ordinary English words is far more important than being able to write poetry, having an extensive vocabulary, or speaking seven different foreign languages. Knowing how to be persuasive when speaking is far more important than being an expert digital marketer or click optimizer.
14. You do need to be deep in something because otherwise you'll be a mile wide and an inch deep and you won't get what you want out of life. You can only achieve mastery in one or two things. It's usually things you're obsessed about.

### Chapter #3: Play Long Term Games With Long Term People

*All the Returns in life, whether in wealth, relationships, or knowledge, come from compound interest.*

#### **How does one know if they're earning compound interest?**

1. Compounding in business relationships is very important. Look at some of the top roles in society, like why someone is a CEO of a public company or managing billions of dollars. It's because people trust them. They are trusted because the relationships they've built and the work they've done has compounded. They've stuck with the business and shown themselves (in a visible and accountable way) to be high-integrity people.
2. Compound interest also happens in your reputation. If you have a sterling reputation and you keep building it for decades upon decades, people will notice. Your reputation will literally end up

being thousands or tens of thousands of times more valuable than somebody else who was very talented but is not keeping the compound interest in reputation going.

3. *Intentions don't matter. Actions do. That's why being ethical is hard*
4. When you find the right thing to do, when you find the right people to work with, invest deeply. Sticking with it for decades is really how you make the big returns in your relationships and in your money.
5. You can learn from anything. At least when it comes to the goal-oriented life, only about 1 percent of the efforts you made paid off.
6. When you find the 1 percent of your discipline which will not be wasted, which you'll be able to invest in for the rest of your life and has meaning to you—go all-in and forget about the rest.

#### Chapter #4: Take On Accountability

*Embrace accountability and take business risks under your own name. Society will reward you with responsibility, equity, and leverage.*

1. To get rich, you need leverage. Leverage comes in labor, comes in capital, or it can come through code or media. For labor, somebody has to follow you. For capital, somebody has to give you money, assets to manage, or machines.
2. So to get these things, you have to build credibility, and you have to do it under your own name as much as possible, which is risky. So, accountability is a double-edged thing. It allows you to take credit when things go well and to bear the brunt of the failure when things go badly
3. Clear accountability is important. Without accountability, you don't have incentives. Without accountability, you can't build credibility. But you take risks. You risk failure. You risk humiliation. You risk failure under your own name.
4. But when you put your name out there, you take a risk with certain things. You also get to reap the rewards. You get the benefits
5. The time that you put in, the capital you put into the company, these are at risk.

#### Chapter #5: Build or Buy Equity In a Business

*If you don't own a piece of a business, you don't have a path towards financial freedom*

##### **Why is owning equity in a business important to becoming rich?**

1. It's ownership versus wage work. If you are paid for renting out your time, even lawyers and doctors, you can make some money, but you're not going to make the money that gives you financial freedom. You're not going to have passive income where a business is earning for you while you are on vacation.
2. People seem to think you can create wealth—make money through work. It's probably not going to work.

3. Without ownership, your inputs are very closely tied to your outputs. In almost any salaried job, even one paying a lot per hour like a lawyer or a doctor, you're still putting in the hours, and every hour you get paid.
4. Without ownership, when you're sleeping, you're not earning. When you're retired, you're not earning. When you're on vacation, you're not earning. And you can't earn nonlinearly
5. If you look at even doctors who get rich (like really rich), it's because they open a business. They open a private practice. The private practice builds a brand, and the brand attracts people. Or they build some kind of a medical device, a procedure, or a process with an intellectual property.
6. You have to work up to the point where you can own equity in a business. You could own equity as a small shareholder where you bought stock. You could also own it as an owner where you started the company. Ownership is really important.
7. Everybody who really makes money at some point owns a piece of a product, a business, or some IP. That can be through stock options if you work at a tech company.
8. But usually, the real wealth is created by starting your own companies or even by investing. In an investment firm, they're buying equity. These are the routes to wealth. It doesn't come through the hours.

#### Chapter #6: Find A Position Of Leverage

1. We live in an age of infinite leverage, and the economic rewards for genuine intellectual curiosity have never been higher.
2. *If it entertains you now but will bore you someday, it's a distraction. Keep looking.*
3. By doing things for their own sake, I did them at their best. Follow your intellectual curiosity more than whatever is "hot" right now.
4. You're more likely to have skills society does not yet know how to train other people to do. If someone can train other people how to do something, then they can replace you. If they can replace you, then they don't have to pay you a lot. You want to know how to do something other people don't know how to do at the time period when those skills are in demand.
5. *If they can train you to do it, then eventually they will train a computer to do it.*
6. You get rewarded by society for giving it what it wants and doesn't know how to get elsewhere.
7. Think about what product or service society wants but does not yet know how to get. You want to become the person who delivers it and delivers it at scale. That is really the challenge of how to make money.
8. *Now, the problem is becoming good at whatever "it" is. It moves around from generation to generation, but a lot of it happens to be in technology.*
9. You are waiting for your moment when something emerges in the world, they need a skill set, and you're uniquely qualified. You build your brand in the meantime on Twitter, on YouTube, and by giving away free work. You make a name for yourself, and you take some risk in the process.

When it is time to move on the opportunity, you can do so with leverage—the maximum leverage possible.

**There are three broad classes of leverage:**

1. One form of leverage is labor—other humans working for you: worst form of leverage that you could possibly use. Managing other people is incredibly messy. It requires tremendous leadership skills.
2. Money is good as a form of leverage. It means every time you make a decision, you multiply it with money. [1] Capital is a trickier form of leverage to use. If you get good at managing capital, you can manage more and more capital much more easily than you can manage more and more people.
3. The final form of leverage is brand new—the most democratic form. It is: “products with no marginal cost of replication.” This includes books, media, movies, and code. Code is probably the most powerful form of permissionless leverage.
4. *Forget rich versus poor, white-collar versus blue. It's now leveraged versus un-leveraged.*
5. The most interesting and the most important form of leverage is the idea of products that have no marginal cost of replication. It started with the printing press. It accelerated with broadcast media, and now it's really blown up with the internet and with coding. Now, you can multiply your efforts without involving other humans and without needing money from other humans.
6. This newest form of leverage is where all the new fortunes are made, all the new billionaires. For the last generation, fortunes were made by capital.
7. But the new generation's fortunes are all made through code or media. Joe Rogan making \$50 million to \$100 million a year from his podcast. You're going to have PewDiePie. I don't know how much money he's rolling in, but he's bigger than the news. And of course, there's Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page, Sergey Brin, Bill Gates, and Steve Jobs. Their wealth is all code-based leverage.
8. The most interesting thing to keep in mind about new forms of leverage is they are permissionless. They don't require somebody else's permission for you to use them or succeed. For labor leverage, somebody has to decide to follow you. For capital leverage, somebody has to give you money to invest or to turn into a product.
9. Coding, writing books, recording podcasts, tweeting, YouTubing—these kinds of things are permissionless. They're great equalizers of leverage. Every great software developer, for example, now has an army of robots working for him at nighttime while he or she sleeps, after they've written the code, and it's cranking away.
10. *You're never going to get rich renting out your time*
11. Whenever you can in life, optimize for independence rather than pay. If you have independence and you're accountable on your output, as opposed to your input—that's the dream.

12. Humans evolved in societies where there was no leverage. Now we've invented leverage—through capital, cooperation, technology, productivity, all these means. We live in an age of leverage. As a worker, you want to be as leveraged as possible so you have a huge impact without as much time or physical effort.
13. A leveraged worker can out-produce a non-leveraged worker by a factor of one thousand or ten thousand. With a leveraged worker, judgment is far more important than how much time they put in or how hard they work.
14. *Forget 10x programmers. 1,000x programmers really exist, we just don't fully acknowledge it. See @ID\_AA\_Carmack, @notch, Satoshi Nakamoto, etc.*
15. For example, a good software engineer, just by writing the right little piece of code and creating the right little application, can literally create half a billion dollars' worth of value for a company. But ten engineers working ten times as hard, just because they choose the wrong model, the wrong product, wrote it the wrong way, or put in the wrong viral loop, have basically wasted their time. Inputs don't match outputs, especially for leveraged workers.
16. What you want in life is to be in control of your time. If you do something incredible to move the needle on the business, they have to pay you. Especially if they don't know how you did it because it's innate to your obsession or your skill or your innate abilities, they're going to have to keep paying you to do it
17. All you care about is the actual work itself. When you do just the actual work itself, you'll be far more productive, far more efficient.
18. *Forty hour work weeks are a relic of the Industrial Age. Knowledge workers function like athletes—train and sprint, then rest and reassess.*
19. Sales is an example—especially very high-end sales. If you're a real estate agent out there selling houses, it's not a great job, necessarily. It's very crowded. But if you're a top-tier real estate agent, you know how to market yourself and you know how to sell houses, it's possible you could sell \$5 million mansions in one tenth of the time while somebody else is struggling to sell \$100,000 apartments or condos. Real estate agent is a job with input and output disconnected.
20. Building any product and selling any product fits this description.
21. Tools and leverage create this disconnection between inputs and outputs. The higher the creativity component of a profession, the more likely it is to have disconnected inputs and outputs. If you're looking at professions where your inputs and your outputs are highly connected, it's going to be very hard to create wealth and make wealth for yourself in that process.
22. *If you want to be part of a great tech company, then you need to be able to SELL or BUILD. If you don't do either, learn.*
23. Learn to sell, learn to build. If you can do both, you will be unstoppable.
24. These are two very broad categories. One is building the product. This is hard, and it's multivariate. It can include design; it can include development; it can include manufacturing,



logistics, procurement; and it can even be designing and operating a service. It has many, many definitions.

25. The other side of it is sales. Again, selling has a very broad definition. Selling doesn't necessarily just mean selling to individual customers, but it can mean marketing, it can mean communicating, it can mean recruiting, it can mean raising money, it can mean inspiring people, it could mean doing PR.
26. *Earn with your mind, not your time.*
27. The worst kind of job is someone who's doing labor to repair a house. Maybe you get paid ten dollars or twenty dollars an hour. You go to people's houses, your boss demands you're there at 8:00 a.m., and you repair your piece of the house. Here, you have zero leverage. You have some accountability, but not really, because your accountability is to your boss, not to the client. You don't have any real specific knowledge, since what you're doing is labor lots of people can do. You're not going to get paid a lot. You're getting paid minimum wage plus a little bit for your skill and your time.
28. The next level up might be the general contractor working on the house for the owner. They may be getting paid \$50,000 to do the whole project, then they're paying the labor fifteen dollars an hour and they're keeping the difference. A general contractor is obviously a better place to be.
29. Contractors have leverage through laborers working for them. They also have little bit more specific knowledge: how to organize a team, make them show up on time, and how to deal with city regulations.
30. The next level up might be a real estate developer. A developer is someone who's going to buy a property, hire a bunch of contractors, and transform it into something higher value.
31. The developer might be able to make a million dollars or half a million dollars in profit when they sell the house for more than they bought it for, including the expenses of construction. But now, notice what is required from the developer: a very high level of accountability.
32. The developer takes on more risk, more accountability, has more leverage, and needs to have more specific knowledge. They need to understand fundraising, city regulations, where the real estate market is headed, and whether they should take the risk or not. It is more difficult.
33. The next level up might be someone who's managing money in a real estate fund. They have an enormous amount of capital leverage. They're dealing with lots and lots of developers, and they're buying huge amounts of housing inventory.
34. One level beyond that might be somebody who says, "Actually, I want to bring the maximum leverage to bear in this market and the maximum specific knowledge." That person would say, "Well, I understand real estate, and I understand everything from basic housing construction, to building properties and selling them, to how real estate markets move and thrive, and I also understand the technology business. I understand how to recruit developers, how to write code,

and how to build a good product, and I understand how to raise money from venture capitalists, how to return it, and how all of that works.”

35. Each level has increasing leverage, increasing accountability, increasingly specific knowledge.
36. The one thing you have to avoid is the risk of ruin. Avoiding ruin means stay out of jail. So, don't do anything illegal. Avoiding ruin could also mean you stay out of things that could be physically dangerous or hurt your body. You have to watch your health.
37. Stay out of things that could cause you to lose all of your capital, all of your savings. Don't gamble everything on one go. Instead, take rationally optimistic bets with big upsides.

#### Chapter #7: Get Paid For Your Judgements

1. I think every human should aspire to being knowledgeable about certain things and being paid for our unique knowledge. We have as much leverage as is possible in our business, whether it's through robots or computers or what have you. Then, we can be masters of our own time because we are just being tracked on outputs and not inputs.
2. You will pay them \$200 million, whatever it takes, because 10 percent better judgment steering a \$100 billion ship is very valuable. CEOs are highly paid because of their leverage. Small differences in judgment and capability really get amplified.
3. Demonstrated judgment—credibility around the judgment—is so critical. Warren Buffett wins here because he has massive credibility. People will throw infinite leverage behind him because of his judgment.
4. Judgment—especially demonstrated judgment, with high accountability and a clear track record—is critical
5. We waste our time with short-term thinking and busywork. Warren Buffett spends a year deciding and a day acting. That act lasts decades.
6. Being at the extreme in your art is very important in the age of leverage.
7. *Solve Via Iteration Then Get Paid Via Repetition*

#### Chapter #8: Prioritize and Focus

1. My personal wealth has not been generated by one big year. It just stacks up a little bit, a few chips at a time: more options, more businesses, more investments, more things I can do.
2. There are so many ways to create wealth, to create products, to create businesses, and to get paid by society as a byproduct.
3. *Value your time at an hourly rate, and ruthlessly spend to save time at that rate. You will never be worth more than you think you're worth.*
4. No one is going to value you more than you value yourself. You just have to set a very high personal hourly rate and you have to stick to it.
5. If you can hire someone to do it for less than your hourly rate, hire them.

6. Set a very high hourly aspirational rate for yourself and stick to it. It should seem and feel absurdly high. If it doesn't, it's not high enough. Like I said, for myself, even before I had money, for the longest time I used \$5,000 an hour.

**Can you expand on your statement, "If you secretly despise wealth, it will elude you"?**

1. Humans are wired to feel what the other person deep down inside feels.
2. Be optimistic, be positive. It's important. Optimists actually do better in the long run.
3. *The business world has many people playing zero sum games and a few playing positive sum games searching for each other in the crowd.*
4. There are fundamentally two huge games in life that people play. One is the money game. Because money is not going to solve all of your problems, but it's going to solve all of your money problems. People realize that, so they want to make money
5. But they're actually playing the other game, which is the status game. They're trying to be high status in the eyes of other people watching by saying, "Well, I don't need money. We don't want money." Status is your ranking in the social hierarchy.
6. *Wealth creation is an evolutionarily recent positive-sum game. Status is an old zero-sum game. Those attacking wealth creation are often just seeking status.*
7. Politics is an example of a status game. They play an important role in our society, so we can figure out who's in charge. But fundamentally, you play them because they're a necessary evil.
8. The problem is, to win at a status game, you have to put somebody else down. That's why you should avoid status games in your life—they make you into an angry, combative person.
9. *Play stupid games, win stupid prizes.*

**What is the most important thing to do for younger people starting out?**

1. Spend more time making the big decisions. There are basically three really big decisions you make in your early life: where you live, who you're with, and what you do.
2. We spend very little time deciding which relationship to get into. We spend so much time in a job, but we spend so little time deciding which job to get into. Choosing what city to live in can almost completely determine the trajectory of your life, but we spend so little time trying to figure out what city to live in.
3. *Advice to a young engineer considering moving to San Francisco: "Do you want to leave your friends behind? Or be the one left behind?"*

**What are one or two steps you'd take to surround yourself with successful people?**

1. Figure out what you're good at, and start helping other people with it. Give it away. Pay it forward. Karma works because people are consistent. On a long enough timescale, you will attract what you project.
2. *An old boss once warned: "You'll never be rich since you're obviously smart, and someone will always offer you a job that's just good enough."*

**How did you decide to start your first company?**

1. I was working at this tech company called @Home Network, and I told everybody around me—my boss, coworkers, my friends, “In Silicon Valley, all of these other people are starting companies. It looks like they can do it. I’m going to start a company. I’m just here temporarily. I’m an entrepreneur.” ...I didn’t actually mean to trick myself into it. It wasn’t a deliberate, calculated thing. I was just venting, talking out loud, being overly honest. But I didn’t actually start a company.
2. Sure enough, everyone started saying “What are you still doing here? I thought you were leaving to start a company?” and “Wow, you’re still here...” I was literally embarrassed into starting my own company

#### Chapter #9: Find Work That Feels Like Play

1. *There are almost 7 billion people on this planet. Someday, I hope, there will be almost 7 billion companies.*
2. I’m much more interested in solving problems than I am in making money.
3. Any end goal will just lead to another goal, lead to another goal. We just play games in life. When you grow up, you’re playing the school game, or you’re playing the social game. Then you’re playing the money game, and then you’re playing the status game. These games just have longer and longer and longer-lived horizons.
4. These are games where the outcome really stops mattering once you see through the game.

#### **What is your definition of retirement?**

Retirement is when you stop sacrificing today for an imaginary tomorrow. When today is complete, in and of itself, you’re retired.

#### **How do you get there?**

1. one way is to have so much money saved that your passive income (without you lifting a finger) covers your burn rate.
2. A second is you just drive your burn rate down to zero—you become a monk.
3. A third is you’re doing something you love. You enjoy it so much, it’s not about the money. So there are multiple ways to retirement.
4. The way to get out of the competition trap is to be authentic, to find the thing you know how to do better than anybody. You know how to do it better because you love it, and no one can compete with you.
5. Apply some leverage and put your name on it. You take the risks, but you gain the rewards, have ownership and equity in what you’re doing,

#### **Did your motivation to earn money drop after you become financially independent?**

1. creating businesses and making money are now more of an “art.”
2. *Whether in commerce, science, or politics—history remembers the artists.*
3. I can create a new business within three months: raise the money, assemble a team, and launch it.

4. I'm always "working." It looks like work to others, but it feels like play to me. And that's how I know no one can compete with me on it. Because I'm just playing, for sixteen hours a day. If others want to compete with me, they're going to work, and they're going to lose because they're not going to do it for sixteen hours a day, seven days a week.

**What was your figure where you thought you were financially safe?**

1. You make money to solve your money and material problems.
2. I value freedom above everything else. All kinds of freedom: freedom to do what I want, freedom from things I don't want to do, freedom from my own emotions or things that may disturb my peace. For me, freedom is my number one value.
3. Money Buys Freedom
4. *The winners of any game are the people who are so addicted they continue playing even as the marginal utility from winning declines.*

**Do I have to start a company to be successful?**

1. The most successful class of people in Silicon Valley on a consistent basis are either the venture capitalists (because they are diversified and control what used to be a scarce resource) or people who are very good at identifying companies that have just hit product/market fit.
2. Those people have the background, expertise, and references those companies really want to help them scale. Then, they go into the latest Dropbox or the latest Airbnb.

**The people who were at Google, then joined Facebook when it was one hundred people, and then joined Stripe when it was one hundred people ?**

1. It's good to be in a smaller company early because there's less of an infrastructure to prevent early promotion
2. For someone who is early in their career (and maybe even later), the single most important thing about a company is the alumni network you're going to build. Think about who you will work with and what those people are going on to do.

Chapter #10: How To Get Lucky

**But getting lucky would help, right?**

How one gets lucky and really four kinds of luck

1. The first kind of luck is blind luck where one just gets lucky because something completely out of their control happened. This includes fortune, fate
2. Then, there's luck through persistence, hard work, hustle, and motion. This is when you're running around creating opportunities. You're generating a lot of energy, you're doing a lot to stir things up. It's almost like mixing a petri dish or mixing a bunch of reagents and seeing what combines. You're just generating enough force, hustle, and energy for luck to find you.

3. A third way is you become very good at spotting luck. If you are very skilled in a field, you will notice when a lucky break happens in your field, and other people who aren't attuned to it won't notice. So, you become sensitive to luck.
4. The last kind of luck is the weirdest, hardest kind, where you build a unique character, a unique brand, a unique mindset, which causes luck to find you.
5. You created your own luck. You put yourself in a position to capitalize on luck or to attract luck when nobody else created the opportunity for themselves. To get rich without getting lucky, we want to be deterministic. We don't want to leave it to chance.
6. *Ways to get lucky: • Hope luck finds you. • Hustle until you stumble into it. • Prepare the mind and be sensitive to chances others miss. • Become the best at what you do. Refine what you do until this is true. Opportunity will seek you out. Luck becomes your destiny.*
7. It starts becoming so deterministic, it stops being luck. The definition starts fading from luck to destiny. To summarize the fourth type: build your character in a certain way, then your character becomes your destiny.
8. If you are a trusted, reliable, high-integrity, long-term-thinking dealmaker, when other people want to do deals but don't know how to do them in a trustworthy manner with strangers, they will literally approach you and give you a cut of the deal just because of the integrity and reputation you've built up.
9. Your character and your reputation are things you can build, which will let you take advantage of opportunities other people may characterize as lucky, but you know it wasn't luck. *"In a long-term game, it seems that everybody is making each other rich. And in a short term game, it seems like everybody is making themselves rich."*

#### **How important is networking?**

1. the reality is if you're building something interesting, you will always have more people who will want to know you. Trying to build business relationships well in advance of doing business is a complete waste of time.
2. *"Be a maker who makes something interesting people want. Show your craft, practice your craft, and the right people will eventually find you."*

#### **And once you've met someone, how do you determine if you can trust someone? What signals do you pay attention to?**

1. If someone is talking a lot about how honest they are, they're probably dishonest.
2. When someone spends too much time talking about their own values or they're talking themselves up, they're covering for something.
3. *Sharks eat well but live a life surrounded by sharks.*
4. The worst outcome in this world is not having self-esteem. If you don't love yourself, who will?
5. *"The closer you want to get to me, the better your values have to be."*

## Chapter #11: Be Patient

1. Great people have great outcomes.
2. *Apply specific knowledge with leverage and eventually, you will get what you deserve*
3. *People are oddly consistent. Karma is just you, repeating your patterns, virtues, and flaws until you finally get what you deserve. Always pay it forward. And don't keep count*
4. I believe the solution to making everybody happy is to give them what they want. Let's get them all rich. Let's get them all fit and healthy. Then, let's get them all happy.
5. *Amazing how many people confuse wealth and wisdom.*

**Building Judgment:** There's no shortcut to smart

## Chapter #1: Judgment

1. If you want to make the maximum amount of money possible, if you want to get rich over your life in a deterministically predictable way, stay on the bleeding edge of trends and study technology, design, and art—become really good at something.
2. *You don't get rich by spending your time to save money. You get rich by saving your time to make money.*
3. How hard you work matters a lot less in the modern economy.

**What is underrated?:** Judgment is underrated.

**Can you define judgment?**

1. My definition of wisdom is knowing the long-term consequences of your actions. Wisdom applied to external problems is judgment. They're highly linked; knowing the long-term consequences of your actions and then making the right decision to capitalize on that.
2. *In an age of leverage, one correct decision can win everything. Without hard work, you'll develop neither judgment nor leverage*
3. You have to put in the time, but the judgment is more important. The direction you're heading in matters more than how fast you move, especially with leverage. Picking the direction you're heading in for every decision is far, far more important than how much force you apply. Just pick the right direction to start walking in, and start walking.

## Chapter #2: How To Think Clearly

*"Clear thinker" is a better compliment than "smart."*

1. Real knowledge is intrinsic, and it's built from the ground up. The really smart thinkers are clear thinkers. They understand the basics at a very, very fundamental level.
2. *Clear thinkers appeal to their own authority.*

**Part of making effective decisions boils down to dealing with reality. How do you make sure you're dealing with reality when you're making decisions?**

1. By not having a strong sense of self or judgments or mind presence. The “monkey mind” will always respond with this regurgitated emotional response to what it thinks the world should be. Those desires will cloud your reality. This happens a lot of times when people are mixing politics and business.
2. The number one thing clouding us from being able to see reality is we have preconceived notions of the way it should be.
3. One definition of a moment of suffering is “the moment when you see things exactly the way they are.”
4. The good news is, the moment of suffering—when you’re in pain—is a moment of truth. It is a moment where you’re forced to embrace reality the way it actually is. Then, you can make meaningful change and progress. You can only make progress when you’re starting with the truth.
5. The hard thing is seeing the truth. To see the truth, you have to get your ego out of the way because your ego doesn’t want to face the truth. The smaller you can make your ego, the less conditioned you can make your reactions, the less desires you can have about the outcome you want, the easier it will be to see the reality.
6. *What we wish to be true clouds our perception of what is true. Suffering is the moment when we can no longer deny reality.*
7. *What you feel tells you nothing about the facts—it merely tells you something about your estimate of the facts.*
8. Also encourage taking at least one day a week where you just have time to think.
9. It’s only after you’re bored you have the great ideas. It’s never going to be when you’re stressed, or busy, running around or rushed. Make the time.
10. *Very smart people tend to be weird since they insist on thinking everything through for themselves.*
11. *A contrarian isn’t one who always objects—that’s a conformist of a different sort. A contrarian reasons independently from the ground up and resists pressure to conform. Cynicism is easy. Mimicry is easy. Optimistic contrarians are the rarest breed.*

### Chapter #3: Shed Your Identity To See Reality

*“Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.”*

1. You absolutely need habits to function. You cannot solve every problem in life as if it is the first time it’s thrown at you. We accumulate all these habits. We put them in the bundle of identity, ego, ourselves, and then we get attached to them.
2. *Any belief you took in a package (ex. Democrat, Catholic, American) is suspect and should be re-evaluated from base principles.*
3. I think creating identities and labels locks you in and keeps you from seeing the truth.
4. *To be honest, speak without identity.*



5. I don't like to self-identify on almost any level anymore, which keeps me from having too many of these so-called stable beliefs.
6. *We each have a contrarian belief society rejects. But the more our own identity and local tribe reject it, the more real it likely is.*
7. There are two attractive lessons about suffering in the long term. It can make you accept the world the way it is. The other lesson is it can make your ego change in an extremely hard way.
8. *Facebook redesigns. Twitter redesigns. Personalities, careers, and teams also need redesigns. There are no permanent solutions in a dynamic system.*

#### Chapter #4: Learn The Skills of Decision Making

1. *Self-serving conclusions should have a higher bar.*
2. *Almost all biases are time-saving heuristics. For important decisions, discard memory and identity, and focus on the problem.*
3. "You should never, ever fool anybody, and you are the easiest person to fool." The moment you tell somebody something dishonest, you've lied to yourself. Then you'll start believing your own lie, which will disconnect you from reality and take you down the wrong road.
4. *I never ask if "I like it" or "I don't like it." I think "this is what it is" or "this is what it isn't."*
5. If you have a criticism of someone, then don't criticize the person—criticize the general approach or criticize the class of activities.

#### **Any advice on developing capacity for instinctual blunt honesty?**

Tell everyone. Start now. It doesn't have to be blunt. Charisma is the ability to project confidence and love at the same time. It's almost always possible to be honest and positive

#### **As an investor and CEO of AngelList, you're paid to be right when other people are wrong. Do you have a process around how you make decisions?**

Decision-making is everything

*The more you know, the less you diversify.*

#### Chapter #5: Collect Mental Modes

1. The best mental models I have found came through evolution, game theory, and Charlie Munger.
2. Mental models are really just compact ways for you to recall your own knowledge.

#### **Evolution**

1. One theory is civilization exists to answer the question of who gets to mate. If you look around, from a purely sexual selection perspective, sperm is abundant and eggs are scarce. It's an allocation problem.
2. Literally all of the works of mankind and womankind can be traced down to people trying to solve this problem.

3. Evolution, thermodynamics, information theory, and complexity have explanatory and predictive power in many aspects of life.

**Inversion:** Try to eliminate what's not going to work. I think being successful is just about not making mistakes. It's not about having correct judgment. It's about avoiding incorrect judgments.

**Complexity Theory:** The more I got into it, the more I understand the limits of our knowledge and the limits of our prediction capability. Complexity has been super helpful to me. It has helped me come to a system that operates in the face of ignorance.

**Economics:**

1. Microeconomics and game theory are fundamental. I don't think you can be successful in business or even navigate most of our modern capitalist society without an extremely good understanding of supply-and-demand, labor-versus-capital, game theory, and those kinds of things.
2. *Ignore the noise. The market will decide*

**Principal Agent Problem**

1. "If you want it done, then go. And if not, then send." What he meant was, if you want it done right, then you have to go yourself and do it. When you are the principal, then you are the owner—you care, and you will do a great job. When you are the agent and you are doing it on somebody else's behalf, you can do a bad job. You just don't care. You optimize for yourself rather than for the principal's assets.
2. The smaller the company, the more everyone feels like a principal. The less you feel like an agent, the better the job you're going to do. The more closely you can tie someone's compensation to the exact value they're creating, the more you turn them into a principal, and the less you turn them into an agent.
3. We're attracted to principals, and we all bond with principals, but the media and modern society spend a lot of time brainwashing you about needing an agent, an agent being important, and the agent being knowledgeable.

**Compound Interest**

1. If you're compounding at 30 percent per year for thirty years, you don't just end up with ten or twenty times your money—you end up with thousands of times your money.
2. In the intellectual domain, compound interest rules. When you look at a business with one hundred users growing at a compound rate of 20 percent per month, it can very, very quickly stack up to having millions of users. Sometimes, even the founders of these companies are surprised by how large the business scales.

**Basic Math**

1. If you're going to make money, if you're going to invest money, your basic math should be really good.

2. But you want arithmetic, probability, and statistics. Those are extremely important. Crack open a basic math book, and make sure you are really good at multiplying, dividing, compounding, probability, and statistics.

**Black Swans:** There's a new branch of probability statistics, which is really around tail events. Black swans are extreme probabilities. Again, I have to refer back to Nassim Taleb, who I think is one of the greatest philosopher-scientists of our times.

**Calculus:** Calculus is useful to know, to understand the rates of change and how nature works. But it's more important to understand the principles of calculus—where you're measuring the change in small discrete or small continuous events. It's not important you solve integrals or do derivations on demand, because you're not going to need to in the business world.

**Falsifiability:**

1. For you to believe something is true, it should have predictive power, and it must be falsifiable
2. If I'm faced with a difficult choice, such as: Should I buy this house? Should I move to this city? Should I go into business with this person?
3. If you cannot decide, the answer is no. And the reason is, modern society is full of options. There are tons and tons of options. We live on a planet of seven billion people, and we are connected to everybody on the internet. There are hundreds of thousands of careers available to you. There are so many choices.
4. When you choose something, you get locked in for a long time. You move to a city for ten to twenty years. These are very, very long-lived decisions. It's very, very important we only say yes when we are pretty certain. You're never going to be absolutely certain, but you're going to be very certain
5. If you find yourself creating a spreadsheet for a decision with a list of yes's and no's, pros and cons, checks and balances, why this is good or bad... forget it. If you cannot decide, the answer is no.

**Run Uphill:**

1. *Simple heuristic: If you're evenly split on a difficult decision, take the path more painful in the short term.*
2. If you have two choices to make, and they're relatively equal choices, take the path more difficult and more painful in the short term.
3. And what your brain is doing through conflict-avoidance is trying to push off the short-term pain.
4. By definition, if the two are even and one has short-term pain, that path has long-term gain associated. With the law of compound interest, long-term gain is what you want to go toward. Your brain is overvaluing the side with the short-term happiness and trying to avoid the one with short-term pain.
5. So you have to cancel the tendency out (it's a powerful subconscious tendency) by leaning into the pain. As you know, most of the gains in life come from suffering in the short term so you can get paid in the long term.

**What are the most efficient ways to build new mental models?:** Reading science, math, and philosophy one hour per day will likely put you at the upper echelon of human success within seven years.

#### Chapter #6: Learn To Love To Read

1. The genuine love for reading itself, when cultivated, is a superpower. We live in the age of Alexandria, when every book and every piece of knowledge ever written down is a fingertip away.
2. *Reading was my first love.*
3. *Read what you love until you love to read.*
4. *Reading a book isn't a race—the better the book, the more slowly it should be absorbed.*
5. *I don't actually read a lot of books. I pick up a lot of books and only get through a few which form the foundation of my knowledge.*
6. *"As long as I have a book in my hand, I don't feel like I'm wasting time."*
7. *Pointing out obvious exceptions implies either the target isn't smart or you aren't.*

**When you first pick up a book, are you skimming for something interesting? How do you go about reading it? Do you just flip to a random page and start reading? What's your process?**

1. *The number of books completed is a vanity metric. As you know more, you leave more books unfinished. Focus on new concepts with predictive power.*
2. *If they wrote it to make money, don't read it*

**What practices do you follow to internalize/organize information from reading books?**

1. Teaching forces learning.
2. *It's not about "educated" vs. "uneducated." It's about "likes to read" and "doesn't like to read."*

**What can I do for the next sixty days to become a clearer, more independent thinker?**

1. Read the greats in math, science, and philosophy. Ignore your contemporaries and news. Avoid tribal identification. Put truth above social approval.
2. *Study logic and math, because once you've mastered them, you won't fear any book.*
3. *Because most people are intimidated by math and can't independently critique it, they overvalue opinions backed with math/pseudoscience.*
4. When it comes to reading, make sure your foundation is very, very high quality
5. The best way to have a high-quality foundation but the trick is to stick to science and to stick to the basics.
6. Mathematics is a solid foundation. Similarly, the hard sciences are a solid foundation. Microeconomics is a solid foundation. The moment you start wandering outside of these solid foundations you're in trouble because now you don't know what's true and what's false. Another way to do this is to read originals and read classics. If you're interested in evolution, read Charles Darwin. If you want to learn macroeconomics, first read Adam Smith, read von Mises, or read Hayek. Start with the original philosophers of the economy.

7. If you start with the originals as your foundations, then you have enough of a worldview and understanding that you won't fear any book. Then you can just learn. If you're a perpetual learning machine, you will never be out of options for how to make money. You can always see what's coming up in society, what the value is, where the demand is, and you can learn to come up to speed.
8. *To think clearly, understand the basics. If you're memorizing advanced concepts without being able to re-derive them as needed, you're lost.*
9. One is our attention span has gone through the floor because we're hit with so much information all the time. We want to skip, summarize, and cut to the chase.
10. *Twitter has made me a worse reader but a much better writer.*
11. When solving problems: the older the problem, the older the solution.
12. If you're trying to learn how to drive a car or fly a plane, you should read something written in the modern age because this problem was created in the modern age and the solution is great in the modern age.
13. If you're talking about an old problem like how to keep your body healthy, how to stay calm and peaceful, what kinds of value systems are good, how you raise a family, and those kinds of things, the older solutions are probably better.
14. Any book that survived for two thousand years has been filtered through many people. The general principles are more likely to be correct. I wanted to get back into reading these sorts of books.
15. *You know that song you can't get out of your head? All thoughts work that way. Careful what you read.*
16. *A calm mind, a fit body, and a house full of love. These things cannot be bought. They must be earned.*

## Part II: Happiness

*The three big ones in life are wealth, health, and happiness. We pursue them in that order, but their importance is reverse*

**Learning Happiness:** *Don't take yourself so seriously. You're just a monkey with a plan.*

### **Chapter #1: Happiness is Learned**

1. *Maybe happiness is not something you inherit or even choose, but a highly personal skill that can be learned, like fitness or nutrition.*
2. Happiness is there when you remove the sense of something missing in your life.
3. We are highly judgmental survival-and-replication machines. We constantly walk around thinking, "I need this," or "I need that," trapped in the web of desires. Happiness is the state when nothing is missing. When nothing is missing, your mind shuts down and stops running into the past or future to regret something or to plan something.

4. In that absence, for a moment, you have internal silence. When you have internal silence, then you are content, and you are happy.
5. Happiness is absence of desire for external things. The fewer desires I can have, the more I can accept the current state of things, the less my mind is moving, because the mind really exists in motion toward the future or the past. The more present I am, the happier and more content I will be.
6. Happiness to me not thinking too much about the future or the past, really embracing the present moment and the reality of what is, and the way it is.
7. If you ever want to have peace in your life, you have to move beyond good and evil.
8. *There are no external forces affecting your emotions—as much as it may feel that way*
9. *Happiness is what's there when you remove the sense that something is missing in your life.*
10. What it means is every second you have on this planet is very precious, and it's your responsibility to make sure you're happy and interpreting everything in the best possible way.
11. *We think of ourselves as fixed and the world as malleable, but it's really we who are malleable and the world is largely fixed*

#### **Can practicing meditation help you accept reality?**

1. Real happiness only comes as a side-effect of peace. Most of it is going to come from acceptance, not from changing your external environment.
2. *A rational person can find peace by cultivating indifference to things outside of their control*
3. I have lowered my identity. I have lowered the chattering of my mind. I don't care about things that don't really matter. I don't get involved in politics. I don't hang around unhappy people. I really value my time on this earth. I read philosophy. I meditate. I hang around with happy people. And it works. You can very slowly but steadily and methodically improve your happiness baseline, just like you can improve your fitness.

#### Chapter #2: Happiness is A Choice

1. *Happiness, love, and passion...aren't things you find—they're choices you make*
2. Happiness is a choice you make and a skill you develop.
3. Memory and identity are burdens from the past preventing us from living freely in the present.

#### Chapter #3: Happiness Requires Presence

1. You can literally destroy your happiness if you spend all of your time living in delusions of the future.
2. *We crave experiences that will make us be present, but the cravings themselves take us from the present moment.*
3. A lot of our unhappiness comes from comparing things from the past to the present.
4. *Anticipation for our vices pulls us into the future. Eliminating vices makes it easier to be present.*

5. "Enlightenment is the space between your thoughts." Its something you can achieve moment to moment
6. *What if this life is the paradise we were promised, and we're just squandering it?*

#### Chapter #4: Happiness Requires Peace

1. For me, happiness is more about peace than it is about joy. I don't think peace and purpose go together.
2. How I combat anxiety: I don't try and fight it, I just notice I'm anxious because of all these thoughts. I try to figure out, "Would I rather be having this thought right now, or would I rather have my peace?" Because as long as I have my thoughts, I can't have my peace.
3. *A happy person isn't someone who's happy all the time. It's someone who effortlessly interprets events in such a way that they don't lose their innate peace.*
4. *Desire is a contract that you make with yourself, to be unhappy until you get what you want*

#### Chapter #5: Every Desire Is A Chosen Happiness

1. I think the most common mistake for humanity is believing you're going to be made happy because of some external circumstance.
2. The thing is, I'm addicted to the desiring. I'm addicted to the idea of this external thing bringing me some kind of happiness and joy, and this is completely delusional.
3. The idea you're going to change something in the outside world, and that is going to bring you the peace, everlasting joy, and happiness you deserve, is a fundamental delusion we all suffer from, including me.
4. *The fundamental delusion: There is something out there that will make me happy and fulfilled forever.*
5. *Desire is a contract you make with yourself to be unhappy until you get what you want.*
6. It's way more important to perfect your desires than to try to do something you don't 100 percent desire.
7. By the time people realize they have enough money, they've lost their time and their health.

#### Chapter #6: Success Does Not Earn Happiness

*Happiness is being satisfied with what you have. Success comes from dissatisfaction. Choose.*

**Confucius says you have two lives, and the second one begins when you realize you only have one.**

**When and how did your second life begin?**

1. Happiness is internal. That conclusion set me on a path of working more on my internal self and realizing all real success is internal and has very little to do with external circumstances.
2. One has to do the external thing anyway. We're biologically hard-wired. It's glib to say, "You can just turn it off." Your own life experience will bring you back to the internal path.

3. *The problem with getting good at a game, especially one with big rewards, is you continue playing it long after you should have outgrown it. Survival and replication drive put us on the work treadmill. Hedonic adaptation keeps us there. The trick is knowing when to jump off and play instead.*

#### **Who do you think of as successful?**

1. Most people think of someone as successful when they win a game, whatever game they play themselves.
2. He was part of the driving force creating something that changed lives for all of humanity.
3. Satoshi Nakamoto is successful in that he created Bitcoin, which is this incredible technological creation that will have repercussions for decades to come. Of course, Elon Musk, because he changed everyone's viewpoint on what is possible with modern technology and entrepreneurship. I consider those creators and commercializers successful.
4. To me, the real winners are the ones who step out of the game entirely, who don't even play the game, who rise above it. Those are the people who have such internal mental and self-control and self-awareness, they need nothing from anybody else.
5. I would say the legendary Buddha or Krishnamurti, whose stuff I like reading, they are successful in the sense that they step out of the game entirely. Winning or losing does not matter to them.
6. "All of man's troubles arise because he cannot sit in a room quietly by himself." If you could just sit for thirty minutes and be happy, you are successful. That is a very powerful place to be, but very few of us get there.
7. The irony is the way most of us try to find peace is through war. When you start a business, in a way, you're going to war. When you struggle with your roommates as to who should clean the dishes, you're going to war. You're struggling so you can have some sense of security and peace later.
8. In reality, peace is not a guarantee. It's always flowing. It's always changing. You want to learn the core skill set of flowing with life and accepting it in most cases.
9. *You can get almost anything you want out of life, as long as it's one thing and you want it far more than anything else.*
10. Peace is happiness at rest, and happiness is peace in motion. You can convert peace into happiness anytime you want. But peace is what you want most of the time. If you're a peaceful person, anything you do will be a happy activity.
11. The way we think you get peace is by resolving all your external problems. But there are unlimited external problems. The only way to actually get peace on the inside is by giving up this idea of problems.

#### Chapter #7: Envy is the Enemy Of Happiness



1. Whenever the word “should” creeps up in your mind, it’s guilt or social programming. Doing something because you “should” basically means you don’t actually want to do it. It’s just making you miserable, so I’m trying to eliminate as many “shoulds” from my life as possible.
2. *The enemy of peace of mind is expectations drilled into you by society and other people.*
3. Training yourself to be happy is completely internal. There is no external progress, no external validation. You’re competing against yourself—it is a single-player game.
4. We’re like bees or ants. We are such social creatures, we’re externally programmed and driven. We don’t know how to play and win these single player games anymore. We compete purely in multiplayer games.
5. The reality is life is a single-player game. You’re born alone. You’re going to die alone. All of your interpretations are alone. All your memories are alone. You’re gone in three generations, and nobody cares. Before you showed up, nobody cared. It’s all single player.
6. *Perhaps one reason why yoga and meditation are hard to sustain is they have no extrinsic value. Purely single-player games.*

**Buffett has a great example when he asks if you want to be the world’s best lover and known as the worst, or the world’s worst lover and known as the best? [paraphrased] in reference to an inner or external scorecard.**

1. Jealousy was a very hard emotion for me to overcome.
2. Do you want to actually be that person with all of their reactions, their desires, their family, their happiness level, their outlook on life, their self-image? If you’re not willing to do a wholesale, 24/7, 100 percent swap with who that person is, then there is no point in being jealous.
3. Once I came to that realization, jealousy faded away because I don’t want to be anybody else. I’m perfectly happy being me. By the way, even that is under my control. To be happy being me. It’s just there are no social rewards for it

#### Chapter #8: Happiness is Built By Habits

1. Peace and happiness are skills.
2. And a lot of it is conditioning from your environment, but you can un-condition and recondition yourself. You can increase your happiness over time, and it starts with believing you can do it.
3. It’s a skill. Just like nutrition is a skill, dieting is a skill, working out is a skill, making money is a skill, meeting girls and guys is a skill, having good relationships is a skill, even love is a skill. It starts with realizing they’re skills you can learn. When you put your intention and focus on it, the world can become a better place
4. *When working, surround yourself with people more successful than you. When playing, surround yourself with people happier than you.*

**What type of skill is happiness?**

1. You just see what works. You can try sitting meditation. Did that work for you? Was it Tantra meditation or was it Vipassana meditation?
2. What if I go car racing? What about cooking? Does that make me Zen? You literally have to try all of these things until you find something that works for you.
3. When it comes to medicines for the mind, the placebo effect is 100 percent effective. When it comes to your mind, you want to be positively inclined, not incredulous in belief. If it is fully internal, you should have a positive mindset.

#### **How does someone build the skill of happiness?**

1. You can build good habits. Not drinking alcohol will keep your mood more stable. Not eating sugar will keep your mood more stable. Not going on Facebook, Snapchat, or Twitter will keep your mood more stable. Playing video games will make you happier in the short run—and I used to be an avid gamer—but in the long run, it could ruin your happiness. You're being fed dopamine and having dopamine withdrawn from you in these little uncontrollable ways. Caffeine is another one where you trade long term for the short term.
2. Essentially, you have to go through your life replacing your thoughtless bad habits with good ones, making a commitment to be a happier person. At the end of the day, you are a combination of your habits and the people who you spend the most time with.
3. The people who are the most happy and optimistic choose the right five chimps.
4. The first rule of handling conflict is: Don't hang around people who constantly engage in conflict. I'm not interested in anything unsustainable or even hard to sustain, including difficult relationships.
5. *If you can't see yourself working with someone for life, don't work with them for a day.*
6. If you're present, you'll realize how many gifts and how much abundance there is around us at all times. That's all you really need to do.
7. The most important trick to being happy is to realize happiness is a skill you develop and a choice you make. You choose to be happy, and then you work at it.
8. You decide it's important to you. You prioritize it above everything else. You read everything on the topic.

#### **Happiness Habits**

1. The obvious one is meditation—insight meditation. Working toward a specific purpose on it, which is to try and understand how my mind works.
2. If I catch myself judging somebody, I can stop myself and say, "What's the positive interpretation of this?" I used to get annoyed about things. Now I always look for the positive side of it.
3. I try to get more sunlight on my skin. I look up and smile.
4. Every time you catch yourself desiring something, say, "Is it so important to me I'll be unhappy unless this goes my way?" You're going to find with the vast majority of things it's just not true.

5. The more you judge, the more you separate yourself. You'll feel good for an instant, because you feel good about yourself, thinking you're better than someone. Later, you're going to feel lonely. Then, you see negativity everywhere. The world just reflects your own feelings back at you.
6. Tell your friends you're a happy person. Then, you'll be forced to conform to it. You'll have a consistency bias. You have to live up to it. Your friends will expect you to be a happy person.
7. Recover time and happiness by minimizing your use of these three smartphone apps: phone, calendar, and alarm clock.
8. Use meditation, music, and exercise to reset your mood. Then choose a new path to commit emotional energy for rest of day.
9. Hedonic adaptation is more powerful for man-made things (cars, houses, clothes, money) than for natural things (food, sex, exercise).
10. No exceptions—all screen activities linked to less happiness, all non-screen activities linked to more happiness.
11. A personal metric: how much of the day is spent doing things out of obligation rather than out of interest?
12. It's the news' job to make you anxious and angry. But its underlying scientific, economic, education, and conflict trends are positive. Stay optimistic.
13. Politics, academia, and social status are all zero-sum games. Positive-sum games create positive people.
14. Increase serotonin in the brain without drugs: Sunlight, exercise, positive thinking, and tryptophan.

### **Changing Habits**

1. Pick one thing. Cultivate a desire. Visualize it
2. Plan a sustainable path.
3. Identify needs, triggers, and substitutes.
4. Track meticulously.
5. Self-discipline is a bridge to a new self-image.
6. Bake in the new self-image. It's who you are—now.
7. *First, you know it. Then, you understand it. Then, you can explain it. Then, you can feel it. Finally, you are it*

### **Chapter #9: Find Happiness in Acceptance**

1. In any situation in life, you always have three choices: you can change it, you can accept it, or you can leave it.
2. If you want to change it, then it is a desire. It will cause you suffering until you successfully change it. So don't pick too many of those. Pick one big desire in your life at any given time to give yourself purpose and motivation.

### **Why not two ?**

1. You'll be distracted. Even one is hard enough. Being peaceful comes from having your mind clear of thoughts. And a lot of clarity comes from being in the present moment. It's very hard to be in the present moment if you're thinking, "I need to do this. I want that. This has got to change."
2. What is not a good option is to sit around wishing you would change it but not changing it, wishing you could leave it but not leaving it and not accepting it. That struggle or aversion is responsible for most of our misery. The phrase I probably use the most to myself in my head is just one word: "accept."

### **What does acceptance look like to you?**

1. It's to be okay whatever the outcome is. It's to be balanced and centered. It's to step back and to see the grander scheme of things.
2. We don't always get what we want, but sometimes what is happening is for the best. The sooner you can accept it as a reality, the sooner you can adapt to it.
3. Achieving acceptance is very difficult.
4. One hack is stepping back and looking at previous bits of suffering I've had in my life. I write them down. "Last time you broke up with somebody, last time you had a business failure, last time you had a health issue, what happened?" I can trace the growth and improvement that came from it years later.
5. Another hack I use for minor annoyances. When they happen, a part of me will instantly react negatively. But I've learned to mentally ask myself, "What is the positive of this situation?"
6. "Well, the Universe is going to teach me something now. Now I get to listen and learn."
7. I've managed to go from taking a couple of seconds to think of a response, to now my brain doing it almost instantaneously. That's a habit you can train yourself to do.

### **How do you learn to accept things you can't change?**

1. Fundamentally, it boils down to one big hack: embracing death. Death is the most important thing that is ever going to happen to you. When you look at your death and you acknowledge it, rather than running away from it, it'll bring great meaning to your life. We spend so much of our life trying to avoid death. So much of what we struggle for can be classified as a quest for immortality.
2. If you're religious and believe there is an afterlife, then you'll be taken care of. If you're not religious, maybe you'll have kids. If you're an artist, a painter, or a businessman, you want to leave a legacy behind.
3. There is no legacy. There's nothing to leave. We're all going to be gone. Our children will be gone. Our works will be dust. Our civilizations will be dust. Our planet will be dust. Our solar system will be dust. In the grand scheme of things, the Universe has been around for ten billion years. It'll be around for another ten billion years.

4. Your life is a firefly blink in a night. You're here for such a brief period of time. If you fully acknowledge the futility of what you're doing, then I think it can bring great happiness and peace because you realize this is a game. But it's a fun game. All that matters is you experience your reality as you go through life. Why not interpret it in the most positive possible way?
5. Any moment where you're not having a great time, when you're not really happy, you're not doing anyone any favors. It's not like your unhappiness makes them better off somehow. All you're doing is wasting this incredibly small and precious time you have on this Earth. Keeping death on the forefront and not denying it is very important.
6. Whenever I get caught up in my ego battles, I just think of entire civilizations that have come and gone.
7. You're going to die one day, and none of this is going to matter. So enjoy yourself. Do something positive. Project some love. Make someone happy. Laugh a little bit. Appreciate the moment. And do your work
8. *Easy Choices Makes Hard Life. Hard Choices Makes Easy Life.*

### **Saving Yourself**

*Doctors won't make you healthy. Nutritionists won't make you slim. Teachers won't make you smart. Gurus won't make you calm. Mentors won't make you rich. Trainers won't make you fit. Ultimately, you have to take responsibility. Save yourself.*

### **Chapter #1: Choosing To Be Yourself**

1. All you should do is what you want to do. If you stop trying to figure out how to do things the way other people want you to do them, you get to listen to the little voice inside your head that wants to do things a certain way. Then, you get to be you.
2. *I never met my greatest mentor. I wanted so much to be like him. But his message was the opposite: Be yourself, with passionate intensity.*
3. No one in the world is going to beat you at being you. You're never going to be as good at being me as I am. I'm never going to be as good at being you as you are. Certainly, listen and absorb, but don't try to emulate. It's a fool's errand. Instead, each person is uniquely qualified at something. They have some specific knowledge, capability, and desire nobody else in the world does, purely from the combinatorics of human DNA and development.
4. *The combinatorics of human DNA and experience are staggering. You will never meet any two humans who are substitutable for each other.*
5. Your goal in life is to find the people, business, project, or art that needs you the most. There is something out there just for you. What you don't want to do is build checklists and decision frameworks built on what other people are doing.
6. *To make an original contribution, you have to be irrationally obsessed with something.*

## Chapter #2: Choosing To Take Care Of Yourself

1. My number one priority in life, above my happiness, above my family, above my work, is my own health. It starts with my physical health. Second, it's my mental health. Third, it's my spiritual health. Then, it's my family's health. Then, it's my family's wellbeing. After that, I can go out and do whatever I need to do with the rest of the world.
2. *Nothing like a health problem to turn up the contrast dial for the rest of life.*

### **What about the modern world steers us away from the way humans are meant to live?**

1. In terms of exercise, we're probably meant to play instead of running on a treadmill.
2. In modern society, almost all of our inputs and communication are visual. We're not meant to walk in shoes. A lot of back and foot problems come from shoes. We're not meant to have clothes keep us warm all of the time. We're meant to have some cold exposure. It kickstarts your immune system.
3. We're not evolved to live in a perfectly sterile and clean environment. It leads to allergies and an untrained immune system. This is known as the hygiene hypothesis. We're evolved to live in much smaller tribes and to have more family around us.
4. The constant mood swings of getting a "like" then an angry comment makes us into anxious creatures. We evolved for scarcity but live in abundance. There's a constant struggle to say no when your genes always want to say yes. Yes to sugar. Yes to staying in this relationship. Yes to alcohol. Yes to drugs. Yes, yes, yes. Our bodies don't know how to say no.
5. *When everyone is sick, we no longer consider it a disease.*

### **Diet**

*Outside of math, physics, and chemistry, there isn't much "settled science." We're still arguing over what the optimal diet is.*

### **Do you have an opinion on the ketogenic diet?**

1. I think the interplay between sugar and fat is really interesting. Fat is what makes you satiated. Fatty foods make you feel full.
2. Sugar makes you hungry. Sugar signals to your body, "There's this incredible food resource in the environment we're not evolved for," so you rush out to get sugar. The problem is the sugar effect dominates the fat effect. If you eat a fatty meal and you throw some sugar in, the sugar is going to deliver hunger and fat is going to deliver the calories and you're just going to binge. That's why all desserts are large combinations of fat and carbs together.
3. In nature, it's very rare to find carbs and fat together. In nature, I find carbs and fat together in coconuts, in mangoes, maybe in bananas, but it's basically tropical fruits. The combination of sugar and fat together is really deadly. You've got to watch out for that in your diet.
4. I'm not an expert, and the problem is diet and nutrition are like politics: everybody thinks they're an expert. Their identity is wrapped up in it because what they've been eating or what they think they should be eating is obviously the correct answer. Everybody has a little religion—it's just a

really difficult topic to talk about. I will just say in general, any sensible diet avoids the combination of sugar and fat together.

5. *Dietary fat drives satiety. Dietary sugar drives hunger. The sugar effect dominates. Control your appetite accordingly.*
6. Most fit and healthy people focus much more on what they eat than how much. Quality control is easier than (and leads to) quantity control.
7. Fasting (from a low-carb/paleo base) is easier than portion control. Once the body detects food, it overrides the brain.
8. When it comes to medicine and nutrition, subtract before you add.
9. *World's simplest diet: The more processed the food, the less one should consume.*

### **Exercise**

*The harder the workout, the easier the day*

#### **What habit would you say most positively impacts your life?**

1. The daily morning workout. That has been a complete game-changer. It's made me feel healthier, younger.
2. *One month of consistent yoga and I feel 10 years younger. To stay flexible is to stay young.*
3. *Walking meetings: • Brain works better • Exercise & sunlight • Shorter, less pleasantries • More dialogue, less monologue • No slides • End easily by walking back*
4. Like everything in life, if you are willing to make the short-term sacrifice, you'll have the long-term benefit.
5. If you are making the hard choices right now in what to eat, you're not eating all the junk food you want, and making the hard choice to work out. So, your life long-term will be easy. You won't be sick. You won't be unhealthy. The same is true of values. The same is true of saving up for a rainy day. The same is true of how you approach your relationships.

**If you make the easy choices right now, your overall life will be a lot harder.**

*Meditation is Intermittent Fasting For The Mind*

#### **Chapter #3: Meditation+Mental Strength**

*An emotion is our evolved biology predicting the future impact of a current event. In modern settings, it's usually exaggerated or wrong.*

#### **Why is meditation so powerful?**

1. Your breath is one of the few places where your autonomic nervous system meets your voluntary nervous system. It's involuntary, but you can also control it.
2. I think a lot of meditation practices put an emphasis on the breath because it is a gateway into your autonomic nervous system. There are many, many cases in the medical and spiritual literature of people controlling their bodies at levels that should be autonomous.
3. Your mind is such a powerful thing.

4. You can do it just by breathing. Relaxed breathing tells your body you're safe. Then, your forebrain doesn't need as many resources as it normally does. Now, the extra energy can be sent to your hindbrain, and it can reroute those resources to the rest of your body.
5. Most of our suffering comes from avoidance. Most of the suffering from a cold shower is the tip-toeing your way in. Once you're in, you're in. It's not suffering. It's just cold. Your body saying it's cold is different than your mind saying it's cold. Acknowledge your body saying it's cold. Look at it. Deal with it. Accept it, but don't mentally suffer over it. Taking a cold shower for two minutes isn't going to kill you.
6. Having a cold shower helps you re-learn that lesson every morning.
7. *Meditation is intermittent fasting for the mind. Too much sugar leads to a heavy body, and too many distractions lead to a heavy mind. Time spent undistracted and alone, in self-examination, journaling, meditation, resolves the unresolved and takes us from mentally fat to fit.*

**Do you have a current meditation practice?**

1. The one I found works best for me is called Choiceless Awareness, or Nonjudgmental Awareness.
2. You don't make any decisions. You don't judge anything. You just accept everything.
3. You could also do transcendental meditation, which is where you're using repetitive chanting to create a white noise in your head to bury your thoughts.
4. As you watch your thoughts, you realize how many of them are fear-based. The moment you recognize a fear, without even trying it goes away. After a while, your mind quiets.
5. *Life-hack: When in bed, meditate. Either you will have a deep meditation or fall asleep. Victory either way.*
6. Another method I've learned is to just sit there and you close your eyes for at least one hour a day. You surrender to whatever happens—don't make any effort whatsoever. You make no effort for something, and you make no effort against anything. If there are thoughts running through your mind, you let the thoughts run.
7. What happens in meditation is you're sitting there and not resisting your mind. These things will start bubbling up. It's like a giant inbox of unanswered emails, going back to your childhood.
8. You will be forced to resolve them. Resolving them doesn't take any work—you just observe them.
9. Over time, you will resolve a lot of these deep-seated unresolved things you have in your mind. Once they're resolved, there will come a day when you sit down to meditate, and you'll hit a mental "inbox zero." When you open your mental "email" and there are none, that is a pretty amazing feeling.
10. It's a state of joy and bliss and peace. Once you have it, you don't want to give it up. If you can get a free hour of bliss every morning just by sitting and closing your eyes, that is worth its weight in gold. It will change your life.



11. Meditation isn't hard. All you have to do is sit there and do nothing. Just sit down. Close your eyes and say, "I'm just going to give myself a break for an hour. This is my hour off from life. This is the hour I'm not going to do anything."
12. "If thoughts come, thoughts come. I'm not going to fight them. I'm not going to embrace them. I'm not going to think harder about them. I'm not going to reject them. I'm just going to sit here for an hour with my eyes closed, and I'm going to do nothing." How hard is that? Why can you not do anything for an hour? What's so hard about giving yourself an hour-long break?

**Was there a moment you realized you could control how you interpreted things? I think one problem people have is not recognizing they can control how they interpret and respond to a situation.**

1. All of society does this to some extent. People chasing thrills in action sports or flow states or orgasms—any of these states people strive for are people trying to get out of their own heads. They're trying to get away from the voice in their heads—the overdeveloped sense of self.
2. At the very least, I do not want my sense of self to continue to develop and strengthen as I get older. I want it to be weaker and more muted so I can be more in present everyday reality, accept nature and the world for what it is, and appreciate it very much as a child would.
3. The first thing to realize is you can observe your mental state. Meditation doesn't mean you're suddenly going to gain the superpower to control your internal state. The advantage of meditation is recognizing just how out of control your mind is. It is like a monkey flinging feces, running around the room, making trouble, shouting, and breaking things. It's completely uncontrollable. It's an out-of-control madperson.
4. *Insight meditation lets you run your brain in debug mode until you realize you're just a subroutine in a larger program*
5. The ability to singularly focus is related to the ability to lose yourself and be present, happy, and (ironically) more effective.

**It's almost like you're taking yourself out of a certain frame and you're watching things from a different perspective even though you're in your own mind.**

1. Buddhists talk about awareness versus the ego. They're really talking about how you can think of your brain, your consciousness, as a multilayered mechanism. There's a core-base, kernel-level OS running. Then, there are applications running on top.
2. Another thing: spirituality, religion, Buddhism, or anything you follow will teach you over time you are more than just your mind. You are more than just your habits. You are more than just your preferences. You're a level of awareness. You're a body. Modern humans, we don't live enough in our bodies. We don't live enough in our awareness. We live too much in this internal monologue in our heads. All of which is just programmed into you by society and by the environment when you were younger.
3. You are basically a bunch of DNA that reacted to environmental effects when you were younger. You recorded the good and bad experiences, and you use them to prejudge everything thrown

against you. Then you're using those experiences, constantly trying and predict and change the future.

4. The mind itself is a muscle—it can be trained and conditioned. It has been haphazardly conditioned by society to be out of our control. If you look at your mind with awareness and intent (a 24/7 job you're working at every moment) I think you can unpack your own mind, your emotions, thoughts, and reactions. Then you can start reconfiguring. You can start rewriting this program to what you want.
5. *Meditation is turning off society and listening to yourself. It only "works" when done for its own sake. Hiking is walking meditation. Journaling is writing meditation. Praying is gratitude meditation. Showering is accidental meditation. Sitting quietly is direct meditation.*

#### Chapter #4: Choosing To Build Yourself

*The greatest superpower is the ability to change yourself.*

##### **What's the biggest mistake you've made in your life and how did you recover?**

1. Life is going to play out the way it's going to play out. There will be some good and some bad. Most of it is actually just up to your interpretation. You're born, you have a set of sensory experiences, and then you die. How you choose to interpret those experiences is up to you, and different people interpret them in different ways.
2. I would have realized the anger and emotions are a huge, completely unnecessary consequence.
3. When we're older, we're a collection of thousands of habits constantly running subconsciously. We have a little bit of extra brainpower in our neocortex for solving new problems. You become your habits.
4. *To have peace of mind, you have to have peace of body first*
5. We're just saying to ourselves, "I'm going to buy myself some more time." The reality is when our emotions want us to do something, we just do it. If you want to go approach a pretty girl, if you want to have a drink, if you really desire something, you just go do it.
6. When you say, "I'm going to do this," and "I'm going to be that," you're really putting it off. You're giving yourself an out. At least if you're self aware, you can think, "I say I want to do this, but I don't really because if I really wanted to do it, I would just do it." Commit externally to enough people
7. When you really want to change, you just change. But most of us don't really want to change—we don't want to go through the pain just yet. At least recognize it, be aware of it, and give yourself a smaller change you can actually carry out
8. *Impatience with actions, patience with results*
9. You're not getting any younger. Your life is slipping away. You don't want to spend it waiting in line. You don't want to spend it traveling back and forth. You don't want to spend it doing things you know ultimately aren't part of your mission.

10. When you do them, you want to do them as quickly as you can while doing them well with your full attention. But then, you just have to be patient with the results because you're dealing with complex systems and many people.
11. It takes a long time for markets to adopt products. It takes time for people to get comfortable working with each other. It takes time for great products to emerge as you polish away, polish away, polish away.

#### Chapter #5: Choosing To Grow Yourself

1. I don't believe in specific goals. "Set up systems, not goals." Use your judgment to figure out what kinds of environments you can thrive in, and then create an environment around you so you're statistically likely to succeed.
2. *The current environment programs the brain, but the clever brain can choose its upcoming environment.*
3. I'm not going to be the most successful person on the planet, nor do I want to be. I just want to be the most successful version of myself while working the least hard possible.
4. *If there's something you want to do later, do it now. There is no "later."*

#### **How do you personally learn about new subjects?**

1. Science is, to me, the study of truth. It is the only true discipline because it makes falsifiable predictions. It actually changes the world. Applied science becomes technology, and technology is what separates us from the animals and allows us to have things like cell phones, houses, cars, heat, and electricity.
2. Science, to me, is the study of truth and mathematics is the language of science and nature.
3. I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual. To me, that is the most devotional thing that I could do, to study the laws of the Universe.

#### **Do you agree with the idea "If you read what everybody else is reading, you're going to think what everyone else is thinking"?**

1. You're fitting in to get along with the herd. That's not where the returns are in life. The returns in life are being out of the herd.
2. Social approval is inside the herd. If you want social approval, definitely go read what the herd is reading. It takes a level of contrarianism to say, "Nope. I'm just going to do my own thing. Regardless of the social outcome, I will learn anything I think is interesting."

#### **Do you think there's some loss aversion there? Because once you diverge, you're not sure if you're diverging toward a positive outcome or a negative outcome?**

1. I think that's why the smartest and the most successful people I know started out as losers. If you view yourself as a loser, as someone who was cast out by society and has no role in normal society, then you will do your own thing and you're much more likely to find a winning path. It helps to start out by saying, "I'm never going to be popular. I'm never going to be accepted. I'm already a loser. I'm not going to get what all the other kids have. I've just got to be happy being me."

2. For self-improvement without self-discipline, update your self-image.
3. Everyone's motivated at something.
4. *Grind and sweat, toil and bleed, face the abyss. It's all part of becoming an overnight success.*

**If you had to pass down to your kids one or two principles, what would they be?**

1. Number one: read. Read everything you can.
2. Related to the skill of reading are the skills of mathematics and persuasion. Both skills help you to navigate through the real world. Having the skill of persuasion is important because if you can influence your fellow human beings, you can get a lot done. I think persuasion is an actual skill. So you can learn it, and it's not that hard to do so.
3. Mathematics helps with all the complex and difficult things in life. If you want to make money, if you want to do science, if you want to understand game theory or politics or economics or investments or computers, all of these things have mathematics at the core. It's a foundational language of nature.
4. Nature speaks in mathematics. Mathematics is us reverse engineering the language of nature, and we have only scratched the surface. The good news is you don't have to know a lot of math. You just have to know basic statistics, arithmetic, etc. You should know statistics and probability forwards and backwards and inside out.

#### Chapter #6: Choosing To Free Yourself

*The hardest thing is not doing what you want—it's knowing what you want.*

Be aware there are no "adults." Everyone makes it up as they go along. You have to find your own path, picking, choosing, and discarding as you see fit. Figure it out yourself, and do it.

**How have your values changed?**

*Advice to my younger self: "Be exactly who you are." Holding back means staying in bad relationships and bad jobs for years instead of minutes.*

#### **Freedom From Expectations**

1. *Courage isn't charging into a machine gun nest. Courage is not caring what other people think.*
2. Value your time. It is all you have. It's more important than your money. It's more important than your friends. It is more important than anything. Your time is all you have. Do not waste your time
3. This doesn't mean you can't relax. As long as you're doing what you want, it's not a waste of your time. But if you're not spending your time doing what you want, and you're not earning, and you're not learning—what the heck are you doing?
4. Don't spend your time making other people happy. Other people being happy is their problem. It's not your problem. If you are happy, it makes other people happy. If you're happy, other people will ask you how you became happy and they might learn from it, but you are not responsible for making other people happy.

### **Freedom From Anger**

1. Anger is a way to signal as strongly as you can to the other party you're capable of violence. Anger is a precursor to violence.
2. Observe when you're angry—anger is a loss of control over the situation. Anger is a contract you make with yourself to be in physical and mental and emotional turmoil until reality changes.
3. *Anger is its own punishment. An angry person trying to push your head below water is drowning at the same time.*

### **Freedom From Employment**

1. People who live far below their means enjoy a freedom that people busy upgrading their lifestyles can't fathom.
2. Once you've truly controlled your own fate, for better or for worse, you'll never let anyone else tell you what to do.
3. *A taste of freedom can make you unemployable.*

### **Freedom From Uncontrolled Thinking**

1. A big habit I'm working on is trying to turn off my "monkey mind." When we're children, we're pretty blank slates. We live very much in the moment. We essentially just react to our environment through our instincts. We live in what I would call the "real world." Puberty is the onset of desire—the first time you really, really want something and you start long-range planning. You start thinking a lot, building an identity and an ego to get what you want.
2. To me, the mind should be a servant and a tool, not a master. My monkey mind should not control and drive me 24/7.
3. I want to break the habit of uncontrolled thinking, which is hard.
4. *A busy mind accelerates the passage of subjective time.*
5. There is no endpoint to self-awareness and self-discovery. It's a lifelong process you hopefully keep getting better and better at. There is no one meaningful answer, and no one is going to fully solve it unless you're one of these enlightened characters. Maybe some of us will get there, but I'm not likely to, given how involved I am in the rat race. The best case is I'm a rat who might be able to look up at the clouds once in a while. I think just being aware you're a rat in a race is about as far as most of us are going to get.
6. *The modern struggle: Lone individuals summoning inhuman willpower, fasting, meditating, and exercising... Up against armies of scientists and statisticians weaponizing abundant food, screens, and medicine into junk food, clickbait news, infinite porn, endless games, and addictive drugs.*

### **Philosophy**

*The real truths are heresies. They cannot be spoken. Only discovered, whispered, and perhaps read.*

### **Chapter #1: Meanings Of Life**

## **A really unbounded, big question: what is the meaning and purpose of life?**

I'll give you three answers.

1. Answer 1: It's personal. You have to find your own meaning. Any piece of wisdom anybody else gives you, whether it's Buddha or me, is going to sound like nonsense. Fundamentally, you have to find it for yourself, so the important part is not the answer, it's the question. You just have to sit there and dig with the question. It might take you years or decades. When you find an answer you're happy with, it will be fundamental to your life.
2. Answer 2: There is no meaning to life. There is no purpose to life. Osho said, "It's like writing on water or building houses of sand." The reality is you've been dead for the history of the Universe, 10 billion years or more. You will be dead for the next 70 billion years or so, until the heat death of the Universe.
3. Anything you do will fade. It will disappear, just like the human race will disappear and the planet will disappear. Even the group who colonizes Mars will disappear. No one is going to remember you past a certain number of generations, whether you're an artist, a poet, a conqueror, a pauper, or anyone else. There's no meaning.
4. You have to create your own meaning, which is what it boils down to. You have to decide: "Is this a play I'm just watching?" "Is there a self-actualization dance I'm doing?" "Is there a specific thing I desire just for the heck of it?" These are all meanings you make up.
5. Before you were born, you didn't care about anything or anyone, including your loved ones, including yourself, including humans, including whether we go to Mars or whether we stay on planet Earth, whether there's an AI or not. After death, you just don't care either.
6. Answer 3: The last answer I'll give you is a little more complicated. From what I've read in science. Maybe there is a meaning to life, but it's not a very satisfying purpose
7. In Physics, the arrow of time comes from entropy. The second law of thermodynamics states entropy only goes up, which means disorder in the Universe only goes up, which means concentrated free energy only goes down. If you look at living things (humans, plants, civilizations, what have you) these systems are locally reversing entropy. Humans locally reverse entropy because we have action.
8. In the process, we globally accelerate entropy until the heat death of the Universe. In that death, there's no concentrated energy, and everything is at the same energy level. Therefore, we're all one thing. We're essentially indistinguishable
9. What we do as living systems accelerates getting to that state. The more complex system you create, whether it's through computers, civilization, art, mathematics, or creating a family—you actually accelerate the heat death of the Universe. You're pushing us towards this point where we end up as one thing

### **What are your core values?**

*Before you can lie to another, you must first lie to yourself.*

1. I don't believe in any short-term thinking or dealing. If I'm doing business with somebody and they think in a short-term manner with somebody else, then I don't want to do business with them anymore. All benefits in life come from compound interest, whether in money, relationships, love, health, activities, or habits. I only want to be around people I know I'm going to be around for the rest of my life. I only want to work on things I know have long-term payout.
2. Another one is I only believe in peer relationships. I don't believe in hierarchical relationships. I don't want to be above anybody, and I don't want to be below anybody. If I can't treat someone like a peer and if they can't treat me like peer, I just don't want to interact with them
3. I don't want to be around angry people.
4. I find if people are fighting or quarreling about something, it's because their values don't line up. If their values lined up, the little things wouldn't matter.
5. "To find a worthy mate, be worthy of a worthy mate."
6. That changes you. Your values inherently become a lot less selfish.

### Chapter #3: Rational Buddhism

*The older the question, the older the answers.*

**You've called your philosophy Rational Buddhism. How does it differ from traditional Buddhism?**

**What type of exploration did you go through?**

1. The rational part means I have to reconcile with science and evolution. I have to reject all the pieces I can't verify for myself.
2. What I will not accept is things like, "There's a past life you're paying off the karma for." I haven't seen it. I don't remember any past lives. I don't have any memory. I just have to not believe that.
3. *Everyone starts out innocent. Everyone is corrupted. Wisdom is the discarding of vices and the return to virtue, by way of knowledge.*

**How do you define wisdom?**

Understanding the long-term consequences of your actions.

*If wisdom could be imparted through words alone, we'd all be done here*

### Chapter #4: The Present Is All We Have

1. *"Everything is more beautiful because we're doomed. You will never be lovelier than you are now, and we will never be here again."*
2. *Inspiration is perishable—act on it immediately*

### **BONUS**

*The democratization of technology allows anyone to be a creator, entrepreneur, scientist. The future is brighter*

*It's statistically likely there are more advanced alien civilizations out there. Hopefully, they're good environmentalists and find us cute*