Apps aren’t the center of the world. But neither are people. [Jobs are.]

The reason why smartphones rule the world is because they do more jobs for more people in more places than anything in the history of mankind.

If there is a single phrase that describes the effect of the Internet, it is the elimination of friction.

Influence lives at intersections.

all markets will be demand-driven; the extent to which they already are is a function of how digitized they have become.

It’s telling that software and music share a common heritage: round, shiny pieces of plastic in a shrink-wrapped case.

Our product development process always starts the same way. We don’t start out by saying, “We have to build an X.” We say, “If we were going to build an X, how would it be different? How would it be better?” And it can’t just be different. It has to be different constrained by customers caring. It’s easy to be different if you don’t constrain it that way. But it has to be useful.

It’s easy to think that the Internet Age is well-established, but the truth is we’re only getting started. Remember, it took nearly two decades for the Model T to develop the car ecosystem to the point where new opportunities emerged to offer differentiated vehicles at much higher prices and much greater per-unit profit

It’s the increase in a company’s per share value, however, not growth in sales or earnings or employees, that offers the ultimate barometer of a CEO’s greatness.

CEOs need to do two things well to be successful: run their operations efficiently and deploy the cash generated by those operations.

It turns out that the most extraordinary CEOs of the last fifty years, the truly great ones, shared this mastery of resource allocation.

Capital allocation is a CEO’s most important job.

our outsider CEOs, also shared an interesting set of personal characteristics: They were generally frugal (often legendarily so) and humble, analytical, and understated.

It is impossible to produce superior performance unless you do something different.

They had familiarity with other companies and industries and disciplines, and this ranginess translated into new perspectives, which in turn helped them to develop new approaches that eventually translated into exceptional results.

it’s how you play the hand you’re dealt that ultimately determines your success as an executive.

a single sheet of paper and an intense focus on key assumptions, not a forty-page set of projections.

Buffett believes that exceptional returns come from concentrated portfolios, that excellent investment ideas are rare, and he has repeatedly told students that their investing results would improve if at the beginning of their careers, they were handed a twenty-hole punch card representing the total number of investments they could make in their investing lifetimes.

they believed that what mattered was clear-eyed decision making, and in their cultures they emphasized the seemingly old-fashioned virtues of frugality and patience, independence and (occasional) boldness, rationality and logic.

Beneath the global crazy quilt of rituals and customs, they see recurring patterns in the structure of family, friendship, politics, courtship, morality.

As Darwin left England’s shores, there was no glaring reason to think people would be writing books about him a century and a half later.

No human behavior affects the transmission of genes more obviously than sex. So no parts of human psychology are clearer candidates for evolutionary explanation than the states of mind that lead to sex:

women may be innately attuned not so much to a man’s wealth as to his social status; among hunter-gatherers, status often translates into power—influence over the divvying up of resources, such as meat after a big kill.

“Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast’s pleasures.… It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.”

much of human sexual psychology flows from the scarceness of eggs relative to sperm. This scarcity gives women more power—in individual relationships, and in shaping the moral fabric—than they sometimes realize.

natural selection never promised us a rose garden. It doesn’t “want” us to be happy. It “wants” us to be genetically prolific. Once you think of genes as programming behavioral development, and not just behavior, as molding the young mind to fit its context—then we all start to look like victims (or beneficiaries) of our environment, no less than of our genes.

once hierarchies exist, status is a resource.

from natural selection’s point of view, status assistance is the main purpose of friendship.

Human history is a brief spot in space, and its first lesson is modesty. At any moment a comet may come too close to the earth and set our little globe turning topsy-turvy in a hectic course,

the first biological lesson of history is that life is competition. Competition is not only the life of trade, it is the trade of life—peaceful when food abounds, violent when the mouths outrun the food.

Nature loves difference as the necessary material of selection and evolution; identical twins differ in a hundred ways, and no two peas are alike.

Each instinct generates habits and is accompanied by feelings. Their totality is the nature of man.

Nature and history do not agree with our conceptions of good and bad; they define good as that which survives, and bad as that which goes under; and the universe has no prejudice in favor of Christ as against Genghis Khan.

Since practical ability differs from person to person, the majority of such abilities, in nearly all societies, is gathered in a minority of men. The concentration of wealth is a natural result of this concentration of ability, and regularly recurs in history.

though men cannot be equal, their access to education and opportunity can be made more nearly equal. The rights of man are not rights to office and power, but the rights of entry into every avenue that may nourish and test a man’s fitness for office and power.

In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war. We have acknowledged war as at present the ultimate form of competition and natural selection in the human species.

Today we speak of "the computer" as if it were a single thing that had to be invented only once. But as Wiener's list of features suggests, the modern digital computer is actually a combination of at least half a dozen separate inventions, most of which involved not just another gadget but a shift in the way people thought about computing.

Such rules of thumb are known as heuristics, from the Greek word heuriskein, meaning "to invent" or "to discover."

But it did make him the integrator and synthesizer, the one who was doing as much as or more than any of the others to envision what a fully computerized world might be like, to imagine what interactivity might mean in human terms, to articulate where computers were going and what researchers would have to do to get there. In short, Lick was the one who provided the road map.

Lick had the patience to take the long view. He couldn't get it all done in one year, or two years, or a lifetime. But by creating a community of fellow believers, he guaranteed that his vision would live on after him.

He liked exciting ideas; his eyes always twinkled when he talked about ideas. And he always sounded enthusiastic, like a young kid in a toy store. He was a relatively soft-spoken person, but he got people excited about his ideas because he was excited and seemed to be having fun.

"Don't just invent the future; go live in it."

"In the history of art," says Alan Kay, "the most powerful work in any genre is done not by the adults who invent it, but by the first generation of kids who grow up in it.

Technology isn't destiny, no matter how inexorable its evolution may seem; the way its capabilities are used is as much a matter of cultural choice and historical accident as politics is, or fashion.

the average number of heartbeats in the lifetime of any mammal is roughly the same, even though small ones like mice live for just a few years whereas big ones like whales can live for a hundred years or more.

Energy is primary. It underlies everything that we do and everything that happens around us. This may seem self-evident, but it is surprising.

nonlinear behavior can simply be thought of as meaning that measurable characteristics of a system generally do not simply double when its size is doubled.

The number 4 therefore plays a fundamental and almost magically universal role in all of life.

the growth and mortality curves of companies closely resemble the corresponding growth and mortality curves of organisms.

Growth and the continual need to be adapting to the challenges of new or changing environments, often in the form of “improvement” or increasing efficiency, are major drivers of innovation.

Complex systems often manifest chaotic behavior in which a small change or perturbation in one part of the system produces an exponentially enhanced response in some other part.

Death is an essential feature of life. Indeed, implicitly it is an essential feature of the theory of evolution. A necessary component of the evolutionary process is that individuals eventually die so that their offspring can propagate new combinations of genes that eventually lead to adaptation by natural selection of new traits and new variations leading to the diversity of species. We must all die so that the new can blossom, explore, adapt, and evolve.

fractals are objects that look approximately the same at all scales or at any level of magnification. Fractals are ubiquitous throughout nature, appearing everywhere from lungs and ecosystems to cities, companies, clouds, and rivers.

Quarter-power scaling laws are perhaps as universal and as uniquely biological as the biochemical pathways of metabolism, the structure and function of the genetic code, and the process of natural selection.

Regardless of one’s belief system, there is something supremely grand and reassuring when one perceives even a tiny piece of the mystifyingly chaotic world around us conforming to regularities and principles that transcend its awesome complexity and seeming meaninglessness.

Even if every cause of death were eliminated, all human beings are destined to die before they reach 125 years old,

within species an individual like each of us can decrease its cellular metabolic rate simply by eating less, resulting in less metabolic damage per cell and potentially in an increase in its life span. This strategy is called caloric restriction. It has a long, somewhat controversial, history and has been the focus of many studies across a range of animals. Many of these have shown significant benefits, but others have found little effect and the situation remains a bit murky. Almost all of the investigations show some signs of decreased aging whether or not life span is enhanced.

lowering metabolism decreases damage, slows the aging process, and increases maximum

the theory predicts that if you consistently decrease your food intake by 10 percent (a couple of hundred calories a day) you could live for up to 10 percent longer (up to ten years more).

every generation has underestimated the potential for finding new recipes and ideas. We consistently fail to grasp how many ideas remain to be discovered. Possibilities do not add up. They multiply.”

more energy is delivered by the sun in just one hour than is used by the entire world in a single year. Indeed, the scale of solar energy is so vast that in one year it is about twice as much as will ever be obtained from all of the Earth’s nonrenewable resources of coal, oil, natural gas, and uranium combined.

lifelong learning, intellectual curiosity, sobriety, avoidance of envy and resentment, reliability, learning from the mistakes of others, perseverance, objectivity, willingness to test one's own beliefs,

Independence is the end that wealth serves for Charlie, not the other way around.

"I am a biography nut myself. And I think when you're trying to teach the great concepts that work; it helps to tie them into the lives and personalities of the people who developed them. I think you learn economics better if you make Adam Smith your friend. That sounds funny, making friends among 'the eminent dead, but if you go through life making friends with the eminent dead who had the right ideas, I think it will work better for you in life and work better in education. It's way better than just giving the basic concepts."

"Charlie has a desire to understand exactly what makes things happen. He wants to get to the bottom of everything, whether it's something of serious interest to him or not. Anything that comes to his attention, he wants to know more about it and understand it and figure out what makes it tick."-

"Our experience tends to confirm a long-held notion that being prepared on a few occasions in a lifetime, to act promptly in scale, in doing some simple and logical thing, will often dramatically improve the financial results of that lifetime. A few major opportunities, clearly recognizable as such, will usually come to one who continuously searches and waits, with a curious mind that loves diagnosis involving multiple variables. And then all that is required is a willingness to bet heavily when the odds are extremely favorable, using resources available as a result of prudence and patience in the past."

Just as multiple factors shape almost every system, multiple models from a variety of disciplines, applied with fluency, are needed to understand that system.

Charlie generally focuses first on what to avoid-that is, on what NOT to do—before he considers the affirmative steps he will take in a given situation.

"Understanding both the power of compound interest and the difficulty of getting it is the heart and soul of understanding a lot of things."

Step by step you get ahead, but not necessarily in fast spurts. But you build discipline by preparing for fast spurts,..., Slug it out one inch at a time, day by day.

One of the advantages of a fellow like Buffett, whom I've worked with all these years, is that he automatically thinks in terms of decision trees and the elementary math of permutations and combinations.

Buffett, whom I've worked with all these years, is that he automatically thinks in terms of decision trees and the elementary math of permutations and combinations. Just as you think better if you array knowledge on a bunch of models that are basically answers to

if you always tell people why, they'll understand it better, they'll consider it more important, and they'll be more likely to comply.

Walton invented practically nothing. But he copied everything anybody else ever did that was smart-and he did it with more fanaticism and better employee manipulation. So he just blew right by them all.

what determine the behavior are incentives for the decision maker.

it's kind of fun to sit there and outthink people who are way smarter than you are because you've trained yourself to be more objective and multidisciplinary

it is not enough to think problems through forward. You must also think in reverse, much like the rustic who wanted to know where he was going to die so that he'd never go there.

Keynes said, "It's not bringing in the new ideas that's so hard. It's getting rid of the old ones." And Einstein said it better, attributing his mental success to "curiosity, concentration, perseverance, and self-criticism." By self-criticism, he meant becoming good at destroying your own best-loved and hardest-Won ideas. If you can get really good at destroying your own wrong ideas, that is a great gift.

The way complex adaptive systems work, and the way mental constructs work, problems frequently become easier to solve through "inversion." If you turn problems around into reverse, you often think better.

I feel that I'm not entitled to have an opinion unless I can state the arguments against my position better than the people who are in opposition.

every day something lasts, the chances that it will continue to last increase.

To be great, one must make great work, and making great work is incredibly hard. It must be our primary focus.

the timeless, recurring problems that make us human—those are ambitious problems to tackle.

An essential part of making perennial, lasting work is making sure that you’re pursuing the best of your ideas and that they are ideas that only you can have (otherwise, you’re dealing with a commodity and not a classic).

The higher and more exciting standard for every project should force you to ask questions like this: What sacred cows am I slaying? What dominant institution am I displacing? What groups am I disrupting? What people am I pissing off?

Children expect opportunities to be handed to them; maturity is understanding you have to go out and make them.

You must be able to explicitly say who you are building your thing for.

creators shouldn’t be thinking “Does this make me look good?” When they are pitching or producing they should be focusing on making their audience look good. Even better, forget the “looking” part—just make them good, period.

They did things that created media opportunities for reporters. They did something that broke through the noise, that made a statement, and they did most of the legwork to boot.

Marketing is the art of allocating resources—sending more power to the wheels that are getting traction, sending it away from the ones that are spinning.

The great Stoic Marcus Aurelius once admonished himself to be a “boxer, not a fencer.” A fencer, he said, has to bend down to pick up his weapon. A boxer’s weapon is a part of him—“all he has to do is clench his fist.” If I could give a prospective creative only one piece of advice, it would be this: Build a list. Specifically, an email list.

More great work is the best way to market yourself. Same goes for the entrepreneur—whether her company has just sold or just failed, the best thing she can do for her career? Start the next company.

This was an explicit part of Steve Jobs’s business strategy as well as his personal strategy. As he said, “If you do something and it turns out pretty good, then you should go do something else wonderful, not dwell on it for too long. Just figure out what’s next.”

Behavioral addiction consists of six ingredients: compelling goals that are just beyond reach; irresistible and unpredictable positive feedback; a sense of incremental progress and improvement; tasks that become slowly more difficult over time; unresolved tensions that demand resolution; and strong social connections.

if you want to compel people to act, you whittle down overwhelming goals into smaller goals that are concrete and easier to manage. Humans are driven by a sense of progress, and progress is easier to perceive when the finish line is in sight.

if you want to compel people to act, you whittle down overwhelming goals into smaller goals that are concrete and easier to manage. Humans are driven by a sense of progress, and progress is easier to perceive when the finish line is in sight. Goals have been around for as long as our planet has sustained

Goals have been around for as long as our planet has sustained life.

important fact about positive feedback: that less is often more.

To earn and accumulate as much as possible was a functional [rule] for survival; individuals did not need to worry about earning too much, because they could not earn too much . . . Like overeating, overearning is a modern-era issue stemming from advancements in productivity, and it carries potential costs for humans.

people will pay up to twice as much for the same item when using a credit card rather than cash. Credit cards, like slot machine cards, hide all feedback from a spender, who has to keep track of his own gains and losses instead.

habits consist of three parts: a cue (whatever prompts the behavior); a routine (the behavior itself); and a reward (the payoff that trains our brains to repeat the habit in the future).

Gamification researchers Kevin Werbach and Dan Hunter examined over one hundred examples of gamification, and identified three common elements: points, badges, and leaderboards.

the psychological level, happiness depends on expectations rather than objective conditions. We don’t become satisfied by leading a peaceful and prosperous existence. Rather,

On the psychological level, happiness depends on expectations rather than objective conditions. We don’t become satisfied by leading a peaceful and prosperous existence. Rather, we become satisfied when reality matches our expectations.

Some complex systems, such as the weather, are oblivious to our predictions. The process of human development, in contrast, reacts to them. Indeed, the better our forecasts, the more reactions they engender. Hence paradoxically, as we accumulate more data and increase our computing power, events become wilder and more unexpected. The more we know, the less we can predict. This is the paradox of historical knowledge. Knowledge that does not change behaviour is useless. But knowledge that changes behaviour quickly loses its relevance. The more data we have and the better we understand history, the faster history alters its course, and the faster our knowledge becomes outdated.

An algorithm is a methodical set of steps that can be used to make calculations, resolve problems and reach decisions. An algorithm isn’t a particular calculation, but the method followed when making the calculation.

99 per cent of our decisions – including the most important life choices concerning spouses, careers and habitats – are made by the highly refined algorithms we call sensations, emotions and desires.

Revolutions are usually made by small networks of agitators rather than by the masses. If you want to launch a revolution, don’t ask yourself, ‘How many people support my ideas?’ Instead, ask yourself, ‘How many of my supporters are capable of effective collaboration

How do you know if an entity is real? Very simple – just ask yourself, ‘Can it suffer?’ When people burn down the temple of Zeus, Zeus doesn’t suffer. When the euro loses its value, the euro doesn’t suffer. When a bank goes bankrupt, the bank doesn’t suffer. When a country suffers a defeat in war, the country doesn’t really suffer. It’s just a metaphor. In contrast, when a soldier is wounded in battle, he really does suffer. When a famished peasant has nothing to eat, she suffers. When a cow is separated from her newborn calf, she suffers. This is reality.

Corporations, money and nations exist only in our imagination. We invented them to serve us; why do we find ourselves sacrificing our lives in their service?

Whoever determines the meaning of our actions – whether they are good or evil, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly – also gains the authority to tell us what to think and how to behave.

This may sound impossible, but before dismissing the idea, remember that most of our planet is already legally owned by non-human intersubjective entities, namely nations and corporations. Indeed, 5,000 years ago much of Sumer was owned by imaginary gods such as Enki and Inanna. If gods can possess land and employ people, why not algorithms?

Growth was about engineer[ing] systems of scale and enabling our users to grow the product for us.”

“If you’re pushing code once every two weeks and your competitor is pushing code every week, just after two months that competitor will have done 10 times as many tests as you. That competitor will have learned 10 times, an order of magnitude more about their product [than you].”

Can you identify an aha moment that users love?

In many cases, improvement comes from what you remove, not what you add on.

The companies that grow the fastest are the ones that learn the fastest. The more experiments you run, the more you learn. It’s really that simple. the stages of the process are: data analysis and insight gathering, idea generation, experiment prioritization, running the experiments, and then returning to the analyze step to review results

Identify metrics to be tracked by looking at the metrics “downstream” from the experiment that will be impacted.

always prioritize growth efforts over administrative work.

the highly successful had a kind of ferocious determination that played out in two ways. First, these exemplars were unusually resilient and hardworking. Second, they knew in a very, very deep way what it was they wanted. They not only had determination, they had direction.

Great things are accomplished by those “people whose thinking is active in one direction, who employ everything as material, who always zealously observe their own inner life and that of others, who perceive everywhere models and incentives, who never tire of combining together the means available to them.”

Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare.

Buffett takes him through three steps. First, you write down a list of twenty-five career goals. Second, you do some soul-searching and circle the five highest-priority goals. Just five. Third, you take a good hard look at the twenty goals you didn’t circle. These you avoid at all costs. They’re what distract you; they eat away time and energy, taking your eye from the goals that matter more.

Several years later, Jeff built an Internet bookstore named after the longest river in the world: Amazon.com. (He also registered the URL www.relentless.com; type it into your browser and see where it takes you.

the word interest comes from the Latin interesse, which means “to differ.” To be interesting is, literally, to be different.

Even the most complex and creative of human abilities can be broken down into its component skills, each of which can be practiced, practiced, practiced.

“Relax. Look around. Make a call.”

Extreme Ownership. Leaders must own everything in their world. There is no one else to blame.

when it comes to standards, as a leader, it’s not what you preach, it’s what you tolerate. When setting expectations, no matter what has been said or written, if substandard performance is accepted and no one is held accountable—if there are no consequences—that poor performance becomes the new standard.

It is critical that those senior leaders impart a general understanding of that strategic knowledge—the why—to their troops.

When overwhelmed, fall back upon this principle: Prioritize and Execute.

When everyone participating in an operation knows and understands the purpose and end state of the mission, they can theoretically act without further guidance.

Take responsibility for leading everyone in your world, subordinates and superiors alike. Don’t ask your leader what you should do, tell them what you are going to do.

Discipline starts every day when the first alarm clock goes off in the morning. The moment the alarm goes off is the first test; it sets the tone for the rest of the day.

Successful strategies require choice or they can be easily imitated.

Product differentiation, on the other hand, creates layers of insulation against competitive warfare because buyers have preferences and loyalites to particular sellers.

The functional background of top management is one key measure of its orientation and perception of the business and appropriate goals. Leaders with financial backgrounds can often emphasize different strategic directions, based on what they feel comfortable with, than leaders with backgrounds in marketing or production. Current examples could be Edwin Land’s penchant for radical innovation as a solution to strategic problems at Polaroid, and McGee’s strategy of retrenchment to energy-related activities at Gulf

Assuming that competitors will retaliate to moves a firm initiates, its strategic agenda is selecting the best battleground for fighting it out with its competitors. This battleground is the market segment or dimensions of strategy in which competitors are ill-prepared,

you must take risks as an angel investor and in life if you want at least the chance of an outsized outcome.

focus on not just what could go wrong with a business but what could go right.

As an angel investor, your job is to provide a combination of money, time, network, and expertise to startups in order to “get on the cap table.”

You can make your own luck in this life by putting yourself next to the people who are already winning.

Every year, billion-dollar companies are created, and that will continue for the rest of our lives—

never say yes in a meeting. Let them know that you need to do research and think about the deal terms.

Adults take notes on paper and review them later.

Important people have the ability to turn off their phones because the world can wait for them. People who are not important have to react to their phones and be at the mercy of people pinging them.

If folks are building a startup for money, they will eventually quit when they realize there are many better ways to make money faster and with more certainty.

Google was the twelfth search engine. Facebook was the tenth social network. iPad was the twentieth tablet. It’s not who gets there first. It’s who gets there first when the market’s ready.

If you don’t have enough resources and your best developer just quit to work at Google? Guess what? F you. Solve the problem! At the core of being a great founder is the unrelenting desire to see your vision—or version—of the world realized.

“I would like a monthly update from you that includes the key metrics for the business, as well as what you consider the wins and losses since the last email. I would like you to put requests for me and your other investors in the email as well. Every email should have how much cash you have left, your burn rate, and when you will be out of cash so that we can all plan for future raises.”

Starting companies is really easy, but finishing them—by having an exit—is really hard. I had a sign on my wall saying starting is easy, finishing is hard for a decade while I was running my own companies.

Life is random, but luck isn’t. Lucky people surround themselves with the most successful people in the world and take chances. It isn’t hard or impossible. It just takes work. Do the work. Trust me, just do the work.

the executive is, first of all, expected to get the right things done.

Effective executives know where their time goes. They work systematically at managing the little of their time that can be brought under their control.

The output limits of any process are set by the scarcest resource. In the process we call “accomplishment,” this is time.

“Know Thyself,” the old prescription for wisdom, is almost impossibly difficult for mortal men. But everyone can follow the injunction “Know Thy Time” if he wants

People in general, and knowledge workers in particular, grow according to the demands they make on themselves. They grow according to what they consider to be achievement and attainment. If they demand little of themselves, they will remain stunted. If they demand a good deal of themselves, they will grow to giant stature—without any more effort than is expended by the nonachievers.

The effective man always states at the outset of a meeting the specific purpose and contribution it is to achieve.

Strong people always have strong weaknesses too. Where there are peaks, there are valleys.

To be more requires a man who is conceited enough to believe that the world—or at least the nation—really needs him and depends on his getting into power.

In every area of effectiveness within an organization, one feeds the opportunities and starves the problems.

If there is any one “secret” of effectiveness, it is concentration. Effective executives do first things first and they do one thing at a time.

Courage rather than analysis dictates the truly important rules for identifying priorities: Pick the future as against the past; Focus on opportunity rather than on problem; Choose your own direction—rather than climb on the bandwagon; and Aim high, aim for something that will make a difference, rather than for something that is “safe” and easy to do.

A good many studies of research scientists have shown that achievement (at least below the genius level of an Einstein, a Niels Bohr, or a Max Planck) depends less on ability in doing research than on the courage to go after opportunity.

A decision is a judgment. It is a choice between alternatives. It is rarely a choice between right and wrong. It is at best a choice between “almost right” and “probably wrong”—but much more often a choice between two courses of action neither of which is provably more nearly right than the other.

In all matters of true uncertainty such as the executive deals with—whether his sphere is political, economic, social, or military—one needs “creative” solutions which create a new situation. And this means that one needs imagination—a new and different way of perceiving and understanding.

“If you have a 10-year plan of how to get [somewhere], you should ask: Why can’t you do this in 6 months?”

More than 80% of the interviewees have some form of daily mindfulness or meditation practice

“We do not rise to the level of our expectations. We fall to the level of our training.” —Archilochus

“Life can be much broader, once you discover one simple fact, and that is that everything around you that you call ‘life’ was made up by people that were no smarter than you. And you can change it, you can influence it, you can build your own things that other people can use. Once you learn that, you’ll never be the same again.”

“If this were the only thing I accomplished today, would I be satisfied with my day?” “Will moving this forward make all the other to-dos unimportant or easier to knock off later?” Put another way: “What, if done, will make all of the rest easier or irrelevant?”

Life is always happening for us, not to us. It’s our job to find out where the benefit is. If we do, life is magnificent.”

Which of these highest-value activities is the easiest for me to do? You can build an entire career on 80/20 analysis and asking this question.

You can control most of the risks, and you can’t imagine the rewards.

if you want something extraordinary, you have two paths: 1) Become the best at one specific thing. 2) Become very good (top 25%) at two or more things. Everyone has at least a few areas in which they could be in the top 25% with some effort.

Forget the brand. Think categories. Prospects are on the defensive when it comes to brands. Everyone talks about why their brand is better. But prospects have an open mind when it comes to categories. Everyone is interested in what’s new. Few people are interested in what’s better.

“If I had always done what I was ‘qualified’ to do, I’d be pushing a broom somewhere.” “Amateurs built the Ark, professionals built the Titanic.”

“This is the big misconception that people have, that [in the beginning] a new film is the baby version of the final film, when in fact the final film bears no relationship to what you started off with. What we’ve found is that the first version always sucks. But in fact, what artists do is they learn to see.”

“Great men have almost always shown themselves as ready to obey as they afterwards proved able to command.” —Lord Mahon

“Great men have almost always shown themselves as ready to obey as they afterwards proved able to command.” —Lord Mahon

biggest mistake you can make is to accept the norms of your time.’ Not accepting norms is where you innovate, whether it’s with technology, with books, with anything. So, not accepting the norm is the secret to really big success and changing the world.”

Money can always be regenerated. Time and reputation cannot.

Life favors the specific ask and punishes the vague wish.

“The world is this continually unfolding set of possibilities and opportunities, and the tricky thing about life is, on the one hand having the courage to enter into things that are unfamiliar, but also having the wisdom to stop exploring when you’ve found something worth sticking around for.

To me, success is you make your own slot. You have a new slot that didn’t exist before. That’s, of course, what Jesus and many others were doing. That’s really hard to do, but I think that’s what I chalk up as success.”

All of the value in life, including in relationships, comes from compound interest.

Watch every thought. (Always ask, “Why am I having this thought?”)

“You get paid for being right first, and to be first, you can’t wait for consensus.”

“Lateral thinking or thematic thinking, the ability to take a lesson from one thing and transfer it to another, is one of the most important disciplines that any of us can cultivate.

I feel that the big ideas come from these periods. It’s the silence between the notes that makes the music.

People’s IQs seem to double as soon as you give them responsibility and indicate that you trust them.

“What if I could only subtract to solve problems?”

Didn’t get promoted? Good. More time to get better. Didn’t get funded? Good. We own more of the company. Didn’t get the job you wanted? Good. Go out, gain more experience, and build a better résumé. If you can say the word “good,” guess what? It means you’re still alive. It means you’re still breathing. And if you’re still breathing, that means you’ve still got some fight left in you. So get up, dust off, reload, recalibrate, re-engage, and go out on the attack. And that, right there, is about as good as it gets.

The Stoics were pioneers of the morning and nightly rituals: preparation in the morning, reflection in the evening.

We would never let another person jerk us around the way we let our impulses do.

Every time you get upset, a little bit of life leaves the body. Are these really the things on which you want to spend that priceless resource?

Marcus liked to point out that Alexander the Great—one of the most passionate and ambitious men who ever lived—was buried in the same ground as his mule driver. Eventually, all of us will pass away and slowly be forgotten. We should enjoy this brief time we have on earth—not be enslaved to emotions that make us miserable and dissatisfied.

You will only get one shot at today. You have only twenty-four hours with which to take it. And then it is gone and lost forever.

Instead of looking for instruction, they cultivate skills like creativity, independence, self-confidence, ingenuity, and the ability to problem solve.

The point is not to have an iron will, but an adaptable will—a will that makes full use of reason to clarify perception, impulse, and judgment to act effectively for the right purpose.

The greats don’t avoid these tests of their abilities. They seek them out because they are not just the measure of greatness, they are the pathway to it.

We know that in any given market a customer has 50 to 150 needs

a functional Job-to-be-Done has three unique and extremely valuable characteristics: First, a job is stable; it doesn’t change over time. It’s the delivery vehicle or the technology that changes.

Second, a job has no geographical boundaries. People who live in the USA, France, UK, Germany, South Korea, China, Russia, Brazil and Australia have many jobs in common that they are trying to get done.

Third, a job is solution agnostic. The Job-to-be-Done does not care if your company provides product, software, or service offerings.

work directly with customers to understand not why they bought your product, but how your product fits into what they are trying to accomplish.

The only way to discover segments of customers with unique sets of unmet needs is to segment the market around unmet needs.

Companies do not lack ideas. They often have thousands of ideas. What they need is insight into the customer’s underserved outcomes.

there is only one truth about a successful bargaining style: To be good, you must learn to be yourself at the bargaining table. The best negotiators play it straight, ask a lot of questions, listen carefully, and concentrate on what they and the other party are trying to accomplish at the bargaining table.

information is power. Listening enables you to get information.

the best negotiators follow a different practice: They ask questions, test for understanding, summarize discussions, and listen, listen, listen.

Normative leverage is the skillful use of standards, norms, and coherent positioning to gain advantage or protect a position.

only two things determine the right price of something: what a buyer is willing to pay and what a seller is willing to accept.

If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from that person’s angle as well as from your own. —HENRY FORD

leverage is a dynamic rather than a static factor in bargaining. It can change moment by moment.

Every time the other party says “I want” in a negotiation, you should hear the pleasant sound of a weight dropping on your side of the leverage scales.

Your job as a negotiator is to uncover everything the other side wants and to investigate as thoroughly as possible just how urgent are his or her various needs.

Ask yourself, as of the moment when you make the assessment, which party has the most to lose from no deal. The party with the most to lose has the least leverage; the party with the least to lose has the most leverage;

Examine the specific situation you face and ask: What do I control that the other side wants, what do they control that I want, and who stands to lose the most if no deal gets done?

They don’t sell us better. The most exciting companies sell us different.

Category kings take it upon themselves to design a great product, a great company, and a great category at the same time.

Jobs intentionally, willfully, strategically created a new category and put the iPad at the top of it from day one. The product itself was not Apple’s strategy. Selling more of a certain kind of software was not Apple’s strategy. Creating the category was Apple’s strategy.

Can you explain to me like a five-year-old what problem you’re trying to solve? 2.If your company solves this problem perfectly, what category are you in? 3.If you win 85 percent of that category, what’s the size of your category potential?

A category name should describe the nature of the problem being solved. For companies aimed at the enterprise, the name should speak to the business function where the problem lives. Ideally, the category name will become a line item in every company’s budget.

When we tackle this step of expressing the POV, we approach it as if we are creating a movie trailer for the category story. It has to tell the story at a simple gut level. In as few words as possible, it should lay out the problem and its ramifications, describe a vision for the category, sketch a blueprint for how to build the category, and paint a picture of potential outcomes. The strategic use of language matters.

Keep in mind that the Declaration of Independence, one of the most enduring and successful POV documents in history, contains 1,337 words. So there is no excuse for ever writing anything longer than that.

Customers will ask for better. You want to hear different. Look for what’s missing, not what can be improved.

“He wants to control his environment, and he sees the product as an extension of himself.”

“I began to realize that an intuitive understanding and consciousness was more significant than abstract thinking and intellectual logical analysis,” he later said

“The thing that struck me was his intensity. Whatever he was interested in he would generally carry to an irrational extreme.”

“If you just sit and observe, you will see how restless your mind is. If you try to calm it, it only makes it worse, but over time it does calm, and when it does, there’s room to hear more subtle things—that’s when your intuition starts to blossom and you start to see things more clearly and be in the present more. Your mind just slows down, and you see a tremendous expanse in the moment. You see so much more than you could see before. It’s a discipline; you have to practice it.”

At the root of the reality distortion was Jobs’s belief that the rules didn’t apply to him.

“He believed that great harvests came from arid sources, pleasure from restraint,” she noted. “He knew the equations that most people didn’t know: Things led to their opposites.”

his ego needs and personal drives led him to seek fulfillment by creating a legacy that would awe people. A dual legacy, actually: building innovative products and building a lasting company.

“Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do,” he said. “That’s true for companies, and it’s true for products.”

Design was not just about what a product looked like on the surface. It had to reflect the product’s essence. “In most people’s vocabularies, design means veneer,” Jobs told Fortune shortly after retaking the reins at Apple. “But to me, nothing could be further from the meaning of design. Design is the fundamental soul of a man-made creation that ends up expressing itself in successive outer layers.”

Jobs hated to cede control of anything, especially when it might affect the customer experience.

One of Jobs’s business rules was to never be afraid of cannibalizing yourself. “If you don’t cannibalize yourself, someone else will,” he said.

Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

As usual Jobs pushed for the purest possible simplicity. That required determining what was the core essence of the device.

The unified field theory that ties together Jobs’s personality and products begins with his most salient trait: his intensity.

He would set priorities, aim his laser attention on them, and filter out distractions. If something engaged him—the user interface for the original Macintosh, the design of the iPod and iPhone, getting music companies into the iTunes Store—he was relentless.

He didn’t invent many things outright, but he was a master at putting together ideas, art, and technology in ways that invented the future.

Some leaders push innovations by being good at the big picture. Others do so by mastering details. Jobs did both, relentlessly.

Great artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo were also great at science. Michelangelo knew a lot about how to quarry stone, not just how to be a sculptor.

You always have to keep pushing to innovate. Dylan could have sung protest songs forever and probably made a lot of money, but he didn’t. He had to move on. That’s what I’ve always tried to do—keep moving. Otherwise, as Dylan says, if you’re not busy being born, you’re busy dying.

We try to use the talents we do have to express our deep feelings, to show our appreciation of all the contributions that came before us, and to add something to that flow. That’s what has driven me.

Every great startup starts as a side project that isn’t anybody’s main priority. AirBed & Breakfast was a way to pay our rent. It was a way to pay rent and buy us time and help us get to the big idea. —Brian Chesky

“Startups are very romanticized and most people are completely clueless about how you just have to will it into existence.”

“When you’re starting a company it never goes at the pace you want or the pace you expect. You imagine everything to be linear, ‘I’m going to do this, then this is going to happen and this is going to happen.’ You’re imagining steps and they’re progressive. You start, you build it, and you think everyone’s going to care. But no one cares, not even your friends.”

“Fear is the disease. Hustle is the antidote,”

“We haven’t built our product around a market, we’ve built an experience around a customer desire,”

“I look at entrepreneurism as risk arbitrage. You are basically looking at risk and saying, ‘I think people are misunderstanding it and I’m going to go after it.”

Few Silicon Valley execs can so effectively phase shift—digging into operational complexities at one moment, negotiating with politicians the next, and then leaving it all behind to speak in relatable tones to students, other startup founders, and the general public. Chesky did this with ease, and it was a reminder of the remarkable personal skills that had propelled his company to such astounding heights.

the true measure of an entrepreneur is how well he or she can identify new opportunities,

Energy is contagious. People like how it feels. If you show enthusiasm, others will want to experience the same rush.

Step one in your search for happiness is to continually work toward having control of your schedule.

food may be a far more dominant contributor to your chemistry than what is happening around you, at least during a normal day.

“If you are able to state a problem . . . then the problem can be solved.”

Land had learned early on that total engrossment was the best way for him to work. He strongly believed that this kind of concentrated focus could also produce extraordinary results for others.

It is a curious property of research activity that after a problem has been solved the solution usually seems obvious.

“a state of mind that includes curiosity, an idealism which is dissatisfied with the restrictions and imperfections of the present, a great inward urge for discovery and an ability to translate this dissatisfaction and inward urge into constructive achievement Polaroid was then, as it would be for decades to come, the personification of Edwin H. Land.

He believed “that the role of industry is to sense a deep human need, then bring science and technology to bear on filling that need. Any market already existing is inherently boring and dull.”16 Land, like Steve Jobs many decades later, believed that his company should “give people products they do not even know they want.”

“You always start with a fantasy. Part of the fantasy technique is to visualize something as perfect. Then with the experiments you work back from the fantasy to reality, hacking away at the components

“an essential aspect of creativity is not being afraid to fail. Scientists [pursue] a great invention by calling their activities hypotheses and experiments [and make] it permissible to fail repeatedly until in the end they [get] the results they want.”

Just as the great steps in scientific history are taken by the giants of the centuries when they slough off the tentacles of the group mind, so every significant step in each . . . single field, is taken by some individual who has freed himself from a way of thinking that is held by friends and associates who may be more intelligent, better educated, better disciplined, but who have not mastered the art of the fresh, clean look at the old, old knowledge.

Dr. Land had an uncanny way of making an individual an expert by telling him that it was his job to be that expert, that important decisions would depend on the results of his work, and that the results were needed quickly. Yet the intensity of the work was balanced by good humor, by intervals of celebration, by time taken to contemplate technical and social consequences on all sides, and by the sense that the work was a shared responsibility.

Land proclaimed, “We don’t do market surveys. We create the markets with our products.”

One of Land’s colleagues loved to tell the story of the time Land called him one morning to complain that no one had shown up for work in his laboratory to continue the experiments they were engaged in.9 The colleague had to remind Land that it was Thanksgiving Day.

the research of science is nothing but failures. You fail and fail and fail, and when you succeed you stop. So the record of science is experiments that didn’t work and that are then the basis of one that does work. . . . The reason I know is because what we offer and what we are selling is the embodiment of all those failures, it is the record.

He sees himself as determined, iron-willed and hard driving, a man who will not rest until he has conquered whatever problem is at hand.

Jobs Theory provides a powerful way of understanding the causal mechanism of customer behavior, an understanding that, in turn, is the most fundamental driver of innovation success.

Creating the right experiences and then integrating around them to solve a job, is critical for competitive advantage. That’s because while it may be easy for competitors to copy products, it’s difficult for them to copy experiences that are well integrated into your company’s processes.

Understanding jobs is about clustering insights into a coherent picture, rather than segmenting down to finer and finer slices.

Airbnb could be reduced to its function—providing a place to stay when traveling. On that level, it’s competing against hotels. And by traditional measures of quality in the hotel industry, Airbnb is a far inferior option. Who would pay to stay on an air mattress on the floor of a stranger’s apartment—or sleep in a stranger’s spare bed—rather than stay in the privacy of their own hotel room? It turns out, lots of people. People weren’t hiring Airbnb only because it’s a place to stay. They were hiring Airbnb because having a place to stay allows them to be someplace so they can participate in something in which they want to be part—and because it offers a more authentic local experience than a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-the-world hotel chain.

It’s important to note that we don’t “create” jobs, we discover them.

the competition is seldom limited to products that the market chooses to lump into the same category. Netflix CEO Reed Hastings made this clear when recently asked by legendary venture capitalist John Doerr if Netflix was competing with Amazon. “Really we compete with everything you do to relax,” he told Doerr. “We compete with video games. We compete with drinking a bottle of wine. That’s a particularly tough one! We compete with other video networks. Playing board games.”

In the context of a data-obsessed world, it might be a surprise that some of the world’s greatest innovators have succeeded with little more than their own intuition about a Job to Be Done to guide their efforts.

Sony founder Akio Morita actually advised against market research, urging instead to “carefully watch how people live, get an intuitive sense as to what they might want and then go with it.”

Jobs to Be Done have always existed. Innovations have just gotten better and better in the way we can respond to them. So no matter how new or revolutionary your product idea may be, the circumstances of struggle already exist.

What has to get fired for my product to get hired? They think about making their product more and more appealing, but not what it will be replacing.

You just have to have a “beginner’s mind” as you walk through a consumer’s decision-making process, looking for clues as to the full picture of the struggle.

Great innovation insights have more to do with depth than breadth.

New products succeed not because of the features and functionality they offer but because of the experiences they enable.

Organizations typically structure themselves around function or business unit or geography—but successful growth companies optimize around the job. Competitive advantage is conferred through an organization’s unique processes: the ways it integrates across functions to perform the customer’s job.

Amazon focuses on when orders are delivered not when they are shipped.

Managers should ask what elements of the experience are the most critical to the customer, and define metrics that track performance against them.

The healthiest mindset for innovation is that nearly all data—whether presented in the form of a large quantitative data set on one extreme, or an ethnographic description of behavior on the other—is built upon human bias and judgment.

A well-articulated job provides a kind of “commander’s intent,” obviating the need for micromanagement because employees at all levels understand and are motivated by how the work they do fits into a larger process to help customers get their jobs done.

A well-defined Job to Be Done is expressed in verbs and nouns—such as, “I need to ‘write’ books verbally, obviating the need to type or edit by hand.”

The candidates to do the job are all from different product categories; and our rule of thumb is that this is the right level of abstraction.