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.

Average is over is the catchphrase of our age, and it is likely to apply all the more to our future. This imbalance in technological growth will have some surprising implications. For instance, workers more and more will come to be classified into two categories. The key questions will be: Are you good at working with intelligent machines or not? Are your skills a complement to the skills of the computer, or is the computer doing better without you? If you and your skills are a complement to the computer, your wage and labor market prospects are likely to be cheery. If your skills do not complement the computer, you may want to address that mismatch.

Where will most of the benefits go? In accord with economic reasoning, they will go to that which is scarce. In today’s global economy here is what is scarce: 1. Quality land and natural resources 2. Intellectual property, or good ideas about what should be produced 3. Quality labor with unique skills Here is what is not scarce these days: 1. Unskilled labor, as more countries join the global economy 2. Money in the bank or held in government securities, which you can think of as simple capital, not attached to any special ownership rights (we know there is a lot of it because it has been earning zero or negative real rates of return)

But getting attention will continue to be a critical function in the new world of work and is likely to require ever-greater effort and sophistication.

Most games are decided on the basis of the accumulation of advantages, and the level of error is fairly well predicted by the relative skills of the players.

Let’s hire good motivators. Let’s teach our professors how to motivate. Let’s judge them on that basis. Let’s treat professors more like athletics coaches, personal therapists, and preachers, because that is what they will evolve to be.

The measure of self-motivation in a young person will become the best way to predict upward mobility.

The mind of the beginner is empty, free of the habits of the expert, ready to accept, to doubt, and open to all the possibilities. It is the kind of mind which can see things as they are, which step by step and in a flash can realize the original nature of everything.

Zen Mind

The goal of practice is always to keep our beginner's mind.

Written teaching is a kind of food for your brain. Of course it is necessary to take some food for your brain, but it is more important to be yourself by practicing the right way of life.

And we should forget, day by day, what we have done; this is true non-attachment. And we should do something new.

Our practice cannot be perfect, but without being discouraged by this, we should continue it. This is the secret of practice.

Dogen-zenji said, "To study Buddhism is to study our- selves. To study ourselves is to forget ourselves."

You just sit in the midst of the problem; when you are a part of the problem, or when the problem is a part of you, there is no problem, because you are the problem itself.

When your life is always a part of your surroundings—in other words, when you are called back to yourself, in the present moment—then there is no problem.

to express yourself freely as you are is the most important thing to make yourself happy, and to make others happy. You will acquire this kind of ability by practicing zazen.

Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it. Because we cannot accept the truth of transiency, we suffer. So the cause of suffering is our non-acceptance of this truth.

Everyone comes out from nothingness moment after mo- ment. Moment after moment we have true joy of life.

Each existence depends on something else. Strictly speak- ing, there are no separate individual existences. There are just many names for one existence.

Don’t set limits on what you can or can’t do. Don’t set limits on what is or isn’t worthy of your time. Dare yourself to “play games” with your day: watch, wait, listen; allow things to happen.

Learn to treasure your worst experiences as gripping (if traumatic) new chapters in the epic novel that is your life.

“Life has no other discipline to impose, if we would but realize it, than to accept life unquestioningly,” wrote Henry Miller. “Everything . . . we deny, denigrate or despise, serves to defeat us in the end. What seems nasty, painful, evil, can become a source of beauty, joy and strength, if faced with an open mind. Every moment is golden for him who has the vision to realize it as such.”

In this way, “seeing” as you travel is somewhat of a spiritual exercise: a process not of seeking interesting surroundings, but of being continually interested in whatever surrounds you.

Thus, travel compels you to discover your spiritual side by simple elimination: Without all the rituals, routines, and possessions that give your life meaning at home, you’re forced to look for meaning within yourself.

An essay is something you write in order to figure something out. An essay doesn't begin with a statement, but with a question.

90% of what ends up in my essays was stuff I only thought of when I sat down to write them. That's why I write them. Something you publish ought to tell the reader something he didn't already know.

Business is a kind of ritualized warfare. Indeed, it evolved from actual warfare: most early traders switched on the fly from merchants to pirates depending on how strong you seemed.

There are many advantages of launching quickly, but the most important may be that once you have users, the tamagotchi effect kicks in. Once you have users to take care of, you're forced to figure out what will make them happy, and that's actually very valuable information.

If you do everything the way the average startup does it, you should expect average performance. The problem here is, average performance means that you'll go out of business. The survival rate for startups is way less than fifty percent. So if you're running a startup, you had better be doing something odd. If not, you're in trouble.

In business, as in war, surprise is worth as much as force.

in most ambitious kids, ambition seems to precede anything specific to be ambitious about. They know they want to do something great.

What kind of book do you read and feel sad that there's only half of it left, instead of being impressed that you're half way through? That's what you really like.

that it's better, initially, to make a small number of users really love you than a large number kind of like you. If I could tell startups only ten sentences, this would be one of them.

In programming, as in many fields, the hard part isn't solving problems, but deciding what problems to solve.

I'd always supposed that all smart people were curious-- that curiosity was simply the first derivative of knowledge.

What and how should not be kept too separate. You're asking for trouble if you try to decide what to do without understanding how to do it.

Related fields are where you go looking for ideas.

The other way makers learn is from examples. For a painter, a museum is a reference library of techniques. For hundreds of years it has been part of the traditional education of painters to copy the works of the great masters, because copying forces you to look closely at the way a painting is made. Writers do this too. Benjamin Franklin learned to write by summarizing the points in the essays of Addison and Steele and then trying to reproduce them.

Relentlessness wins because, in the aggregate, unseen details become visible.

The right way to collaborate, I think, is to divide projects into sharply defined modules, each with a definite owner, and with interfaces between them that are as carefully designed and, if possible, as articulated as programming languages.

It turns out that looking at things from other people's point of view is practically the secret of success. It doesn't necessarily mean being self-sacrificing. Far from it. Understanding how someone else sees things doesn't imply that you'll act in his interest; in some situations-- in war, for example-- you want to do exactly the opposite.

Over and over we see the same pattern. A new medium appears, and people are so excited about it that they explore most of its possibilities in the first couple generations.

Art has a purpose, which is to interest its audience. Good art (like good anything) is art that achieves its purpose particularly well. The meaning of "interest" can vary. Some works of art are meant to shock, and others to please; some are meant to jump out at you, and others to sit quietly in the background. But all art has to work on an audience,andhere's the critical pointmembers of the audience share things in common.

But if you find a work of art that would appeal equally to your friends, to people in Nepal, and to the ancient Greeks, you're probably onto something.

Good founders have a healthy respect for reality. But they are relentlessly resourceful.

The definition of work was now to make some original contribution to the world, and in the process not to starve.

The rule about doing what you love assumes a certain length of time. It doesn't mean, do what will make you happiest this second, but what will make you happiest over some longer period, like a week or a month.

To be happy I think you have to be doing something you not only enjoy, but admire. You have to be able to say, at the end, wow, that's pretty cool.

Although doing great work takes less discipline than people thinkbecause the way to do great work is to find something you like so much that you don't have to force yourself to do itfinding work you love does usually require discipline.

"Always produce" is also a heuristic for finding the work you love. If you subject yourself to that constraint, it will automatically push you away from things you think you're supposed to work on, toward things you actually like. "Always produce" will discover your life's work the way water, with the aid of gravity, finds the hole in your roof.

These seem to me what philosophy should look like: quite general observations that would cause someone who understood them to do something differently. What is wisdom? I'd say it's knowing what to do in a lot of situations. Human problems are the most common type, so being good at solving those is key in achieving a high average outcome.

So cultivating intelligence seems to be a matter of identifying some bias in one's charactersome tendency to be interested in certain types of thingsand nurturing it. Instead of obliterating your idiosyncrasies in an effort to make yourself a neutral vessel for the truth, you select one and try to grow it from a seedling into a tree.

The more confident people are, the more willing they seem to be to answer a question "I don't know."

Probably the biggest lie told in schools, though, is that the way to succeed is through following "the rules." In fact most such rules are just hacks to manage large groups efficiently.

Boldness pays. And if at the last minute two parts don't quite fit, you can figure out some hack that will at least conceal the problem.

We found the startups that did best were the ones with the sort of founders about whom we'd say "they can take care of themselves." The startups that do best are fire-and-forget in the sense that all you have to do is give them a lead, and they'll close it, whatever type of lead it is.

Understanding all the implications even the inconvenient implications of what someone tells you is a subset of resourcefulness. It's conversational resourcefulness.

Actually startups take off because the founders make them take off. There may be a handful that just grew by themselves, but usually it takes some sort of push to get them going. The most common unscalable thing founders have to do at the start is to recruit users manually. Nearly all startups have to. You can't wait for users to come to you. You have to go out and get them.

I was trying to think of a phrase to convey how extreme your attention to users should be, and I realized Steve Jobs had already done it: insanely great. Steve wasn't just using "insanely" as a synonym for "very." He meant it more literallythat one should focus on quality of execution to a degree that in everyday life would be considered pathological.

One of my tricks for generating startup ideas is to imagine the ways in which we'll seem backward to future generations.

If you want to take on a problem as big as the ones I've discussed, don't make a direct frontal attack on it.

I think the way to use these big ideas is not to try to identify a precise point in the future and then ask yourself how to get from here to there, like the popular image of a visionary. You'll be better off if you operate like Columbus and just head in a general westerly direction. Don't try to construct the future like a building, because your current blueprint is almost certainly mistaken. Start with something you know works, and when you expand, expand westward. The popular image of the visionary is someone with a clear view of the future, but empirically it may be better to have a blurry one.

A formidable person is one who seems like they'll get what they want, regardless of whatever obstacles are in the way. Formidable is close to confident, except that someone could be confident and mistaken. Formidable is roughly justifiably confident.

The way to seem most formidable as an inexperienced founder is to stick to the truth.

If this is such a great idea, why hasn't someone else already done it? Ideally the answer is that it only recently became a good idea, because something changed, and no one else has noticed yet.

The way to get startup ideas is not to try to think of startup ideas. It's to look for problems, preferably problems you have yourself.

The very best startup ideas tend to have three things in common: they're something the founders themselves want, that they themselves can build, and that few others realize are worth doing.

If you're at the leading edge of a field that's changing fast, when you have a hunch that something is worth doing, you're more likely to be right.

Live in the future, then build what's missing.

The verb you want to be using with respect to startup ideas is not "think up" but "notice." At YC we call ideas that grow naturally out of the founders' own experiences "organic" startup ideas. The most successful startups almost all begin this way.

If you're not at the leading edge of some rapidly changing field, you can get to one.

But you know the ideas are out there. This is not one of those problems where there might not be an answer. It's impossibly unlikely that this is the exact moment when technological progress stops. You can be sure people are going to build things in the next few years that will make you think "What did I do before x?"

What you need to do is turn off the filters that usually prevent you from seeing them. The most powerful is simply taking the current state of the world for granted. Even the most radically open-minded of us mostly do that.

If you knew about all the things we'll get in the next 50 years but don't have yet, you'd find present day life pretty constraining, just as someone from the present would if they were sent back 50 years in a time machine. When something annoys you, it could be because you're living in the future.

Work on hard problems, driven mainly by curiousity, but have a second self watching over your shoulder, taking note of gaps and anomalies.

Err on the side of doing things where you'll face competitors. Inexperienced founders usually give competitors more credit than they deserve. Whether you succeed depends far more on you than on your competitors. So better a good idea with competitors than a bad one without.

A crowded market is actually a good sign, because it means both that there's demand and that none of the existing solutions are good enough.

One way to ensure you do a good job solving other people's problems is to make them your own. When RajatSuri of E la Carte decided to write software for restaurants, he got a job as a waiter to learn how restaurants worked. That may seem like taking things to extremes, but startups are extreme. We love it when founders do such things.

But imagine asking that in the future, not now. When one company or industry replaces another, it usually comes in from the side. So don't look for a replacement for x; look for something that people will later say turned out to be a replacement for x.

There's nothing more valuable than an unmet need that is just becoming fixable. If you find something broken that you can fix for a lot of people, you've found a gold mine. As with an actual gold mine, you still have to work hard to get the gold out of it. But at least you know where the seam is, and that's the hard part.

You don't know what the ideas are until you get them down to the fewest words.

I think the goal of an essay should be to discover surprising things. That's my goal, at least. And most surprising means most different from what people currently believe. So writing to persuade and writing to discover are diametrically opposed. The more your conclusions disagree with readers' present beliefs, the more effort you'll have to expend on selling your ideas rather than having them.

Civilization always seems old, because it's always the oldest it's ever been.

If you pick an ambitious idea, you'll have less competition, because everyone else will have been frightened off by the challenges involved. (This is also true of starting a startup generally.)

Everything else we associate with startups follows from growth.

You have to know that growth is what you're after. The good news is, if you get growth, everything else tends to fall into place. Which means you can use growth like a compass to make almost every decision you face.

What's different about successful founders is that they can see different problems.

If there's one number every founder should always know, it's the company's growth rate. That's the measure of a startup.

Most fairly good ideas are adjacent to even better ones.

You'll generally do best to follow that constraint wherever it leads rather than being influenced by some initial vision, just as a scientist is better off following the truth wherever it leads rather than being influenced by what he wishes were the case. When Richard Feynman said that the imagination of nature was greater than the imagination of man, he meant that if you just keep following the truth you'll discover cooler things than you could ever have made up. For startups, growth is a constraint much like truth. Every successful startup is at least partly a product of the imagination of growth.

If you want to understand startups, understand growth. Growth drives everything in this world.

You can probably take it as a rule of thumb from now on that if people don't think you're weird, you're living badly.

We learned quickly that the most important predictor of success is determination.

If determination is effectively the product of will and discipline, then you can become more determined by being more disciplined.

So here in sum is how determination seems to work: it consists of willfulness balanced with discipline, aimed by ambition.

Indeed, if you want to create the most wealth, the way to do it is to focus more on their needs than your interests, and make up the difference with determination.

I'd say it's hard to do a really good job on anything you don't think about in the shower.

There's a kind of thinking you do without trying to. I'm increasingly convinced this type of thinking is not merely helpful in solving hard problems, but necessary.

You can't directly control where your thoughts drift. If you're controlling them, they're not drifting. But you can control them indirectly, by controlling what situations you let yourself get into. That has been the lesson for me: be careful what you let become critical to you. Try to get yourself into situations where the most urgent problems are ones you want to think about.

Errors of omission are a particularly dangerous type of mistake, because you make them by default.

Don't ignore your dreams; don't work too much; say what you think; cultivate friendships; be happy. which I then put at the top of the file I use as a todo list.

I've been surprised again and again by just how much more important persistence is than raw intelligence.

I learnt never to bet on any one feature or deal or anything to bring you success. It is never a single thing. Everything is just incremental and you just have to keep doing lots of those things until you strike something.

We've always encouraged founders to see a startup idea as a hypothesis rather than a blueprint.

But as long as you're over a certain threshold of intelligence, what matters most is determination. You're going to hit a lot of obstacles. You can't be the sort of person who gets demoralized easily.

To do really great things, you have to seek out questions people didn't even realize were questions.

You only get one life. Why not do something huge?

Good design is simple. You hear this from math to painting. When you're forced to be simple, you're forced to face the real problem. When you can't deliver ornament, you have to deliver substance.

Aiming at timelessness is a way to make yourself find the best answer: if you can imagine someone surpassing you, you should do it yourself. Some of the greatest masters did this so well that they left little room for those who came after.

Strangely enough, if you want to make something that will appeal to future generations, one way to do it is to try to appeal to past generations. So if you can make something that appeals to people today and would also have appealed to people in 1500, there is a good chance it will appeal to people in 2500.

Problems can be improved as well as solutions.

To have a sense of humor is to be strong: to keep one's sense of humor is to shrug off misfortunes, and to lose one's sense of humor is to be wounded by them. And so the mark-- or at least the prerogative-- of strength is not to take oneself too seriously. The confident will often, like swallows, seem to be making fun of the whole process slightly, as Hitchcock does in his films or Bruegel in his paintings-- or Shakespeare, for that matter.

If you're not working hard, you're probably wasting your time.

It takes confidence to throw work away. You have to be able to think, there's more where that came from.

The ambitious are not content to imitate. The second phase in the growth of taste is a conscious attempt at originality. I think the greatest masters go on to achieve a kind of selflessness. They just want to get the right answer, and if part of the right answer has already been discovered by someone else, that's no reason not to use it. They're confident enough to take from anyone without feeling that their own vision will be lost in the process.

The only style worth having is the one you can't help. And this is especially true for strangeness. There is no shortcut to it.

Steve Jobs's famous maxim "artists ship" works both ways. Artists aren't merely capable of shipping. They insist on it. So if you don't let people ship, you won't have any artists.

great new things often come from the margins, and yet the people who discover them are looked down on by everyone, including themselves. It's an old idea that new things come from the margins.

Being able to take risks is hugely valuable. Everyone values safety too much, both the obscure and the eminent. No one wants to look like a fool. But it's very useful to be able to. If most of your ideas aren't stupid, you're probably being too conservative.

The most important kinds of learning happen one project at a time. ("Next time, I won't...") The faster you cycle through projects, the faster you'll evolve.

If I had to condense the power of the marginal into one sentence it would be: just try hacking something together.

If you're not sure what to do, make something.

If you really want to score big, the place to focus is the margin of the margin: the territories only recently captured from the insiders. That's where you'll find the juiciest projects still undone, either because they seemed too risky, or simply because there were too few insiders to explore everything.

They remind us that it is the people who break rules that are the source of America's wealth and power.

Google doesn't try to force things to happen their way. They try to figure out what's going to happen, and arrange to be standing there when it does. That's the way to approach technologyand as business includes an ever larger technological component, the right way to do business.

As societies get richer, they learn something about work that's a lot like what they learn about diet. We know now that the healthiest diet is the one our peasant ancestors were forced to eat because they were poor. Like rich food, idleness only seems desirable when you don't get enough of it. I think we were designed to work, just as we were designed to eat a certain amount of fiber, and we feel bad if we don't.

keep track of opinions that get people in trouble, and start asking, could this be true?

To do good work you need a brain that can go anywhere. And you especially need a brain that's in the habit of going where it's not supposed to. Great work tends to grow out of ideas that others have overlooked, and no idea is so overlooked as one that's unthinkable.

Training yourself to think unthinkable thoughts has advantages beyond the thoughts themselves. It's like stretching. When you stretch before running, you put your body into positions much more extreme than any it will assume during the run. If you can think things so outside the box that they'd make people's hair stand on end, you'll have no trouble with the small trips outside the box that people call innovative.

So the optimal plan, if you can manage it, is to have a few trusted friends you can speak openly to. This is not just a way to develop ideas; it's also a good rule of thumb for choosing friends. The people you can say heretical things to without getting jumped on are also the most interesting to know.

You don't need to be in a rush to choose your life's work. What you need to do is discover what you like.

The world changes fast, and the rate at which it changes is itself speeding up. In such a world it's not a good idea to have fixed plans.

Instead of working back from a goal, work forward from promising situations. This is what most successful people actually do anyway.

The best protection is always to be working on hard problems. Writing novels is hard. Reading novels isn't. Hard means worry: if you're not worrying that something you're making will come out badly, or that you won't be able to understand something you're studying, then it isn't hard enough. There has to be suspense. In practice, "stay upwind" reduces to "work on hard problems."

Rebellion is almost as stupid as obedience. In either case you let yourself be defined by what they tell you to do.

If you want to do good work, what you need is a great curiosity about a promising question.

The way to get a big idea to appear in your head is not to hunt for big ideas, but to put in a lot of time on work that interests you, and in the process keep your mind open enough that a big idea can take roost. Einstein, Ford, and Beckenbauer all used this recipe. They all knew their work like a piano player knows the keys. So when something seemed amiss to them, they had the confidence to notice it.

The important thing is to get out there and do stuff. Instead of waiting to be taught, go out and learn.

But the less you identify work with employment, the easier it becomes to start a startup. When you see your career as a series of different types of work, instead of a lifetime's service to a single employer, there's less risk in starting your own company, because you're only replacing one segment instead of discarding the whole thing.

Empirically, boldness wins.

I think it's far more important to write well than most people realize. Writing doesn't just communicate ideas; it generates them. If you're bad at writing and don't like to do it, you'll miss out on most of the ideas writing would have generated.

You have to do your homework. But as you become expert in a field, you'll start to hear little voices saying, What a hack! There must be a better way. Don't ignore those voices. Cultivate them. The recipe for great work is: very exacting taste, plus the ability to gratify it.

Generally speaking, the Way of the warrior is resolute acceptance of death.

The strategist makes small things into big things,

In short, it is difficult for large numbers of men to change position, so their movements can be easily predicted. An individual can easily change his mind, so his movements are difficult to predict. You must appreciate this. The essence of this book is that you must train day and night in order to make quick decisions. In strategy it is necessary to treat training as a part of normal life with your spirit unchanging.

It will seem difficult at first, but everything is difficult at first.

The Way is in training.

Perceive those things which cannot be seen.

Do nothing which is of no use.

In strategy it is important to see distant things as if they were close and to take a distanced view of close things.

Waiting is bad.

Today is victory over yourself of yesterday; tomorrow is your victory over lesser men.

Because you can win quickly by taking the lead, it is one of the most important things in strategy. There are several things involved in taking the lead. You must make the best of the situation, see through the enemy's spirit so that you grasp his strategy and defeat him.

The important thing in strategy is to suppress the enemy's useful actions but allow his useless actions.

"Crossing at a ford" means, for example, crossing the sea at a strait, or crossing over a hundred miles of broad sea at a crossing place. I believe this "crossing at a ford" occurs often in a man's lifetime. It means setting sail even though your friends stay in harbour, knowing the route, knowing the soundness of your ship and the favour of the day. When all the conditions are met, and there is perhaps a favourable wind, or a tailwind, then set sail. If the wind changes within a few miles of your destination, you must row across the remaining distance without sail.

"To know the times" means to know the enemy's disposition in battle. Is is flourishing or waning? By observing the spirit of the enemy's men and getting the best position, you can work out the enemy's disposition and move your men accordingly. You can win through this principle of strategy, fighting from a position of advantage.

In large-scale strategy, when you cannot see the enemy's position, indicate that you are about to attack strongly, to discover his resources. It is easy then to defeat hin with a different method once you see his resources.

It is difficult to move strong things by pushing directly, so you should "injure the corners".

The "mountain-sea" spirit means that it is bad to repeat the same thing several times when fighting the enemy. There may be no help but to do something twice, but do not try it a third time.

Really skilful people never get out of time, and are always deliberate, and never appear busy.

Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone. —MARGARET WHEATLEY

real networking was about finding ways to make other people more successful. It was about working hard to give more than you get.

A network functions precisely because there's recognition of mutual need.

Your goals must be challenging and demanding. Step out of your comfort zone; set goals that require risk and uncertainty.

Seize this very minute; what you can do, or dream you can, begin it; Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. —JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Nothing in my life has created opportunity like a willingness to ask, whatever the situation.

The choice isn't between success and failure; it's between choosing risk and striving for greatness, or risking nothing and being cer- tain of mediocrity.

Spectacular achievement is always preceded by spectacular preparation. —ROBERT H. SCHULLERWhom

William James wrote: "The deepest principle in human nature is the crav- ing to be appreciated."

Selling is, reduced to its essence, solving another person's problems. And you can only do that when you know what those problems are.

Invisibility is a fate far worse than failure. In building a network, remember: Above all, never, ever disappear.

the more successfully you use language, the faster you can get ahead in life.

I believe that vulnerability—yes, vulnerability—is one of the most underappreciated assets in business today.

try to find out what motivations drive that person. It often comes down to one of three things: making money, finding love, or changing the world.

"there are three things in this world that engender deep emotional bonds between people. They are health, wealth, and children."

Real power comes from being indispensable. Indis- pensability comes from being a switchboard, parceling out as much information, contacts, and goodwill to as many people—in as many different worlds—as possible

All successful people are planners. They think on paper.

As I look back on my career, the recipe seems straightforward: I'd latch on to the latest, most cutting-edge idea in the business world. I'd immerse myself in it, getting to know all the thought leaders pushing the idea and all the literature available. I'd then distill that into a message about the idea's broader impact to others and how it could be applied in the industry I worked in. That was the content. Becoming an expert was the easy part. I simply did what experts do: I taught, wrote, and spoke about my expertise. There's no better way to learn something, and become an expert at it, than to have to teach.

in an economy that values emotions over numbers, storytellers will have the edge.

whom you associate with is crucial to who you become.

century.Life is about work, work is about life, and both are about people. Bringing people together by building personal relationships is becoming far more than a career strategy; it's increasingly regarded as one of the most effective ways to enhance America's civic and social health.

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

Look at things as they are, not as your emotions color them.

You must strive to apply this ruthless standard in your daily life, judging people by the results of their actions, the deeds that can be seen and measured, the maneuvers they have used to gain power.

What you know must translate into action, and action must translate into knowledge.

Get them emotional; people are usually more sincere when they argue.

Man exists only in so far as he is opposed. GEORG HEGEL, 1770-1831

In the same way the independence of the superior man is not based on rigidity and immobility of character. He always keeps abreast of the time and changes with it. What endures is the unswerving directive, the inner law of his being, which determines all his actions. THE I CHING, CHINA,

You must actively resist the emotional pull of the moment--staying decisive, confident, and aggressive no matter what hits you. Make the mind tougher by exposing it to adversity.

[Presence of mind] must play a great role in war, the domain of the unexpected, since it is nothing but an increased capacity of dealing with the unexpected. We admire presence of mind in an apt repartee, as we admire quick thinking in the face of danger.... The expression "presence of mind" precisely conveys the speed and immediacy of the help provided by the intellect. ON WAR, CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ,

Any mistakes you make, you can rectify with more energetic action still. Save your carefulness for the hours of preparation, but once the fighting begins, empty your mind of doubts.

All great generals, from Julius Caesar to Patton, have at some point lost their nerve and then have been the stronger for winning it back. The more you have lost your balance, the more you will know about how to right yourself.

Put yourself in situations where you have too much at stake to waste time or resources--if you cannot afford to lose, you won't. Cut your ties to the past; enter unknown territory where you must depend on your wits and energy to see you through.

make the thought of death something not to escape but to embrace. Your days are numbered. Will you pass them half awake and halfhearted or will you live with a sense of urgency?

Unlimited possibilities are not suited to man; if they existed, his life would only dissolve in the boundless. To become strong, a man's life needs the limitations ordained by duty and voluntarily accepted. The individual attains significance as a free spirit only by surrounding himself with these limitations and by determining for himself what his duty is. THE I CHING,

The risks you keep taking, the challenges you keep overcoming, are like symbolic deaths that sharpen your appreciation of life.

the future belongs to groups that are fluid, fast, and nonlinear.

the essence of strategy is not to carry out a brilliant plan that proceeds in steps; it is to put yourself in situations where you have more options than the enemy does.

The best way to motivate people is not through reason but through emotion.

In a world that frowns on displays of overt aggression, the ability to fight defensively--to let others make the first move and then wait for their own mistakes to destroy them--will bring you untold power.

Limitations are troublesome, but they are effective. If we live economically in normal times, we are prepared for times of want. To be sparing saves us from humiliation. Limitations are also indispensable in the regulation of world conditions. In nature there are fixed limits for summer and winter, day and night, and these limits give the year its meaning. In the same way, economy, by setting fixed limits upon expenditures, acts to preserve property and prevent injury to the people. THE I CHING, CHINA,

Reality can be defined by a sharp series of limitations on every living thing, the final boundary being death.

War is a balance of ends and means: a general might have the best plan to achieve a certain end, but unless he has the means to accomplish it, his plan is worthless. Wise generals through the ages, then, have learned to begin by examining the means they have at hand and then to develop their strategy out of those tools.

Every limitation has its value, but a limitation that requires persistent effort entails a cost of too much energy. When, however, the limitation is a natural one (as, for example, the limitation by which water flows only downhill), it necessarily leads to success, for then it means a saving of energy. The energy that otherwise would be consumed in a vain struggle with the object is applied wholly to the benefit of the matter in hand, and success is assured. THE I CHING,

Oddly enough, knowing your limits will expand your limits; getting the most out of what you have will let you have more.

In politics, jujitsu style yields endless benefits. It gives you the ability to fight without seeming aggressive. It saves energy, for your opponents tire while you stay above the fray. And it widens your options, allowing you to build on what they give you.

There are two kinds of dispositions, inward and outward, and a person who is lacking in one or the other is worthless.

There are two kinds of dispositions, inward and outward, and a person who is lacking in one or the other is worthless. HAGAKURE: THE BOOK OF THE SAMURAI,

Your task as a strategist is simple: to see the differences between yourself and other people, to understand yourself, your side, and the enemy as well as you can, to get more perspective on events, to know things for what they are.

beginning the minute you are born, time is all you have. It is your only true commodity. People can take away your possessions, but--short of murder--not even the most powerful aggressors can take time away from you unless you let them.

Grand strategy is the art of looking beyond the battle and calculating ahead. It requires that you focus on your ultimate goal and plot to reach it.

clarify your life--decipher your own personal riddle--by determining what it is you are destined to achieve, the direction in which your skills and talents seem to push you. Visualize yourself fulfilling this destiny in glorious detail. As Aristotle advised, work to master your emotions and train yourself to think ahead: "This action will advance me toward my goal, this one will lead me nowhere." Guided by these standards, you will be able to stay on course.

Your task as a grand strategist is to extend your vision in all directions--not only looking further into the future but also seeing more of the world around you, more than your enemy does.

those able to see further than others, to control their animal nature and think before they acted, were humans of the most deeply human kind--the ones best able to use the reasoning powers that separate us from animals.

It is not so much that your strategies are more clever or manipulative as that they exist on a higher plane. You have made a qualitative leap.

The greatest power you could have in life would come neither from limitless resources nor even consummate skill in strategy. It would come from clear knowledge of those around you--the ability to read people like a book.

You must be slow in deliberation and swift in execution. --Napoleon Bonaparte

By acting boldly, before others are ready, by moving to seize the initiative, you create your own circumstances rather than simply waiting for what life brings you.

Often what separates a mediocre general from a superior one is not their strategies or maneuvers but their vision--they simply look at the same problem from a different angle. Freed from the stranglehold of convention, the superior general naturally hits on the right strategy.

Always divide up the issue at hand, first placing yourself in a central position, then proceeding down the line, killing off your problems one by one. It is often wise to begin with the smallest problem while keeping the most dangerous one at bay. Solving that one will help you create momentum, both physical and psychological, that will help you overwhelm all the rest.

the flank is the path to power.

I began to realize that the indirect approach had a much wider application--that it was a law of life in all spheres: a truth of philosophy. Its fulfillment was seen to be the key to practical achievement in dealing with any problem where the human factor predominates, and a conflict of wills tends to spring from an underlying concern for all interests.

The perfect plan stems from a detailed analysis of the situation, which allows you to decide on the best direction to follow or the perfect position to occupy and suggests several effective options (branches) to take, depending on what the enemy throws at you. A plan with branches lets you outmaneuver your enemy because your responses to changing circumstances are faster and more rational.

Aptitude for maneuver is the supreme skill in a general; it is the most useful and rarest of gifts by which genius is estimated. NAPOLEON BONAPARTE,

an ending was not like a wall but more like a door, leading to the next phase or battle. What mattered to him was not gaining a victory but where it left him, how it opened onto the next round.

What man can you show me who places any value on his time, who reckons the worth of each day, who understands that he is dying daily? For we are mistaken when we look forward to death; the major portion of death has already passed. Whatever years be behind us are in death's hands.

The primary indication, to my thinking, of a well-ordered mind is a man's ability to remain in one place and linger in his own company.

You must linger among a limited number of master thinkers, and digest their works, if you would derive ideas which shall win firm hold in your mind.

enough.judge a man after they have made him their friend, instead of making him their friend after they have judged him.

Inwardly, we ought to be different in all respects, but our exterior should conform to society.

fear follows hope. I am not surprised that they proceed in this way; each alike belongs to a mind that is in suspense, a mind that is fretted by looking forward to the future. But the chief cause of both these ills is that we do not adapt ourselves to the present, but send our thoughts a long way ahead. And so foresight, the noblest blessing of the human race, becomes perverted.

"Cherish some man of high character, and keep him ever before your eyes, living as if he were watching you, and ordering all your actions as if he beheld them."

Choose a master whose life, conversation, and soul-expressing face have satisfied you; picture him always to yourself as your protector or your pattern.

every day ought to be regulated as if it closed the series, as if it rounded out and completed our existence.

the wise man regards the reason for all his actions, but not the results. The beginning is in our own power; fortune decides the issue, but I do not allow her to pass sentence upon myself.

If you live according to nature, you will never be poor; if you live according to opinion, you will never be rich."

Set aside a certain number of days, during which you shall be content with the scantiest and cheapest fare, with coarse and rough dress, saying to yourself the while: "Is this the condition that I feared?" It is precisely in times of immunity from care that the soul should toughen itself beforehand for occasions of greater stress, and it is while Fortune is kind that it should fortify itself against her violence.

"You must reflect carefully beforehand with whom you are to eat and drink, rather than what you are to eat and drink. For a dinner of meats without the company of a friend is like the life of a lion or a wolf."

philosophy teaches us to act, not to speak; it exacts of every man that he should live according to his own standards, that his life should not be out of harmony with his words, and that, further, his inner life should be of one hue and not out of harmony with all his activities.

"If you wish," said he, "to make Pythocles rich, do not add to his store of money, but subtract from his desires."

We have reached the heights if we know what it is that we find joy in and if we have not placed our happiness in the control of externals.

conduct you to peace of mind by another route: if you would put off all worry, assume that what you fear may happen will certainly happen in any event; whatever the trouble may be, measure it in your own mind, and estimate the amount of your fear. You will thus understand that what you fear is either insignificant or short-lived.

Remember, however, before all else, to strip things of all that disturbs and confuses, and to see what each is at bottom; you will then comprehend that they contain nothing fearful except the actual fear.

the very day which we are now spending is shared between ourselves and death. It is not the last drop that empties the water-clock, but all that which previously has flowed out;

Of this one thing make sure against your dying day, – let your faults die before you die.

Therefore, as far as possible, prove yourself guilty, hunt up charges against yourself; play the part, first of accuser, then of judge, last of intercessor. At times be harsh with yourself.[7]

He who does not wish to die cannot have wished to live. For life is granted to us with the reservation that we shall die; to this end our path leads.

Therefore, how foolish it is to fear it, since men simply await that which is sure, but fear only that which is uncertain!

Be deaf to those who love you most of all; they pray for bad things with good intentions.

Respect means love, and love and fear cannot be mingled.

It is not everywhere that death shows himself so near at hand; yet everywhere he is as near at hand.

Death is non-existence, and I know already what that means. What was before me will happen again after me. If there is any suffering in this state, there must have been such suffering also in the past, before we entered the light of day. As a matter of fact, however, we felt no discomfort then.

we go astray in thinking that death only follows, when in reality it has both preceded us and will in turn follow us. Whatever condition existed before our birth, is death.

Every virtue is limitless; for limits depend upon definite measurements.

Many men pass by that which is visible, and peer after things hidden and concealed; a locked room invites the thief. Things which lie in the open appear cheap; the house-breaker passes by that which is exposed to view. This is the way of the world, and the way of all ignorant men: they crave to burst in upon hidden things.

That which is short of perfection must necessarily be unsteady, at one time progressing, at another slipping or growing faint; and it will surely slip back unless it keeps struggling ahead; for if a man slackens at all in zeal and faithful application, he must retrograde. No one can resume his progress at the point where he left off. 36. Therefore let us press on and persevere.

You ask what this freedom is? It means not fearing either men or gods; it means not craving wickedness or excess; it means possessing supreme power over oneself And it is a priceless good to be master of oneself.

Hence, the wise man accustoms himself to coming trouble, lightening by long reflection the evils which others lighten by long endurance. We sometimes hear the inexperienced say: "I knew that this was in store for me." But the wise man knows that all things are in store for him. Whatever happens, he says: "I knew it."

I do not set an equal value on benefits and injuries. I reckon a benefit at a higher rate than an injury.

We hold nothing dearer than a benefit, so long as we are seeking one; we hold nothing cheaper after we have received it.

At any rate, it is thus that we should live, – as if we lived in plain sight of all men; and it is thus that we should think, – as if there were someone who could look into our inmost souls; and there is one who can so look.

I would have my mind of such a quality as this; it should be equipped with many arts, many precepts, and patterns of conduct taken from many epochs of history; but all should blend harmoniously into one. 11. "How," you ask, "can this be accomplished?" By constant effort, and by doing nothing without the approval of reason.

For it is easier to stop them in the beginning than to control them when they gather force.

he himself is always in action, and is greatest in performance at the very time when fortune has blocked his way. For then he is actually engaged in the business of wisdom;

Do you suppose that he is weighed down by evils? He makes use of them.

Study, not in order to add anything to your knowledge, but to make your knowledge better.

One who daily puts the finishing touches to his life is never in want of time.

A small number of Black Swans explain almost everything in our world, from the success of ideas and religions, to the dynamics of historical events, to elements of our own personal lives.

There are so many things we can do if we focus on antiknowledge, or what we do not know. Among many other benefits, you can set yourself up to collect serendipitous Black Swans (of the positive kind) by maximizing your exposure to them. Indeed, in some domains—such as scientific discovery and venture capital investments—there is a disproportionate payoff from the unknown, since you typically have little to lose and plenty to gain from a rare event.

Read books are far less valuable than unread ones.

What we call “talent” generally comes from success, rather than its opposite.

you formulate a (bold) conjecture and you start looking for the observation that would prove you wrong. This is the alternative to our search for confirmatory instances. If you think the task is easy, you will be disappointed—few humans have a natural ability to do this.

The way to avoid the ills of the narrative fallacy is to favor experimentation over storytelling, experience over history, and clinical knowledge over theories.

These nonlinear relationships are ubiquitous in life. Linear relationships are truly the exception; we only focus on them in classrooms and textbooks because they are easier to understand.

It is my great hope someday to see science and decision makers rediscover what the ancients have always known, namely that our highest currency is respect.

Humans will believe anything you say provided you do not exhibit the smallest shadow of diffidence; like animals, they can detect the smallest crack in your confidence before you express it.

Prediction, not narration, is the real test of our understanding of the world.

Simply, things that move, and therefore require knowledge, do not usually have experts, while things that don’t move seem to have some experts.

We cannot truly plan, because we do not understand the future—but this is not necessarily bad news. We could plan while bearing in mind such limitations. It just takes guts.

The classical model of discovery is as follows: you search for what you know (say, a new way to reach India) and find something you didn’t know was there (America). almost everything of the moment is the product of serendipity.

In other words, you find something you are not looking for and it changes the world, while wondering after its discovery why it “took so long” to arrive at something so obvious.

The best way to get maximal exposure is to keep researching. Collect opportunities

There is actually a law in statistics called the law of iterated expectations, which I outline here in its strong form: if I expect to expect something at some date in the future, then I already expect that something at present.

Know how to rank beliefs not according to their plausibility but by the harm they may cause.

“You need to love to lose”

Seize any opportunity, or anything that looks like opportunity. They are rare, much rarer than you think. Remember that positive Black Swans have a necessary first step: you need to be exposed to them. Many people do not realize that they are getting a lucky break in life when they get it.

Work hard, not in grunt work, but in chasing such opportunities and maximizing exposure to them. This makes living in big cities invaluable because you increase the odds of serendipitous encounters—you gain exposure to the envelope of serendipity.

All these recommendations have one point in common: asymmetry. Put yourself in situations where favorable consequences are much larger than unfavorable ones.

This idea that in order to make a decision you need to focus on the consequences (which you can know) rather than the probability (which you can’t know) is the central idea of uncertainty.

The long tail’s contribution is not yet numerical; it is still confined to the Web and its small-scale online commerce. But consider how the long tail could affect the future of culture, information, and political life. It could free us from the dominant political parties, from the academic system, from the clusters of the press—anything that is currently in the hands of ossified, conceited, and self-serving authority.

In the end it is those who derive consequences and seize the importance of the ideas, seeing their real value, who win the day. They are the ones who can talk about the subject.

my thinking is rooted in the belief that you cannot go from books to problems, but the reverse, from problems to books.

Snub your destiny. I have taught myself to resist running to keep on schedule. This may seem a very small piece of advice, but it registered. In refusing to run to catch trains, I have felt the true value of elegance and aesthetics in behavior, a sense of being in control of my time, my schedule, and my life. Missing a train is only painful if you run after it! Likewise, not matching the idea of success others expect from you is only painful if that’s what you are seeking.

But the most interesting thing that Franklin invented, and continually reinvented, was himself. America’s first great publicist, he was, in his life and in his writings, consciously trying to create a new American archetype. In the process, he carefully crafted his own persona, portrayed it in public, and polished it for posterity.

One aspect of Franklin’s genius was the variety of his interests, from science to government to diplomacy to journalism, all of them approached from a very practical rather than theoretical angle.

honorable men who believe that their personal strivings are intertwined with the progress of humanity. History is a tale, Franklin came to believe, not of immutable forces but of human endeavors.

“I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal,” he later wrote, “but to avoid all appearances of the contrary” (his emphasis).

The opening phrase of the passage—“Man is a sociable being”—would turn out to be a defining credo of his long life.

Franklin was the consummate networker. He liked to mix his civic life with his social one, and he merrily leveraged both to further his business life.

First he made a list of twelve virtues he thought desirable, and to each he appended a short definition: Temperance: Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation. Silence: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation. Order: Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time. Resolution: Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve. Frugality: Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; (i.e., waste nothing). Industry: Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions. Sincerity: Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly. Justice: Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty. Moderation: Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve. Cleanliness: Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation. Tranquility: Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable. Chastity: Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another’s peace or reputation.

“Lost time is never found again.”

“Some may think these trifling matters not worth minding,” Franklin said, but they should remember that “human felicity is produced…by little advantages that occur every day.”

I have long observed one rule which prevents any inconveniences from such practices. It is simply this: to be concerned in no affairs I should blush to have made public, and to do nothing but what spies may see and welcome. When a man’s actions are just and honorable, the more they are known, the more his reputation is increased and established.

Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day.

When you wake up in the morning, tell yourself: The people I deal with today will be meddling, ungrateful, arrogant, dishonest, jealous, and surly. They are like this because they can’t tell good from evil. But I have seen the beauty of good, and the ugliness of evil, and have recognized that the wrongdoer has a nature related to my own—not of the same blood or birth, but the same mind, and possessing a share of the divine. And so none of them can hurt me. No one can implicate me in ugliness. Nor can I feel angry at my relative, or hate him. We were born to work together like feet, hands, and eyes, like the two rows of teeth, upper and lower. To obstruct each other is unnatural. To feel anger at someone, to turn your back on him: these are obstructions.

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

And what dying is—and that if you look at it in the abstract and break down your imaginary ideas of it by logical analysis, you realize that it’s nothing but a process of nature, which only children can be afraid of. (And not only a process of nature but a necessary one.)

Even if you’re going to live three thousand more years, or ten times that, remember: you cannot lose another life than the one you’re living now, or live another one than the one you’re losing. The longest amounts to the same as the shortest. The present is the same for everyone; its loss is the same for everyone; and it should be clear that a brief instant is all that is lost. For you can’t lose either the past or the future; how could you lose what you don’t have?

Then what can guide us? Only philosophy. Which means making sure that the power within stays safe and free from assault, superior to pleasure and pain, doing nothing randomly or dishonestly and with imposture, not dependent on anyone else’s doing something or not doing it. And making sure that it accepts what happens and what it is dealt as coming from the same place it came from. And above all, that it accepts death in a cheerful spirit, as nothing but the dissolution of the elements from which each living thing is composed. If it doesn’t hurt the individual elements to change continually into one another, why are people afraid of all of them changing and separating? It’s a natural thing. And nothing natural is evil.

You need to get used to winnowing your thoughts, so that if someone says, “What are you thinking about?” you can respond at once (and truthfully) that you are thinking this or thinking that. And it would be obvious at once from your answer that your thoughts were straightforward and considerate ones—the thoughts of an unselfish person, one unconcerned with pleasure and with sensual indulgence generally, with squabbling, with slander and envy, or anything else you’d be ashamed to be caught thinking.

Never regard something as doing you good if it makes you betray a trust, or lose your sense of shame, or makes you show hatred, suspicion, ill will, or hypocrisy, or a desire for things best done behind closed doors.

always to define whatever it is we perceive—to trace its outline—so we can see what it really is: its substance. Stripped bare. As a whole. Unmodified. And to call it by its name—the thing itself and its components, to which it will eventually return. Nothing is so conducive to spiritual growth as this capacity for logical and accurate analysis of everything that happens to us.

Our inward power, when it obeys nature, reacts to events by accommodating itself to what it faces—to what is possible. It needs no specific material. It pursues its own aims as circumstances allow; it turns obstacles into fuel. As a fire overwhelms what would have quenched a lamp. What’s thrown on top of the conflagration is absorbed, consumed by it—and makes it burn still higher.

Choose not to be harmed—and you won’t feel harmed. Don’t feel harmed—and you haven’t been.

“If you seek tranquillity, do less.” Or (more accurately) do what’s essential— Because most of what we say and do is not essential. If you can eliminate it, you’ll have more time, and more tranquillity. Ask yourself at every moment, “Is this necessary?”

make your way through life—no one’s master and no one’s slave.

All that exists is the seed of what will emerge from it. You think the only seeds are the ones that make plants or children? Go deeper.

At dawn, when you have trouble getting out of bed, tell yourself: “I have to go to work—as a human being. What do I have to complain of, if I’m going to do what I was born for—the things I was brought into the world to do? Or is this what I was created for? To huddle under the blankets and stay warm? —But it’s nicer here. . . . So you were born to feel “nice”? Instead of doing things and experiencing them? Don’t you see the plants, the birds, the ants and spiders and bees going about their individual tasks, putting the world in order, as best they can? And you’re not willing to do your job as a human being? Why aren’t you running to do what your nature demands? —But we have to sleep sometime. . . . Agreed. But nature set a limit on that—as it did on eating and drinking. And you’re over the limit. You’ve had more than enough of that. But not of working. There you’re still below your quota.

What happens to each of us is ordered. It furthers our destiny.

But to get back up when you fail, to celebrate behaving like a human—however imperfectly—and fully embrace the pursuit that you’ve embarked on.

Things have no hold on the soul. They have no access to it, cannot move or direct it. It is moved and directed by itself alone. It takes the things before it and interprets them as it sees fit.

In a sense, people are our proper occupation. Our job is to do them good and put up with them.

Our actions may be impeded by them, but there can be no impeding our intentions or our dispositions. Because we can accommodate and adapt. The mind adapts and converts to its own purposes the obstacle to our acting. The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way.

When jarred, unavoidably, by circumstances, revert at once to yourself, and don’t lose the rhythm more than you can help. You’ll have a better grasp of the harmony if you keep on going back to it.

Like seeing roasted meat and other dishes in front of you and suddenly realizing: This is a dead fish. A dead bird. A dead pig. Or that this noble vintage is grape juice, and the purple robes are sheep wool dyed with shellfish blood. Or making love—something rubbing against your penis, a brief seizure and a little cloudy liquid. Perceptions like that—latching onto things and piercing through them, so we see what they really are. That’s what we need to do all the time—all through our lives when things lay claim to our trust—to lay them bare and see how pointless they are, to strip away the legend that encrusts them. Pride is a master of deception: when you think you’re occupied in the weightiest business, that’s when he has you in his spell.

If anyone can refute me—show me I’m making a mistake or looking at things from the wrong perspective—I’ll gladly change. It’s the truth I’m after, and the truth never harmed anyone. What harms us is to persist in self-deceit and ignorance.

Remember—your responsibilities can be broken down into individual parts as well. Concentrate on those, and finish the job methodically—without getting stirred up or meeting anger with anger.

It’s normal to feel pain in your hands and feet, if you’re using your feet as feet and your hands as hands. And for a human being to feel stress is normal—if he’s living a normal human life. And if it’s normal, how can it be bad?

If you’ve seen the present then you’ve seen everything—as it’s been since the beginning, as it will be forever. The same substance, the same form. All of it.

When you need encouragement, think of the qualities the people around you have: this one’s energy, that one’s modesty, another’s generosity, and so on. Nothing is as encouraging as when virtues are visibly embodied in the people around us, when we’re practically showered with them. It’s good to keep this in mind.

Ambition means tying your well-being to what other people say or do. Self-indulgence means tying it to the things that happen to you. Sanity means tying it to your own actions.

Practice really hearing what people say. Do your best to get inside their minds.

Frightened of change? But what can exist without it? What’s closer to nature’s heart? Can you take a hot bath and leave the firewood as it was? Eat food without transforming it? Can any vital process take place without something being changed? Can’t you see? It’s just the same with you—and just as vital to nature.

Perfection of character: to live your last day, everyday, without frenzy or sloth or pretense.Through first principles.

The first step: Don't be anxious, nature controls it all.The second step: Concentrate on what you have to do. Fix your eyes on it. Remind yourself that your task is to be a good human being; remind yourself what nature demands of people. Then do it, without hesitation, and speak the truth as you see it. But with kindness. With humility. Without hypocrisy. Nature of any kind thrives on forward progress. When you have trouble getting out of bed in the morning, remember that your defining characteristic- what defines a human being- is to work with others. Even animals know how to sleep. And it's the characteristic activity that's the more natural one- more innate and satisfying.

you.You have to assemble a life for yourself- action by action. And be satisfied if each one achieves its goal, as far as it can.

But if you accept the obstacle and work with what you're given, an alternative will present itself, another piece of what you're trying to assemble. Action by action.

Just as nature takes every obstacle, every impediment, and works around it- turns it to its purpose, incorporates itself- so; too, a rational being can turn each setback intro raw material and use it to achieve its goal.

You participate in society by your existence. Then participate in life through your actions- all your actions. Any action not directed toward a social end (directly or indirectly) is a disturbance to your life, an obstacle to wholeness, a source of dissension.

You can discard most of the junk that clutters your mind- things that exist only there- and clear out space for yourself: By comprehending the scale of the world, by contemplating infinite time, by thinking of the speed which things change- each part of everything; the narrow space between our birth and death; the infinite time before, the equally unbounded time that follows.

Your actions and perceptions need to aim: at accomplishing practical ends, at the exercise of thoughts, at maintaining a confidence founded on understanding. An unobstructive confidence- hidden in plain sight.

Learn to ask of all actions, "Why are they doing that?" Starting with your own.Characteristics of the rational soul: Self-perception, self-examination, and the power to make of itself whatever it wants. It reaps its own harvest, unlike plants (and in a different way animals) whose yield is gathered by others. It reaches its intended goal, no matter where the limit of its life is [set.It](http://set.it/) surveys the world and the empty space around it and the way its put together. It delves into the endlessness of time to extend its grasp and comprehension of the periodic births and rebirths that the world goes through. It knows that those who come after us will see nothing different, that those who came before us saw no more than we do, and that anyone with forty years behind him and eyes in his head has seen both past and future- both alike.

They hover before us, unmoving. It is we who generate the judgement- inscribing them on ourselves. And we don't have to. We could leave the page blank- and if a mark slips through- erase it instantly.

It never ceases to amaze me: we all love ourselves. More than other people, but care more about their opinion than our own.

“A pickup artist must be the exception to the rule. You must not do what everyone else does. Ever.”

“The number one characteristic of an alpha male is the smile,” he said, beaming an artificial beam. “Smile when you enter a room. As soon as you walk in a club, the game is on. And by smiling, you look like you’re together, you’re fun, and you’re somebody.”

first commandment of pickup: the three-second rule. A man has three seconds after spotting a woman to speak to her, he said. If he takes any longer, then not only is the girl likely to think he’s a creep who’s been staring at her for too long, but he will start overthinking the approach, get nervous, and probably blow it.

“As soon as you ask yourself whether you should or shouldn’t, that means you should.

You must be a superstar.

Those who push themselves, and are willing to face pain, exhaustion, humiliation, rejection, or worse, are the ones who become champions. The rest are left on the sidelines. To seduce a woman successfully, to inspire her to take the risk of saying yes, I would have to grow some balls and be willing to leave my comfort zone.

to get a woman, you have to be willing to risk losing her.

In life, people tend to wait for good things to come to them. And by waiting, they miss out. Usually, what you wish for doesn’t fall in your lap; it falls somewhere nearby, and you have to recognize it, stand up, and put in the time and work it takes to get to it. This isn’t because the universe is cruel. It’s because the universe is smart. It has its own cat-string theory and knows we don’t appreciate things that fall into our laps.

Seduction is the art of setting the stage for two people to choose to reveal themselves to each other. Talking in statement form is the way old friends speak to each other. Statements are the mode of the intimate, the confident, and the giving. They invite others to share and make perfect metaphysical sense.

Attraction is working on yourself and improving yourself to the point where women are magnetically attracted to you and want to be around you.“

”How do you make someone want something?“ he asked, after making his students practice giving each other James Dean underlooks. ”You give it value. You show that others like it. You make it scarce. And you make them work for it.

If I showed even a flicker of weakness or doubt, they’d eat me alive.

Beauty to me was now a shit test: It weeded out the losers who got dumbstruck by it.

First, open. Then demonstrate higher value. Next, build rapport and an emotional connection. And, finally, create a physical connection.

But it’s not enough to just be yourself. You have to be your best self.

We have this idea that love is supposed to last forever. But love isn’t like that. It’s a free-flowing energy that comes and goes when it pleases. Sometimes it stays for life; other times it stays for a second, a day, a month, or a year. So don’t fear love when it comes simply because it makes you vulnerable. But don’t be surprised when it leaves, either. Just be glad you had the opportunity to experience it.

AMONG OUR STRUCTURALLY CLOSEST ANALOGUES THE PRIMATES THE MALE DOES NOT FEED THE FEMALE. HEAVY WITH YOUNG, MAKING HER WAY LABORIOUSLY ALONG, SHE FENDS FOR HERSELF. HE MAY FIGHT TO PROTECT HER OR TO POSSESS HER, BUT HE DOES NOT NURTURE HER. —MARGARET MEAD,

And building a lifestyle is cumulative. Everything you do counts and brings you closer to your goal.

All human relationships follow the same formula. Rapport equals trust plus comfort.

One of the things I’d learned in the past year and a half was how to take a compliment. Just say, ”Thank you.“ It’s the only response a confident person can make.

follows—your fears are a kind of prison that confines you within a limited range of action. The less you fear, the more power you will have and the more fully you will live.

You can just as easily see a crisis or problem as a challenge, an opportunity to prove your mettle, the chance to strengthen and toughen yourself, or a call to collective action. By seeing it as a challenge, you will have converted this negative into a positive purely by a mental process that will result in positive action as well.

POSSIBLE…THE FEAR I HAD WAS ALMOST LIKE AN INVITATION, A CHALLENGE TO GO FORWARD INTO SOMETHING I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT. THAT’S WHERE I THINK MY PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE…STARTED, WITH THAT MOMENT…. IN MY MIND I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED AND THOUGHT SINCE THEN THAT MY MOTION HAD TO BE FORWARD, AWAY FROM THE HEAT OF THAT FLAME. —Miles Davis

That is the physics that all fearless types discover at some point—an appropriate ratcheting up of self-belief and energy when facing negative or even impossible circumstances.

ONCE I FELT THE POWER THAT I HAD BY SHOWING THE WORLD I DIDN’T CARE ABOUT BEING LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, I COULD NEVER GO BACK. —50 Cent

the people who practice the 50th Law in their lives all share certain qualities—supreme boldness, unconventionality, fluidity, and a sense of urgency—that give them this unique ability to shape circumstance.

Those who follow the 50th Law are not afraid of change or chaos; they embrace it by being as fluid as possible. They move with the flow of events and then gently channel them in the direction of their choice, exploiting the moment. Through their mind-set, they convert a negative (unexpected events) into a positive (an opportunity).

IN MY VIEW…IT IS BETTER TO BE IMPETUOUS THAN CAUTIOUS, BECAUSE FORTUNE IS A WOMAN, AND IF YOU WISH TO DOMINATE HER YOU MUST BEAT HER AND BATTER HER. IT IS CLEAR THAT SHE WILL LET HERSELF BE WON BY MEN WHO ARE IMPETUOUS RATHER THAN BY THOSE WHO STEP CAUTIOUSLY. —Niccolò Machiabelli

The real poetry and beauty in life comes from an intense relationship with reality in all its aspects. Realism is in fact the ideal we must aspire to, the highest point of human rationality.

You came into this life with the only real possessions that ever matter—your body, the time that you have to live, your energy, the thoughts and ideas unique to you, and your autonomy.

THERE IS A TIME IN EVERY MAN’S EDUCATION WHEN HE ARRIVES AT THE CONVICTION THAT…IMITATION IS SUICIDE…THAT THOUGH THE WIDE UNIVERSE IS FULL OF GOOD, NO KERNEL OF NOURISHING CORN CAN COME TO HIM BUT THROUGH HIS TOIL BESTOWED ON THAT PLOT OF GROUND WHICH IS GIVEN TO HIM TO TILL. THE POWER WHICH RESIDES IN HIM IS NEW IN NATURE, AND NONE BUT HE KNOWS WHAT THAT IS WHICH HE CAN DO, NOR DO KNOW UNTIL HE HAS TRIED. —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Events in life are not negative or positive. They are completely neutral. The universe does not care about your fate; it is indifferent to the violence that may hit you or to death itself.

Things merely happen to you. It is your mind that chooses to interpret them as negative or positive.

According to conventional wisdom, an opportunity is something that exists out there in the world; if it comes our way and we seize it, it brings us money and power. This concept is extremely limited in scope. It makes us dependent on outside forces. It stems from a fearful, passive attitude towards life that is counterproductive. It constrains our minds to a small circle of possibility. The truth is that for the human mind, everything that crosses its path can be a potential tool for power and expansion. This attitude is what we shall call “opportunism.” True opportunists do not require urgent, stressful circumstances to become alert and inventive. They operate this way on a daily basis. They channel their aggressive energy into hunting down possibilities for expansion in the most banal and insignificant events. Everything is an instrument in their hands, and with this enlarged notion of opportunity, they create more of it in their lives and gain great power.

An opportunist in life sees all hindrances as instruments for power. The reason is simple: negative energy that comes at you in some form is energy that can be turned around—to defeat an opponent and lift you up. When there is no such energy, there is nothing to react or push against; it is harder to motivate yourself.

Look for any sudden successes or failures in the business world that people find hard to explain. These are often indications of shifts going on under the surface; perhaps someone has inadvertently hit upon a new model for doing things and you must analyze this.

Opportunism comes with a belief system that is eminently positive and powerful—one known to the Stoic philosophers of ancient Rome as amor fati, or love of fate. In this philosophy every event is seen as fated to occur. When you complain and rail against circumstances, you fall out of balance with the natural state of things; you wish things were different. What you must do instead is accept the fact that all events occur for a reason, and that it is within your capacity to see this reason as positive. Marcus Aurelius compared this to a fire that consumes everything in its path—all circumstances become consumed in your mental heat and converted into opportunities.

WITHOUT DOUBT, PRINCES BECOME GREAT WHEN THEY OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES AND HURDLES PUT IN THEIR PATH. WHEN FORTUNE WANTS TO ADVANCE A NEW PRINCE…SHE CREATES ENEMIES FOR HIM, MAKING THEM LAUNCH CAMPAIGNS AGAINST HIM SO THAT HE IS COMPELLED TO OVERCOME THEM AND CLIMB HIGHER ON THE LADDER THAT THEY HAVE BROUGHT HIM. THEREFORE, MANY JUDGE THAT A WISE PRINCE MUST SKILLFULLY FAN SOME ENMITY WHENEVER THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES, SO THAT IN CRUSHING IT HE WILL INCREASE HIS STANDING. —Niccolò Machiavelli

LET GO AND MOVE WITH THE CHAOS THAT PRESENTS ITSELF TO YOU—FROM WITHIN IT, YOU WILL FIND ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES THAT ELUDE MOST PEOPLE.

In a social situation in which you want the ability to influence people, your first move is to bend to their different energies. You see what they bring and you adapt to this, then find a way to divert their energy in your direction. You let go of the past way of doing things and adapt your strategies to the ever-flowing present.

Like the hustler, you must find your freedom through the fluidity of your thoughts and your constant inventiveness. This means having a greater willingness to experiment, trying several ventures without fear of failing here or there. It also means constantly looking to develop new styles, new directions you can take, freeing yourself up from any inertia that comes with age.

loosen up and experiment. What ties this all together is that something inside of us opens up and we allow a greater range of motion. Our style becomes freer and bolder, and we move with the current. momentum in life comes from increased fluidity, a willingness to try more, to move in a less constricted fashion.

you must learn the art of counterbalance. When you are fearful, force yourself to act in a bolder fashion than usual. When you feel inordinate hate, find some object of love or admiration that you can focus on with intensity. One strong emotion tends to cancel out the other and help you move past it.

You have nothing to fear from moments of transition. You welcome, even create them. Whenever you feel rooted and established in place, that is when you should be truly afraid.

PEOPLE WISH TO BE SETTLED; ONLY AS FAR AS THEY ARE UNSETTLED IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR THEM. —Ralph Waldo Emerson

In general, you must be less respectful of the rules that other people have established. They do not necessarily fit the times or your temperament. And there is great power to be had by being the one to initiate a new order.

You must imagine that you are continually being challenged to show that you deserve the position you occupy. In a culture full of fakery and hype, you will stand out as someone authentic and worthy of respect.

Thinking ahead requires a particular thought process that comes with practice. It means seeing something practical and achievable several years down the road, and mapping out how this goal can be achieved. It means thinking in branches, coming up with several paths to get there, depending on circumstances. It means being emotionally attached to this idea, so that when a thousand distractions and interruptions seem to push you off course, you have the strength and purpose to keep at it.

For the Romans, if you simply acted as if your position entitled you to certain powers, you lost your authority. You were no longer an author, a contributor, but a passive consumer of power.

A DISTINGUISHED COMMANDER WITHOUT BOLDNESS IS UNTHINKABLE. NO MAN WHO IS NOT…BOLD CAN PLAY SUCH A ROLE, AND THEREFORE WE CONSIDER THIS QUALITY THE FIRST PREREQUISITE OF THE GREAT MILITARY LEADER. HOW MUCH OF THIS QUALITY REMAINS BY THE TIME HE REACHES SENIOR RANK, AFTER TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE HAVE AFFECTED AND MODIFIED IT, IS ANOTHER QUESTION. THE GREATER THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT IS RETAINED, THE GREATER THE RANGE OF HIS GENIUS. —Carl bon Clausewitz

The superior hustler moves to the inside.

all costs, you need to continually force yourself outward. You must reach a point where any sense of losing this connection to your environment translates into a feeling of vulnerability and peril.

We are social creatures who make things in order to communicate and connect with those around us. Your goal must be to break down the distance between you and your audience, the base of your support in life.

To master any process you must learn through trial and error. You experiment, you take some hard blows, and you see what works and doesn’t work in real time.

YOUR SENSE OF WHO YOU ARE WILL DETERMINE YOUR ACTIONS AND WHAT YOU END UP GETTING IN LIFE.

There is another, fearless way of approaching your life. It begins by untying yourself from the opinions of others.

Taking this risk will then make your energy levels rise—you have to meet the challenge or go under, and you will find untapped reservoirs of creativity within you. People are drawn to those who act boldly, and their attention and faith in you will have the effect of heightening your confidence.

the most intense form of self-belief is to feel a sense of destiny impelling you forward.

You must always be prepared to place a bet on yourself, on your future, by heading in a direction that others seem to fear.

Clinging to people or situations out of fear is like desperately holding on to life on even the worst terms, and he had now moved far beyond such a point. He was not afraid of death, so how could he be afraid of anything anymore?

The core of Stoicism is learning the art of how to die, which paradoxically teaches you how to live.

All your actions, feelings, behavior, even your abilities are always consistent with the self-image. Note the word, always.

One accomplishes their goals by going foreword, making errors and continually correcting them.

Many great thinkers of all ages have believed that a human beings “stored information” is not limited to personal memories of past experiences and learned factors.

- Human beings always act and feel and perform in accordance with what they imagine to be true about themselves and their environment. Mind over matter. - This is the basic and fundamental law of the mind. It is how we are built.

- Every year that passes I enjoy it more due largely to a diminishing preoccupation with myself.

- Nearly all the discoveries in research labs came as hunches during a period of relaxation, following a period of intense thinking and fact gathering

- There are few inherently right or wrong decisions. Instead, we make decisions, then make them right or wrong. That’s what leadership is all about.

- Your creative mechanism cannot work tomorrow, or even a minute from now. Only right now.

Creative living means responding and reacting to environment spontaneously.

- Even on the busiest day, the crowded hours come to us moment by moment at a time; no matter how many problems, tasks, or strains we face, they always come to us in single file, which is the only way they can come

- Deliberately turn your attention to desirable outcomes. Resolve to make the best of your opportunities and the time you spend working towards your goals, even if they seem to lead to nothing.

- Thoughts and feelings go together. Feelings are the soil that thoughts and ideas grow.

- Proving people wrong is one of the strongest and most powerful motivations

- There is one basic emotion, excitement, and that excitement manifests itself as fear, anger, courage, etc. depending on our own inner goals at the time, whether we are inwardly organized to conquer a problem, run away from it, or destroy it. - The real problem is not to control emotion, but to control the choice of which tendency shall receive emotional reinforcement

- If there is one simple secret to the operation of your creative servo-mechanism, it is this: Call up, capture, evoke the feeling of success. When you feel successful and self-confident, you will act successfully. When the feeling is strong, you can literally do no wrong.

- When we think, remember or imagine, these neurons discharge an electrical current that can be measured. Thoughts are energy.

- When a successful pattern of action is performed, the entire action from beginning to end is not only stored in what we call conscious memory, but in our very nerve tissues.

You have to be wiped out as a human being in order to be born again as an individual.

We are all part of creation, all things, all poets, all musicians, we have only to open up, only to discover what is already there.

experience a moment of pure bliss, of pure awareness, is the end all be all.

- Like it or not I was obliged to create a new life for myself. And this new life I feel is mine, absolutely mine, to use or smash, as I see fit. In this life, I am god, and like god I am indifferent to my own fate. I am everything there is, so why worry.

Hope is a bad thing. It means that you are not what you want to be. It means part of you is dead, if not all of you. It means you entertain illusions.

- I believe only in what is active, immediate and personal

- I have the accelerated rhythm that goes with genius. I am happy all the time inside, even when I am depressed. I never doubt for a minute. Never. I am dead certain of everything.

- What it is I have it, and I don’t give a fuck by what name you call it. Nature, is with me, and god too, and so are all my brothers in the flesh, though they don’t know it all yet

- On the surface, where= the historical battles rage, where everything is interpreted in terms of money and power, there may be crowding. But life only begins when one drops below the surface, when one gives up the struggle, sinks and disappears from sight.

- I entered the world of art without any apparent talent, a thorough novice, awkward, tongue-tied, almost paralyzed by fear and apprehensiveness. I had to lay one brick on another, set millions of words to paper before writing one real authentic, real word dragged up from my own guts. - I had to throw myself into the current knowing that I would probably sink. The great majority of artists are throwing themselves in with life-preservers around their necks, and more often then not it is the life preserver which sinks them. Nobody can drown in the ocean of reality who voluntarily gives himself up to the experience. Whatever there be of progress in life comes not through adaptation but through daring, through obeying the blind urge.

- To live out ones desires and in doing so to subtly alter the quality of desire, is, it seems to me, the greatest purpose of living. But desire is paramount and ineradicable, even when according to Buddhist thought, it passes over into its opposite. Because, in order to free oneself from all desire, one has to desire to do so

- He is not against dying, because to him dying and living are synonymous: he is against stagnation, crystallization, immobility.

I have to be careful of what I dream, since for me between dream and reality there is only the thinnest veil.

- What I remember like a fiend are “moments” not facts. Moments and places, often looks, expressions on the human countenance which are unforgettable.

- Until we lose ourselves there can be no hope of finding ourselves. We are the world, and to enter fully into the world, we must first abandon it. It doesn’t matter what road we take so long as we are giving of ourselves, so long as we are not holding on.

- My suffering was so great and my ego too, no doubt- that I imagined it needed a canvas of that scope.

- Everything that happens to you was intended for you, and never mistake it. Particularly the bad things.

o Cement a little everyday, rather than add new fertilizers.

o When you can’t create you can work

o Discard the Program when you feel like it-but go back to it the next day. Concentrate. Narrow down. Exclude.

- We think of the insane as inhabiting a world completely divorced from reality, but our own everyday behavior, whether in war or peace, if examined from only a slightly higher standpoint, bears all the ear-marks of insanity

What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate.

No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof.

We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests;

For the improvements of ages have had but little influence on the essential laws of man's existence; as our skeletons, probably, are not to be distinguished from those of our ancestors.

To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically.

In the long run men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, though they should fail immediately, they had better aim at something high.

the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.

But lo! men have become the tools of their tools. The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer; and he who stood under a tree for shelter, a housekeeper.

This spending of the best part of one's life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it reminds me of the Englishman who went to India to make a fortune first, in order that he might return to England and live the life of a poet.

Many are concerned about the monuments of the West and the East—to know who built them. For my part, I should like to know who in those days did not build them—who were above such trifling.

It is best to avoid the beginnings of evil.

suffice—for my greatest skill has been to want but little—

for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

"Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages.

All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains.

Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations.

Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour.

Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.

I might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run "amok" against society; but I preferred that society should run "amok" against me, it being the desperate party.

He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established.

We should be blessed if we lived in the present always, and took advantage of every accident that befell us, like

"Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find A thousand regions in your mind Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be Expert in home-cosmography."

Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought.

Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness.

Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe.

These may be but the spring months in the life of the race.

If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.

As an organizer I start from where the world is, as it is, not as I would like it to be. That we accept the world as it is does not in any sense weaken our desire to change it into what we believe it should be — it is necessary to begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it should be. That means working in the system.

Great dangers always accompany great opportunities. The possibility of destruction is always implicit in the act of creation.

I will argue that man’s hopes lie in the acceptance of the great law of change; that a general understanding of the principles of change will provide clues for rational action and an awareness of the realistic relationship between means and ends and how each determines the other.

Irreverence, essential to questioning, is a requisite. Curiosity becomes compulsive. His most frequent word is “why?”

Political realists see the world as it is: an arena of power politics moved primarily by perceived immediate self-interests, where morality is rhetorical rationale for expedient action and self-interest.

The prime illusion we must rid ourselves of is the conventional view in which things are seen separate from their inevitable counterparts.

Everything about us must be seen as the indivisible partner of its converse, light and darkness, good and evil, life and death.

We then recognize that for every positive there is a negative,\* and that there is nothing positive without its concomitant negative,

This grasp of the duality of all phenomena is vital in our understanding of politics.

We cannot think first and act afterwards. From the moment of birth we are immersed in action and can only fitfully guide it by taking thought. — ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

The man of action views the issue of means and ends in pragmatic and strategic terms. He has no other problem; he thinks only of his actual resources and the possibilities of various choices of action. He asks of ends only whether they are achievable and worth the cost; of means, only whether they will work.

All effective actions require the passport of morality.

It has been previously noted that the wise man of action knows that frequently in the stream of action of means towards ends, whole new and unexpected ends are among the major results of the action. From a Civil War fought as a means to preserve the Union came the end of slavery.

It is not just that, in communication as in thought, we must ever strive toward simplicity.

Power is an essential life force always in operation, either changing the world or opposing change.

Every organization known to man, from government down, has had only one reason for being—that is, organization for power in order to put into practice or promote its common purpose.

If he or she does not have that complete self-confidence (or call it ego) that he can win, then the battle is lost before it is even begun.

The leader is driven by the desire for power, while the organizer is driven by the desire to create. The organizer is in a true sense reaching for the highest level for which man can reach—to create, to be a “great creator,” to play God.

Ego must be so all-pervading that the personality of the organizer is contagious, that it converts the people from despair to defiance, creating a mass ego.

“Life is the expectation of the unexpected—the things you worry about rarely happen. Something new, the unexpected, will usually come in from outside the ball park.

An organizer can communicate only within the areas of experience of his audience; otherwise there is no communication. The organizer, in his constant hunt for patterns, universalities, and meaning, is always building up a body of experience.

Curiosity. What makes an organizer organize? He is driven by a compulsive curiosity that knows no limits.

Humor is essential to a successful tactician, for the most potent weapons known to mankind are satire and ridicule.

The first thing you have to know is yourself. A man who knows himself can step outside himself and watch his own reactions like an observer.

People only understand things in terms of their experience, which means that you must get within their experience. Further, communication is a two-way process. If you try to get your ideas across to others without paying attention to what they have to say to you, you can forget about the whole thing.

Power and organization are one and the same.

To give people help, while denying them a significant part in the action, contributes nothing to the development of the individual. In the deepest sense it is not giving but taking—taking their dignity.

TACTICS MEANS doing what you can with what you have.

Always remember the first rule of power tactics: Power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have.\*

If you push a negative hard and deep enough it will break through into its counterside; this is based on the principle that every positive has its negative.

Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it.

A leader may struggle toward a decision and weigh the merits and demerits of a situation which is 52 per cent positive and 48 per cent negative, but once the decision is reached he must assume that his cause is 100 per cent positive and the opposition 100 per cent negative.

Power is not static; it cannot be frozen and preserved like food; it must grow or die.

Timing is to tactics what it is to everything in life—the difference between success and failure.

Power has always derived from two main sources, money and people.

His approach must be free, open-ended, curious, sensitive to any opportunities, any handles to grab on to, even though they involve other issues than those he may have in mind at that particular time.

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself, and you are the easiest person to fool. —RICHARD P. FEYNMAN,

Options—the ability to choose—is real power.

Civilization had too many rules for me, so I did my best to rewrite them. —BILL COSBY

I won by reading the rules and looking for unexploited opportunities, The important distinction is that between official rules and self-imposed rules. Sports evolve when sacred cows are killed, when basic assumptions are tested. The same is true in life and in lifestyles.

Alternating periods of activity and rest is necessary to survive, let alone thrive. Capacity, interest, and mental endurance all wax and wane.

Conditions are never perfect. “Someday” is a disease that will take your dreams to the grave with you. Pro and con lists are just as bad. If it’s important to you and you want to do it “eventually,” just do it and correct course along the way.

Ask for Forgiveness, Not Permission.

It is far more lucrative and fun to leverage your strengths instead of attempting to fix all the chinks in your armor.

Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action. —BENJAMIN DISRAELI,

what we most fear doing is what we most need to do.

a person’s success in life can usually be measured by the number of uncomfortable conversations he or she is willing to have. Resolve to do one thing every day that you fear.

Doing the Unrealistic Is Easier Than Doing the Realistic

The level of competition is thus fiercest for “realistic” goals, paradoxically making them the most time-and energy-consuming.

Having an unusually large goal is an adrenaline infusion that provides the endurance to overcome the inevitable trials and tribulations that go along with any goal.

get in touch with someone who knows the answer instead of spending too much time in books or online, which can turn into paralysis by analysis. The best first step, the one I recommend, is finding someone who’s done it and ask for advice on how to do the same. It’s not hard.

I’ve trained myself to propose solutions instead of ask for them, to elicit desired responses instead of react, and to be assertive without burning bridges. To have an uncommon lifestyle, you need to develop the uncommon habit of making decisions, both for yourself and for others.

What you do is infinitely more important than how you do it.

Limit tasks to the important to shorten work time (80/20). Shorten work time to limit tasks to the important (Parkinson’s Law).

Identify the few critical tasks that contribute most to income and schedule them with very short and clear deadlines.

Identify: Positive friends versus time-consuming friends: Who is helping versus hurting you, and how do you increase your time with the former while decreasing or eliminating your time with the latter?

you are the average of the five people you associate with most,

If someone isn’t making you stronger, they’re making you weaker.

Learn to ask, “If this is the only thing I accomplish today, will I be satisfied with my day?” There should never be more than two mission-critical items to complete each day. Never. It just isn’t necessary if they’re actually high-impact.

More is not better, and stopping something is often 10 times better than finishing it.

Batch activities to limit setup cost and provide more time for dreamline milestones.What can I routinize by batching? That is, what tasks (whether laundry, groceries, mail, payments, or sales reporting, for example) can I allot to a specific time each day, week, month, quarter, or year so that I don’t squander time repeating them more often than is absolutely necessary?

“No” should be your default answer to all requests. Don’t make up elaborate lies or you’ll get called on them. A simple “I really can’t—sorry; I’ve got too much on my plate right now” will do as a catch-all response.

cash flow and time. With these two currencies, all other things are possible. Without them, nothing is possible.

Many of these theories have been killed off only when some decisive experiment exposed their incorrectness…. Thus the yeoman work in any science … is done by the experimentalist, who must keep the theoreticians honest. —MICHIO KAKU, theoretical physicist and cocreator of String Field Theory,

is far better for a man to go wrong infreedom than to go right in chains. —THOMAS H. HUXLEY,English biologist

All courses of action are risky, so prudence is not in avoiding danger (it’s impossible), but calculating risk and acting decisively. Make mistakes of ambition and not mistakes of sloth. Develop the strength to do bold things, not the strength to suffer. —NICCOLÒ

If you must play, decide on three things at the start: the rules of the game, the stakes, and the quitting time. —CHINESE PROVERB

In the world of action and negotiation, there is one principle that governs all others: The person who has more options has more power.

It is fatal to know too much at the outcome: boredom comes as quickly to the traveler who knows his route as to the novelist who is overcertain of his plot. —PAUL THEROUX,

If you can’t define it or act upon it, forget it.

Though you can upgrade your brain domestically, traveling and relocating provides unique conditions that make progress much faster. The different surroundings act as a counterpoint and mirror for your own prejudices, making weaknesses that much easier to fix.

There is no right answer to the question “What should I do with my life?” Forget “should” altogether. The next step—and that’s all it is—is pursuing something, it matters little what, that seems fun or rewarding.

If you don’t make mistakes, you’re not working on hard enough problems. And that’s a big mistake. —FRANK WILCZEK, 2004 Nobel Prize winner in physics

For the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?” And whenever the answer has been “No” for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something … 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. —STEVE JOBS,

Time without attention is worthless, so value attention over time.

What is the one goal, if completed, that could change everything?

Set rules for yourself so you can automate as much decision making as possible Don’t postpone decisions just to avoid uncomfortable conversations.

Embrace the choice-minimal lifestyle. It’s a subtle and under-exploited philosophical tool that produces dramatic increases in both output and satisfaction, all with less overwhelm.

Who you portray in your marketing isn’t necessarily the only demographic who buys your product—it’s often the demographic that most people want to identify with or belong to. The target isn’t the market. No one aspires to be the bland average, so don’t water down messaging to appeal to everyone—it will end up appealing to no one.

Measure compulsively, for as Peter Drucker stated, What gets measured gets managed.

Outside of science and law, most “rules” are just common practice. Just because everyone in your industry offers terms doesn’t mean you have to, and offering terms is the most consistent ingredient in start-up failure.

If you have no enemies, find a way to make them.

When you force the other person to act, you are the one in control.

Be the master of your own image rather than letting others define it for you.

power's crucial foundation, the ability to master your emotions.

Power is a social game. To learn and master it, you must develop die ability to study and understand people.

An understanding of people's hidden motives is die single greatest piece of knowledge you can have in acquiring power.

Reputation is the cornerstone of power.

Never be afraid, then, of the qualities that set you apart and draw attention to you.

Use the past, a vast storehouse of knowledge and wisdom. Isaac Newton called this “standing on the shoulders of giants.” He meant that in making his discoveries he had built on the achievements of others.

Bismarck once said, “Fools say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others' experience.”

In the game of power, the people you associate with are critical.

Only create associations with positive affinities.

Necessity rules the world. People rarely act unless compelled to. If you create no need for yourself, then you will be done away widi at first opportunity.

In your quest for power, you will constantiy find yourself in the position of asking for help from those more powerful than you. There is an art to asking for help, an art that depends on your ability to understand the person you are dealing with, and to not confuse your needs with theirs. Most people never succeed at this, because they are completely trapped in their own wants and desires. They start from the assumption that the people they are appealing to have a selfless interest in helping them. They talk as if their needs mattered to these peoplewho probably couldn't care less. Sometimes they refer to larger issues: a great cause, or grand emotions such as love and gratitude. They go for the big picture when simple, everyday realities would have much more appeal. What they do not realize is that even the most powerful person is locked inside needs of his own, and that if you make no appeal to his self-interest, he merely sees you as desperate or, at best, a waste of time.

you must train yourself to tiiink your way inside the other person's mind, to see their needs and interests, to get rid of the screen of your own feelings that obscure the truth.

Extend the law of scarcity to your own skills. Make what you are offering the world rare and hard to find, and you instandy increase its value.

Because humans are social creatures by nature, power depends on social interaction and circulation. To make yourself powerful you must place yourself at the center of things.

The mind must not wander from goal to goal, or be distracted by success from its sense of purpose and proportion. What is concentrated, coherent, and connected to its past has power.

Schopenhauer wrote, “Intellect is a magnitude of intensity, not a magnitude of extensity.”

Never assume that your criteria of behavior and judgment are universal. Not only is an inability to adapt to another culture the height of barbarism, it puts you at a disadvantage.

Be the master of your own image rather than letting others define it for you.

Working on yourself like clay should be one of your greatest and most pleasurable life tasks. It makes you in essence an artist an artist creating yourself.

If you are unsure of a course of action, do not attempt it. Your doubts and hesitations will infect your execution.

Any mistakes you commit through audacity are easily corrected with more audacity. Everyone admires the bold; no one honors the timid.

Hesitation puts obstacles in your path, boldness eliminates them. Once you understand this, you will find it essential to overcome your natural timidity and practice the art of audacity.

The bold move crowns seduction with triumph: It leaves no time for reflection.

It is the power of being able to overcome the natural human tendency to react to things as they happen, and instead to train oneself to step back, imagining the larger things taking shape beyond one's immediate vision.

Nature does not reveal its tricks, and what imitates nature by appearing effortless approximates nature's power.

As a person of power, you must research and practice endlessly before appearing in public, onstage or anywhere else. Never expose the sweat and labor behind your poise.

Withdrawal and disappearance are classic ways of controlling the options. You give people a sense of how things will fall apart without you, and you offer them a “choice”:

The Reality: Change is slow and gradual. It requires hard work, a bit of luck, a fair amount of self-sacrifice, and a lot ofpatience.

For a king respects himself and inspires the same sentiment in others. By acting regally and confident of your powers, you make yourself seem destined to wear a crown.

Never lose your self-respect, nor be too familiar with yourself when you are alone. Let your integrity itself be your own standard of rectitude, and be more indebted to the severity of your own judgment of yourself than to all external precepts. Desist from unseemly conduct, rather out of respect for your own virtue than for the strictures of external authority. Come to hold yourself in awe, and you will have no need of Seneca's imaginary tutor. Baltasar Gracian, 1601-1658

If we believe we are destined for great things, our belief will radiate outward, just as a crown creates an aura around a king.

People who wear crowns seem to feel no inner sense of the limits to what they can ask for or what they can accomplish. This too radiates outward. Limits and boundaries disappear.

Never show doubt, never lose your dignity beneath the crown, or it will not fit. It will seem to be destined for one more worthy. Do not wait for a coronation; the greatest emperors crown themselves.

Time, then, depends on perception, which, we know, can be willfully altered. This is die first thing to understand in mastering the art of timing.

slowing time down will give you a perspective on the times you live in, letting you take a certain distance and putting you in a less emotionally charged position to see the shapes of things to come.

The deadline, then, is a powerful tool. Close off the vistas of indecision and force people to make up their damn minds or get to the pointnever let them make you play on their excruciating terms. Never give them time.

Your mastery of timing can really only be judged by how you work with end timehow you quickly change the pace and bring things to a swift and definitive conclusion.

and a small mistake is often made worse and more visible when you try to fix it.

You need to turn your back on what you want, show your contempt and disdain.

He recognized that people do not always want words, or rational explanations, or demonstrations of the powers of science; they want an immediate appeal to their emotions.

Words stir up arguments and divisions; images bring people together. They are the quintessential instruments of power.

What has worth is worth paying for.

The powerful learn early to protect their most valuable resources: independence and room to maneuver. By paying the full price, they keep themselves free of dangerous entanglements and worries.

“giving when you are about to take.”

What money should buy is not lifeless objects but power over people.

a Tea Master prizes sentiment and association more than intrinsic value.”

As Machiavelli states, necessity is what impels men to take action, and once die necessity is gone, only rot and decay are left.

Only the weak rest on their laurels and dote on past triumphs; in the game of power there is never time to rest.

The men who have changed the universe have never gotten there by working on leaders, but rather by moving the masses.

Seduction often fails to get past the first step because it is too aggressive; the first move must always be a retreat.

Envy creates silent enemies.

Power requires a wide and solid support base, which envy can silendy destroy.

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

The powerful are constantly creating form, and their power comes from the rapidity with which they can change.

Never show any defensiveness. When you act defensive, you show your emotions, revealing a clear form.

learning to adapt to each new circumstance means seeing events through your own eyes, and often ignoring the advice that people constantly peddle your way. It means that ultimately you must throw out the laws that others preach, and the books they write to tell you what to do, and the sage advice of the elder.

The basic issue in marketing is creating a category you can be first in.

Marketing is a battle of perceptions, not products.

Everyone is interested in what’s new. Few people are interested in what’s better.

“If you want to make a big impression on another person, you cannot worm your way into their mind and then slowly build up a favorable opinion over a period of time. The mind doesn’t work that way. You have to blast your way into the mind. The reason you blast instead of worm is that people don’t like to change their minds. Once they perceive you one way, that’s it. They kind of file you away in their minds as a certain kind of person. You cannot become a different person in their minds.

perceptions in the minds of the customer or prospect. The perception is the reality.

Only by studying how perceptions are formed in the mind and focusing your marketing programs on those perceptions can you overcome your basically incorrect marketing instincts.

The most effective words are simple and benefit oriented.

The essence of marketing is narrowing the focus. You become stronger when you reduce the scope of your operations. You can’t stand for something if you chase after everything.

If you want to establish a firm foothold on the second rung of the ladder, study the firm above you. Where is it strong? And how do you turn that strength into a weakness? You must discover the essence of the leader and then present the prospect with the opposite. (In other words, don’t try to be better, try to be different.)

The long-term effects are often the exact opposite of the short-term effects.

Less is more. If you want to be successful today, you have to narrow the focus in order to build a position in the prospect’s mind.

Marketing is a game of mental warfare.

The generalist is weak.

The target is not the market. That is, the apparent target of your marketing is not the same as the people who will actually buy your product. Even though Pepsi-Cola’s target was the teenager, the market was everybody.

History teaches that the only thing that works in marketing is the single, bold stroke. Furthermore, in any given situation there is only one move that will produce substantial results. Successful generals study the battleground and look for that one bold stroke that is least expected by the enemy. Finding one is difficult. Finding more than one is usually impossible. Military strategist and author B.H. Liddell Hart calls this bold stroke “the line of, least expectation.” The Allied invasion came at Normandy, a place whose tide and rocky shore the Germans felt would be an unlikely choice for a landing of any scale. So it is in marketing. Most often there is only one place where a competitor is vulnerable. And that place should be the focus of the entire invading force. What works in marketing is the same as what works in the military: the unexpected.

Good short-term planning is coming up with that angle or word that differentiates your product or company. Then you set up a coherent long-term marketing direction that builds a program to maximize that idea or angle. It’s not a long-term plan, it’s a long-term direction.

While tracking trends can be a useful tool in dealing with the unpredictable future, market research can be more of a problem than a help. Research does best at measuring the past. New ideas and concepts are almost impossible to measure. No one has a frame of reference. People don’t know what they will do until they face an actual decision.

Ego is the enemy of successful marketing.

Real revolutions don’t arrive at high noon with marching bands and coverage on the 6:00 P.M. news. Real revolutions arrive unannounced in the middle of the night and kind of sneak up on you.

If you apply the immutable laws, you run the risk of being bad-mouthed, ignored, or even ostracized. Have patience. The immutable laws of marketing will help you achieve success. And success is the best revenge of all.

What and how should not be kept too separate. You’re asking for trouble if you try to decide what to do without understanding how to do it.

Nearly all makers have day jobs early in their careers.

Relentlessness wins because, in the aggregate, unseen details become visible.

It turns out that looking at things from other people’s point of view is practically the secret of success. Empathy doesn’t necessarily mean being self-sacrificing. Far from it. Understanding how someone else sees things doesn’t imply that you’ll act in his interest; in some situations—in war, for example— you want to do exactly the opposite.

Almost certainly, there is something wrong with you if you don’t think things you don’t dare say out loud.

The statements that make people mad are the ones they worry might be believed. I suspect the statements that make people maddest are those they worry might be true.

To do good work you need a brain that can go anywhere. And you especially need a brain that’s in the habit of going where it’s not supposed to.

Closed thoughts and an open face. Smile at everyone, and don’t tell them what you’re thinking.

Talking about an idea leads to more ideas. So the optimal plan, if you can manage it, is to have a few trusted friends you can speak openly to. This is not just a way to develop ideas; it’s also a good rule of thumb for choosing friends. The people you can say heretical things to without getting jumped on are also the most interesting to know.

How can you see the wave, when you’re the water? Always be questioning. That’s the only defence.

They remind us that it is the people who break rules that are the source of America’s wealth and power.

The thing about ideas, though, is that they lead to more ideas. Have you ever noticed that when you sit down to write something, half the ideas that end up in it are ones you thought of while writing?

So shelving an idea costs you not only that delay in implementing it, but also all the ideas that implementing it would have led to. In fact, shelving an idea probably even inhibits new ideas:

There are only two things you have to know about business: build something users love, and make more than you spend.

Economically, you can think of a startup as a way to compress your whole working life into a few years. Instead of working at a low intensity for forty years, you work as hard as you possibly can for four.

Wealth is the fundamental thing. Wealth is stuff we want: food, clothes, houses, cars, gadgets, travel to interesting places, and so on. You can have wealth without having money.

Someone graduating from college thinks, and is told, that he needs to get a job, as if the important thing were becoming a member of an institution. A more direct way to put it would be: you need to start doing something people want.

To get rich you need to get yourself in a situation with two things, measurement and leverage. You need to be in a position where your performance can be measured, or there is no way to get paid more by doing more. And you have to have leverage, in the sense that the decisions you make have a big effect.

A good hint to the presence of leverage is the possibility of failure. Upside must be balanced by downside, so if there is big potential for gain there must also be a terrifying possibility of loss.

What is technology? It’s technique. It’s the way we all do things. And when you discover a new way to do things, its value is multi- plied by all the people who use it. It is the proverbial fishing rod, rather than the fish. That’s the difference between a startup and a restaurant or a barber shop. You fry eggs or cut hair one cus- tomer at a time. Whereas if you solve a technical problem that a lot of people care about, you help everyone who uses your solution. That’s leverage.

Use difficulty as a guide not just in selecting the overall aim of your company, but also at decision points along the way. What this meant in practice was that we deliberately sought hard problems.

Startbypicking how to make wealth a hard problem, and then at every decision point, take the harder choice.

Since it became possible to get rich by creating wealth, everyone who has done it has used essentially the same recipe: measurement and leverage, where measurement comes from working with a small group, and leverage from de- veloping new techniques. The recipe was the same in Florence in 1200 as it is in Santa Clara today.

The only thing technology can’t cheapen is brand. Which is precisely why we hear ever more about it.

It seems strange to have to emphasize simplicity. You’d think simple would be the default. Ornate is more work. But something seems to come over people when they try to be creative. Beginning writers adopt a pompous tone that doesn’t sound anything like the way they speak. When you’re forced to be simple, you’re forced to face the real problem. When you can’t deliver ornament, you have to deliver substance.

Aiming at timelessness is a way to make yourself find the best answer: if you can imagine someone surpassing you, you should do it yourself. Some of the greatest masters did this so well that they left little room for those who came after.

Strangely enough, if you want to make something that will appeal to future generations, one way to do it is to try to appeal to past generations.

I think it’s because humor is related to strength. To have a sense of humor is to be strong: to keep one’s sense of humor is to shrug off misfortunes, and to lose one’s sense of humor is to be wounded by them. And so the mark—or at least the prerogative— of strength is not to take oneself too seriously. The confident will often, like swallows, seem to be making fun of the whole process slightly, as Hitchcock does in his films or Bruegel in his paintings (or Shakespeare, for that matter).

Good design is hard. If you look at the people who’ve done great work, one thing they all seem to have in common is that they worked very hard. If you’re not working hard, you’re probably wasting your time.

I think the greatest masters go on to achieve a kind of selflessness. They just want to get the right answer, and if part of the right answer has already been discovered by someone else, that’s no reason not to use it. They’re confident enough to take from anyone without feeling that their own vision will be lost in the process. The only style worth having is the one you can’t help.

If you do everything the way the average startup does it, you should expect average performance. The problem here is, average performance means you’ll go out of business. The survival rate for startups is way less than fifty percent. So if you’re running a startup, you had better be doing something odd. If not, you’re in trouble.

In business, as in war, surprise is worth as much as force.

All you have to do is keep telling your story, and eventually people will start to hear. It’s not when people notice you’re there that they pay attention; it’s when they notice you’re still there.

The Way of the Samurai is found in death.

If by setting one's heart right every morning and evening, one is able to live as though his body were already dead, he pains freedom in the Way. His whole life will be without blame, and he will succeed in his calling.

When we throw off our own bias, follow the sayings of the ancients, and confer with other people, matters should go well and without mishap.

Throughout your life advance daily, becoming more skillful than yesterday, more skillful than today. This is never-ending.

Thinking about things previously and then handling them lightly when the time comes is what this is all about. To face an event anew solve it lightly is difficult if you are not resolved beforehand, and there will always be uncertainty in hitting your mark. However, if the foundation is laid previously, you can think of the saying, "Matters of great concern should be treated lightly," as your own basis for action.

Above all, the Way of the Samurai should be in being aware that you do not know what is going to happen next, and in querying every item day and night.

In light of this, it would be good to make a model and to learn from that. To do this, one should look at many people and choose from each person his best point only. For example, one person for politeness, one for bravery, one for the proper way of speaking, one for correct conduct and one for steadiness of mind. Thus will the model be made.

"The Way of the Samurai is in desperateness. Ten men or more cannot kill such a man. Common sense will not accomplish great things. Simply become insane and desperate.'

In the words of the ancients, one should make his decisions within the space of seven breaths.

A warrior is a person who does things quickly.

When your mind is going hither and thither, discrimination will never be brought to a conclusion. With an intense, fresh and undelaying spirit, one will make his judgments within the space of seven breaths. It is a matter of being determined and having the spirit to break right through to the other side.

Courage is gritting one' s teeth ; it is simply doing that and pushing ahead, paying no attention to the circumstances.

There is surely nothing other than the single purpose of the present moment. A man's whole life is a succession of moment after moment. If one fully understands the present moment, there will be nothing else to do, and nothing else to pursue. Live being true to the single purpose of the moment

Thus, the Way of the Samurai is, morning after morning, the practice of death, considering whether it will be here or be there, imagining the most sightly way of dying, and putting one's mind firmly in death. Although this may be a most difficult thing, if one will do it, it can be done.

Human life is truly a short affair. It is better to live doing the things that you like.

There are two kinds of dispositions, inward and outward, and a person who is lacking in one or the other is worthless.

Money is a thing that will be there

Meditation on inevitable death should be performed daily. Every day when one's body and mind are at peace, one should meditate upon being ripped apart by arrows, rifles, spears and swords, being carried away by surging waves, being thrown into the midst of a great fire, being struck by lightning, being shaken to death by a great earthquake, falling from thousand-foot cliffs, dying of disease or committing seppuku at the death of one's master. And every day without fail one should consider himself as dead.

There is a reason that almost every war strategist warns against emulating the tactics of the opposition–you become an inferior copy of your enemy.

The payoff will come from a combination of scarcity and selectiveness.

Project success and the prophecy will fulfill itself. Manifest your intended result in your current attitude and you paint an alluring portrait.

never lose sight of “formlessness” and the fact that the strategy is DIRECTLY rooted in moderation.

“What is the meaning of life?” but rather, man being asked “What is the meaning of life?” and answering with his actions. Do that here on a smaller scale. Define how you want to be, the person or ideal to which you aspire. Pose the question that illustrates the chasm and answer it each time you’re asked. Or as Karl Jaspers wrote: “What one is, he has become through that cause which he has made his own.” Make who you’d like to be your cause, and each day set out to serve it. Through this, literally, you become who you truly are.

Wake each morning prepared for exertion. Do not sleep or leave the gym until you have. Drench the ground in your sweat, fill the pages with words. The Resistance will dog you the entire way, pay it no attention. When you diverge from the path, look inwards and correct–dedicate a second to chastisement and move on. But most importantly, realize that not knowing your purpose is no excuse for stasis. Even if the destination has yet to reveal itself, you still must be ready for the call. Prepare, be active, and be open.

to truly be your own master you literally must force labor from your body.

your [own.It](http://own.it/) seems to me that the key to strategic flexibility in life is to sow the seeds to a renaissance existence. Foster your interests in multiple fields, so that in light of the future, you have the ability to quickly ramp up one to dedicate your life around.

Cut waste ruthlessly, always look for ways to avoid dead ends, and when you do fuck up, learn all you can from it so you don’t have to do it again.

I enter the conversation informed or I don’t enter at all and I always, always have something to offer.

Daily action builds habits. It gives you practice and will make you an expert in a short time. If you don't break the chain, you'll start to spot opportunities you otherwise wouldn't. Small improvements accumulate into large improvements rapidly because daily action provides "compounding interest.

Where there is the lowest demand, you will find the lowest prices. You can kill yourself in the high cost, low margins game of politics, military or Law or you can find the uncontested niche and turn it into your domain.

I’ve surrounded myself with people who have expectations for me that are higher than my own, that I have to rise to meet and satisfy.If you aren’t going to say ‘I’m the best’ who will?” Respect is the same way. If you aren’t going to demand that you be treated with it, who will?

1) Don’t talk, Just Do. And quite frankly, it’s a lot easier to Get Stuff Done when you keep your goals to yourself. What I did instead was finagle chances to prove myself, then worked my ass off doing it. If youth is not the time for calculated risk and big plans, what time is?

Time without attention is worthless, so value attention over time.

Godin listed the skills he felt couldn’t be outsourced.analysis, insight, surprise, responsibility, humor,creativity, guts. respect, charisma, vision, calm, love.The only way I’ve found them is to surround yourself with people that already have them.

My feeling is that if you don’t make the people around you better then you are not working hard enough, you’re not bringing enough value to the table.

Think of it this way, if there is a general rule or aphorism that lays out your path then it’s probably a common one. And thus it lacks any scarcity or value. We know for sure at least one person has already done it, and enough followed to propagate a cliché about it. Is that what you want? Does that sound like the field or the life for you.

So I would offer this to the people who are my age and coming up. Trust your gut. Do the stuff that actually makes sense, let the short term money ride and build something based on reciprocity, authenticity and value.

I am starting to feel that when you stop trying so hard and let your subconscious do what it needs to, you find better results than you do in the Pyrrhic battle for control.

wake up each morning and refuse to be defined by other people.

One thing I learned from Robert was that you always attack the strategy of your enemy. This sounds simple, but it’s not. Most of the time, you’re attacking the tactics–or just trying to beat them in the game they chose. (We have to outrun them to that hill as opposed to, what if we made that hill a worthless target). But one thing you can always do in life is attack strategy. Figure out what it is, and then find a way to to interrupt it. Attacking strategy is a long-term plan. It’s getting inside and disrupting. It’s how you understand that even if you win otherwise, your victory is defined by the fact that you’re reacting against someone else. That means you’re focusing your energy in a lot of directions that you don’t necessary wish to; it’s full of waste and costs and friction. I am trying to to look at situations and go “what is their strategy?” and “can you I go around it?” instead of just accepting it as a given.

The smart people are building community and a deeper relationship whenever they can.

Vision is one of the few skills that can’t be outsourced. Do you have any? Or are all your ideas derivative of things that already exist?”It’s like Facebook but for people who love cats.” Are you able to understand where things are going well enough that you can combine converging trends into a cohesive and comprehensive conclusion?“This industry is leading this one, and what we see there will matter for this reason. Here is how we can draft of that energy.” And probably most importantly, are you in an environment that incubates those ideas instead of stifling them? “If you have any ideas, Ryan, now is the time…You’re on the right track, but it’s tell me how and why–not what.” Vision. it’s just about the only competitive advantage left. You really can’t be more efficient on the internet–websites load at about the same speed and Google is hard to game–so you have to be better at scope, scale and vision. Because really, that’s all you have.

Agreeing to disagree is the middle way–and thus not your way. Either admit that you are wrong or fight it until the end.

People want to make money but they also want to work with people they like, who understand their goals and show they have potential.

It matters because it is strategic thinking at its very essence. Instead of looking at the situation from the framed lens you were given, what if you torn it all down? What if you took nothing for granted, got creative and came up with something inspired?

there is a huge opportunity for anyone smart enough to cut through the bullshit and actually do the learning.

Nothing is better than mulling some big, macro idea over–picking at it until it crumbles into understanding. Then translating it, explaining it and applying it. I’ve been doing that with Wikipedia pages, connecting articles and creating news ones based on my research.

Carve a path. No matter how much it bothers other people.

The successful companies of the future won’t “sell” things, as much as they will solve economic problems and thus create value for the customer. Sometimes those two things are the same, but often times they aren’t.This is the key to understanding the economic future of the world, and why some companies will compete and some won’t.

When your boss asks you a question, that question should become the jumping off point for several more ideas and thoughts. If you want to elevate yourself, you must sink your thoughts and time into not only answering the question but going above and beyond it to add value to the train of thought your boss was on.

My philosophy, and it’s one that’s working pretty well is this: There are more than enough people willing to tell your story for you if its good enough. In the meantime, I’ve too much other stuff I need to work on.

I’ve always known that I was a bit different – that I had something that most people don’t have. But instead of feeling confident, like that was an asset, I doubted myself. I knew that I wouldn’t be doing what everyone else was doing but I didn’t know that I’d be doing something better – I thought I’d be rejected instead of doing the rejecting. (Or something close to that. Needless to say, it wasn’t a positive state of mind) That’s how it works, the system is aimed at breaking people who can disrupt it. The superficial incentives all point to mediocrity and sameness. But when you leave that state of mind, everything changes.

All I know is that I have seen exponential rewards from going my own way. I don’t mean school or Hollywood – I mean being in utter and complete control of the person I’d like to be. And understanding the process it takes to get there. That requires submission – not to the Trinity – but to the idea that kicking and clawing will get you nowhere.

And after reading about every major American hustler of the last hundred years, I don’t think I came across a single one that wasn’t 1)Intimately aware of every step of the process 2) Almost 100% self-taught.

Over the last 6 year years, my library has gone from a hobby to priceless labor of love. It is without question, directly responsible for where I am today.

Frank Lucas called this “backtracking.” He’d lock himself in a room, pull the blinds and tune everybody out. He’d look forward and inward and outward and just think. That’s where he came up with the Cadaver Connection – importing heroin directly from South East Asia for a tenth of the cost in imitation coffins that they’d sneak on US Army jets. John Boyd called it his “draw down” period and it’s where all his big ideas came from – EM Theory, Destruction and Creation. Both of them relied on introspection to create innovation. From meditative isolation comes clarity.

Which, by the way, is exactly how I’m starting to look at developing yourself. Like a start up. You are start up. Don’t worry about monetization. Or a safety net or health insurance or an office. Aim for critical mass and pick up support wherever you can. Woo every customer. Find something that no one else does and do it better than they ever can. Invest in yourself. Sweat equity. What are you doing? Do you love it? Start ups run on love. Read the books. Look for the angel investors. Have an exit strategy.

And all of the equalizing power of new media is lost on you if you can’t step up and extend yourself.

More than anything, it’s a crap shoot. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve had bigger scoops, cooler angles and better sources but seen it go nowhere. You have no idea how your email is going to catch someone or what kind of newsday your up against. That means you have to be doing this all the time, try to be clever and hope to get lucky.

If you think of a new media presence as something like a bank account – assets that include your profiles, contacts, track record, fans, resources – then this is just one way to make a deposit. It’s something you can keep and use again later. I don’t want to say that it’s easy, but think about it, with one email about a post that showed up in my RSS reader, I managed to call out one of the biggest managers in music, in front of everybody. And I didn’t do it with anything that you don’t have access to.

Seneca had this thing where once a month he would practice poverty. He’d scale down his diet, sleep on the floor and stay away from business. Like a solider who performs maneuvers in times of peace, he said, you should practice misfortune in times of fortune. The idea being that fear is mostly bred from unfamiliarity and unfamiliarity is easily fixed.

Douglass risked violence and death to read whenever he could, what excuse do you have?

The fundamental rule of the internet is essentially this: Just doing it is cheaper than deciding about doing it. Or, it’s better to try stuff and get it wrong, then talk about it first and get it 100% right.

I have this very intense fear of being regular. Of becoming normal. Of being just like everyone else. I have no idea where it comes from or why it colors the way I think about things. But it does.

Think about the phrase “making connections.” A lot of people confuse it with seeing connections. Any idiot can see a connection.Making them is a totally different animal. It’s constructive process. It’s creative process. It’s taking two unrelated things and forging a relationship that wasn’t there before you found.

it takes a lot of hard work and hard questions to examine your life through a critical and detached lens. To break the cycle of impulse and indulgence. To become someone who’s in control of themselves, the direction that they go and the choices that they make.

there isn’t a single part of your life that isn’t work – a part of you that in order to improve doesn’t take honesty, investment and effort.

One rightly understand that rules are just guidelines, flexible markers that can be used to accommodate change if only treated with the right amount of respect and acknowledgment.

Not by thinking about the question at hand but by the factors that created the necessity of the question. That means figuring out what something boils down to, why, and ignoring the rest of the shit that people get hung up on.

Life is an effects based operation. And then means looking at things not as they are but what they’re intended to be. It means training yourself to look cross-eyed so you can that thing right below the surface, the thing that everyone else is missing.

When you’re trying to accomplish something that is dependent on other people’s actions, the only solution is to examine their incentives. Step back and examine what makes them act the way they do. Figure out their self-interest and many times, you won’t even need to do anything but explain how what you want is exactly that. So think about incentives. Always. Your own. Theirs. Ours.

John Boyd had a rule that whenever he was using data as support for an argument, he’d deflate the numbers to understate his case. The idea was use lower number while making a strong case; when he was challenged and fact checked, it’d always be worse when the new calculations came in.

It’s the idea that if you can break apart something, it loses its power over you.

The canvas strategy involves actively finding outlets for other people – in fact, actually making them better rather than simply looking so. 3 Keys: 1) Find new trains of thought to hand over for them to explore. Track down angles and contradictions and analogies that they can use. Ex: I was reading the biography of \_\_\_\_\_\_, I think you should look at it because there may be something you can do with the imagery. 2) Find outlets, people, associations, and connections. Cross wires to create new sparks. Ex: I know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I think you two should talk. Have you thought about meeting \_\_\_\_? 3) Find inefficiencies and waste and redundancies. Identify leaks and patches to free up resources for new areas. Ex: You don’t need to do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ anymore, I have an idea for improving the process, let me try it so you can worry about something else. In other words, discover opportunities to promote their creativity, find outlets and people for collaboration, and eliminate distractions that hinder their progress and focus.

He means that after you’ve cleared out dependency and distractions, you acquire, in a way, a kind of grand strategy: a sense of self. When that becomes your only guiding principle, what is happening on the outside is irrelevant. You’re free because grand strategy gives way to formlessness. And formlessness to peace and calm and self-assurance.

Good analysis requires understanding. Understanding requires thinking beyond the superficial notions of what we think things are and looking at the assumptions and facts that undergird them.

our perception puffs things up and embellishes them. We underestimate how this hurts us spiritually as well as strategically.

The problem with a lot of advice is that it’s a good part projection of the other person, and not about you. What I like to do is search out things that speak to me, that I can tweak into becoming some sort of lesson rather than an explicit instruction from someone else.

People, he said, are the terrain.

In jujitsu, one finds an opponents center of gravity and attacks that point to throw them off balance.

if you can properly turn a problem upside down, bad is constantly a new source of good.

life is defined by how much you do, how often you took the difficult road and were rewarded for it. It is not, and will never be, improved by how much you avoid and scheme and congratulate.

As a human being, your job is to work. To show up. To learn. To contribute.

weak minds have always gravitated to: a false sense of superiority at the expense of a real opportunity.

tolerate conditions they don’t approve of. The next time you find yourself in a new environment, dedicate weeks or even a few months to understanding the terrain. Give yourself time to be underestimated. Familiarize yourself with the system so you know what to do when you fuck up, so nothing is irreparable or permanent.

The Stoics had a similar idea to this ocean analogy. Not only are the things we own not really ours, they said, but even our life itself is possessed by us only in trust. It can be taken back at any moment.

Here’s the thing I’ve learned about ideas. It’s your job to have them.

You’re after something elusive and rare and critical: to not be shaken. If you can accept that your strategy will almost certainly “feel wrong” at some point, you’ll be less likely to ditch it at the critical moment.

Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you.

“Don’t aim at success—the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one’s dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one’s surrender to a person other than oneself.

Humor was another of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds.

They may have been few in number, but they offer suffcient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way. And there were always choices to make.

The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity—even under the most diffcult circumstances—to add a deeper meaning to his life.

We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.

When the impossibility of replacing a person is realized, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its continuance to appear in all its magnitude. A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life.

The immediate influence of behavior is always more effective than that of words.

Thus it can be seen that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become. Such a tension is inherent in the human being and therefore is indispensable to mental well-being.

What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task.

One should not search for an abstract meaning of life. Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone’s task is as unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.

In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible. Thus, logotherapy sees in responsibleness the very essence of human existence.

“Live as if you were living already for the second time and as if you had acted the first time as wrongly as you are about to act now!”

Such a precept confronts him with life’s finiteness as well as the finality of what he makes out of both his life and himself.

we can discover this meaning in life in three dif- ferent ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering.

I never tire of saying that the only really transitory aspects of life are the potentialities; but as soon as they are actualized, they are rendered realities at that very moment; they are saved and delivered into the past, wherein they are rescued and preserved from transitoriness.

for everything hinges upon our realizing the essentially transitory possibilities. Man constantly makes his choice concerning the mass of present potentialities; which of these will be condemned to nonbeing and which will be actualized? Which choice will be made an actuality once and forever, an immortal “footprint in the sands of time”? At any moment, man must decide, for better or for worse, what will be the monument of his existence.

turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment;

perception of meaning, as I see it, more specifically boils down to becoming aware of a possibility against the background of reality or, to express it in plain words, to becoming aware of what can be done about a given situation.

“notion that experiencing can be as valuable as achieving is therapeutic because it compensates for our one-sided emphasis on the external world of achievement at the expense of the internal world of experience.”

The flow isn’t like time, it’s like life. It’s like a heartbeat or the way you breathe, it can jump, speed up, slow down, stop, or pound right through like a machine. If the beat is time, flow is what we do with that time, how we live through it. The beat is everywhere, but every life has to find its own flow.

for me hustling is the ultimate metaphor for the basic human struggles: the struggle to survive and resist, the struggle to win and to make sense of it al

This is why the hustler’s story—through hip-hop —has connected with a global audience. The deeper we get into those sidewalk cracks and into the mind of the young hustler trying to find his fortune there, the closer we get to the ultimate human story, the story of struggle, which is what defines us al .

That desire to compete—and to win—was the engine of everything we did.

We were going to impose our sense of what was hot on the world around us.

And sometimes, I’m only competing with myself, to be a better artist and businessman. To be a better person with a broader vision. But it’s stil that old sense of competition that motivates me.

I had to learn to keep my mind stil so I could think clearly and sometimes hold back even when my heart is teling me to go in.

The gift that Jordan had wasn’t just that he was wiling to do the work, but he loved doing it, because he could feel himself getting stronger, ready for anything.

I’ve never been a purely linear thinker. My mind is always jumping around, restless, making connections, mixing and matching ideas, rather than marching in a straight

I’ve always believed in motion and action, in fol owing connections wherever they take me, and in not getting entrenched. My life has been more poetry than prose, more about unpredictable leaps and links than simple steady movement, or worse, stagnation. It’sal owed me to stay open to the next thing without feeling held back by a preconceived notion of what I’m supposed to be doing next.

Artists can have greater access to reality; they can see patterns and details and connections that other people, distracted by the blur of life, might miss. Just sharing that truth can be a very powerful thing.

A Long Tail is just culture unfiltered by economic scarcity.

Mea- sured by the amount of attention a product attracts, reputation can be converted into other things of value: jobs, tenure, audiences, and lu- crative offers of all sorts.

a company’s brand is not what the company says it is, but what Google says it is. The new tastemakers are us. Word of mouth is now a public conversation, carried in blog comments and customer reviews, exhaustively collated and measured. The ants have megaphones.

Human attention is more expandable than money. The primary effect of the Long Tail is to shift our taste toward niches, but to the extent we’re more satisfied by what we’re finding, we may well consume more of it.

It’s hard to overstate how fundamental to economics the notion is that you can’t have it all for free—the entire discipline is oriented around studying trade-offs and how they’re made.

In every industrial revolution, some key factor of production is dras- tically reduced in cost. Relative to the previous cost to achieve that function, the new factor is virtually free. Physical force in the indus- trial revolution became virtually free compared to its expense when it derived from animal muscle power and human muscle power. Suddenly you could do things you could not afford to do before.

a society that asks questions and has the power to answer them is a healthier society than one that simply accepts what it’s told from a narrow range of experts and institutions.

The secret to creating a thriving Long Tail business can be summa- rized in two imperatives: 1. Make everything available. 2. Help me find it.

Don’t predict; measure and respond.

the best way to market to Long Tail consumers is to find out who is influencing them and focus your energies there. That starts with doing less messaging and more listening.

Y Combination Start-up Library by Paul Graham

As societies get richer, they learn something about work that's a lot like what they learn about diet. We know now that the healthiest diet is the one our peasant ancestors were forced to eat because they were poor. Like rich food, idleness only seems desirable when you don't get enough of it. I think we were designed to work, just as we were designed to eat a certain amount of fiber, and we feel bad if we don't.

In fact most of the money to be made from big trends is made indirectly. It was not the railroads themselves that made the most money during the railroad boom, but the companies on either side, like Carnegie's steelworks, which made the rails, and Standard Oil, which used railroads to get oil to the East Coast, where it could be shipped to Europe. I think the Internet will have great effects, and that what we've seen so far is nothing compared to what's coming. But most of the winners will only indirectly be Internet companies;

A nerd, in other words, is someone who concentrates on substance.

Instead of being dominated by a few, giant tree-structured organizations, it's now looking like the economy of the future will be a fluid network of smaller, independent units.

For the future, the trend to bet on seems to be networks of small, autonomous groups whose performance is measured individually. And the societies that win will be the ones with the least impedance.

You need three things to create a successful startup: to start with good people, to make something customers actually want, and to spend as little money as possible. Most startups that fail do it because they fail at one of these. A startup that does all three will probably succeed.

I can think of several heuristics for generating ideas for startups, but most reduce to this: look at something people are trying to do, and figure out how to do it in a way that doesn't suck.

If you think about people you know, you'll find the animal test is easy to apply. Call the person's image to mind and imagine the sentence "so-and-so is an animal." If you laugh, they're not. You don't need or perhaps even want this quality in big companies, but you need it in a startup.

What drives people to start startups is (or should be) looking at existing technology and thinking, don't these guys realize they should be doing x, y, and z? And that's also a sign that one is a good hacker.

As in science, the hard part is not answering questions but asking them:

Merely measuring something has an uncanny tendency to improve it.

You can get surprisingly far by just not giving up. This isn't true in all fields. There are a lot of people who couldn't become good mathematicians no matter how long they persisted. But startups aren't like that. Sheer effort is usually enough, so long as you keep morphing your idea.

To get rich you need to get yourself in a situation with two things, measurement and leverage. You need to be in a position where your performance can be measured, or there is no way to get paid more by doing more. And you have to have leverage, in the sense that the decisions you make have a big effect.

All you need to do is be part of a small group working on a hard problem.

Use difficulty as a guide not just in selecting the overall aim of your company, but also at decision points along the way. What this meant in practice was that we deliberately sought hard problems.

In an artificial world, only extremists live naturally.

The way to deal with uncertainty is to analyze it into components.

A need that's narrow but genuine is a better starting point than one that's broad but hypothetical.

If you know your peers are going to push you in some direction, choose good peers, and position yourself so they push you in a direction you like.

In fact, the whole concept of a "good effort" is a fake idea adults invented to encourage kids. It is not found in nature.

I'm just saying you should think about who you really admire and hang out with them, instead of whoever circumstances throw you together with.

Treating a startup idea as a question changes what you're looking for. If an idea is a blueprint, it has to be right. But if it's a question, it can be wrong, so long as it's wrong in a way that leads to more ideas.

Ideas get developed in the process of explaining them to the right kind of person. You need that resistance, just as a carver needs the resistance of the wood.

I find that to have good ideas I need to be working on some problem. You can't start with randomness. You have to start with a problem, then let your mind wander just far enough for new ideas to form.

the best way to solve a problem is often to redefine it.

I finally got being a good startup founder down to two words: relentlessly resourceful.

"Make something people want" is the destination, but "Be relentlessly resourceful" is how you get there.

You can only avoid competition by avoiding good ideas.

Startups are more like science, where you need to follow the trail wherever it leads.

You should compete against what someone else could be doing, not just what you can see people doing.

As Richard Feynman said, the imagination of nature is greater than the imagination of man. You'll find more interesting things by looking at the world than you could ever produce just by thinking.

Fear of failure is an extraordinarily powerful force. Usually it prevents people from starting things, but once you publish some definite ambition, it switches directions and starts working in your favor. I think it's a pretty clever piece of jiujitsu to set this irresistible force against the slightly less immovable object of becoming rich.

Good writing is an elaborate effort to seem spontaneous.

The Icarus Deception: How High Will You Fly? By Seth Godin

Why Make Art? Because you must. The new connected economy demands it and will reward you for nothing else.

The new safety zone is the never-ending creation of ever-deeper personal connection. Creating ideas that spread and connecting the disconnected are the two pillars of our new society, and both of them require the posture of the artist.

What’s scarce is trust, connection, and surprise. These are three elements in the work of a successful artist.

All of those people who have made such a difference in the world . . . None of those people were ordained. None of those people were preapproved. None of those people were considered all-stars at an early age.

We don’t risk interactions in order to spread the word about something obvious or trite. The remarkable is almost always new and untested, fresh and risky.

the connection economy works horizontally—allowing anyone to stand up and make an offer.

Since emotional labor scales so dramatically, the ability to bring a little more to the table is the chance of a lifetime. “A little more” compounds, because ideas spread.

compliance and obedience, feel it for what it is—a reminder of the way you’ve been trained, not a sensible or rational approach to the opportunity in front of you.

Seek out questions, not answers.

the habit of measuring how many frontiers you crossed today.

Six Daily Habits for Artists Sit alone; sit quietly. Learn something new without any apparent practical benefit. Ask individuals for bold feedback; ignore what you hear from the crowd. Spend time encouraging other artists. Teach, with the intent of making change. Ship something that you created.

Tension focuses our attention. Tension brings us closer, eager to find out how the tension will be relieved. It takes confidence and guts to intentionally create tension.

If not enough people doubt you, you’re not making a difference.

The resistance is not something to be avoided; it’s something to seek out.

You can’t accurately see until you abandon your worldview.

The Hard Thing about hard things by Ben Horowitz

The hard thing isn’t dreaming big. The hard thing is waking up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat when the dream turns into a nightmare.There’s no recipe for really complicated, dynamic situations.That’s the hard thing about hard things—there is no formula for dealing with them.

There are no shortcuts to knowledge, especially knowledge gained from personal experience. Following conventional wisdom and relying on shortcuts can be worse than knowing nothing at all.

I learned to look for alternative narratives and explanations coming from radically different perspectives to inform my outlook.

Note to self: It’s a good idea to ask, “What am I not doing?”

Shock is a great mechanism for behavioral change.

Every time you make the hard, correct decision you become a bit more courageous and every time you make the easy, wrong decision you become a bit more cowardly.

As it turns out, this is one thing all great men and women of history have in common. Like oxygen to a fire, obstacles became fuel for the blaze that was their ambition. Nothing could stop them, they were (and continue to be) impossible to discourage or contain. Every impediment only served to make the inferno within them burn with greater ferocity.

All great victories, be they in politics, business, art, or seduction, involved resolving vexing problems with a potent cocktail of creativity, focus, and daring. When you have a goal, obstacles are actually teaching you how to get where you want to go—carving you a path.

Nothing makes us feel this way; we choose to give in to such feelings.

Humans are still primed to detect threats and dangers that no longer exist

Discipline in perception lets you clearly see the advantage and the proper course of action in every situation—without the pestilence of panic or fear.

What such a man needs is not courage but nerve control, cool headedness. This he can get only by practice. —THEODORE ROOSEVELT

If an emotion can’t change the condition or the situation you’re dealing with, it is likely an unhelpful emotion.

We defeat emotions with logic

Logic is questions and statements. With enough of them, we get to root causes (which are always easier to deal with).

Don’t let the force of an impression when it first hit you knock you off your feet; just say to it: Hold on a moment; let me see who you are and what you represent. Let me put you to the test. —EPICTETUS

when you can break apart something, or look at it from some new angle, it loses its power over you.

Where the head goes, the body follows. Perception precedes action. Right action follows the right perspective.

Emerson put it best: “We cannot spend the day in explanation.” Don’t waste time on false constructs.

Genius is the ability to put into effect what is in your mind. There’s no other definition of it. —F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Having learned early in life that reality was falsely hemmed in by rules and compromises that people had been taught as children, Jobs had a much more aggressive idea of what was or wasn’t possible. To him, when you factored in vision and work ethic, much of life was malleable.

A good person dyes events with his own color . . . and turns whatever happens to his own benefit. —SENECA

We must all either wear out or rust out, every one of us. My choice is to wear out. —THEODORE ROOSEVELT

If you want momentum, you’ll have to create it yourself, right now, by getting up and getting started.

He says the best way out is always through And I agree to that, or in so far As I can see no way out but through. —ROBERT FROST

Consider this mind-set. never in a hurry never worried never desperate never stopping short

Doing new things invariably means obstacles. A new path is, by definition, uncleared. Only with persistence and time can we cut away debris and remove impediments.

Failure puts you in corners you have to think your way out of. It is a source of breakthroughs.

Follow the process and not the prize.

Right action—unselfish, dedicated, masterful, creative—that is the answer to that question. That’s one way to find the meaning of life. And how to turn every obstacle into an opportunity.

Pragmatism is not so much realism as flexibility. There are a lot of ways to get from point A to point B.

Men will not look at things as they really are, but as they wish them to be—and are ruined. In politics there are no perfectly safe courses; prudence consists in choosing the least dangerous ones.

I answer for the reasons given above that a blunder ought never to be perpetrated to avoid war, because it is not to be avoided, but is only deferred to your disadvantage.

he who has relied least on fortune is established the strongest.

And in examining their actions and lives one cannot see that they owed anything to fortune beyond opportunity,

For injuries ought to be done all at one time, so that, being tasted less, they offend less; benefits ought to be given little by little, so that the flavour of them may last longer.

A prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline;

men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails.

so it is necessary for a prince to know how to make use of both natures, and that one without the other is not durable.

Without doubt princes become great when they overcome the difficulties and obstacles by which they are confronted, and therefore fortune, especially when she desires to make a new prince great, who has a greater necessity to earn renown than an hereditary one, causes enemies to arise and form designs against him, in order that he may have the opportunity of overcoming them, and by them to mount higher, as by a ladder which his enemies have raised.

A prince is also respected when he is either a true friend or a downright enemy, that is to say, when, without any reservation, he declares himself in favour of one party against the other; which course will always be more advantageous than standing neutral;

For my part I consider that it is better to be adventurous than cautious, because fortune is a woman, and if you wish to keep her under it is necessary to beat and ill-use her; and it is seen that she allows herself to be mastered by the adventurous rather than by those who go to work more coldly. She is, therefore, always, woman-like, a lover of young men, because they are less cautious, more violent, and with more audacity command her. that all men, or the larger number of them, who have performed great deeds in the world, and excelled all others in their day, have had their birth and beginning in baseness and obscurity; or have been aggrieved by Fortune in some outrageous way.

Successful viral products don’t have viral marketing bolted on once the product has been developed. It’s not a marketing strategy. Instead, it’s designed into the product from the very beginning as part of the fundamental architecture of the experience.

If the fundamental product doesn’t drive a viral motivation from its users, then it’s very hard to force it.

Instead of: “We have product X, how do we virally spread it?” … we ask: “We have viral loop X, what’s the right product to put into it?” Once you have that question in mind, it becomes a lot easier to start brainstorming compelling experiences that might be inherently viral.

there’s a very short checklist of things you need to do in order to make your site viral: Make it EFFICIENT to spread your site Give people an INCENTIVE to send it to their friends Have a GREAT product that keeps people around spreading it through time

More data and faster learning cycles.

Increasing the prominence of high-value actions by removing low-value actions.

competing via a differentiated positioning rather than based on a feature checklist.

Instead of measuring YOUR conversion rates and revenue generated, instead you might figure out the metrics of what benefits you are providing to the user.

One of the highest leverage design decisions you can make is not about the look of an individual page, but what happens before and after it.

Make it insanely great, even while you copy, steal, reinvent, or invent whatever you need to make that happen.

Have a vision for what you are trying to do. Use data to validate and help you navigate that vision, and map it down into small enough pieces where you can begin to execute in a data-informed way.

Every startup is a series of iterative experiments that gets you from zero to product/market fit, and if you can do it before running out of money, then you might get rich.

Growth hackers are a hybrid of marketer and coder, one who looks at the traditional question of “How do I get customers for my product?” and answers with A/B tests, landing pages, viral factor, email deliverability, and Open Graph. On top of this, they layer the discipline of direct marketing, with its emphasis on quantitative measurement, scenario modeling via spreadsheets, and a lot of database queries. If a startup is pre-product/market fit, growth hackers can make sure virality is embedded at the core of a product. After product/market fit, they can help run up the score on what’s already working.

Tapping into an emotional desire to share and communicate is a prerequisite for building a long-term product.

One needs practice to achieve mastery, a body of experience before one achieves real success. And if what we are missing when we fail is individual skill, then what is needed is simply more training and practice.

They provide a kind of cognitive net. They catch mental flaws inherent in all of us—flaws of memory and attention and thoroughness. And because they do, they raise wide, unexpected possibilities.

Good checklists, on the other hand, are precise. They are efficient, to the point, and easy to use even in the most difficult situations. They do not try to spell out everything

Instead, they provide reminders of only the most critical and important steps—the ones that even the highly skilled professionals using them could miss.

Good checklists are, above all, practical.

A rule of thumb some use is to keep it to between five and nine items, which is the limit of working memory.

checklist—“they improve their outcomes with no increase in skill. That’s what we are doing when we use the checklist.”

The checklist gets the dumb stuff out of the way, the routines your brain shouldn’t have to occupy itself with

Just as powerful, though, was the effect that the routine of the checklist—the discipline—had on us.

So early in life, I had learned that if you want something, you had better make some noise.

“The main thing you got to remember is that everything in the world is a hustle.

in order to get something you had to look as though you already had something.

As is the case in any jungle, the hustler's every waking hour is lived with both the practical and the subconscious knowledge that if he ever relaxes, if he ever slows down, the other hungry, restless foxes, ferrets, wolves, and vultures out there with him won't hesitate to make him their prey.

I read aimlessly, until I learned to read selectively, with a purpose.

I had learned early one important thing, and that was to always teach in terms that the people could understand.

Quick “picking up” was probably the number one survival rule when I'd been out there in the streets as a hustler.

So over you is the greatest enemy a man can have-and that is fear.

I had enough experience to know that in order to be a good organizer ofanything which you expect to succeed-including yourself-you must almost mathematically analyze cold facts.

it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

Anything I do today, I regard as urgent. No man is given but so much time to accomplish whatever is his life's work.

“Only persons really changed history those who changed men's thinking about themselves.

How to Live: A Life of Montaigne by Sarah Bakewell

Essayer, in French, means simply to try. To essay something is to test or taste it, or give it a whirl.

If my mind could gain a firm footing, I would not make essays, I would make decisions; but it is always in apprenticeship and on trial.

“Observe, observe perpetually,” was his rule, she said—and what he observed was, above all, this river of life running through his existence.

If you fail to grasp life, it will elude you. If you do grasp it, it will elude you anyway. So you must follow it—and “you must drink quickly as though from a rapid stream that will not always flow.”

“I try to increase it in weight, I try to arrest the speed of its flight by the speed with which I grasp it … The shorter my possession of life, the deeper and fuller I must make it.”

People with good memories have cluttered minds, but his brain was so blissfully empty that nothing could get in the way of common sense.

If one could only get these two things right—controlling and paying attention—most other problems would take care of themselves.

For him, abstract systems were of no use; what counted was critical self-awareness: the ability to pry into one’s own motivations and yet to accept oneself as one was.

Montaigne discouraged tedious small talk.

Moderation sees itself as beautiful; it is unaware that in the eye of the immoderate it appears black and sober, and consequently ugly-looking.

I turn my gaze inward, I fix it there and keep it busy. Everyone looks in front of him; as for me, I look inside of me; I have no business but with myself; I continually observe myself, I take stock of myself, I taste myself … I roll about in myself.

A well-known principle of human behavior says that when we ask someone to do us a favor we will be more successful if we provide a reason.

It seems that it was not the whole series of words, but the first one, “because,” that made the difference.

The secret of their effectiveness lies in the way they structure their requests, the way they arm themselves with one or another of the weapons of influence that exist within the social environment.

All that is required is to trigger the great stores of influence that already exist in the situation and direct them toward the intended target.

If I can get you to make a commitment (that is, to take a stand, to go on record), I will have set the stage for your automatic and ill-considered consistency with that earlier commitment.

once a person’s self-image is altered, all sorts of subtle advantages become available to someone who wants to exploit that new image.

something special happens when people personally put their commitments on paper: They live up to what they have written down.

In times of such uncertainty, the natural tendency is to look around at the actions of others for clues. What is easy to forget, though, is that everybody else observing the event is likely to be looking for social evidence, too.

Thus the most influential leaders are those who know how to arrange group conditions to allow the principle of social proof to work maximally in their favor.

An innocent association with either bad things or good things will influence how people feel about us.

The outward signs of power and authority frequently may be counterfeited with the flimsiest of materials.

The idea of potential loss plays a large role in human decision making.

- Confidence comes from within. And when you believe in yourself, others will to. This is a universal law and a secret known to all leaders.

- Meaning does not exist as a concrete reality; it is purely a subjective phenomenon of perception.

In order to fulfill my dreams, I must help other people fulfill their own dreams. The universe works for and rewards those who help others. The greater the energy you put fore hand, coupled with the service you provide to others, the better results you will enjoy.

- The mind encodes powerfully held beliefs differently from weakly held ones.

- Resourceful people expect to be able to find a way to achieve their outcome.

- If you intend to connect with someone before beginning to talk to them, you will project that intent and that person will unconsciously pick up on it.

- If you want to do something well, its worth doing poorly first. That is why taking action is always better than not taking action.

The more empowering habits you have, the better you life will be.

- The great equalizer among us all is that in each and every day we have the same 24 hrs to invest. Most people don’t think of their time as investment. Once you’ve spent today’s 24 hrs you can never get them back ever.

- Luck is where preparation meets opportunity. Be prepared and relentlessly pursue the opportunities and you’ll surprise yourself at how lucky you become. Make is happen.

- Charles Schwab: “I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among my people the greatest asset I possess, and the way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement. I never criticize anyone. I believe in giving a person incentive to work. So I am anxious to praise but loath to find fault. If I like anything, I am hearty in my approbation and lavish in my praise”.

- Henry Ford: “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 your own”.

the rare individual who unselfishly tries to serve others has an enormous advantage.

Encourage others to talk about themselves.

- Whenever Roosevelt expected a visitor, he sat up late the night before, reading up on a subject he knew would interest his guest.

- The law is this: always make the other person feel important.

“No man is resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention”. – Lincoln

- “I would rather walk the sidewalk in front of a person’s office for two hours before an interview than step into - that office without a perfectly clear idea of what I was going to say and what that person, from my knowledge of his or her interest and motives, was likely to answer”.

Forget about the benefits to yourself and focus on the benefits to the other person.

a. Make sure capture everything you need to do outside your mind to clear your mind. b. Clarify what you have to do to make progress. c. Once you decide in actions, keep them organized in a system you review regularly.

- The key to managing all your “stuff” is managing all your actions. - You can’t do a project. You can only do an action related to it.

“The knowledge that we consider knowledge proves itself in action. What we now mean by knowledge is info in action, info focused on results”. – Peter F. Drucker

- Priorities should drive your choice.

- Purpose defines success. It is the primal reference point for any investment of time and energy.

- You won’t see how to do it until you see yourself doing it.

“It is easier to act yourself into a better way of feeling than to feel yourself into a better way of action”. § O.H. Mowrer

- The two-minute rule means anything you can do in less than 2 minutes, do it immediately.

- It’s always useful to work from the bottom up, starting with the most mundane levels.

- Function often follows form. Give yourself a context for capturing thoughts and thoughts will occur that you don’t let know you have.

- “No one ever gets far unless he accomplishes the impossible at least once a day”. –L. Ron Hubbard

- “The best place to succeed is where you are with what you have”. –Charles Schwab

- “There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction”. –John F Kennedy

- “People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who got on in this world and the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and of they cant find them, they make them”. George Bernard Shaw

- Results only happen when you hold yourself to the discipline of identifying the real results you want and more specifically, the projects you need to define in order to produce them. It’s all connected.

Getting Everything You Want Out of Everything You have by Jay Abraham

The greatest certainties in uncertain times are opportunity and possibility. This has always been true.

there are only three ways to increase your business: 1. Increase the number of clients. 2. Increase the average size of the sale per client. 3. Increase the number of times clients return and buy again.

the process of borrowing success practices from other industries and applying them to yours.

The concept of viewing clients as valued friends will appear frequently in this book and for good reason – it is the essence of the Strategy of Preeminence and the life blood of a long lasting, rewarding and profitable relationship for both you and your clients.

To get your prospects and clients to see you or your business as offering them a superior benefit or advantage that no other competitor offers them is the essence of unique selling proposition (a “USP”).

You identify what advantage or result your clients want the most. You don’t have to change your product or service, but you have to position your product or service as having a unique benefit they’re not getting from your competitors.

You incorporate the fact that you are now offering them this unique advantage or benefit in everything you say and everything you do. When you do this, you clearly educate them so they see, appreciate and want to seize that advantage.

When you take away the risk, you lower the barrier to action and eliminate the primary obstacle to buying.

Find something that no one else in your company is doing (or doing well) and voluntarily add it on to your responsibilities.

your Unique Selling Proposition got their attention, and risk reversal caused them to buy, and add-ons and cross-selling gave them the best products or services to solve their problem,

Your greatest success and prosperity in business and life, will come from your ability to create your own breakthroughs.

Simply put, you should expect to achieve your dreams. Raise the bar and accomplish your goals.

But you can and should think in terms of skipping levels and making quantum leaps. You can move rapidly, easily and surprisingly safely from your present level of accomplishment to a place that is several stages higher. You can do it instantly --- and directly. You can do it by not limiting yourself to following only those practices people in your industry follow.

A business strategy that may be common as dirt in one industry can have the effect of an atom bomb in an industry or business application where it’s never been used before.

You can’t be a follower and expect to ever really become a leader in your field.

Major breakthroughs come from the correct mindset. It's an attitude - an opportunistic attitude. People who make breakthroughs are always opportunity focused.

Breakthroughs increase in direct proportion to the amount of networking, brainstorming and masterminding you do with like-minded, success-driven people outside your industry.

The Strategy of Preeminence is quite simply the ability to always put your clients’ needs ahead of your own. When you master that your success will naturally follow.

Accept that people will work harder not to look foolish than they will work to gain an advantage.

When you identify what that distinct advantage is, you then must integrate it into all your promotional, marketing, advertising and selling operations.

The USP is the nucleus around which you build your success, fame, and wealth. So you’d better be able to state it.

Good marketing requires that you give clients rational reasons for their emotional buying decision.

When you remove the risk for anyone deciding to do business with you it results in a powerful advantage in your business and financial success.

Always remind yourself of the fact that they are not buying a product or service – they are responding to the advantages your product or service will produce for them.

what the client’s primary needs, wants and desires are. And second, to educate that client as to what’s available and possible.

I think a marketing genius is someone who has the ability to always get the maximum result from the minimum effort – not the person with the most creative ingenuity.

So a marketing genius, to me, is someone who is both logical and prudent. Someone who only follows the path that produces the highest and best results or returns for their time, money and effort. Anyone can become a virtual marketing genius equivalent by doing one simple thing: TESTING.

Refuse to allow yourself to become a commodity. Instead, focus on your contribution to your clients’ lives or business and the ultimate impact that results.

Quantity does not matter in lead generation. Quality and convertibility are what’s important.

AIDA means Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. All your copy should follow this simple formula, no matter what it is

All you’ve got to do is send your customers the kind of email you would send your best friend, children or relatives. Those are the emails that we respond to.

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.” – Charles Darwin

The Radical is that unique person who actually believes what he says. He is that person to whom the common good is the greatest personal value.

He is completely concerned with fundamental causes rather than current manifestations.

He thinks only in terms of human frontiers which are as limitless as the horizons.

We move step by step—from where we are.

It should be remembered as a maxim in community organization that every obstacle contains certain assets.

When you know what a guy wants out of life you know how to deal with him.

—smash the plan! The smashing of the plan of the opposition is nowhere as difficult as people think it is. Every step of this plan is based on an anticipated move from you.

“Get them to move in the right direction first They’ll explain to themselves later why they moved in that direction and that explanation will be better learning for them than anything we can do.”

You cannot meet the crisis of today tomorrow. You cannot pick and choose when and what you will do at your personal convenience.

Those who see fearlessly and clearly; they will be your Radicals.

Hope lay in positive action.

Surely You’re Joking Mr. Feynman Adventures of a Curious Character

But the whole problem of discovering what was the matter, and figuring out what you have to do to fix it—that was interesting to me, like a puzzle.

All the time you’re saying to yourself, “I could do that, but I won’t”—which is just another way of saying that you can’t.

I always do that, get into something and see how far I can go.

And so the rule was: All other problems out. Only one problem and just concentrate on this one.

you don’t have to be responsible for the world that you’re in. So I have developed a very powerful sense of social irresponsibility as a result of Von Neumann’s advice.

It was a brilliant idea: You have no responsibility to live up to what other people think you ought to accomplish. I have no responsibility to be like they expect me to be. It’s their mistake, not my failing.

Since then I never pay any attention to anything by “experts.” I calculate everything myself.

I started to say that the idea of distributing everything evenly is based on a theory that there’s only X amount of stuff in the world, that somehow we took it away from the poorer countries in the first place, and therefore we should give it back to them. But this theory doesn’t take into account the real reason for the differences between countries—that is, the development of new techniques for growing food, the development of machinery to grow food and to do other things, and the fact that all this machinery requires the concentration of capital. It isn’t the stuff, but the power to make the stuff, that is important.

Details that could throw doubt on your interpretation must be given, if you know them. You must do the best you can—if you know anything at all wrong, or possibly wrong—to explain it.

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself—and you are the easiest person to fool.

every action admits of being outdone. Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning;

There are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees.

A man's growth is seen in the successive choirs of his friends. For every friend whom he loses for truth, he gains a better.

Men cease to interest us when we find their limitations. The only sin is limitation. As soon as you once come up with a man's limitations, it is all over with him.

Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can never ripen into truth.

A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think.

He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all minds.

Fear always springs from ignorance.

The world is nothing, the man is all;

Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess.

Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end preëxists in the means, the fruit in the seed.

Whilst I stand in simple relations to my fellow-man, I have no displeasure in meeting him. We meet as water meets water, or as two currents of air mix, with perfect diffusion and interpenetration of nature.

For the real price of labor is knowledge and virtue, whereof wealth and credit are signs. These signs, like paper money, may be counterfeited or stolen, but that which they represent, namely, knowledge and virtue, cannot be counterfeited or stolen.

Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults.

Our strength grows out of our weakness.

The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point.

And such should be the outward biography of man in time, a putting off of dead circumstances day by day, as he renews his raiment day by day.

To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse,

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion;

Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so,

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day.

Your genuine action will explain itself, and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future.

For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession.

The characteristic of a genuine heroism is its persistency. All men have wandering impulses, fits and starts of generosity. But when you have chosen your part, abide by it, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world. The heroic cannot be the common, nor the common the heroic.

It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person,—"Always do what you are afraid to do."

But whoso is heroic will always find crises to try his edge.

We are such lovers of self-reliance, that we excuse in man many sins, if he will show us a complete satisfaction in his position, which asks no leave to be of mine, or any man's good opinion. But any deference to some eminent man or woman of the world, forfeits all privilege of nobility. He is an underling.

Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself.

Only as far as masters of the world have called in nature to their aid, can they reach the height of magnificence.

We aim above the mark, to hit the mark. Every act hath some falsehood of exaggeration in it.

Great men are more distinguished by range and extent, than by originality.

We paint those qualities which we do not possess.

Let him learn that everything in nature, even motes and feathers, go by law and not by luck, and that what he sows he reaps.

Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great,

Let us suck the sweetness of those affections and consuetudes [688] that grow near us.

like draws to like, and that the goods which belong to you gravitate to you and need not be pursued with pains and cost?

I unsettle all things. No facts are to me sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no Past at my back.

People wish to be settled: only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them.

The universe is predictably unbalanced. Few things really matter.

The entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower productivity into an area of higher productivity and yield’.

Beneath the surface there are warring positive and negative inputs that combine to produce the effect we can observe above the surface. The 80/20 Principle is most useful when we can identify all the forces beneath the surface, so that we can stop the negative influences and give maximum power to the most productive forces.

Progress requires simplicity; and simplicity requires ruthlessness.

Successful marketing is all about a focus on the relatively small number of customers who are the most active in consuming your product or service.

The 80/20 Principle is so pervasive because it is a reflection of deeper forces ruling our existence.

Keep the ‘vital few’ in the forefront of your brain. And keep reviewing whether you are spending more time and effort on the vital few rather than the trivial many.

The common attributes of 80/20 Thinking are that it is reflective, unconventional, hedonistic, strategic and non-linear; and that it combines extreme ambition (in the sense of wanting to change things for the better) with a relaxed and confident manner.

You are more likely to win by rigging the odds in your favour (legitimately and fairly) than by striving to improve your performance. You are more likely to win again where you have won before. You are more likely to win when you are selective about the races you enter.

Productivity on most projects could be doubled simply by halving the amount of time for their completion.

What we must do is to plant firmly in our minds that hard work, especially for somebody else, is not an efficient way to achieve what we want. Hard work leads to low returns. Insight and doing what we ourselves want lead to high returns.

It is increasingly apparent that the whole idea of working directly for someone else, of having a job with security but limited discretion, has just been a transient phase (albeit one lasting two centuries) in the history of work.

be unconventional and eccentric in how you use your time. Do not follow the herd.

The key to earning more and working less is to pick the right thing to do and to do only those things that add the highest value.

learn something tangible that adds value everyday, no matter how small

Resistance is the enemy within.

The more important a call or action is to our soul’s evolution, the more Resistance we will feel toward pursuing it.

The warrior and the artist live by the same code of necessity, which dictates that the battle must be fought anew every day.

Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny.

The artist is grounded in freedom. He is not afraid of it.

The paradox seems to be, as Socrates demonstrated long ago, that the truly free individual is free only to the extent of his own self-mastery. While those who will not govern themselves are condemned to find masters to govern over them.

The professional tackles the project that will make him stretch. He takes on the assignment that will bear him into uncharted waters, compel him to explore unconscious parts of himself.

Seeking support from friends and family is like having your people gathered around at your deathbed. It’s nice, but when the ship sails, all they can do is stand on the dock waving goodbye.

I’m not thinking about the work. I’ve already consigned that to the Muse. What I am aware of is Resistance. I feel it in my guts. I afford it the utmost respect, because I know it can defeat me on any given day.

The professional masters how, and leaves what and why to the gods.

The professional knows that fear can never be overcome. He knows there is no such thing as a fearless warrior or a dread-free artist.

The professional dedicates himself to mastering technique not because he believes technique is a substitute for inspiration but because he wants to be in possession of the full arsenal of skills when inspiration does come.

The professional cannot allow the actions of others to define his reality.

Because the most important thing about art is to work. Nothing else matters except sitting down every day and trying.

the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.

Goethe’s couplets: “Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, magic, and power in it. Begin it now.”

The principle of organization is built into nature. Chaos itself is self-organizing. Out of primordial disorder, stars find their orbits; rivers make their way to the sea.

We know that if we embrace our ideals, we must prove worthy of them. And that scares the hell out of us.

Our job in this lifetime is not to shape ourselves into some ideal we imagine we ought to be, but to find out who we already are and become it.

A territory sustains us without any external input. A territory is a closed feedback loop. Our role is to put in effort and love; the territory absorbs this and gives it back to us in the form of well-being.

The 85 Percent Solution: Getting started is more important than becoming an expert.

Spend extravagantly on the things you love, and cut costs mercilessly on the things you don’t.

One of the key differences between rich people and everyone else is that rich people plan before they need to plan.

invest.discipline with controlled release

A Conscious Spending Plan involves four major buckets where your money will go: Fixed Costs, Investments, Savings, and Guilt-free Spending Money.

Try focusing on big wins that will make a large, measurable change. In fact, I focus on only one or two big wins each month:

The key to taking action is, quite simply, making your decisions automatic.

If you invest in yourself, the potential return is limitless.

More information is not always good, especially when it’s not actionable and causes you to make errors in your investing.

Negotiating is 90 percent about mind-set and 10 percent about tactics.

Getting rich isn’t about one silver bullet or secret strategy. It happens through regular, boring, disciplined action.

Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu

- All great religious texts focus on two primary methods by which one can acquire a deeper knowledge of virtue: gaining of self-knowledge and rejecting worldly aims and standards.

Overly rigid dualism can obscure the true nature of reality. I can start to think that good is some essential entity that exists in and of itself without the presence of bad.

Giving something a name sets it apart from other things. The Tao is considered nameless because it is without finite form.

To hold until full is not as good as stopping.

Confessions of a media manipulator by Ryan Holiday

What rules over the media, he concluded, rules over the country.

The constraints of blogging create artificial content, which is made real and impacts the outcome of real world events.

The human mind “first believes, then evaluates,” as one psychologist put

the normal parts of life are omitted from the news by virtue of being normal.

In other words, the media is a mechanism for systematically limiting the information seen by the public.

But one’s daily routine is also a choice, or a whole series of choices. In the right hands, it can be a finely calibrated mechanism for taking advantage of a range of limited resources: time (the most limited resource of all) as well as willpower, self-discipline, optimism. A solid routine fosters a well-worn groove for one’s mental energies and helps stave off the tyranny of moods.

“Sooner or later,” Pritchett writes, “the great men turn out to be all alike. They never stop working. They never lose a minute. It is very depressing.”

“The repetition itself becomes the important thing; it’s a form of mesmerism. I mesmerize myself to reach a deeper state of mind.”

“I think in the cracks all the time,” he has said. “I never stop.”

Growth Hacker Marketing by Ryan Holiday

I prefer the discipline of knowledge to the anarchy of ignorance. We pursue knowledge the way a pig pursues truffles. —David Ogilvy

A growth hacker is someone who has thrown out the playbook of traditional marketing and replaced it with only what is testable, trackable, and scalable.

“Marketing has always been about the same thing—who your customers are and where they are.”

stop sitting on your hands and start getting them dirty.

Stumbling Upon Happiness by Dan Gilbert

One cannot divine nor forecast the conditions that will make happiness; one only stumbles upon them by chance, in a lucky hour, at the world’s end somewhere, and holds fast to the days, as to fortune or fame. Willa Cather, “Le Lavandou,”

The dictionary tells us that to prefer is “to choose or want one thing rather than another because it would be more pleasant,” which is to say that the pursuit of happiness is built into the very definition of desire.

Happiness refers to feelings, virtue refers to actions, and those actions can cause those feelings.

Perceptions are portraits, not photographs, and their form reveals the artist’s hand every bit as much as it reflects the things portrayed.

Among life’s cruelest truths is this one: Wonderful things are especially wonderful the first time they happen, but their wonderfulness wanes with repetition.

We make mistakes when we compare with the past instead of the possible.

Because we do not realize that our psychological immune systems can rationalize an excess of courage more easily than an excess of cowardice, we hedge our bets when we should blunder forward.

the production of wealth does not necessarily make individuals happy, but it does serve the needs of an economy, which serves the needs of a stable society, which serves as a network for the propagation of delusional beliefs about happiness and wealth.

A lesson in elementary wisdom by Charles munger

the first rule is that you can't really know anything if you just remember isolated facts and try and bang 'em back. If the facts don't hang together on a latticework of theory, you don't have them in a usable form. You've got to have models in your head. And you've got to array your experience—both vicarious and direct—on this latticework of models.

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....

You have to figure out where you've got an edge. And you've got to play within your own circle of competence.

the wise ones bet heavily when the world offers them that opportunity. They bet big when they have the odds. And the rest of the time, they don't. It's just that simple.

The way to win is to work, work, work, work and hope to have a few insights. How many insights do you need? Well, I'd argue: that you don't need many in a lifetime.

As usual in human affairs, what determines the behavior are incentives for the decision maker.

The Secret Rhonda Byrne

⁃ Thoughts are magnetic, and thats have a frequency. As you think thoughts, they are sent out into the Universe, and they magnetically attract all like things that are on the same frequency. Everything sent out returns to the source, you.

⁃ Your current thoughts are creating your future life. What you think about the most or focus on the most will appear as your life.

⁃ You're getting exactly what you're feeling about, not so much what you're thinking about.

⁃ Every teacher in the secret uses gratitude as part of his or her day. Most of them begin their day with thoughts and feelings of gratitude.

⁃ The power of gratitude stands above everything else. If you do only one thing with the knowledge of the secret, use gratitude until it becomes your way of life.

⁃ “The good news is that the moment you decide that what you know is more important than what you have been taught to believe, you will have shifted gears in your quest for abundance. Success comes from within, not from without.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Energy flows where attention goes.

⁃ Everything that you want, all the joy, love, abundance, prosperity, bliss, it's there, ready for you to grab ahold of it. And you've got to get hungry for it. You've got to be intentional about it. And when you become intentional and on fire for what you want, the Universe will deliver every single thing that you've been wanting.

⁃ All the things you want are made of energy, and they are vibrating to. Everything is energy.

⁃ When you are aware, you are in the present and you know what you are thinking. You have gained control of your thoughts, and that is where all your power is.

Think and Grow Rich By Napoleon Hill

- Success come to those who become success conscious. Failure comes to those who indifferently allow themselves to become failure conscious.

- No hope or wishes, only a keen pulsating desire, which transcends everything else.

- Through some strange and powerful principle of “mental chemistry”, nature wraps up in the impulse of strong desire “that something” which recognizes no such word as impossible and accepts no such reality as failure.

- There are no limitations to the mind except those we acknowledge.

- Perfection will come through practice. It cannot come by merely reading instructions.

- Every man is what he is because of the dominating thoughts which he permits to occupy his mind.

- Attributes of leadership: a. Self control b. Definiteness of decision c. The habit of doing more than paid for d. Mastery of detail e. Cooperation f. Willingness to assume full responsibility

- Men who succeed keep open minds and are afraid of nothing.

Success requires no explanations, failure permits no alibis.

- The world has the habit of making room for the man who’s words and actions show he knows where he is going.

- A study of prophets, philosophers, miracle men sees that persistence, concentration of effort, definiteness of purpose were major sources of their achievements.

- A better definition of genius is “a man who has discovered how to increase the intensity of thought to the point where he can freely communicate with sources of knowledge, not available rate of thought”.

- The road to genius consists of the development, control, and use of love, sex and romance.

- The starting point of all achievement is desire. The finishing point is that brand of knowledge which leads to understanding – understanding of self, understanding of others, understanding of the laws of nature, recognition and understanding of happiness.

- Nature has endowed man with absolute control over but one thing, and that is thought. The fact coupled with the additional fact that everything which man creates begins in the form of thought, leads one very near to the principle by which fear may be mastered.

- If you fail to control your own mind, you may be sure you will control nothing else.

- Form, sensation, perception, volition and consciousness.

- Take all of your thoughts, good, bad and indifferent, and drop them.

- Awaken to enlightenment, do not seek after it.

- A great practitioner’s life is extraordinarily independent. - Each practitioner must follow his own path to nirvana and walk his path alone.

- Keep practicing and do not bother with anything else.

- View practice itself as the result.

- If you look closely enough, you will see in all things, the something and everything. There is no difference between a grain of sand and King Solomon’s treasures.

- Pull your thoughts together; focus your scattered mind into a concentrated mind. Pull your concentrated mind into a unified mind. Finally, let go of your unified mind.

I’ve always credited the success of that venture to my hustle and single-minded dedication to engaging with my fans and customers by answering every email or blog comment.

Do not put your principles above the reality of the market.

Run on limited resources and you’ll be forced to reckon with constraints earlier and more intensely. And that’s a good thing. Constraints drive innovation.

[Innovation] comes from saying no to 1,000 things to make sure we don’t get on the wrong track or try to do too much. We’re always thinking about new markets we could enter, but it’s only by saying no that you can concentrate on the things that are really important. -Steve Jobs,

value the importance of moving on and moving forward. Get in the rhythm of making decisions. Make a quick, simple call and then go back and change that decision if it doesn’t work out.

So shrink your time. Keep breaking down timeframes into smaller chunks. Instead of a 12 week project, think of it as 12 weeklong projects. Instead of guesstimating at tasks that take 30+ hours, break them down into more realistic 6-10 hour chunks. Then proceed one step at a time. The same theory applies to other problems too. Are you facing an issue that’s too big to wrap your mind around? Break it down. Keep dividing problems into smaller and smaller pieces until you’re able to digest them.

The key is to restate any hard problem that requires a lot of software into a simple problem that requires much less. You may not be solving exactly the same problem but that’s alright. Solving 80% of the original problem for 20% of the effort is a major win.

It’s important to understand why your customer needs something, not just what it is they need. That context often has a direct impact on how we design something. Cut out the middle man.

Success is all about great execution.

Those who understand the new free will command tomorrow’s markets and disrupt today’s—indeed, they’re already doing it.

we know that the most disruptive way to enter a market is to vaporize the economics of existing business models.

Abundance thinking is not only discovering what will become cheaper, but also looking for what will become more valuable as a result of that shift, and moving to that.

The biggest gap in any venture is that between a service that is free and one that costs a penny.

free is disruptive, to be sure, but it tends to leave more efficient markets in its wake. The trick is to ensure you’ve bet on the winning side.

You can look at the Web as the extension of the media business model to an unlimited range of other industries.

You can have the abundant, one-size-fits-all version of the author’s ideas for free, but if you want those ideas tailored for your own company, industry conference, or investors meeting, you’ll have to pay for the author’s scarce time.

Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.

Nature wastes life in search of better life. It mutates DNA, creating failure after failure, in the hopes that every now and then a new sequence will outcompete those that came before, and the species will evolve.

When all physical needs are met, the most important commodity becomes social capital.

Economics has little place for morality for the same reason that evolution is unsentimental about extinction—it describes what happens, not what should happen.

Every abundance creates a new scarcity. A hundred years ago entertainment was scarce and time plentiful; now it’s the reverse. When one product or service becomes free, value migrates to the next higher layer. Go there.

Founders at Work by Jessica Livingston

the less energy people expend on performance, the more they expend on appearances to compensate. More often than not the energy they expend on seeming impressive makes their actual performance worse.

determination is the single most important quality in a startup founder. If the founders I spoke with were superhuman in any way, it was in their perseverance.

Starting a startup is a process of trial and error. What guided the founders through this process was their empathy for the users. They never lost sight of making things that people would want.

I think the hallmark of a really good entrepreneur is that you’re not really going to build one specific company. The goal—at least the way I think about entrepreneurship—is you realize one day that you can’t really work for anyone else. You have to start your own thing. It almost doesn’t matter what that thing is.

Always seek excellence: make your product better than the average person would.

I love this stuff; the persistence part is the part that I like. It’s actually not fun when it’s happening, but you know it makes a difference because 99.9 percent of the people give up.

People have a narrow concept of what’s possible, and we’re limited more by our own ideas about what’s possible than what really is possible.

I think investors like to be bossed around, like horses. It reassures them when you’re in control.

Whatever it is, question every single aspect of conventional wisdom. “Is that the right way to do it or can we break that and make it better?”

Reduce. Do as little as possible to get what you have to get done. Do less of it; get it done.

The biggest entrepreneurial lesson I’ve learned has been that you really do need to follow your instincts.

“Pick a big enough project, something that’s really hard, something that over the years you can work on.” I’ve found that that has been a great guid-ing piece of wisdom. If you just set out to go and make a lot of money, then the problem is, what happens when you make a lot of money? You’re out of ideas.

I try to make sure that every year there’s some accomplishment that you can actually point at and say, “OK, this year I’m going to do this.”

Experience will come when you face certain problems and live through them. And the best way to do that is to put yourself squarely in the path of those problems.

Entrepreneurs are the kind of people who love ideas and want to build things, and add value to the world. Part of that is to quench their ego’s thirst and say, “I matter.”

You’ve got to say you are a step ahead of where you actually are to move to the step that you want to be at. To move to step two, people have to believe that you’re already at step two so there’s no risk for them. Because they don’t want to take on your risk—you have to take it all on. And then you have to take on the risk of fibbing.

as most successes are caused by very few “windows of opportunity,” failing to grab one can be deadly for one’s career. Take your luck!

I am fallible and see no reason to hide my minor flaws if they are part of my personality no more than I feel the need to wear a wig when I have my picture taken or borrow someone else’s nose when I show my face.

rational thinking has little, very little, to do with risk avoidance.

We discovered that, in the very small, particles jump (discretely) between states; they do not slide between them.

I needed the backing of my bank account so I could buy time to think and enjoy life.

Accordingly, I will use statistics and inductive methods to make aggressive bets, but I will not use them to manage my risks and exposure.

small advantage in life can translate into a highly disproportionate payoff, or, more viciously, how no advantage at all, but a very, very small help from randomness, can lead to a bonanza.

I am also realizing the nonlinear effect behind success in anything: It is better to have a handful of enthusiastic advocates than hordes of people who appreciate your work—better to be loved by a dozen than liked by the hundreds.

Choose Yourself by James Altucher

In every single industry, the middleman is being taken out of the picture, causing more disruption in employment but also greater efficiencies and more opportunities for unique ideas to generate real wealth. You can develop those ideas, execute on them, and choose yourself for success.

Success comes from continually expanding your frontiers in every direction—creatively, financially, spiritually, and physically. Always ask yourself, what can I improve? Who else can I talk to? Where else can I look?

The only real fire to cultivate is the fire inside of you. Nothing external will cultivate it. The greater your internal fire is, the more people will want it.

You can never get enough exercise really, and no creative person has ever complained about too much walking.

yogis measure their lives in breaths, not years. Deep breathing is what keeps those breaths going.

The only skills you need to be an entrepreneur are the ability to fail, to have ideas, to sell those ideas, to execute on them, and to be persistent so even as you fail you learn and move onto the next adventure.

So the question is not, when is an idea too big? It’s how do I make all ideas smaller and achievable?

Ultimately, life is a sentence of failures, punctuated only by the briefest of successes. So the mediocre entrepreneur learns two things from failure: First he learns directly how to overcome that particular failure. He’s highly motivated to not repeat the same mistakes. Second, he learns how to deal with the psychology of failure.

The value of your network goes up exponentially when you view your contacts and resources not as a list but as a network of nodes on a graph. Think of the number of connections that can connect two different nodes on that graph. It’s exponential compared to the number of items in a list that connect directly to you.

Every second defines you. Be who you are, not who anyone else is, or who anyone else wants you to be.

Probably the most productive schedule is to wake up early—do your work before people start showing up at your doorstep, on your phone, in your inbox, etc., and leave off at the point right when you are most excited to continue. Then you know it will be easy to start off the next day.

Boyd called “many sided, implicit cross referencing,” which means to slice the problem a number of ways, draw ideas from across a range of disciplines, and see if we can discern common patterns.

This applies to culture as much as to war: to gain attention with some cultural product, you have to create something new, but something with no reference to ordinary life is not in fact unconventional, but merely strange. What is truly shocking and extraordinary unfolds out of the ordinary.

“People, ideas, and hardware—in that order!”

Boyd and his colleagues began analyzing war in general and time after time the idea of “asymmetric fast transients,” where one side could create and then exploit situations more rapidly than the other, seemed to explain why the winning side won.

“OODA Loop.” A participant in a conflict, any conflict, may be thought of as engaging in four distinctive although not distinct activities: • He must observe the environment, which includes himself, his opponent, the physical, mental, and moral situation, and potential allies and opponents. • He must orient himself to decide what it all means. Boyd calls orientation a “many-sided, implicit cross-referencing” process involving the information observed, one’s genetic heritage, social environment, and prior experiences, and the results of analyses one conducts and synthesis that one forms • He must reach some type of decision. • He must attempt to carry out that decision. That is, he must act. Hence the OODA loop.

Therefore it is said that victorious warriors win first, then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first, then seek to win.

When discussing the notion of grand strategy, Boyd concluded that: What is needed is a vision rooted in human nature so noble, so attractive that it not only attracts the uncommitted and magnifies the spirit and strength of its adherents, but also undermines the dedication and determination of any competitors or adversaries. Moreover, such a unifying notion should be so compelling that it acts as a catalyst or beacon around which to evolve those qualities that permit a collective entity or organic whole to improve its stature in the scheme of things.

Because the future is unpredictable, a strategy can only be built from intentions: Given where you are now and where you think you want to go, now, what can you do, now, to help you get there? A strategy is not a fact, or a forecast, or a schedule, or a roadmap to the future.

A plan is an intention about how to get from where we are now to where we want to be in the future. The term strategy will be used for higher-order devices for creating and managing plans.

Strategy, then, includes selecting the view of the future we want, creating devices to harmonize all the plans and actions designed to achieve that future, and on relatively rare occasions, shifting to an alternate future.

Boyd’s definition: Strategy is a mental tapestry of changing intentions for harmonizing and focusing our efforts as a basis for realizing some aim or purpose in an unfolding and often unforeseen world of many bewildering events and many contending interests.

What a Business Strategy Should Do • Keep our focus on the customer, with an eye to the competition and the rest of the strategic environment • Provide our team with a continuing stream of options • Enable rapid switching between options • Encourage initiative at all levels—in particular, an execute-and-communicate (“shoot and scoot”) mindset rather than one of ask-and-wait • Harmonize our efforts to achieve the future we have in mind.

A plan says, “Here’s what I intend to accomplish, here’s what I’ve got to work with, so here’s what I’m going to do.” Strategy can also ask, “Who said this is what I’ve got to work with? I can develop or buy new capabilities or partner with those who have them.”

So in business, we look to agility to have a two-fold purpose: Keep the competition off balance while also leading both us and the customer into new ways of conceiving the product or service. This is what “shaping the marketplace” means.

Practice is the only way that you will ever come to understand what the Way of the warrior is about . . . Words can only bring you to the foot of the path.

“We set directions rather than goals.”

in war we shape the enemy and move him as if we were also commanding his forces, and in business we shape and are shaped by the customer and marketplace.

One of the main themes of this book has been that the essence of Boyd’s strategy in business competition is to shape ourselves and the marketplace to improve our capacity for independent action—to survive on our terms—generally at the expense of our competitors.

The nature of war is to shape the enemy.

one needs to develop an ability to do the unexpected and then exploit its result quickly.

Boyd insisted that “ch’i” and “Schwerpunkt” are essentially the same, that is, finding and exploiting the magical element should be what gives your enterprise focus and direction.

He did what so few men are privileged to do: he changed the world.

the truth is that men who embody a warrior spirit combined with sweeping and lasting intellectual achievement are rare not only in America, but in any country. They seldom pass among us. And they do so only when there is a great need.

He was determined to excel although he did not yet know in what area. He only knew that he had to do something better than anyone had ever done it before. He had to show people in Erie that he was somebody.

But he also knew that a few men, only the best, could grow up and blossom and realize their potential when they were put to the fire.

As the day wore on, he grew cocky. This was the brief that would change the Air Force.

“If you insist on getting credit for the work you do, you’ll never get far in life. Don’t confuse yourself with the idea of getting credit.”

Boyd, as always, had planned move and countermove,

Usually if a man in a bureaucracy has a big stick, he uses it. But Boyd decided to hide his. He knew there would come a time, perhaps in a year or even two years, when the stick could be used to greater advantage.

“If you want to understand something, take it to the extremes or examine its opposites,” Boyd said.

We can analyze whatever process or event we are observing by breaking it down into individual components and interactions. And from this we can make deductions that lead to understanding. Or we can synthesize by taking various sometimes unrelated components and putting them together to form a new whole.

Boyd showed how synthesis was the basis of creativity.

whoever can handle the quickest rate of change is the one who survives.

the need to execute the cycle in such fashion as to get inside the mind and the decision cycle of the adversary. This means the adversary is dealing with outdated or irrelevant information and thus becomes confused and disoriented and can’t function.

A commander can use this temporal discrepancy (a form of fast transient) to select the least-expected action rather than what is predicted to be the most-effective action.

To attack the mind of the opponent, to unravel the commander before a battle even begins, is the essence of fighting smart.

1) the essence of warfare is cheng and ch’i, and 2) to practice this most effectively a commander must operate at a faster OODA Loop than does his opponent.

“Do you want to be part of the system or do you want to shake up the system?”

He understated everything so that any revisions would only make his conclusions more damning.

technology should reinforce that behavior, not drive it,

“People, ideas, hardware—in that order.”

War is ever changing and men are ever fallible. Rigid rules simply won’t work. Teach men to think.”

Each one began with his saying, “I want you to know there is nothing personal in what I am about to do.” And then total devastation.

Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu

All great religious texts focus on two primary methods by which one can acquire a deeper knowledge of virtue: gaining of self-knowledge and rejecting worldly aims and standards.

It is better not to follow human laws and rules because in following the Tao one becomes humble and aware of the underlying unity in all things.

In order to be aware of the changes in ones environment, one must be sensitive and in touch with ones vulnerability. In order to get along with these changes, one must also be supple and flexible enough to adapt.

Things arise on the their accord and not as a result of her own coercion or anxious striving. She is not the one who brings things about, and so she does not feel any sense of ownership over the results of her actions.

The highest goodness is like water. Water easily benefits all things without struggle.

To hold until full is not as good as stopping. An oversharpened sword cannot last long. Boasting of wealth and virtue brings your demise. After finishing the work, withdraw.

Act without expectation.

Cut doors and windows to make a room. It is because of emptiness that the room is useful. But it is in absence that there is usefulness.

he who values the world as much as he values himself, can be entrusted with the ruling of the world.

One who knows other people is wise. One who knows himself is enlightened. To overcome others is strong. To overcome oneself is the will of power. One who is contented is rich.

difficult affairs must be taken care of when they are easy. All great accomplishments must be performed from the small tasks.

Tao of Nature is to reduce the excessive and to replenish the insufficient.

All Marketers are Liars by Seth Godin

Either you’re going to tell stories that spread, or you will become irrelevant.

Stories make it easier to understand the world. Stories are the only way we know to spread an idea. Stories are shortcuts we use because we’re too overwhelmed by data to discover all the details.

no matter what you sell—and whether you sell it to businesses or consumers—the path to profitable growth is in satisfying wants, not needs. (Of course, your product must really satisfy those wants, not

Stories (not ideas, not features, not benefits) are what spread from person to person.

Great stories make a promise. They promise fun or money, safety or a shortcut. The promise is bold and audacious and not just very good—it’s exceptional or it’s not worth listening to.

Talented marketers understand that the prospect is ultimately telling himself the lie, so allowing him (and the rest of the target audience) to draw his own conclusions is far more effective than just announcing the punch line.

Consumers believe stories. Without this belief, there is no marketing.

Consumers notice something only when it changes.

where you take something people may or may not need and turn it into something they definitely want—that’s where the money is.

There are only two things that separate success from failure in most organizations today: 1. Invent stuff worth talking about. 2. Tell stories about what you’ve invented.

On a personal level, your résumé should be about inventing remarkable things and telling stories that register—not about how good you are at meeting specs.

identify a population with a certain worldview, frame your story in terms of that worldview and you win.

The desire to do what the people we admire are doing is the glue that keeps our society together. It’s the secret ingredient in every successful marketing venture as well.

almost every important buying decision is made instantaneously. These snap decisions affect everything we do, and we’ll bend over backward to defend them later.

marketing = storytelling, and everything an organization does supports the story.

authentic marketing, from one human to another, is extremely powerful. Telling a story authentically, creating a product or service that actually does what you say it will leads to a different sort of endgame.

marketing has become an art. The essence of that art is your ability to use nonverbal techniques to make me a series of promises (promises you intend to keep).

The hard part isn’t selling to them—it was identifying the right group and telling them the right story.

"How you differentiate yourself in the mind of your prospect."

In the communication jungle out there, the only hope to score big is to be selective, to concentrate on narrow targets, to practice segmentation.

You look for the solution to your problem not inside the product, not even inside your own mind. You look for the solution to your problem inside the prospect's mind.

The mind has no room for what's new and different unless it's related to the old. That's why if you have a truly new product, it's often better to tell the prospect what the product is not, rather than what it is.

What you must do is look inside the prospect's mind.

The time for extra effort is clearly when the situation is in doubt.

"Look for the hole" in the prospect's mind is one of the best strategies in the field of marketing.

Rather than asking yourself, "Who are we trying to appeal to?" try asking yourself the opposite question, "Who should not use our brand?"

"The mind works by ear, not by eye." This is one of the most useful conceptual ideas in the entire book. Before you can file away a picture in the mind, you have to verbalize it. Every successful positioning program we studied was a verbally oriented program, not a visual one. (Think small, Avis is No. 2, etc.) It's not that pictures or illustrations weren't used, it's that the purpose of the visuals was to drive verbal ideas into the mind.

Inside-out thinking is the biggest barrier to success. Outside-in thinking is the biggest aid.

Isolating a narrow target is usually the first step in finding an effective position.

success in life is based more on what others can do for you than on what you can do for yourself.

If you look at biographies of successful people, it's amazing to find how many crawled up the ladder of success right behind someone else.

"Hitch your wagon to a star," said Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"One indication of the validity of a principle," according to psychologist Charles Osgood, "is the vigor and persistence with which it is opposed. In any field," says Dr. Osgood, "if people see that a principle is obvious nonsense and easy to refute, they tend to ignore it. On the other hand, if the principle is diffi- cult to refute and it causes them to question some of their own basic assumptions with which their names may be identified, they have to go out of their way to find something wrong with it."

The temptation is to work on the solution without first thinking through the problem. Much better to think about your situation in an organized way before leaping to a conclusion.

Only in a give-and-take atmosphere can ideas be refined and perfected.

The ability to make others feel that they won is so important that I’d almost give you that as a definition of a Power Negotiator.

One of the cardinal rules of Power Negotiating is you should ask the other side for more than you expect to get.

What you should be asking for is your MPP—your maximum plausible position. This is the most you can ask for and still have the other side see some plausibility in your position.

Power Negotiators know you should always flinch—react with shock and surprise at the other side’s proposals.

Any negotiator who presents himself as the decision-maker has put himself at a severe bargaining disadvantage.

Power Negotiators know that, any time you make a concession to the other side in a negotiation, you should ask for a reciprocal concession right away.

a person’s mind always works to reinforce decisions that it has just made. Power Negotiators know how this works, and use it to get the other side to agree to something that they wouldn’t have agreed to earlier in the negotiation.

The fewer alternatives the other side has, the more power you have.

we tend to believe information we have obtained surreptitiously.

Planted Information can be an astoundingly powerful influencer.

Any time that you are negotiating only based on information that the other side has chosen to tell you, you are extremely vulnerable to manipulation.

The printed word has great power over people. Most people believe what they see in writing; even if they won’t believe it when they just hear about it.

The rule in negotiating is that 80 percent of the concessions occur in the last 20 percent of time available. Power Negotiators have learned about time is that people become flexible under time pressure.

The side with the most options has the most power.

Try to establish that the other side has a deadline.

If you want to learn about another person, nothing will work better than the direct question.

Asking for more information in your dealings with others will not only help you to be a better negotiator; it will also be a major factor in helping you get what you want out of life.

You’ll get even more information if you learn how to ask open-ended questions.

Let’s recap the four open-ended Gambits for gathering information. 1. Repeat the question. “You don’t think we can meet the specifications?” 2. Ask for feelings. “And how do you feel about that policy?” 3. Ask for reactions. “What was your response to that?” 4. Ask for restatement. “You don’t think we’ll get it done on time?”

away from their work environments, and information flows much more freely.

Being Prepared to Walk Away Of all the negotiating pressure points, this one is the most powerful.

The minute you pass the point when you’re willing to say, “I’m prepared to walk away from this,” you lose in the negotiations. Be sure you don’t pass that point.

You develop Walk-Away power by increasing your alternatives. Remember that the side with the most options has the most power.

Understand the person, and you can often dominate the negotiations.

To be a Power Negotiator, you need to have or develop these personal characteristics: the courage to probe for more information, the patience to outlast the other negotiator, the courage to ask for more than you expect to get, the integrity to press for win-win solutions, and the willingness to be a good listener.

The most important thought you can have is not “What can I get them to give me?” It is “What can I give them that would not take away from my position?”

Learn to feel comfortable with ambiguity, because negotiating is the management of a fluid situation.

Power. Control. Influence. That’s really at the heart of any interpersonal situation, isn’t it? In negotiating, the person with the most influence or power will gain the most concessions. If you allow other people to manipulate and intimidate you, it is your fault if you’re not getting what you want out of life. If, on the other hand, you learn what influences people and how to use and counter specific methods, you can take control of any situation.

You want to have power over your customers? Just convince them that you’re the only one who can solve their problem.

You must figure out what you fear the most and do it.

you’re willing to take a stand for your principles, especially if it appears you’re risking financial loss, it builds trust in other people, and they love you for it.

If the opposite of charisma is being self-centered, it becomes clear that charisma is the ability to project that you care about everyone with whom you come in contact.

Sharing information forms a bond. Any time that you share information with someone, you get closer to that person.

it has become cost-efficient once again to conduct individual dialogues, even with millions of consumers—one customer at a time.

Powerful advertising is anticipated, personal, and relevant.

Permission Marketing encourages consumers to participate in a long-term, interactive marketing campaign in which they are rewarded in some way for paying attention to increasingly relevant messages.

When you double the length of a fish, its weight goes up by a factor of four. The same thing is true for advertising. When you increase your frequency by 100 percent, you usually increase your effectiveness by 400 percent.

Creating value through interaction is far more important than solving a consumer’s problem in thirty seconds.

The goal of the Permission Marketer is to move consumers up the permission ladder, moving them from strangers to friends to customers. And from customers to loyal customers. At every step up the ladder, trust grows, responsibility grows, and profits grow.

Permission Marketers make every single interaction selfish for the consumer. “What’s in it for me?” is the question that must be answered at every step.

Every communication must be crafted with the goal of ensuring that it’s not the last one.

To test everything. Every day. To build hundreds of tests that don’t require talent or genius, just perseverance.

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

an apprenticeship in which they come alive with energy and focus. They excel by their ability to practice harder and move faster through the process, all of this stemming from the intensity of their desire to learn and from the deep connection they feel to their field of study.

people get the mind and quality of brain that they deserve through their actions in life.

His mind, he decided, worked best when he had several different projects at hand, allowing him to build all kinds of connections between them.

One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself. —LEONARDO DA VINCI

The principle is simple and must be engraved deeply in your mind: the goal of an apprenticeship is not money, a good position, a title, or a diploma, but rather the transformation of your mind and character—the first transformation on the way to mastery.

He constantly looked for challenges, pushing himself past his comfort zone. He used danger and difficulties as a way to measure his progress.

The natural model for learning, largely based on the power of mirror neurons, came from watching and imitating others, then repeating the action over and over.

It is better to dedicate two or three hours of intense focus to a skill than to spend eight hours of diffused concentration on it.

The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways.

Do not think that what is hard for you to master is humanly impossible; and if it is humanly possible, consider it to be within your reach. —MARCUS AURELIUS

Not even enlightenment is enough. You must continually start over and challenge yourself.

With people, he cultivated the ability to home in on the details that made them unique and to connect to their experience and motivations. He built up a high degree of sensitivity to the subtleties of human nature, avoiding the common tendency to lump people together.

You must see the creation of a persona as a key element in social intelligence,

Masters not only retain the spirit of the Original Mind, but they add to it their years of apprenticeship and an ability to focus deeply on problems or ideas. This leads to high-level creativity.

your emotional commitment to what you are doing will be translated directly into your work.

Think of yourself as an explorer. You cannot find anything new if you are unwilling to leave the shore.

Truly creative people in all fields can temporarily suspend their ego and simply experience what they are seeing, without the need to assert a judgment, for as long as possible. All Masters possess this Negative Capability, and it is the source of their creative power. This quality allows them to entertain a broader range of ideas and experiment with them, which in turn makes their work richer and more inventive. cultivating Negative Capability will be the single most important factor in your success as a creative thinker.

To look at the “how” instead of the “what” means focusing on the structure—how the parts relate to the whole.

anomalies themselves contain the richest information. They often reveal to us the flaws in our paradigms and open up new ways of looking at the world. You must turn yourself into a detective, deliberately uncovering and looking at the very anomalies that people tend to disregard.

The list of great thinkers who relied upon images is enormous, and perhaps the greatest of them all was Albert Einstein, who once wrote, “The words of the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychical entities which seem to serve as elements in thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be voluntarily reproduced and combined.”

The feeling that we have endless time to complete our work has an insidious and debilitating effect on our minds.

Every day represents an intense challenge, and every morning you wake up with original ideas and associations to push you along.

What must ultimately motivate you is the work itself and the process.

Curiosity is its own reason.

love learning for its own sake. Anyone who would spend ten years absorbing the techniques and conventions of their field, trying them out, mastering them, exploring and personalizing them, would inevitably find their authentic voice and give birth to something unique and expressive.

The lesson is simple—what constitutes true creativity is the openness and adaptability of our spirit. When we see or experience something we must be able to look at it from several angles, to see other possibilities beyond the obvious ones.

To the ancient Chinese, who understood this very well, it was known as the Tao or Way, and this Way inhabits everything in the world and is embedded in the relationships between things. The Way is visible to the expert—in cooking, carpentry, warfare, or philosophy. We shall call it the dynamic, the living force that inevitably operates in anything we study or do. It is how the whole thing functions, and how the relationships evolve from within.

It is not a matter of studying a subject for twenty years, and then emerging as a Master. The time that leads to mastery is dependent on the intensity of our focus.

Mastery is not a function of genius or talent. It is a function of time and intense focus applied to a particular field of knowledge.

Masters have a strong inner guiding system and a high level of self-awareness. What has suited others in the past does not suit them, and they know that trying to fit into a conventional mold would only lead to a dampening of spirit, the reality they seek eluding them.

In any competitive environment in which there are winners or losers, the person who has the wider, more global perspective will inevitably prevail. The reason is simple: such a person will be able to think beyond the moment and control the overall dynamic through careful strategizing.

“Look wider and think further ahead” must be your motto.

A group needs only two things to be a tribe: a shared interest and a way to communicate.

Do you believe in what you do? Every day? It turns out that belief happens to be a brilliant strategy.

marketing is about engaging with the tribe and delivering products and services with stories that spread.

A crowd is a tribe without a leader. A crowd is a tribe without communication. Most organizations spend their time marketing to the crowd. Smart organizations assemble the tribe.

Showing up isn’t sufficient.

the riskiest thing you can do is play it safe.

Great leaders don’t water down their message in order to make the tribe a bit bigger. Instead, they realize that a motivated, connected tribe in the midst of a movement is far more powerful than a larger group could ever be.

The art of leadership is understanding what you can’t compromise on.

Leadership almost always involves thinking and acting like the underdog. That’s because leaders work to change things, and the people who are winning rarely do.

Instead of wondering when your next vacation is, maybe you ought to set up a life you don’t need to escape from.

Exclusion is an extremely powerful force for loyalty and attention. Who isn’t part of your movement matters almost as much as who is.

Products, services, career paths—whatever it is, the forces for mediocrity will align to stop you, forgiving no errors and never backing down until it’s over.

What leaders do: they give people stories they can tell themselves. Stories about the future and about change.

Startups also have a true north, a destination in mind: creating a thriving and world-changing business. I call that a startup’s vision. To achieve that vision, startups employ a strategy, which includes a business model, a product road map, a point of view about partners and competitors, and ideas about who the customer will be.

which of our efforts are value-creating and which are wasteful? This question is at the heart of the lean manufacturing revolution;

Lean thinking defines value as providing benefit to the customer; anything else is waste.

the right way to think about productivity in a startup: not in terms of how much stuff we are building but in terms of how much validated learning we’re getting for our efforts.

every product, every feature, every marketing campaign—everything a startup does—is understood to be an experiment designed to achieve validated learning.

The value hypothesis tests whether a product or service really delivers value to customers once they are using it.

the growth hypothesis, which tests how new customers will discover a product or service,

the role of strategy is to help figure out the right questions to ask.

the video was the minimum viable product.

we must focus our energies exclusively on producing outcomes that the customer perceives as valuable.

Most modern business and engineering philosophies focus on producing high-quality experiences for customers as a primary principle; it is the foundation of Six Sigma, lean manufacturing, design thinking, extreme programming, and the software craftsmanship movement.

If we do not know who the customer is, we do not know what quality is.

If a competitor can outexecute a startup once the idea is known, the startup is doomed anyway. The reason to build a new team to pursue an idea is that you believe you can accelerate through the Build-Measure-Learn feedback loop faster than anyone else can. If that’s true, it makes no difference what the competition knows.

The only way to win is to learn faster than anyone else.

When one is choosing among the many assumptions in a business plan, it makes sense to test the riskiest assumptions first.

good design is one that changes customer behavior for the better.

I learned is that letting curiosity take you where it leads you is important. Don’t plan everything out. It deprives you of the crucial elements of surprise and fun.

behind mountains lay more mountains.

This moment is not your life. This is just a moment in your life.That’s it. That sentence will help you endure much. It will help you let so much go.

Because how you do anything, is how you do everything.

Linchpin by Seth Godin

There are no longer any great jobs where someone else tells you precisely what to do.

The only way to succeed is to be remarkable, to be talked about.

The essential thing measured by school is whether or not you are good at school.

Fearless doesn't really mean "without fear." What it means in practice is, "unafraid of things that one shouldn't be afraid of."

The linchpin feels the fear, acknowledges it, then proceeds.

Great jobs, world-class jobs, jobs people kill for--those jobs don't get filled by people e-mailing in resumes.

Projects are the new resumes.

If there is no change, there is no art. If no one experiences it, there can be no change.

People with passion look for ways to make things happen. The combination of passion and art is what makes someone a linchpin.

The core thing would be just do something awesome.

Successful people are successful for one simple reason: they think about failure differently. You become a winner because you're good at losing.

The people who break through usually have nothing to lose, and they almost never have a backup plan.

Pretending you know what you're doing is almost the same as knowing what you are doing, so accept that you know what you're doing even if you don't and do it.

Banish procrastination. If you wait more than a week to get an idea done, abandon it.

The goal is to strip away anything that looks productive but doesn't involve shipping.

Attempt to create only one significant work a year. Break that into smaller projects, and every day, find three tasks to accomplish that will help you complete a project. And do only that during your working hours. I'm talking about an hour a day to complete a mammoth work of art, whatever sort of art you have in mind.

A valuable platform is an asset, one that isn't handed to you. It takes preparation and effort to set the world up so that your ideas are more likely to ship.

the new form of marketing is leadership, and leadership is about building and connecting tribes of like-minded people.

Great work is not created for everyone. If it were, it would be average work.

What does it take to lead? The key distinction is the ability to forge your own path, to discover a route from one place to another that hasn't been paved, measured, and quantified.

the right effort in the right place can change the outcome, and she reserves her effort for doing just that.

The world just gave you control over the means of production. Not to master them is a sin.

it's the investment you make in your interactions that will pay off.

We have everything we need, so we're not buying commodities. We're not even buying products. We're buying relationships and stories and magic.

Focusing deeply and specifically on measuring Outcomes means connecting customer behavior to the bottom line of the company. The most impactful thing you will do with web analytics is to tie Outcomes to profits and to the bonuses of your report recipients.

A website attempts to deliver just three types of Outcomes: Increase revenue. Reduce cost. Improve customer satisfaction/loyalty.

segmentation is the key to finding insights. You segment, or you die.

life is about taking action, and if your work is not driving action, you need to stop and reboot.

Likelihood to recommend is a strong proxy for Engagement because it measures the greatest gift you can get from your customers: that they will recommend your business to others.

My recommendation is to never start in the weeds, but instead start with a profound understanding of the forest, of the big picture.

We rarely accept that a slightly imperfect answer in 15 seconds is better than the perfect answer in 2 days.

From a strategic perspective, what is the most important thing that your website is solving for? If one metric could identify that your business is going up in flames or not, which one would it be?

True customer centricity—the thing that will power huge success for you on the Web—will come only from listening to your customers at scale and all the time.

Every touch point with our customers is our opportunity to reinforce our brand experience.

If the Web holds one massive advantage over all other channels, it is in your ability to experiment and fail at a very low cost.

You want the readers of your blog to have a conversation with you, contribute content, and truly create a social experience. That’s success.

Marketing is now about engaging with customers in ways that are beneficial to them, without asking for anything in return.

The Web changes every six to nine months.

Move fast, think smart: In the context of decision making, the slogan used to be think smart, move fast. But on the Web you lose opportunities when you take your time and wait for perfection. The slogan for analysis ninjas is move fast, think smart.

Word of mouth is more effective than traditional advertising for two key reasons. First, it’s more persuasive. Second, word of mouth is more targeted.

Principle 1: Social Currency How does it make people look to talk about a product or idea?

We need to find our inner remarkability and make people feel like insiders. We need to leverage game mechanics to give people ways to achieve and provide visible symbols of status that they can show to others.

Principle 2: Triggers How do we remind people to talk about our products and ideas? Triggers are stimuli that prompt people to think about related things.

Principle 3: Emotion When we care, we share. So how can we craft messages and ideas that make people feel something? Naturally contagious content usually evokes some sort of emotion.

Principle 4: Public Can people see when others are using our product or engaging in our desired behavior?

Principle 5: Practical Value How can we craft content that seems useful?

Principle 6: Stories What broader narrative can we wrap our idea in? People don’t just share information, they tell stories.

Emphasize what’s remarkable about a product or idea and people will talk.

Marketing is about tapping into their genuine enthusiasm for products and services that they find useful. Or fun. Or beautiful. Marketing is about spreading the love.

FOCUS ON FEELINGS Information is not enough.

Rather than harping on features or facts, we need to focus on feelings; the underlying emotions that motivate people to action.

rather than quoting statistics or providing information, we need to focus on feelings.

If something is built to show, it’s built to grow.

When writer and editor William F. Buckley Jr. was asked which single book he would take with him to a desert island, his reply was straightforward: “A book on shipbuilding.” Useful things are important.

One of the main tenets of prospect theory is that people don’t evaluate things in absolute terms. They evaluate them relative to a comparison standard, or “reference point.”

That means making the idea or desired benefit a key part of the narrative.

To strip an idea down to its core, we must be masters of exclusion. We must relentlessly prioritize.

The Golden Rule is the ultimate model of simplicity: a one-sentence statement so profound that an individual could spend a lifetime learning to follow it.

We need to violate people’s expectations. We need to be counterintuitive.

here’s our checklist for creating a successful idea: a Simple Unexpected Concrete Credentialed Emotional Story.

If you want your ideas to be stickier, you’ve got to break someone’s guessing machine and then fix it.

Statistics will, and should, almost always be used to illustrate a relationship. It’s more important for people to remember the relationship than the number.

An old advertising maxim says you’ve got to spell out the benefit of the benefit. In other words, people don’t buy quarter-inch drill bits. They buy quarter-inch holes so they can hang their children’s pictures.

People make decisions based on identity. They ask themselves three questions: Who am I? What kind of situation is this? And what do people like me do in this kind of situation? It’s almost as if people consulted an ideal self-image: What would someone like me do?

A strategy is, at its core, a guide to behavior.

The surest way to smartness is through massive dumbness.

Since the measure of a technology’s success is how invisible it becomes, the best long-term strategy is to develop products and services that can be ignored.

Every step that promotes cheap, rampant, and univer- sal connection is a step in the right direction.

the network economy is, at worst, winner-take-all, and at best, winner-take-most.

The outcome of competition in a network is not determined solely by the abilities of the competitors, but by tiny differences, including luck, that are greatly magnified by the power of positive feedback loops.

in a network, new opportunities arise primarily when existing opportunities are seized. A business that suc- cessfully occupies a niche immediately creates at least two new niches for other businesses. There is, for example, no end to the number of companies that will find a niche in email; the more wild ideas that are created, the more wild ideas can be created.

Maximize the opportunities of others. In every aspect of your busi- ness (and personal life) try to allow others to build their success around your own success.

When confronted with a fork in the road, if all things are equal, go down the path that makes the opportunities of others plentiful.

Every era is marked by the wealth of those who figure out what the new scarcity is.

Ubiquity drives increasing returns in the network economy. The question becomes, What is the most cost-effective way to achieve ubiq- uity? And the answer is: give things away. Make them free.

The only factor becoming scarce in a world of abundance is human attention.

In the network economy a firm’s primary focus shifts from maximiz- ing the firm’s value to maximizing the network’s value.

By definition a network is one huge edge. It has no fixed center.

Technology has always influenced the size of companies. The inven- tion of the elevator made possible high-rise buildings, which brought thousands of employees together into one tightly coupled physical space.

I’ve never seen radical innovation emerge from an outfit that wasn’t halfway to unraveling at the epicenter of change. Most of the studies of optimal evolution in complex systems confirm this view. The price for progressive change in maximum doses is a dangerous (and thrilling) ride to the edge of disruption.

A company, institution, or individual must remain perched in an almost-falling state. In this precarious position it is inclined to fall, but continually catches itself and never quite topples.

There are changes in the game, changes in the rules of the game, and changes in how the rules are changed.

Rank is a clever and workable substitute for ubiquitous real-time information. When information is scarce, follow orders. When information is plentiful, peers take over.

Since a relationship involves two members investing in it, its value increases twice as fast as one’s investment.

The network economy is founded on technology, but can only be built on relationships.

The origin of economic wealth begins in opportunities.

Perhaps the most potent physical force on earth is the power of com- pounded results, whether that is compounded interest, compounded growth, compounded life, or compounded opportunities. The inputs of energy and human time into the economy can only be supplied in an additive function, bit by bit, but over time the output is multiplied to compound upon itself, yielding astounding accumulations.

There is more to be gained by producing more opportunities than by optimizing existing ones.

The problem with trying to measure productivity is that it measures only how well people can do the wrong jobs. Any job that can be mea- sured for productivity probably should be eliminated from the list of jobs that people do.

The qualities needed to succeed in the network economy can be reduced to this: a facility for charging into the unknown. Disaster lurks everywhere, but so do unexpected bonanzas.

Remarkable marketing is the art of building things worth noticing right into your product or service.

My goal in Purple Cow is to make it clear that it’s safer to be risky – to fortify your desire to do truly amazing things.

Ideas That Spread, Win.

It is useless to advertise to anyone (except interested sneezers with influence).

Differentiate your customers. Find the group that’s most profitable. Find the group that’s most likely to sneeze. Figure out how to develop/advertise/reward either group. Ignore the rest.

Being safe is risky.

Smart businesses target markets where there’s already otaku.

Marketing is the act of inventing the product. The effort of designing it. The craft of producing it. The art of pricing it. The technique of selling it.

If you are a marketer who doesn’t know how to invent, design, influence, adapt, and ultimately discard products, then you’re no longer a marketer. You’re deadwood.

Are you obsessed or just making a living?

The path to lifetime job security is to be remarkable.

Fooled by Randomness by Nassim Taleb

It certainly takes bravery to remain skeptical; it takes inordinate courage to introspect, to confront oneself, to accept one’s limitations—scientists

as most successes are caused by very few “windows of opportunity,” failing to grab one can be deadly for one’s career. Take your luck!

Heroes are heroes because they are heroic in behavior, not because they won or lost.

history teaches us that things that never happened before do happen.

social treadmill effect: You get rich, move to rich neighborhoods, then become poor again.

This chapter is about how a small advantage in life can translate into a highly disproportionate payoff, or, more viciously, how no advantage at all, but a very, very small help from randomness, can lead to a bonanza.

I am also realizing the nonlinear effect behind success in anything: It is better to have a handful of enthusiastic advocates than hordes of people who appreciate your work—better to be loved by a dozen than liked by the hundreds.

Life would be unbearably bland if we had no enemies on whom to waste efforts and energy.

We have been getting things wrong in the past and we laugh at our past institutions; it is time to figure out that we should avoid enshrining the present ones.

There is nothing wrong and undignified with emotions—we are cut to have them. What is wrong is not following the heroic or, at least, the dignified path. That is what stoicism truly means. It is the attempt by man to get even with probability.

The stoic is a person who combines the qualities of wisdom, upright dealing, and courage. The stoic will thus be immune from life’s gyrations as he will be superior to the wounds from some of life’s dirty tricks.

your job as product manager is not to define the ultimate product, it’s to define the smallest possible product that will meet your goals.

What really matters is whether or not your product is something users will find valuable and want to buy—that testing your ideas with real users is probably the single most important activity in your job as product manager.

Scope grows in minutes, not months. Look after the minutes, and the months take care of themselves.

Good design is: Innovative Makes a product useful Aesthetic Understandable Unobtrusive Honest Long-lasting Thorough down to the last detail Environmentally friendly As little design as possible

Great innovators know that your first idea is rarely the best.

A good vision is one that’s aggressively big. However, at the same time, it’s seemingly doable.

Learning Agile: Understanding Scrum, XP, Lean, and Kanban by Andrew Stellman and Jennifer Greene

Manifesto for Agile Software Development: Individuals and interactions over processes and tools Working software over comprehensive documentation Customer collaboration over contract negotiation Responding to change over following a plan

A team isn’t agile until they’re constantly improving the way they build software.

When teams are motivated effectively, it’s because they’re organized around an elevating goal. If you’re out digging ditches, that’s not very elevating or inspiring. But if you’re digging ditches to protect your town that’s about to be attacked by an enemy, well, that’s more inspiring, even though it’s the same activity. And so the leader’s job, really, is to try to determine or frame the activity in such a way that people can understand what the value is.

PMs focus on cutting non-essential features to strip the product down to just the essentials. This allows them to launch faster and to begin the process of learning what customers really want (or if they want the product at all).

Deep Work: Professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate.

if you study the lives of other influential figures from both distant and recent history, you’ll find that a commitment to deep work is a common theme.

To remain valuable in our economy, therefore, you must master the art of quickly learning complicated things.

I build my days around a core of carefully chosen deep work, with the shallow activities I absolutely cannot avoid batched into smaller bursts at the peripheries of my schedule.

Two Core Abilities for Thriving in the New Economy 1. The ability to quickly master hard things. 2. The ability to produce at an elite level, in terms of both quality and speed.

“Men of genius themselves were great only by bringing all their power to bear on the point on which they had decided to show their full measure.”

the skillful management of attention is the sine qua non of the good life and the key to improving virtually every aspect of your experience.

This philosophy argues that the easiest way to consistently start deep work sessions is to transform them into a simple regular habit. The goal, in other words, is to generate a rhythm for this work that removes the need for you to invest energy in deciding if and when you’re going to go deep.

execution should be aimed at a small number of “wildly important goals.”

Don’t be afraid to take time off when you need it. You could learn something that will change the course of your life,

Pursue Top Talent as If Your Success Depended on

it was our goal to create an industry, not just a company.

we knew the biggest threat to a fledgling technology company is doing too much at once. Our ultimate goal was to have a comprehensive line of products to serve everyone, but it didn’t make sense to kick off with a suite of services,

something that should be immediately introduced to employees at any size company—is a crash course on the product and an immersion in the company culture. We offer intensive product training so that all new hires receive insight into how a typical user works with our application.

the future wasn’t about simply improving on what was already done; it was about being bold enough to make big, sweeping, dramatic changes.

In all industries, especially the technology industry, people overestimate what you can do in one year, and they underestimate what you can do in ten.

if you go looking you’ll find that history is also made by individuals who fought their egos at every turn, who eschewed the spotlight, and who put their higher goals above their desire for recognition.

Just one thing keeps ego around—comfort. Pursuing great work—whether it is in sports or art or business—is often terrifying. Ego soothes that fear.

It’s a temptation that exists for everyone—for talk and hype to replace action.

each opportunity—no matter how gratifying or rewarding—must be evaluated along strict guidelines: Does this help me do what I have set out to do? Does this allow me to do what I need to do? Am I being selfish or selfless?

It’d be far better if you were intimidated by what lies ahead—humbled by its magnitude and determined to see it through regardless. Leave passion for the amateurs. Make it about what you feel you must do and say, not what you care about and wish to be.

Great men have almost always shown themselves as ready to obey as they afterwards proved able to command. —LORD MAHON

Find canvases for other people to paint on. Be an anteambulo. Clear the path for the people above you and you will eventually create a path for yourself.

canvas strategy is easy. The iterations are endless. Maybe it’s coming up with ideas to hand over to your boss. Find people, thinkers, up-and-comers to introduce them to each other. Cross wires to create new sparks. Find what nobody else wants to do and do it. Find inefficiencies and waste and redundancies. Identify leaks and patches to free up resources for new areas. Produce more than everyone else and give your ideas away

the person who clears the path ultimately controls its direction, just as the canvas shapes the painting.

Be part of what’s going on around you. Feast on it, adjust for it. There’s no one to perform for. There is just work to be done and lessons to be learned, in all that is around us.

Receive feedback, maintain hunger, and chart a proper course in life.

Materiam superabat opus. (The workmanship was better than the material.) The material we’ve been given genetically, emotionally, financially, that’s where we begin. We don’t control that. We do control what we make of that material, and whether we squander it.

As Plutarch finely expressed, “The future bears down upon each one of us with all the hazards of the unknown.” The only way out is through.

I don’t like work—no man does—but I like what is in the work—the chance to find yourself. —JOSEPH CONRAD

there is no market for ideas. Think about it for a second: have you tried selling an idea lately? Where would you go to sell it? Who would buy it? When there is no market, it is usually a very sure sign that there is no value.

Ideas, however necessary, are not sufficient. They are just an entry ticket to play the game.

Usage is like oxygen for ideas. You can never fully anticipate how an audience is going to react to something you've created until it's out there. That means every moment you're working on something without it being in the public arena, it's actually dying, deprived of the oxygen of the real world.

I love what Ev Williams (founder of Odeo, Blogger, Twitter) says about this: Focus on the smallest possible problem you could solve that would potentially be useful. Most companies start out trying to do too many things, which makes life difficult and turns you into a me-too. Focusing on a small niche has so many advantages: With much less work, you can be the best at what you do. Small things, like a microscopic world, almost always turn out to be bigger than you think when you zoom in. You can much more easily position and market yourself when more focused. And when it comes to partnering, or being acquired, there's less chance for conflict. This is all so logical and, yet, there's a resistance to focusing. I think it comes from a fear of being trivial. Just remember: If you get to be #1 in your category, but your category is too small, then you can broaden your scope and you can do so with leverage.

Amazing entrepreneurs are like forces of nature—they are unstoppable.

Companies that work just always seem to move at lightning pace. By contrast, the ones that don't seem to always be talking about releases and features that are coming “in a few months.” How do the fast companies do it? They focus on what matters, and make massive progress in the areas that actually have an impact.

human nature has a tendency to admire complexity, but to reward simplicity.

there are only two steps to entrepreneurship: start, and keep going—

If you understand your customers and your competitors well enough, it usually becomes obvious what your whitespace is and what you'll need to do to exploit

investment is like a credit card; what you want in the long term is revenue. Revenue is justification that your customers want what you made; investment is just a one-time shot in the arm.

Most of us who play this game called entrepreneurship have an amazing work ethic. It's really hard to succeed as a startup founder if you don’t. But in our experience, the best entrepreneurs also know how to disconnect and unwind. They find a balance that works for them and it makes them stronger entrepreneurs.

Fate did not hand Genghis Khan his destiny; he made it for himself.

The Mongols made no technological breakthroughs, founded no new religions, wrote few books or dramas, and gave the world no new crops or methods of agriculture. Their own craftsmen could not weave cloth, cast metal, make pottery, or even bake bread. They manufactured neither porcelain nor pottery, painted no pictures, and built no buildings. Yet, as their army conquered culture after culture, they collected and passed all of these skills from one civilization to the next. The only permanent structures Genghis Khan erected were bridges. Although he spurned the building of castles, forts, cities, or walls, as he moved across the landscape, he probably built more bridges than any ruler in history.

Victory did not come to the one who played by the rules; it came to the one who made the rules and imposed them on his enemy.

At no single, crucial moment in his life did he suddenly acquire his genius at warfare, his ability to inspire the loyalty of his followers, or his unprecedented skill for organizing on a global scale. These derived not from epiphanic enlightenment or formal schooling but from a persistent cycle of pragmatic learning, experimental adaptation, and constant revision driven by his uniquely disciplined mind and focused will.

Since he had far fewer soldiers than the Naiman, Temujin ordered each man to set five campfires every night on the hills where his army camped. From a distance, the small army appeared much larger, since they seemed to have “more fires than the stars in the sky.”

his penchant for finding a use for everything he encountered,

He tried to teach them that the first key to leadership was self-control, particularly the mastery of pride, which was something more difficult, he explained, to subdue than a wild lion, and anger, which was more difficult to defeat than the greatest wrestler.

basic military strategy by first attacking the smaller and weaker areas before moving against the larger target.

Once any domain, discipline, technology or industry becomes information-enabled and powered by information flows, its price/performance begins doubling approximately annually.

It is our belief that most great new enterprises in the years to come will either build their businesses off new sources of information or by converting previously analog environments into information.

Non-ownership, then, is the key to owning the future—except, of course, when it comes to scarce resources and assets. As noted above, Tesla owns its own factories and Amazon its own warehouses. When the asset in question is rare or extremely scarce, then ownership is a better option. But if your asset is information-based or commoditized at all, then accessing is better than possessing.

“Eliminate all expenses with any goal other than the creation of value for the end customer.”)

ExOs are taking advantage of this accelerating trend in one of two ways: by creating new business models on existing data streams or by adding new data streams to old paradigms.

As Travis Kalanick, CEO of Uber, said at the 2013 LeWeb conference in Paris, “You have to be self-aware and look for that startup idea and purpose that is a perfect fit with you—with you as a person, not as a business[person].”

“Culture is what happens when the boss leaves.” We think that pretty much sums it up, and would only add that culture is a company’s greatest intangible asset.

execution eats strategy for breakfast.

As Bezos says, “If you’re competitor-focused, you have to wait until there is a competitor doing something. Being customer-focused allows you to be more pioneering.”

Real-time monitoring will allow for the institution of real-time pricing to maximize pricing based on real-time demand (e.g., airline tickets). AIs will prove extremely valuable in this transition.

Applied Information Economics: A Universal Approach to Measurement Define the decision. Determine what you know now. Compute the value of additional information. (If none, go to step 5.) Measure where information value is high. (Return to steps 2 and 3 until further measurement is not needed.) Make a decision and act on it. (Return to step 1 and repeat as each action creates new decisions.)

Success is a function of persistence and doggedness and the willingness to work hard for twenty-two minutes to make sense of something that most people would give up on after thirty seconds. —Malcolm Gladwell, Outliers: The Story of Success

He wrung more information out of the few facts he could confirm instead of assuming the hard way was the only way.

The concept of measurement as “uncertainty reduction” and not necessarily the elimination of uncertainty is a central theme of this book.

if this thing is detectable, then it must be detectable in some amount. If you can observe a thing at all, you can observe more of it or less of it. Once we accept that much, the final step is perhaps the easiest. If we can observe it in some amount, then it must be measurable.

Figure out what you mean and you are halfway to measuring it.

Rule of Five There is a 93.75% chance that the median of a population is between the smallest and largest values in any random sample of five from that population.

The information from a very small sample is underestimated when a decision maker starts with a high degree of uncertainty,

If you can define the outcome you really want, give examples of it, and identify how those consequences are observable, then you can design measurements that will measure the outcomes that matter.

Four Useful Measurement Assumptions It’s been measured before. You have far more data than you think. You need far less data than you think. Useful, new observations are more accessible than you think.

Most scientific discoveries are far from direct observations. Nature often leaves the scientist only a trail of tiny crumbs and faint clues.

mathematically speaking, when you know almost nothing, almost anything will tell you something.

learning how to describe your uncertainty in terms of ranges and probabilities.

The most important questions of life are indeed, for the most part, really only problems of probability. —Pierre Simon Laplace, Théorie Analytique des Probabilités, 1812

If you have “no idea” that a narrow range is correct, you simply widen it until it reflects what you do know—with 90% confidence.

all risk in any project investment ultimately can be expressed by one method: the ranges of uncertainty on the costs and benefits and probabilities on events that might affect them.

simply decomposing a variable into the parts that make it up can be an enlightening first step. Decomposition involves figuring out how to compute something very uncertain from other things that are a lot less uncertain or at least easier to measure.

The information value curve is usually steepest at the beginning. The first 100 samples reduce uncertainty much more than the second 100.

Be iterative. Don’t try to eliminate uncertainty in one giant study. Start making a few observations, and recalculate the information value.

It might seem remarkable that looking at some things tells us anything about things we aren’t looking at, but, in fact, this is most of what science does.

the speed of light was determined with, literally, some samples of light. And no matter what measurement method was used, it had error. Therefore, scientists measured the speed of light more than once to reduce this error.

Modeling the world mathematically is as uniquely a human trait as language or art, but you would rarely find anyone complaining of being “reduced to a poem” or “reduced to a painting.”

you need to develop a higher tolerance for disorder.

You need to try to do the impossible, to anticipate the unexpected. And when the unexpected happens, you should double your efforts to make order from the disorder it creates in your life. The motto I’m advocating is “Let chaos reign, then rein in chaos.”

The key to survival is to learn to add more value

“When a person is not doing his job, there can only be two reasons for it. The person either can’t do it or won’t do it; he is either not capable or not motivated.”

If you only understand one thing about building products, you must understand that energy put in early in the process pays off tenfold and energy put in at the end of the program pays off negative tenfold.

“In order to build anything great, you have to be an optimist, because by definition you are trying to do something that most people would consider impossible. Optimists most certainly do not listen to leading indicators of bad news.”

My day always ends when I’m tired and ready to go home, not when I’m done. I am never done

In principle more money, more manpower, or more capital can always be made available, but our own time is the one absolutely finite resource we each have. Its allocation and use therefore deserve considerable attention. How you handle your own time is, in my view, the single most important aspect of being a role model and leader.

Managerial productivity—that is, the output of a manager per unit of time worked—can be increased in three ways: 1. Increasing the rate with which a manager performs his activities, speeding up his work. 2. Increasing the leverage associated with the various managerial activities. 3. Shifting the mix of a manager’s activities from those with lower to those with higher leverage.

The art of management lies in the capacity to select from the many activities of seemingly comparable significance the one or two or three that provide leverage well beyond the others and concentrate on them.

Decision-making is not a spectator sport, because onlookers get in the way of what needs to be done.

if the person’s life depended on doing the work, could he do it? If the answer is yes, that person is not motivated; if the answer is no, he is not capable.

training should be a process, not an event.

In every job, I would justify it in my mind, whether I loved it or hated it, that I was getting paid to learn and every experience would be of value when I figured out what I wanted to do when I grew up.

Most people won’t put in the time to get a knowledge advantage.

That’s what success is all about. It’s about the edge. It’s not whom you know. It’s not how much money you have. It’s very simple. It’s whether or not you have the edge and have the guts to use it.

The edge is knowing that you have to be the smartest guy in the room when you have your meeting and you are going to put in the effort to learn whatever you need to learn to get there.

“Everyone has got the will to win; it’s only those with the will to prepare that do win.”

Cautious silence is the refuge of good sense. A decision openly declared is never respected;

Make people depend on you. An image is made sacred not by its creator but by its worshipper. The shrewd would rather people needed them than thanked them.

Advice should be offered as if a reminder of what they’ve forgotten, not an insight that they’ve never had. The stars teach us such subtlety, for though they are children of the sun and shine brilliantly, they never compete with it in all its radiance.

The good fortune of the powerful: to be accompanied by outstanding minds that can save them from tight spots caused by their own ignorance and fight difficult battles for them. It shows exceptional greatness to make use of wise people,

We all idolize something: for some, esteem; for others, self-interest; and for most, pleasure. The trick to influencing people lies in knowing what they idolize. Knowing each person’s driving impulse is like having the key to their will. You should go direct to what most motivates a person, normally something base rather than anything noble, for there are more self-indulgent people than self-controlled ones in the world.

Always be suspicious of unbroken good fortune; far safer is fortune that’s mixed, and for it to be bittersweet even whilst you are enjoying it.

Pay attention to how things end, then, taking greater care to make a good exit than a widely applauded entrance.

Understand yourself: your temperament, intellect, opinions, emotions. You can’t be master of yourself if you don’t first understand yourself. There are mirrors for the face, but none for the spirit: let discreet self-reflection be yours.

The sensible person’s maxim: abandon things before they abandon you. Know how to turn an ending into a triumph.

Your emotions need to be concealed, and even more so your faults. Everyone errs, but with this difference: the shrewd dissimulate what they’ve done, while fools blab about what they’re about to do. Reputation is more a matter of caution than of deeds;

Don’t depend on just one person, or limit yourself to a single resource, however excellent. Everything should be doubled, and especially the sources of advantage, favour and pleasure.

Progress = Outcomes, Not Output

There is more value in creating the first version of an idea than spending half a day debating its merits in a conference room.

The way you motivate somebody to make a switch is the same for a friendship, a relationship, or a software product – identify the struggling moments your customers are experiencing and build around that. Emphasize why the existing way does not make sense, why it's safe to switch to your product, and why they don't need to worry about leaving the existing way behind. If you can solve all those things, you'll get customers to switch.

The most important thing a product manager does is decide where their product stops and someone else’s product takes over.

Products exist to solve problems that occur in a workflow. They have a start and end point within it. To understand where these points should be, you must understand the entire workflow.

But when you’re exploring the value of a product, there are only so many productive layers to discuss. Here are the layers I’ve found the most valuable to fully explore: The immediate layer relates to usefulness. What do you actually do with the thing? I use the drill to make holes. The secondary layer relates to usability. What result comes from using it? I’ve made holes to hang photos. The tertiary layer relates to desirability. What’s different now that I’ve accomplished my goal? I’ve hung photos and now have a more personal home.

Pick your era in history and you’ll find a handful of people—across industries and continents—who buck the norm and do incredible things in implausibly short amounts of time.

“hacking” is something done not just by criminals and computer scientists, but by anyone who has the capability to approach a problem laterally. (This is the original usage of the term, in fact.)

momentum—not experience—is the single biggest predictor of business and personal success.

an entrepreneur who’d failed in a previous venture was not likely to do better than someone who’d never run a business in her life. Expecting to be suddenly great at business after running one into the ground is akin to losing the first basketball game you ever played and expecting to win the next game because you lost the first one.

rigorous research showing that a disproportionate number of the most successful people in a given industry are extremely generous. From medical students to engineers to salespeople, his studies find givers at the top of the ladder.

“Superconnecting is about learning what people need, then talking about ‘how do we create something of value.’”

Innovation is about doing something differently, rather than creating something from nothing (invention) or doing the same thing better (improvement).

“segmenting the market into a sufficiently isolated segment which can be dominated.”

Technical deficiencies, if they exist, can be overcome by superior distribution, better service and support, and a whole series of intangibles.

A company must make it a goal to capture at least 25 percent of a market segment. It should never even enter a market unless it is almost certain it can capture at least 15 percent.

Tell to Win: Connect, Persuade, and Triumph with the Hidden Power of Story

stories don’t have to be long or involved. But they do have to surprise us.

“narrative emerges from violations to expectations.”

The more you wonder what will happen next, the more you pay attention. And the more attention you pay, the more you hear, notice, and retain.

The tragedy of our species is that we’re wired for narrative, yet live in a world that’s random.”

“Boredom occurs when you fail to make the other person interesting.”

Startups usually get only one good shot at a successful product before they run out of money.

Get that surface right, and you can work backward to figure out the underlying systems or technology. Focusing on the surface allows you to move fast and answer big questions before you commit to execution,

meaningful work, especially the kind of creative effort needed to solve big problems, requires long, uninterrupted blocks of time.

We’ve found that magic happens when we use big whiteboards to solve problems.

great innovation is built on existing ideas, repurposed with vision.

I’m not testing you—I’m actually testing this product. If you get stuck or confused, it’s not your fault. In fact, it helps us find problems we need to fix.

There is bias in the nature of technology that tilts it in certain directions and not others. All things being equal, the physics and mathematics that rule the dynamics of technology tend to favor certain behaviors. These tendencies exist primarily in the aggregate forces that shape the general contours of technological forms and do not govern specifics or particular instances.

Constant flux means more than simply “things will be different.” It means processes—the engines of flux—are now more important than products. Our greatest invention in the past 200 years was not a particular gadget or tool but the invention of the scientific process itself. Once we invented the scientific method, we could immediately create thousands of other amazing things we could have never discovered any other way.

Everything, without exception, requires additional energy and order to maintain itself.

The total number of web pages, including those that are dynamically created upon request, exceeds 60 trillion. That’s almost 10,000 pages per person alive. And this entire cornucopia has been created in less than 8,000 days.

In terms of the internet, nothing has happened yet! The internet is still at the beginning of its beginning. It is only becoming. If we could climb into a time machine, journey 30 years into the future, and from that vantage look back to today, we’d realize that most of the greatest products running the lives of citizens in 2050 were not invented until after 2016.

There has never been a better day in the whole history of the world to invent something. There has never been a better time with more opportunities, more openings, lower barriers, higher benefit/risk ratios, better returns, greater upside than now. Right now, this minute. This is the moment that folks in the future will look back at and say, “Oh, to have been alive and well back then!”

Three generations ago, many a tinkerer struck it rich by taking a tool and making an electric version. Take a manual pump; electrify it. Find a hand-wringer washer; electrify it. The entreprenuers didn’t need to generate the electricity; they bought it from the grid and used it to automate the previously manual. Now everything that we formerly electrified we will cognify. There is almost nothing we can think of that cannot be made new, different, or more valuable by infusing it with some extra IQ. In fact, the business plans of the next 10,000 startups are easy to forecast: Take X and add AI. Find something that can be made better by adding online smartness to it.

Because of a quirk in our evolutionary history, we are cruising as the only self-conscious species on our planet, leaving us with the incorrect idea that human intelligence is singular. It is not. Our intelligence is a society of intelligences, and this suite occupies only a small corner of the many types of intelligences and consciousnesses that are possible in the universe. We like to call our human intelligence “general purpose,” because compared with other kinds of minds we have met, it can solve more types of problems, but as we build more and more synthetic minds we’ll come to realize that human thinking is not general at all. It is only one species of thinking.

In a superconnected world, thinking different is the source of innovation and wealth. Just being smart is not enough.

the first version of a new medium imitates the medium it replaces. The first commercial computers employed the metaphor of the office. Our screens had a “desktop” and “folders” and “files.”

we are transitioning into the third age of computation. Pages and browsers are far less important. Today the prime units are flows and streams. We constantly monitor Twitter streams and the flows of posts on our Facebook wall.

Music has been altered by technology for more than a century. Early gramophone equipment could make recordings that contained no more than four and a half minutes, so musicians abbreviated meandering works to fit to the phonograph, and today the standard duration of a pop song is four and a half minutes.

Brand companies can command higher prices for similar products and services from companies without brands because they are trusted for what they promise. So trust is an intangible that has increasing value in a copy-saturated world.

If I re-google my own email (stored in a cloud) to find out what I said (which I do) or rely on the cloud for my memory, where does my “I” end and the cloud start?

I feel like an ancient hunter-gatherer who owns nothing as he wends his way through the complexities of nature, conjuring up a tool just in time for its use and then leaving it behind as he moves on. It is the farmer who needs a barn for his accumulation. The digital native is free to race ahead and explore the unknown. Accessing rather than owning keeps me agile and fresh, ready for whatever is next.

Intermediates of some type are needed to shape the cloud of creativity that boils up from the crowd.

The largest, fastest growing, most profitable companies in 2050 will be companies that will have figured out how to harness aspects of sharing that are invisible and unappreciated today.

Our attention is the only valuable resource we personally produce without training. It is in short supply and everyone wants some of it.

Since it is the last scarcity, wherever attention flows, money will follow.

The only things that are increasing in cost while everything else heads to zero are human experiences—which cannot be copied. Everything else becomes commoditized and filterable.

this is how authors work. We dip into a finite database of established words, called a dictionary, and reassemble these found words into articles, novels, and poems that no one has ever seen before. The joy is recombining them. Indeed, it is a rare author who is forced to invent new words. Even the greatest writers do their magic primarily by remixing formerly used, commonly shared ones.

Implicit in VR is the fact that everything—without exception—that occurs in VR is tracked. The virtual world is defined as a world under total surveillance, since nothing happens in VR without tracking it first.

The internet is the world’s largest, fastest tracking machine, and anything that touches it that can be tracked will be tracked. What the internet wants is to track everything. We will constantly self-track, track our friends, be tracked by friends, companies, and governments.

Every second of every day we globally manufacture 6,000 square meters of information storage material—disks, chips, DVDs, paper, film—which we promptly fill up with data. That rate—6,000 square meters per second—is the approximate velocity of the shock wave radiating from an atomic explosion. Information is expanding at the rate of a nuclear explosion, but unlike a real atomic explosion, which lasts only seconds, this information explosion is perpetual, a nuclear blast lasting many decades.

Metadata is the new wealth because the value of bits increases when they are linked to other bits. The least productive life for a bit is to remain naked and alone. A bit uncopied, unshared, unlinked with other bits will be a short-lived bit.

That gap between questions and answers is our ignorance, and it is growing exponentially. In other words, science is a method that chiefly expands our ignorance rather than our knowledge.

Question makers will be seen, properly, as the engines that generate the new fields, new industries, new brands, new possibilities, new continents that our restless species can explore. Questioning is simply more powerful than answering.

Thousands of years from now, when historians review the past, our ancient time here at the beginning of the third millennium will be seen as an amazing moment. This is the time when inhabitants of this planet first linked themselves together into one very large thing. Later the very large thing would become even larger, but you and I are alive at that moment when it first awoke.

Yet even while we exalt our own personal growth, we realize that millions of self-actualized persons don't add up to an actualized society

The reward of the historian is to locate patterns that recur over time and to discover the natural rhythms of social experience.

Sometime before the year 2025, America will pass through a great gate in history, commensurate with the American Revolution, Civil War,

Over the millennia, man has developed three ways of thinking about time: chaotic, cyclical, and linear. The first was the dominant view of primitive man, the second of ancient and traditional civilizations, and the third of the modern West, especially America.

Yet the great weakness of linear time is that it obliterates time's recurrence and thus cuts people off from the eternal—whether in nature, in each other, or in ourselves. When we deem our social destiny entirely self-directed and our personal lives self-made, we lose any sense of participating in a collective myth larger than ourselves.

We need to recall that time, in its physical essence, is nothing but the measurement of cyclically itself. Whether the swing of a pendulum, the orbit of a planet, or the frequency of a laser beam, the assumed regularity of a cyclical event is literally all we have to define what time is.

The other rhythm beats to the four phases of a human life, each about twenty years or so in length. What the ancient Greeks called genos, and what we call the generation, has been known, named, and respected as a force in history by practically every civilization since the dawn of time.

When a month is over, we push the day back to the first. When a year is over, we push the month back to the first. But is there ever a time when we should push the year back to the first? The ancients thought so. Whenever heroic or prophetic deeds occurred, they often moved all measures of time back to the number one. Their calendrical dates typically denoted numbered years of a particular reign or generation or dynasty.

No one can calibrate or predict its timing with exact precision. But every phase of breathing must follow another in the proper order and at roughly the right moment, or a person would quickly die. Likewise with the saeculum. History moves in a progression of ebbs and flows whose schedule is regular yet not precisely fixed.

At the dawn of recorded history, the generation (not the day or month or year) was the universal standard of social time.

history always dishes out accidents. But, for the saeculum, what matters most are not the accidents themselves, but rather society's response to them.

history is not predetermined—that the actions people take (and political choices they make) can fundamentally alter the course of history.

In nature, the season that is about to come is always the season farthest removed from memory. So too in American history, past and present. Less than 10 percent of today's Americans were of soldier (or riveter) age on D-Day, the climax of the last Fourth Turning.

Decisive events will occur—events so vast, powerful, and unique that they lie beyond today's wildest hypotheses. These events will inspire great documents and speeches, visions of a new political order being framed. People will discover a hitherto unimagined capacity to fight and die, and to let their children fight and die, for a communal cause. The Spirit of America will return, because there will be no other choice.

Yet it is the turning, not the nation, that elevates great people to the apex of power. Lincoln and FDR are both cases in point: Both had to wait for the Crisis to hit.

If you are starting a career now, realize that generalists with survival know-how will have the edge over specialists whose skills are useful only in an undamaged environment.

Fast change comes in times of cheap experimentation. Massive new life emerged on Earth during time periods in which a convergence of foundational platforms, like the different aspects of Earth’s biosphere, favored the emergence of diverse species, most of which failed. Massive new technologies emerge when the discovery and extraction of massive amounts of resources (water, minerals, fuel) provide low-cost industrial experiments, most of which fail.

The best way to navigate the near future is to hyperfocus on creating value for customers and moving at the speed of the Internet.

You must be a leader and a fast follower. You must be like a basketball point guard shadowing your opponent, anticipating moves, and reacting fast.

Zuckerberg’s vision wasn’t to invent social networking; Jobs didn’t foresee turning phones into a computing platform; Ford did not invent the automobile. The story of the solo wolf entrepreneur who, in a flash of brilliance, experiences a “Eureka!” moment that will forever alter the course of history is a myth. It’s simply not true. A truer story is the scientist who makes a discovery by accident, or the engineer who betters existing technology through painstaking experimentation, or the entrepreneur who willingly alters his vision in order to follow market demand.

The vision of the solution is not as important as the change you hope to make in the world and your drive to achieve it.

The key insight is that your driving force will form the basis of your business model. If you can keep your key motivation in clear focus as you develop your model, many other factors will simply fall into place.

Scale comes from expanding the solution to solve for multiple market segments.

A lean startup is not ready to grow big until the product itself is the best marketing tool.

Battle-tested entrepreneurs know how to fish, and when asked who will buy their product, they do not respond by reciting demographic characteristics, but by describing their buyers’ specific pains, passions, and needs.

You can find your thousandth customer only after your hundredth, which came after your tenth, which came after your first.

If history teaches us anything, it’s that you must be willing to experiment and fail in search of the right combination of problem, product, and market that results in success.

It’s actually rather ironic that we are willing to fund scientists to research new technology, but the moment we wish to commercialize said technology, we abandon the scientific method.

The scientist faces uncertainty by definition. She believes some combination of chemistry will counter the effects of a disease. She doesn’t know. How does she find out? By running experiments.

It’s true that most of the great innovations of the world came about without talking to customers first, but how did they come about? By accident: Scientist Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin when after returning from vacation he observed mold growing in petri dishes he had accidentally left out. By rapid experimentation: Inventor Thomas Edison tried numerous material combinations to find a commercially viable filament for the incandescent lightbulb which was actually invented 80 years before Edison. Timing: Underlying technology must often be in place for an idea to finally catch on. If the timing of Facebook and Friendster had been reversed, perhaps the winner would have been different.

Generally, disruptive technologies underperform established products in mainstream markets. But they have other features that a few fringe (and generally new) customers value. Products based on disruptive technologies are typically cheaper, simpler, smaller, and, frequently, more convenient to use.

Generally disruptive innovations were technologically straightforward, consisting of off-the-shelf components put together in a product architecture that was often simpler than prior approaches.8

An organization’s historical choices about which technological problems it would solve and which it would avoid determine the sorts of skills and knowledge it accumulates.

the desirability of aligning our actions with the amore powerful laws of nature, society, and psychology, in order to lead a productive life, is a central theme in many works, particularly the ancient Chinese classic, Tao te Ching.

two models for how to make money cannot peacefully coexist within a single organization.

Such discoveries often come by watching how people use products, rather than by listening to what they say.

managers confronting disruptive technologies need to get out of their laboratories and focus groups and directly create knowledge about new customers and new applications through discovery-driven expeditions into the marketplace.

Understanding problems is the most crucial step in solving them.

the firms that were most successful in commercializing a disruptive technology were those framing their primary development challenge as a marketing one: to build or find a market where product competition occurred along dimensions that favored the disruptive attributes of the product.4

Just as disruptive technologies don’t fit the models of established firms for improving profits, they often don’t fit the models of their distributors, either.

I want them to feel constant pressure to find some way— some set of customers somewhere—to make our small organization cash-positive as fast as possible.

Edison did not himself lack for self-confidence and held fast to the conviction that he could remove any technical obstacle that impeded his progress, no matter what field of invention he explored.

invention should not be pursued as an exercise in technical cleverness, but should be shaped by commercial needs.

The process that produced the invention could not be called careful planning, but it was something more than pure serendipity. It was the by-product of working on state-of-the-art communications technology, while remaining receptive to chance insight and recombining bits of recently secured experience. Bell invented the telephone while tinkering with acoustic telegraphy; Edison invented the phonograph while tinkering with the telephone.

the most interesting aspect of the interviews that followed Edison’s return to Menlo Park was the deliberate way he misled the reporters about his plans. “Did you get any new ideas out there, Mr. Edison?” the New York World asked. “No. That’s not a place for ideas,” Edison replied. “It’s perfectly barren.” The West offered splendid country for a summer vacation, he said, further deflecting attention from inspiration for a new project that he did not want to disclose. He spoke of the barrenness of the West on August 27, the day after he had returned. It was also the very day he, along with Batchelor and Kruesi, signed and dated a page in a laboratory notebook containing three sketches. They were labeled “Electric Light.”

“I don’t care so much about making my fortune,” Edison said in an interview, “as I do for getting ahead of the other fellows.”

Thomas Edison’s determination to spurn these opportunities to quickly commercialize the electric light, and instead to remain focused on the more difficult, but ultimately more significant, task of launching his own central power system, proved to be a brilliant stroke. It was not the result of formal study, or broad consultation with his lieutenants. Instead, it was an intuitive hunch that demonstrating the viability of a centralized system would be strategically more important to the business than accepting orders from individual customers.

He had always done best when attempting something both entirely new and gargantuan in scale,

“Anything that won’t sell I don’t want to invent, because anything that won’t sell hasn’t reached the acme of success. Its sale is proof of its utility, and utility is success.”

Even then, in the founding years of the recorded-music business, the economics of the industry was based upon hits, the few songs that enjoyed an unpredictably large success

when the fire had yet to be contained and was still hopping from one building to the next and when the prospects were the bleakest, Edison’s equanimity was put to a test. His immediate reaction? He cracked jokes, laughed, and declared, “Although I am over 67 years old, I’ll start all over again tomorrow.” Nothing could rattle him.

All human beings are entrepreneurs. When we were in the caves, we were all self-employed … finding our food, feeding ourselves. That’s where human history began. As civilization came, we suppressed it. We became “labor” because they stamped us, “You are labor.” We forgot that we are entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs deal with these uncertainties, changes, and constraints head-on. They take stock of their assets, aspirations, and the market realities to develop a competitive advantage. They craft flexible, iterative plans. They build a network of relationships throughout their industry that outlives their start-up. They aggressively seek and create breakout opportunities that involve focused risk, and actively manage that risk. They tap their network for the business intelligence to navigate tough challenges. And, they do these things from the moment they hatch that nascent idea to every day after that—even as the companies go from being run out of a garage to occupying floors of office space.

Your competitive advantage is formed by the interplay of three different, ever-changing forces: your assets, your aspirations/values, and the market realities, i.e., the supply and demand for what you offer the marketplace relative to the competition.

Their business goals emerged from their strengths, interests, and network of contacts.

A competitive edge emerges when you combine different skills, experiences, and connections.

Winning careers, like winning start-ups, are in permanent beta: always a work in progress.

World-class professionals build networks to help them navigate the world.

Relationship builders prioritize high-quality relationships over a large number of connections.

Entrepreneurs succeed when they make stuff people will pay money for, which means understanding what’s going on in the heads of customers. Discovering what people want, in the words of start-up investor Paul Graham, “deals with the most difficult problem in human experience: how to see things from other people’s point of view, instead of thinking only of yourself.”

If you are not receiving or making at least one introduction a month, you are probably not fully engaging your extended professional network.

all it takes to stay in touch with the people you know is a desire to do so and a modest amount of organization and proactiveness.

An English novelist named Horace Walpole coined the word to describe a phenomenon he first observed in an old Persian fairy tale called “The Three Princes of Serendip.” In the story, the king sends his three sons on a journey to distant lands. The princes come upon some problems; at one point they are accused of thievery. Yet they exercise such impeccable judgment and insight (when exonerating themselves from charges that they stole a camel) that their father and other rulers decide to grant them the opportunity to become rulers and kings themselves. In a letter to a friend, Walpole says “serendipitous” is how he refers to the accidental good fortune of the Serendip princes: they got lucky, to be sure, but they also acted sagely and wisely in turning unexpected setbacks into opportunities. Winning the lottery is blind luck. Serendipity involves being alert to potential opportunity and acting on it.

“The best way to ensure that lucky things happen is to make sure a lot of things happen.”4 Make things happen, and in the long run, you’ll design your own serendipity, and make your own opportunities.

great opportunities almost never fit your schedule.

Your onboarding experience shouldn’t be defined by the touchpoints you create, but instead by the improvement you provide. It’s not about getting people from Point A to Point B in your app; it’s about getting them from Point A to Point B in their lives: better video marketers, better daters, better relaxers. That’s the recipe for loyal, ongoing engagement.

In order to create an effective and consistent tone across all your touchpoints, it really helps to think of your company as an individual person with traits, quirks, and attitudes all their own.

When in doubt, ask yourself “what would I do if the user was standing right in front of me rather than sitting in front of my website?” Then design the site to replace yourself.

four features that constitute the universal Stoic attitude. They are, first, the Stoic consciousness of “the fact that no being is alone, but that we make up part of a Whole, constituted by the totality of human beings as well as by the totality of the cosmos”; second, the Stoic “feels absolutely serene, free, and invulnerable to the extent that he has become aware that there is no other evil but moral evil and that the only thing that counts is the purity of moral consciousness”; third, the Stoic “believes in the absolute value of the human person,” a belief that is “at the origin of the modern notion of the ‘rights of man’; finally, the Stoic exercises his concentration “on the present instant, which consists, on the one time, and, on the other hand, in being conscious that, in this lived presence of the instant, we have access to the totality of time and of the world.”

Self-control is fundamentally being attentive to oneself: an unrelaxing vigilance for the Stoics,

For Epicurus this exercise for death takes on a new meaning; it becomes the consciousness of the finitude of existence that gives an infinite value to each instant: “Persuade yourself that every new day that dawns will be your last one. And then you will receive each unhoped for hour with gratitude.”

Take flight each day! At least for a moment, however brief, as long as it is intense. Every day a “spiritual exercise,” alone or in the company of a man who also wishes to better himself….Leave ordinary time behind. Make an effort to rid yourself of your own passions….Become eternal by surpassing yourself. This inner effort is necessary, this ambition, just. Many are those who are entirely absorbed in militant politics, in the preparation for the social revolution. Rare, very rare, are those who, in order to prepare for the revolution, wish to become worthy of it.

all mankind’s woes derive from the fact that he seeks to acquire or to keep possessions that he may either lose or fail to obtain, and from the fact that he tries to avoid misfortunes which are often inevitable. The task of philosophy, then, is to educate people, so that they seek only the goods they are able to obtain, and try to avoid only those evils which it is possible to avoid. In order for something good to be always obtainable, or an evil always avoidable, they must depend exclusively on man’s freedom; but the only things which fulfill these conditions are moral good and evil. They alone depend on us; everything else does not depend on us.

This is the domain of nature. indifference to indifferent things.

Attention to the present moment is, in a sense, the key to spiritual exercises. It frees us from the passions, which are always caused by the past or the future—two areas which do not depend on us. By encouraging concentration on the minuscule present moment, which, in its exiguity, is always bearable and controllable, attention increases our vigilance. Finally, attention to the present moment allows us to accede to cosmic consciousness, by making us attentive to the infinite value of each instant, and causing us to accept each moment of existence from the viewpoint of the universal law of the cosmos.

We must confront life’s difficulties face to face, remembering that they are not evils, since they do not depend on us.

Life ebbs as I speak: so seize each day, and grant the next no credit.

Those who practice wisdom…are excellent contemplators of nature and everything she contains. They examine the earth, the sea, the sky, the heavens, and all their inhabitants; they are joined in thought to the sun, the moon, and all the other stars, both fixed and wandering, in their courses; and although they are attached to the earth by their bodies, they provide their souls with wings, so that they may walk on the ether and contemplate the powers that live there, as is fitting for true citizens of the world…and so, filled with excellence, accustomed to take no notice of ills of the body or of exterior things…it goes without saying that such men, rejoicing in their virtues, make of their whole lives a festival.

If one wants to know the nature of a thing, one must examine it in its pure state, since every addition to a thing is an obstacle to the knowledge of that thing. When you examine it, then, remove from it everything that is not itself; better still remove all your stains from yourself and examine yourself, and you will have faith in your immortality.

spiritual exercises must be taken up again and again, in an ever-renewed effort.

Everywhere and at all times, it is up to you to rejoice piously at what is occurring at the present moment, to conduct yourself with justice towards the people who are present here and now, and to apply rules of discernment [emphilotekhnein] to your present representations [phantasiai], so that nothing slips in that is not objective.

Meditation must, in any case, be constant.

Vigilance and self-attention clearly presuppose the practice of examining one’s conscience.

We ought not only to examine ourselves everyday but also every season, every month, and every week, and ask ourselves: “What stage am I at now with regards to the passion by which I was overcome last week?” Similarly every year: “Last year I was overcome by such and such a passion; how about now?”

Epictetus: “Do not seek to have everything that happens happen as you wish, but wish for everything to happen as it actually does happen, and your life will be serene”.

Haste is universal because everyone is in flight from himself.

You have the power to strip off many superfluous things that are obstacles to you, and that depend entirely upon you value-judgements; you will open up for yourself a vast space by embracing the whole universe in your thoughts, by considering unending eternity, and by reflecting on the rapid changes of each particular thing; think of how short is the span between birth and dissolution, and how vast the chasm of time before your birth, and how the span after your dissolution will likewise be infinite.

“People are not troubled by things, but by their judgements about things.” “learning to desire that everything happen just the way it does happen.

What is enough for you? - Your present value-judgement, so long as it is objective; - The action you are accomplishing at the present moment, so long as it is done for the benefit of the human community; - Your present inner disposition, as long as it rejoices in every event brought about by causes outside yourself. On what, then, should we exert our efforts? Only this: correct intentions; actions [prakseis] carried out in the service of the community; speech [logos] which could never be used to deceive; an inner disposition [diathesis] which joyfully greet each event like something necessary and familiar, since it flows from so grand a principle, and so great a source.

Aristotle had said that pleasure is total and complete at each moment of its duration, and that its prolongation does not charge its essence.

The fundamental attitude that the Stoic must maintain at each instant of his life is one of attention, vigilance, and continuous tension, concentrated upon each and every moment, in order not to miss anything which is contrary to reason.

Whoever practices the art of living must also recognize that each instant is pregnant: heavy with meaning, it contains both the past and the future; not only of the individual, but also of the cosmos in which he is plunged. It is here that the thought of death comes into play, for life itself is perpetual metamorphosis, and, inseparably, the death of every instant.

Through all of human history from its earliest beginning until now, there have been only three basic changes of economic life: (1) hunting – and – gathering societies; (2) agricultural societies; and (3) industrial societies. Now, looming over the horizon, is something entirely new, the fourth stage of social organization: information societies.

The commercialization of sovereignty will make the terms and conditions of citizenship in the nation-state as dated as chivalric oaths seemed after the collapse of feudalism. Instead of relating to a powerful state as citizens to be taxed, the Sovereign Individuals of the twenty-first century will be customers of governments operating from a “new logical space”.

the most important causes of change are not to be found in political manifestos or in the pronouncements of dead economists, but in the hidden factors that alter the boundaries where power is exercised.

The more apparent it is that a system is nearing an end, the more reluctant people will be to adhere to its laws. Any social organization will therefore tend to discourage or play down analyses that anticipate its demise. This alone helps ensure that history’s greatest transitions are seldom spotted as they happen. If you know nothing else about the future, you can rest assured that dramatic changes will be neither welcomes nor advertised by conventional thinkers.

Costs and rewards matter. Changes in external conditions that raise the rewards or lower the costs of certain behavior will lead to more of that behavior, other things being equal.

Cultures are not matters of taste but systems of adaptation to specific circumstances that may prove irrelevant or even counterproductive in other settings. Humans live in a wide variety of habitats. The wide number of potential niches in which we live require variations in behavior that are too complex to be informed by instinct. Therefore, behavior is culturally programmed.

politics in the modern sense, as the preoccupation with controlling and nationalizing the power of the state, is mostly a modern invention. We believe it will end with the modern world just as the tangle of feudal duties and obligations that engrossed the attention of people in the Middle Ages ended with the Middle Ages.

Moral outrage against corrupt leaders is not an isolated historical phenomenon but a common precursor of change. It happens again and again whenever some era gives way to another.

From the vantage point of the Information Society, the spectacle of soldiers in the modern period travelling halfway around the world to entertain death our of loyalty to the nation-state will come to be seen as grotesque and silly. It will seem not far different from some of the extraordinary and exaggerated rites of chivalry, like walking about in leg irons, which otherwise sensible people took pride in ding during the feudal period.

citizenship crucially depended upon the fact that no individual or small group of individuals was megapolitically capable of exercising military power independently. As information technology alters the logic of battle, it will antiquate the myths of citizenship just as assuredly as gunpowder antiquated medieval chivalry.

Customers would scream bloody murder if a telephone company attempted to charge for calls on the same basis that income taxes are imposed. Suppose the phone company sent a bill for $50,000 for a call to London, just because you happened to conclude a deal worth $125,000 during the conversation. Neither you nor any other customer in his right mind would pay it. But that is exactly the basis upon which income taxes are assessed in every democratic welfare state.

Like politics itself, nationalism is mostly a modern invention. Before nationalism, the early-modern state required the aid of lords, dukes, earls, bishops, free cities, and other corporate and ethnic intermediaries, from tax “farmers” to military contract merchants and mercenaries to collect revenues, raise troops and conduct other government functions.

There has always been a strong tendency for social systems to mimic the characteristics of prevailing technology. This is something that Marx got right. Gigantic factories coincided with the age of big government. Microprocessing is miniaturizing institutions. If our analysis is correct, the technology of the Information Age will ultimately create an economy better suited to exploit the advantages of complexity.

Microprocessing individualizes work. Industrial technology standardized work. Anyone using the same tools would produce the same output. Microtechnology has started replacing “stupid” machines with more intelligent technology capable of highly variable output. The increases variability of output for persons using the same tools has profound implication,

Not only will one individual be able to manifestly multiply his activities by employing an essentially unlimited number of intelligent agents. He or she will even be able to act after death. For the first time, an individual will be capable of carrying on elaborate tasks even if he is biologically dead. It will no longer be possible for either an enemy at war or a criminal to completely extinguish the capability of an individual to retaliate by killing him. This is one of the more revolutionary innovations in the logic of violence in the whole of history.

The competition that information technology is driving governments to engage in is not competition of a military kind, but competition in quality and price of an economic service – genuine protection. In short, governments will be obliged to give customers what they want.

The processing and use of information is rapidly replacing and modifying physical products as the most important source of profit.

each $5,000 of annual tax payments paid over forty years slashes your net worth by $2.2 million, assuming you could realize just a 10 percent return on your capital. At a 20 percent return, the compound loss balloons to about $44 million. For high-income earners in a high-tax country, the cumulative losses from predatory taxation over a lifetime are staggering.

Nobel Prize-winning economist F.A. Hayek argued, there is “no clear distinction between money and non-money”. He wrote, “although we usually assume there is a sharp line of distinction between what is money and what is not – and the law generally tries to make such a distinction – so far as the casual effects of monetary events are concerned, there is no such clear difference. What we find is rather a continuum in which objects of various degrees of liquidity, or with values which can fluctuate independently of each other, shade into each other in the degree to which they function as money.”

profit margins are likely to fall in any field where local price anomalies can be eroded by additional information and competition.

The model business organization of the new information economy may be a movie production company. Such enterprises can be very sophisticated, with budgets of hundreds of millions of dollars. While they are often large operations, they are also temporary in nature. A movie company producing a film for $100 million may come together for a year and then dissolve. While the people who work on the production are talented, they have no expectation that finding work on the project is equivalent to having a “permanent job”. When the project is over, the lighting technicians, cameramen, sound engineers, and wardrobe specialists will go their separate ways. They may be reunited in another project, or they may not.

“Nationalism, of course, is intrinsically absurd. Why should the accident – fortune or misfortune – of birth as an American, Albanian, Scot, or Fiji Islander impose loyalties that dominate an individual life and structure a society so as to place it in formal conflict with others? In the past there were local loyalties to place and clan and tribe, obligations to lord or landlord, dynastic or territorial wars, but primary loyalties were to religion, God or god-king, possibly to emperor, to a civilization as such. There was no nation. There was attachment to patria, land of one’s fathers, or patriotism, but to speak of nationalism before modern times is anachronistic.- William Pfaff

After two centuries of indoctrination in the mysteries of “international relations” and “international law”, it is easy to overlook that “international” is not a long-standing Western concept. In fact, the word international was invented by Jeremy Bentham in 1789. It was first used in his book An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Bentham wrote, “The word international, it must be acknowledged, is a new one, though it is hoped sufficiently analogous and intelligible. “International” came to be a sloppy synonym for anything that happens across the globe.

“To the extent that members of a group share a common fate or outcome, helping one another becomes self-help.”

Paying taxes, like bearing arms, is a duty, or a service of an equal or greater value. This much is acknowledged in common speech. People speak of a “tax burden” as they do not speak of the “food burden” of shopping for nutriments, or the “car burden” of purchasing an automobile, or a “vacation burden” for traveling, precisely because commercial purchases are generally fair exchanges. Otherwise, the buyers would not make them.

A system that routinely submits control over the largest, most deadly enterprises on earth to the winner of popularity contests between charismatic demagogues is bound to suffer for it in the long run.

the Information Revolution is likely to be the most far-reaching of all. It will reorganize life more thoroughly than either the Agricultural Revolution or the Industrial Revolution. And its impact will be felt in a fraction of the time. Fasten your seat belts.

One must return to it often, in order to discover in it, day by day, some nourishment which suits the momentary states of our soul.

The Stoic philosophical life consists essentially in mastering one’s inner discourse. Everything in an individual’s life depends on how he represents things to himself – in other words, how he tells them to himself in inner dialogue.

The goal is to reactualize, rekindle, and ceaselessly reawaken an inner state which is in constant danger of being numbed or extinguished. The task – ever-renewed – is to bring back to order an inner discourse which becomes dispersed and diluted in the futility of routine.

Stoicism is a philosophy of self-coherence, based upon a remarkable intuition of the essence of life.

one of the Stoics’ most fundamental attitudes: the delimitation of our own sphere of liberty as an impregnable islet of autonomy, in the midst of the vast river of events and of Destiny.

Just as Socrates used to say that an unexamined life is not worth living, so we must never accept an unexamined representation.

the intellect, when freed from the passions, is a citadel; for mankind has no stronger fortress than this. If we take refuge within it, we will be in an impregnable position from now on.

My relationship to universal Nature and the cosmos is the subject of the discipline of desire; my relationship to human nature is that of the discipline of action; and my relationship with myself – insofar as I am a power of assent – is the domain of the discipline of assent.

We must therefore recognize that our real lives are limited to a minuscule point which, by the intermediary of the present event or action, places us in constant contact – whether actively or passively – with the overall movement of the universe.

Life, too, consists only of a series of such instants which we live in succession, and the better we are able to isolate each one and define it precisely, the better we shall be able to gain control over the entire series.

Do not seek for things to happen the way you want them to; rather, wish that what happens happen the way it happens then you will be happy.

Death then, will not deprive me of anything, since I have already, within each instant, had everything. At any moment at which the limits of its life cease, the soul attains its end. Within each present moment, I possess everything I can expect from life: the presence of the entire universe and presence of universal Reason, which is the presence of one and the same thing.

Seneca replies as follows: When it comes to action, we can never wait until we have an absolutely certain understanding of the entire situation. We only take the path down which we are led by probability. Every “duty” (officium) must follow this path; for this is how we sow, sail, make war, get married, and have children. In all these things, the result is uncertain, but we nevertheless decide to undertake those actions which we think have some hope of succeeding…We go where reason – and not the absolute truth – leads us.

The first reason why we must do good unto others, without asking for anything in return, is that, by virtue of the principle “what is good for the whole is good for the part,” doing good unto others is the same as doing good to oneself.

Blows that are not unexpected, but foreseen, strike us less hard, and wound us less deeply, that those which strike unexpectedly.

Such written meditation was highly recommended by Stoic masters, and is, moreover, still practiced today by people who do not have a stomach ulcer, but who are simply trying to live in a somewhat human way.

All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe that we are away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.

‘All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.’

‘Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards. So in war, the way to avoid what is strong is to strike what is weak.

the indirect approach had a much wider application – that it was a law of life in all spheres: a truth of philosophy. Its fulfillment was seen to be the key to practical achievement in dealing with any problem where the human factor predominates, and a conflict of wills tends to spring from underlying concern for interests. In all such cases, the direct assault of new ideas provokes a stubborn resistance, thus intensifying the difficulty of producing a change of outlook.

As in war, the aim is to weaken resistance before attempting to overcome it; and the effect is best attained by drawing the other party out of defences.

In strategy, the longest way around is often the shortest way home.

Bonaparte’s key ideas had been moulded by the masters who had guided his military studies during his most impressionable years.

The true purpose of strategy is to diminish the possibility of resistance. And from this follows another axiom – that to ensure attaining an objective one should have alternative objectives. An attack that converges on one point should threaten, and be able to diverge against another. Only by this flexibility of aim can strategy be attuned to the uncertainty of war.

the concentration of strength against weakness depends on the dispersion of your opponent’s strength, which in turn is produced by distribution of your own that gives the appearance, and partial effect of dispersion. Your dispersion, his dispersion, your concentration – such is the sequence, and each is a sequel. True concentration is the fruit of calculated dispersion.

Choose the line (or course) of least expectation. Try to put yourself in the enemy’s shoes, and think what course it is least probable he will foresee or forestall.

Consumers are not on-off switches. They are volume dials. Consumers can and do turn the volume up or down on the various products and services they purchase and use over a lifetime.

This is the long-term future of collaborative marketing – custom-designed products and services, uniquely tailored to individual consumers.

Start paying attention to the individual perspectives and needs of each customer, one at a time, rather than just paying attention to the aggregate needs or opinions of a market segment or group.

Walt Disney’s influence cannot be measured by numbers or encomia. It can only be measured by how thoroughly he reshaped the culture and the American consciousness.

His life would become an ongoing effort to devise what psychologists call a “parcosm,” an invented universe, that he could control as he could not control reality.

He would always go ahead with any of his ideas whether he had the means or not.”

He was a go-getter who did not know where he was getting to, only that he would get somewhere.

For someone virtually without training or experience, for someone who had just lost his job, he was cocky—“I felt well-qualified,” he would say

It was a way to make his mark since, unlike newspaper cartooning, animation was something that Walt thought he might do better than anyone else because so few people at the time were doing it and so few people had any expertise in it, and the idea of being the best, the most noted, clearly appealed to him.

Walt Disney seldom dabbled. Everyone who knew him remarked on his intensity; when something intrigued him, he focused himself entirely as if it were the only thing that mattered.

“slap as big a mortgage on everything we got and let’s go after this thing in the right manner.”

Walt, as fervent as ever that quality was his only real advantage,

“Walt struck me as being absolutely sure of himself,”

“He was very excited about everything he was doing,” John Hench observed, citing a quality Walt had had even as a boy. “And he lived and breathed it and finally it rubbed off on you.”

Money wasn’t for personal indulgence. Money was for quality, and money was for independence.

“He knew everything that went into the park,” Dick Irvine said as one might have once commented about Walt’s knowledge of the studio. “He knew where every pipe was. He knew the height of every building.” Lillian said he knew where every nail in the park was located.

“he would get stagnant if he didn’t do new things.” “Walt instinctively resists doing the same thing twice. He likes to try something fresh.”

Walt had always identified closely with the outcasts and the marginalized rather than with the powerful,

But as with almost everything in Walt Disney’s life, there was action behind the talk.

He had changed the world. He had created a new art form and then produced several indisputable classics within he demonstrated how one could assert one’s will on the world at the very time when everything seemed to be growing beyond control and beyond comprehension.

Homo sapiens is the species that adapts the world to itself instead of adapting itself to the world. Machine learning is the newest chapter in this million-year saga:

Amazon’s algorithm, more than any one person, determines what books are read in the world today.

If every algorithm suddenly stopped working, it would be the end of the world as we know it.

Computers are made of billions of tiny switches called transistors, and algorithms turn those switches on and off billions of times per second.

Believe it or not, every algorithm, no matter how complex, can be reduced to just these three operations: AND, OR, and NOT.

Technically, machine learning is a subfield of AI, but it’s grown so large and successful that it now eclipses its proud parent.

Machine learning is the scientific method on steroids. It follows the same process of generating, testing, and discarding or refining hypotheses

Life’s infinite variety is the result of a single mechanism: natural selection. Even more remarkable, this mechanism is of a type very familiar to computer scientists: iterative search, where we solve a problem by trying many candidate solutions, selecting and modifying the best ones, and repeating these steps as many times as necessary. Evolution is an algorithm.

Evolution is the ultimate example of how much a simple learning algorithm can achieve given enough data.

Whenever a learner finds a pattern in the data that is not actually true in the real world, we say that it has overfit the data. Overfitting is the central problem in machine learning.

One of the most important problems in machine learning—and life—is the exploration-exploitation dilemma. If you’ve found something that works, should you just keep doing it? Or is it better to try new things, knowing it could be a waste of time but also might lead to a better solution?

Pornography was the unacknowledged “killer app” of the World Wide Web, not to mention the printing press, photography, and video before it. The vibrator was the first handheld electrical device, predating the cell phone by a century. Scooters took off in postwar Europe, particularly Italy, because they let young couples get away from their families. Facilitating dating was surely one of the “killer apps” of fire when Homo erectus discovered it a million years ago; and equally surely, a key driver of increasing realism in humanlike robots will be the sexbot industry. Sex just seems to be the end, rather than the means, of technological evolution.

machine learning is the art of making false assumptions and getting away with it. As the statistician George Box famously put it: “All models are wrong, but some are useful.”

Milton Friedman even argued in a highly influential essay that the best theories are the most oversimplified, provided their predictions are accurate, because they explain the most with the least.

how to learn from very little data. That might seem unnecessary in these days of data deluge, but the truth is that we often find ourselves with reams of data about some parts of the problem we want to solve and almost none about others. This is where one of the most important ideas in machine learning comes in: analogy. All of the tribes we’ve met so far have one thing in common: they learn an explicit model of the phenomenon under consideration, whether it’s a set of rules, a multilayer perceptron, a genetic program, or a Bayesian network. When they don’t have enough data to do that, they’re stumped. But analogizers can learn from as little as one example because they never form a model.

Analogy was the spark that ignited many of history’s greatest scientific advances. The theory of natural selection was born when Darwin, on reading Malthus’s Essay on Population, was struck by the parallels between the struggle for survival in the economy and in nature. Bohr’s model of the atom arose from seeing it as a miniature solar system, with electrons as the planets and the nucleus as the sun. Kekulé discovered the ring shape of the benzene molecule after daydreaming of a snake eating its own tail.

Your lawyers make money by executing transactions and your investors simply bring more transactions to your lawyers than you do.

You can’t negotiate at all without leverage. Roughly speaking, leverage is power. Alternatives are the most basic type of leverage in any negotiation.

the CEO does not represent the common stockholders on the board; his job is to create value for all classes of stock. In fact, all of the board members have a duty to serve the interests of the company, not a duty to “serve their class of stock”.

skillful negotiators use their opponent’s standards and norms to advance their own arguments. Fancy negotiators call this normative leverage.

Focus on your share price and the number of shares you own — metrics like valuation and percent ownership can fool you.

Startups often raise their seed round by selling convertible debt instead of equity because debt is simpler and cheaper.

Raising convertible debt from angels usually leaves your Series A options open. Why? Angels send a positive signal if they want to re-invest in the Series A, but they don’t send any negative signals to your prospective investors if they decide to pass.

Set up 10 meetings to all happen in the same week. Some of them will flake out and you will end up meeting with 4-6 of them. Tell them all that you plan to sign a term sheet in 6 weeks and if don’t have an offer by that time, we are going to go back to the drawing board and using sweat equity to build the company. Focus on the fund raising and get it done or go back and fix what is wrong with the company.

When you evaluate a candidate, ask yourself whether she is likely to increase the next round’s share price. If the answer is yes, she is a possible hire. If no, she is a no hire.

think about building value, not filling a position. entrepreneurs should understand that the top firms pick the best companies, they don’t make the best companies. Ask them yourself.

entrepreneurs should understand that the top firms pick the best companies, they don’t make the best companies. Ask them yourself.

Successful entrepreneurs delight their customers, execute relentlessly, and enjoy lots of luck. You recognize great entrepreneurs when you see them (like porn) and you get better at recognizing them every day.

We have a mission and a team that is taking us there. Why? We discovered a large problem and solved it with a product that has this amazing technology inside. We’re going to market and sell it to these customers, with these advantages over our competitors. In particular, we’re working towards these milestones over the next few quarters. In conclusion, this financing is a great investment opportunity.

Spending time developing alternatives is as good as spending time developing your current offer.

If you’re working on something interesting, smart people will offer to help you. The contrapositive is also true: if smart people don’t offer to help you, you’re probably not working on something interesting.

“A private company’s valuation is solely determined by the CEO’s ability to create a one-time market for its shares.”

The scarcity of available time should force you to distill the idea to the absolute minimum that is necessary to test the hypothesis. If you’re going to screw off at work (everyone does), spend it getting smarter about the stuff you don’t know.

Never think about something else when you should be thinking about incentives.

“A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week.” — George Patton

figure out how much money you need to run at least two experiments\*. Then tack on 3 more months of runway so you can raise another round before you run out of money. This is the minimum amount of money you should raise.

“For investors, the product is nothing.” Bad elevator pitches go on and on about the product. Good ones boil it down to a high concept pitch. The rest of the elevator pitch should be devoted to your traction, social proof, team, and market.

“The winner in your market will likely be the one with the best leader. A startup CEO needs to convince people to make “irrational” bets with their own lives. He needs to convince customers to be early adopters. He usually needs to raise capital and manage risk averse investors. A great group of people with a weak CEO will lose. A strong CEO has a strong grasp of strategy, can sell anything to anyone, and can inspire people to do what they never realized they could achieve.”

“Just about everything has a strike against it. It’s either already been done or it’s never been done.” – Seth Godin

Lawyers teach you the rules of the game. But they usually can’t teach you how to play it.

”A better way to understand leverage is to think about which side, at any given moment, has the most to lose from a failure to agree… the party with the most to lose has the least leverage; the party with the least to lose has the most leverage.

In good times and bad, startups should be asking themselves the same questions: (1) What’s our runway? (2) What experiments are we running to extend our runway? (3) How long will we try the experiments before we switch to plan B? and (4) What’s plan B? Startups that survived the last downturn didn’t take life-threatening risks with their runway—survival mattered more than market domination.

Pitches usually fail because they answer the wrong questions. The right questions depend on the stage of your business—for example, some businesses are just getting started with an idea, while others are printing money. Focus your pitch on the key questions for your stage and if you keep getting non-key questions, something is wrong with your pitch.

Don’t start a company if you’re not willing to start another one if this one fails. You can’t land on the moon with one shot.

The most important thing: idea intelligence connections experience determination.

the great thing about five whys is that it has a Pareto principle built right in. Because the most common problems keep recurring, your prevention efforts are automatically focused on the 20% of your product that needs the most help. That’s also the same 20% that causes you to waste the most time.

In a software startup, the OODA Loop looks like this: (1) Come up with an idea, (2) Code it, launch it, (3) Learn from usage data. Keep repeating the loop, each time using the Learnings to influence your next idea. This is the Idea-Code-Data loop.

As you eliminate waste in a lean startup, you can repeat the loop at a higher tempo than the competition; serve customers more effectively; and incidentally sow panic, paralysis, and surrender in the competition.

“A raise is only a raise for thirty days; after that, it’s just your salary.” – David Russo,

Constraints spur creativity. Bad economies demand it. Innovation is easier when the alternative is death.

usually if someone can sell you in an investment meeting really well, and you walk out dizzy, saying I don’t really get the product or this space, but this guy almost sold me. That’s a good sign.

integrity is paramount, because if you have someone with high intelligence and high energy, but they don’t have high integrity, you’ve basically got a hard-working crook. You don’t want to be associated with that. In fact, you prefer lazy, dumb crooks to hard-working smart crooks.

you don’t want to launch until, You’ve verified a customer’s problem by taking money out of her pocket. You’ve optimized your funnel so the money you spend on the launch yields the highest possible return on investment.

You always re-factor your design out of specific use cases and out of specific uses, rather than starting with the broad vision of what it’s like. Nivi: Basically the trails where the people walk, you pave those?

Steve Jobs: “Originally, we weren’t exactly sure how to market the Touch. Was it an iPhone without the phone? Was it a pocket computer? What happened was, what customers told us was, they started to see it as a game machine. Because a lot of the games were free on the store. Customers started to tell us, “You don’t know what you’ve got here — it’s a great game machine, with the multitouch screen, the accelerometer, and so on.” “We started to market it that way, and it just took off. And now what we really see is it’s the lowest-cost way to the App Store, and that’s the big draw. So what we were focused on is just reducing the price to $199. We don’t need to add new stuff — we need to get the price down where everyone can afford it.”

Your next feature won’t save you. But product/market fit, acquisition optimization, and creative distribution might.

What can you release in one day? “The first version of Gmail was literally written in a day.” – Paul Buchheit

If you fold at the first un-returned email what hope do you have as an entrepreneur? As an entrepreneur, people aren’t going to respond to you and it’s your responsibility to politely and assertively stay on people’s radar screen.

every successful entrepreneur I’ve ever met has a certain ‘X-Factor’ about them that makes people take notice.

As soon as you have enough users saying they would be very disappointed without your product, then it is critical to quickly implement a business model. And it will be much easier to map the business model to user perceived value.”

“You have to understand that you are not competing with an abstract notion of what a good investment is. You are competing with the other teams that saw the investor that week.”

High concept pitches are great for getting your foot in the door (“It’s Friendster… for dogs!”). But once you’re in the building, pitch a bigger vision.

Don’t make your vision too abstract. Be concrete

could you get up and pitch your company on a whiteboard without a single slide? If you cannot do that you are not ready to present.

it’s not that the competition is worse than you at everything; it’s that they made a different set of tradeoffs. They made a different set of decisions. Be articulate about what those decisions are, especially when you’re competing with big companies.

theory is consummately practical. The law of gravity, for example, actually is a theory—and it is useful. It allows us to predict that if we step off a cliff, we will fall.

Target products and markets that the established companies are motivated to ignore or run away from. Many of the most profitable growth trajectories in history have been initiated by disruptive innovations.

We say that new-market disruptions compete with “nonconsumption” because new-market disruptive products are so much more affordable to own and simpler to use that they enable a whole new population of people to begin owning and using the product, and to do so in a more convenient setting.

Often, the innovations that enable low-end disruption are improvements that reduce overhead costs, enabling a company to earn attractive returns on lower gross margins, coupled with improvements in manufacturing or business processes that turn assets faster.

Only if managers define market segments that correspond to the circumstances in which customers find themselves when making purchasing decisions can they accurately theorize which products will connect with their customers.

Companies that target their products at the circumstances in which customers find themselves, rather than at the customers themselves, are those that can launch predictably successful products.

Focus is scary—until you realize that it only means turning your back on markets you could never have anyway. Sharp focus on jobs that customers are trying to get done holds the promise of greatly improving the odds of success in new-product development.

Customers don’t just “change jobs” because a new product becomes available. Rather, the new product will succeed to the extent it helps customers accomplish more effectively and conveniently what they’re already trying to do.

we see the world not in terms of primary qualities, like being yellow or being twenty-four ounces by volume, but in terms of outcomes: “What we perceive when we look at objects are their [outcomes], not their qualities.

The disruptive innovation creates a whole new value network. The new consumers typically purchase the product through new channels and use the product in new venues.

Disruptive products require disruptive channels.

“What do we need to master today, and what will we need to master in the future, in order to excel on the trajectory of improvement that customers will define as important?”

companies are more likely to succeed when they match product architecture to their competitive circumstances.

One of the most exciting insights from our research about commoditization is that whenever it is at work somewhere in a value chain, a reciprocal process of de-commoditization is at work somewhere else in the value chain.1

Innovative ideas always emerge in a half-baked, partially formed condition,

Entrepreneurs rarely get their strategies exactly right the first time. The successful ones make it because they have money left over to try again after they learn that their initial strategy was flawed, whereas the failed ones typically have spent their resources implementing a deliberate strategy before its viability could be known

We have concluded that the best money during the nascent years of a business is patient for growth but impatient for profit.

Financial results measure how healthy the business was, not how healthy the business is.

We suspect that founders have an advantage in tackling disruption because they not only wield the requisite political clout but also have the self-confidence to override established processes in the interests of pursuing disruptive opportunities.

We begin with a clear hypothesis that makes predictions about what is supposed to happen. • We test those predictions empirically by giving customers a chance to take some action. This action can be an actual purchase, but it can also be some other kind of commitment: an exchange of an email address, for example, or an agreement to take part in a training session. (I will use the word “customer” throughout the book to refer not only to external customers but also our internal customers—such as colleagues who will be affected by a new sales process or IT system.) • We measure customer behavior and make a decision to act based on what we’ve learned. The fact that we’re looking at honest-to-goodness customer behavior is what separates Lean Startup from traditional market research. We’re not interested in what customers say they will do, but in how they actually behave. Just as scientific experimentation is informed by theory, Lean Startup experiments are guided by our vision to create a sustainable business or process solution.

Simplify: What can you remove so that you can launch tomorrow?

Go where you are the least comfortable in your assumptions.

That’s why the bias to action is so important. Science is all about making mistakes, learning from them, and adjusting.

rarely do customers say, “Gosh, I wish you’d launched this with more complexity.”

There’s one basic rule of sustainable growth: New customers come from the actions of past customers.

There are four ways past customers drive growth: • Word of mouth • As a side effect of product usage • Through funded ads (when paid out of revenue) • Through repeat purchase

Above all else, I want you to think for yourself—to decide 1) what you want, 2) what is true, and 3) what to do about it. I want you to do that in a clear-headed, thoughtful way, so that you get what you want.

Principles connect your values to your actions; they are beacons that guide your actions, and help you successfully deal with the laws of reality. It is to your principles that you turn when you face hard choices.

The consensus is often wrong, so I have to be an independent thinker. To make any money, you have to be right when they’re wrong.

I learned that failure is by and large due to not accepting and successfully dealing with the realities of life, and that achieving success is simply a matter of accepting and successfully dealing with all my realities.

one should accept the amount of pain that is consistent with achieving one’s objectives.

The things we are striving for are just the bait to get us to chase after them in order to make us evolve, and it is the evolution and not the reward itself that matters to us and those around us.

there is an excellent correlation between giving society what it wants and making money, and almost no correlation between the desire to make money and how much money one makes.

the quality of our lives depends on the quality of the decisions we make.

throwing us trick choices that have both types of consequences and

Successful people know that nature is testing them, and that it is not sympathetic.39

When you think that it’s too hard, remember that in the long run, doing the things that will make you successful is a lot easier than being unsuccessful. The first-order consequences of escaping life’s challenges may seem pleasurable in the moment, but the second-and third-order consequences of this approach are your life and, over time, will be painful.

You can have virtually anything you want, but you can’t have everything you want.

I also know that I can “cheat.” Unlike in school, in life you don’t have to come up with all the right answers. You can ask the people around you for help—or even ask them to do the things you don’t do well.

Get over “blame” and “credit” and get on with “accurate” and “inaccurate.”

Remember that a root cause is not an action but a reason.

Considering both the probabilities and the payoffs of the consequences, make sure that the probability of the unacceptable (i.e., the risk of ruin) is nil.

Recognize opportunities where there isn’t much to lose and a lot to gain, even if the probability of the gain happening is low.

Embracing your failures is the first step toward genuine improvement; it is also why “confession” precedes forgiveness in many societies.

While it’s good to be open-minded and questioning, it’s dumb to treat the views of people with great track records and experience the same as those without track records and experience.

Since nature created different ways of thinking and since nature never creates anything without a purpose,61 each way of thinking has purposes. Often, thinking well for some purposes necessitates thinking poorly for others.

It is a law of nature that you must do difficult things to gain strength and power. As with working out, after a while you make the connection between doing difficult things and the benefits you get from doing them, and you come to look forward to doing these difficult things.

You shouldn’t be a manager if you have problems confronting people or if you put being liked above ensuring your people succeed.

Don’t “pick your battles.” Fight them all. If you see something wrong, even something small, deal with it.

You have to understand the person’s modus operandi and that to be successful, they can’t be successful in all ways—e.g., to be meticulous they might not be able to be fast (and vice versa).

Don’t use the anonymous “we” and “they,” because that masks personal responsibility—use specific names.

First visualize the parts and their interactions, and then find the parts to fit the design.

Remember that everything takes longer and costs more than you plan for.

Remember that your goal is to find the best answer, not to give the best one you have.

The man-worshipers, in my sense of the term, are those who see man’s highest potential and strive to actualize it.

He looked at the granite. To be cut, he thought, and made into walls. He looked at a tree. To be split and made into rafters. He looked at a streak of rust on the stone and thought of iron ore under the ground. To be melted and to emerge as girders against the sky.

“My dear fellow, who will let you?” “That’s not the point. The point is, who will stop me?”

“I have, let’s say, sixty years to live. Most of that time will be spent working. I’ve chosen the work I want to do. If I find no joy in it, then I’m only condemning myself to sixty years of torture. And I can find the joy only if I do my work in the best way possible to me. But the best is a matter of standards—and I set my own standards. I inherit nothing. I stand at the end of no tradition. I may, perhaps, stand at the beginning of one.”

Before each new venture he studied the field for a long time, then proceeded to act as if he had never heard of it, upsetting all precedent.

every human soul has a style of its own, also. Its one basic theme. You’ll see it reflected in every thought, every act, every wish of that person. The one absolute, the one imperative in that living creature.

All growth demands destruction.

“Men differ in their virtues, if any,” said Gail Wynand, explaining his policy, “but they are alike in their vices.”

Predictable Lead Generation, the most important thing for creating predictable revenue.

The biggest bottleneck in prospecting into companies that have more than a few executives isn’t getting to the decision maker/influencer/point person…it’s finding them in the first place!

sending mass emails to high level executives to ask for referrals to the best person in their organization for a first conversation.

“No” doesn’t matter until you hear it from the CEO or your ideal decision maker. And even then when you get a No, you should find out why to determine if it’s coming from an objection you can handle.

Salespeople should use a nonthreatening, research-oriented approach that uses the first half of the call to learn about the prospect's business and needs. The salesperson positions their service and value at the end of the call, after they've uncovered what the prospect actually wants. This means they position the solution to the specific needs of the prospect without lots of distracting, irrelevant information and features the prospect doesn’t care about.

“Did I catch you at a bad time?” This is my all-time favorite question for opening any conversation.

humans rarely choose things in absolute terms. We don’t have an internal value meter that tells us how much things are worth. Rather, we focus on the relative advantage of one thing over another, and estimate value accordingly.

most people don’t know what they want unless they see it in context. We don’t know what kind of racing bike we want—until we see a champ in the Tour de France ratcheting the gears on a particular model.

Mark Twain once noted about Tom Sawyer, “Tom had discovered a great law of human action, namely, that in order to make a man covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.”

humans are intrinsically afraid of loss. The real allure of FREE! is tied to this fear. There’s no visible possibility of loss when we choose a FREE!

SO WE LIVE in two worlds: one characterized by social exchanges and the other characterized by market exchanges.

when we offer people a financial payment in a situation that is governed by social norms, the added payment could actually reduce their motivation to engage and help out.

This variable schedule of reinforcement also works wonders for motivating people.

In the absence of expertise or perfect information, we look for social cues to help us figure out how much we are, or should be, impressed, and our expectations take care of the rest.

Before recent times, almost all medicines were placebos.

In the United States very few surgical procedures are tested scientifically. For that reason, we don’t really know whether many operations really offer a cure, or whether, like many of their predecessors, they are effective merely because of their placebo effect. Thus, we may find ourselves frequently submitting to procedures and operations that if more carefully studied, would be put aside.

We have found that individuals who handle pressure well are also sensitive to their physiological arousal “shifts,” which allows them to regulate their arousal by, for example, breathing slower, which enables them to process information more effectively and prevent themselves from becoming mentally rigid, thus preventing counterproductive, impulsive, defensive comments, products of unmanaged physical arousal.

In a stressful situation, reduction is the goal. In a pressure moment, success is the goal.

Whenever you feel pressure, ask yourself: Does the situation really call for the reaction I am having? Or am I wearing myself out by overreacting when I don’t need to? Can my performance in this situation actually threaten my success? Your answers will help you gauge whether you are really in a pressure moment or are merely feeling stress.

Research shows that in venture-capital pitches, when entrepreneurs go to private equity organizations to get funded, as Kim was doing on the show, investors’ decisions often turn on nonverbal factors like “how comfortable and charismatic the entrepreneur is.” “The predictors of who actually gets the money are all about how you present yourself, and much less to do with the content of what you say,”

Psychologists today agree: It is not the event that causes our reactions but rather how we interpret the event, which makes us either confident or anxious.

The single most important question that we face when we are under pressure is: Do I see the situation as a crisis or a challenge?

Start by increasing your awareness of the inner dialogues you have before a pressure moment so that you can begin to rid yourself of pressure distortions that derail you.

Investors don’t invest in businesses. They invest in stories about businesses.

The major components of an elevator pitch are traction, product, team, and social proof. And investors care about traction over everything else.

Getting an introduction is a test of your entrepreneurial skills. If you can’t convince a middleman to make an introduction, how will you convince employees to join your company? How will you convince customers to buy from you? How will you convince investors to put their money in your pocket?

There is literally more money to invest than the world’s VCs know what to do with.

“Talk about what you’ve done, not what you’re going to do. Weak startups and their leaders seem to immediately start talk about “what’s next,” as opposed to focusing on the core product.

Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great.

Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life. The vast majority of companies never become great, precisely because the vast majority become quite good—and that is their main problem.

The good-to-great companies did not focus principally on what to do to become great; they focused equally on what not to do and what to stop doing.

Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy—these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. They are more like Lincoln and Socrates than Patton or Caesar.

Level 5 leader—an individual who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will.

Luck. What an odd factor to talk about. Yet the good-to-great executives talked a lot about luck in our interviews.

Great vision without great people is irrelevant.

managing your problems can only make you good, whereas building your opportunities is the only way to become great.

For no matter what we achieve, if we don’t spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect, we cannot possibly have a great life. But if we spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect—people we really enjoy being on the bus with and who will never disappoint us—then we will almost certainly have a great life, no matter where the bus goes.

Freud and the unconscious, Darwin and natural selection, Marx and class struggle, Einstein and relativity, Adam Smith and division of labor—they were all hedgehogs. They took a complex world and simplified it.

If you could pick one and only one ratio—profit per x (or, in the social sector, cash flow per x)—to systematically increase over time, what x would have the greatest and most sustainable impact on your economic engine? We learned that this single question leads to profound insight into the inner workings of an organization’s economics.

a great company is much more likely to die of indigestion from too much opportunity than starvation from too little. The challenge becomes not opportunity creation, but opportunity selection.

Peter Drucker once observed that the drive for mergers and acquisitions comes less from sound reasoning and more from the fact that doing deals is a much more exciting way to spend your day than doing actual work.35

I believe that it is no harder to build something great than to build something good. It might be statistically more rare to reach greatness, but it does not require more suffering than perpetuating mediocrity.

If you have to ask the question, “Why should we try to make it great? Isn’t success enough?” then you’re probably engaged in the wrong line of work.

platforms allow consumers and producers to connect with each other and exchange goods, services, and information.

Platforms don’t, to use a common phrase, own the means of production—instead, they create the means of connection.

Figure out what the main activity is you’re trying to change and then put it in to this sentence: “X, no longer a pain the ass.”

all platforms do two things: reduce transaction costs and enable complementary innovation.

The core transaction is the platform’s “factory”—the way it manufactures value for its users. It is the process that turns potential connections into transactions. Getting the core transaction right is the most important piece of platform design, as the platform will need its users to repeat this process over and over to generate and exchange value.

platforms are as old as human society itself. Examples include a Roman marketplace, an ancient auction house, a bazaar, or, more

IBM estimated in 2013 that 90 percent of the world’s information was less than two years old.11

Platforms are the natural business model of the Internet: They are pure zero-marginal-cost information businesses. They use data to facilitate transactions and enable networked production. The low marginal cost of production means that expenses don’t grow as fast as revenue does.

The trick isn’t adding stuff. It’s taking away. —Mark Zuckerberg,

Well-designed networks reduce friction and help good stuff be found. —Ev Williams,

The local nature of network effects helps us understand why network density matters just as much as network size for platforms. The denser a network is, the more overlapping local networks there will be. This means that more of the potential connections in the network will become actual transactions, as these users are more likely to interact with each other.

growth in networks isn’t random. It’s path dependent. What does this mean? It means that the types of users your network will attract in the future depends on the composition and behavior of your network’s existing users. A network’s future growth depends on the path it has taken to get there.

This coordination problem must be solved by incentivizing users to join. The main way platforms do this is by subsidizing participation for one or both user groups. In this way, the platform can get early users to join even when the value of the network is relatively low.

look for untapped sources of supply. If you can take this unused supply and bring it into a formal community or marketplace, you can generate a lot of previously unrealized economic and social value.

When you join a startup, you are also joining a network – You aren’t just joining a company – you are joining a network of employees and investors who – regardless of the fate of the startup you join – will inevitably go on to do interesting and successful ventures. If you impress them, they will bring you along. I know of many cases where startups failed but employees went on to flourish at the founders’ next startup or another company their VCs invested in.

In the 10 years or so I’ve been involved with startups, I have never seen a “Eureka” moment where someone suddenly comes up with a great idea. Instead, I have always found idea development to be a wrenching and often meandering process that is guided mostly by instinct.

Founder salaries – these should be “subsistence” level and no more. If the founders are wealthy, the number should be zero. If they aren’t, it should be whatever lets them not worry about money but not save any. This is very, very important.

whenever you want to debate something with a VC, frame it in operational terms since it’s hard for them to argue with that).

The Google founders are widely recognized for their algorithmic work. Their most important insight, however, in my opinion, was to identify a previously untapped and incredibly valuable data source – links – and then build a (brilliant) algorithm to optimally harness that new data source.

Algorithms are, as they say in business school, “commoditized.” The order of magnitude breakthroughs (and companies with real competitive advantages) are going to come from those who identify or create new data sources.

The biggest mistake entrepreneurs make when pitching VCs is to argue that their startup is likely to succeed. Instead, they should argue that there is a small probability their startup could be a billion dollar or greater exit.

Benjamin Graham famously said that the stock market is a voting machine in the short run and weighing machine in the long run. The same is true of startups. Make something weighty – try to build an empire – and you’ll be far less vulnerable to the ups and downs of the market.

John Doerr discussing the original business plans for companies he invested in such as Google, Intuit, and Amazon: In every case you can find the one sentence or paragraph that describes their unique business model advantage. It could be their unique distribution system or the retailing model. It’s the factor that accounts for their success. It turns out the factor that explains their success at the beginning is what accounts for their failure later.

The startup world is extremely small. If you’re smart, work really hard, and act with integrity, people will notice. Contrary to popular wisdom, you will actually have more job stability than working at a big company. And hopefully you’ll go on to start your own company, gain independence, and then help others do the same.

The story you should tell is the story of someone who has been building stuff her whole life and now just needs some capital to take it to the next level.

smart business should be practiced like smart chess: you should make moves that assume your opponents will respond by optimizing their interests.

To distinguish toys that are disruptive from toys that will remain just toys, you need to look at products as processes. Obviously, products get better inasmuch as the designer adds features, but this is a relatively weak force. Much more powerful are external forces: microchips getting cheaper, bandwidth becoming ubiquitous, mobile devices getting smarter, etc. For a product to be disruptive it needs to be designed to ride these changes up the utility curve.

Every time an engineer joins Google, a startup dies

Jobs is obviously a remarkable person, but there are probably 100 Steve Jobs born every year. The vast majority just never have a chance or give a thought to starting a revolutionary new company.

I noticed that the more powerful the VC, the more likely they were to pay close attention, show up on time, and not bring phones/computers into meetings. I guess when you are changing the world, emails can wait an hour for a response).

Venture capital is a shining example of capitalism just like Adam Smith pictured it, where private vice really does lead to public virtue.

Size markets using narratives, not numbers

are you creating more value for others than you capture for yourself?

I think of people who aim to create more value than they capture as “builders” and people who don’t as “extractors.” Most entrepreneurs are natural-born builders. They want to create something from nothing and are happy to see the benefits of their labor spill over to others.

Your #1 competitor starting out will always be the BACK button, nothing else. – Garry Tan

If you aren’t getting rejected on a daily basis, your goals aren’t ambitious enough

One of the great things about looking for a job is that your “payoff” is almost always a max function (the best of all attempts), not an average. This is also generally true for raising VC financing, doing bizdev partnerships, hiring programmers,

Entrepreneurs should always ask themselves “why will I succeed where others failed?” If the answer is simply “I’m doing it right” or “I’m smarter,” you are probably underestimating your antecedents, which were probably run by competent or even great entrepreneurs

Mark Twain famously quipped that “80 percent of life is showing up.” Running a startup, I’d say it’s more like 90 percent.

Unilever might have had a large share of what marketers have defined as the yellow fats business, but no customer walks into the store saying, “I need to buy something in the yellow fats category.” They come in with a specific Job to Be Done.

the definition of what we mean by a job is highly specific and precise. It’s not an all-purpose catchphrase for something that a customer wants or needs. It’s not just a new buzzword. Finding and understanding jobs—and then creating the right product or service to solve them—takes work.

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.

There is a simple, but powerful, insight at the core of our theory: customers don’t buy products or services; they pull them into their lives to make progress. We call this progress the “job” they are trying to get done, and in our metaphor we say that customers “hire” products or services to solve these jobs.

In many innovations, the focus is often entirely on the functional or practical need. But in reality, consumers’ social and emotional needs can far outweigh any functional desires.

A job is the progress that an individual seeks in a given circumstance. Successful innovations enable a customer’s desired progress, resolve struggles, and fulfill unmet aspirations. They perform jobs that formerly had only inadequate or nonexistent solutions. Jobs are never simply about the functional—they have important social and emotional dimensions, which can be even more powerful than functional ones. Because jobs occur in the flow of daily life, the circumstance is central to their definition and becomes the essential unit of innovation work—not customer characteristics, product attributes, new technology, or trends. Jobs to Be Done are ongoing and recurring.

Jobs Theory is not primarily focused on “who” did something, or “what” they did—but on “why.” Understanding jobs is about clustering insights into a coherent picture, rather than segmenting down to finer and finer slices.

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

what’s important is that you focus on understanding the underlying job, not falling in love with your solution for it.

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.”

competitive advantage is built not just by understanding customers’ jobs, but by creating the experiences that customers seek both in purchasing and using the product or service—and then, crucially, building internal processes to ensure that those experiences are reliably delivered to the customer every time. That is what’s hard for competitors to copy.

Innovation is less about producing something new and more about enabling something new and important for customers.

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.”

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.

One of the fundamental mistakes that many marketers make is to collect a handful of data points from a huge sample of respondents when what they really need—and this interview illustrates—is a huge number of data points from a smaller sample size. 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.

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.

A powerful lever to drive job-centric process development and integration is to measure and manage to new metrics aligned with nailing the customer’s job. Managers should ask what elements of the experience are the most critical to the customer, and define metrics that track performance against them.

Data has an annoying way of conforming itself to support whatever point of view we want it to support. In fact, Nate Silver, a well-known statistician and founder of the New York Times political blog FiveThirtyEight (it was acquired by ESPN in 2013), noted, “The most calamitous failures of prediction usually have a lot in common. We focus on those signals that tell a story about the world as we would like it to be, not how it really is.”8

a clear Job to Be Done can provide the foundation for an organization’s culture—we solve problems this way because we know what matters and why.

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.”

All we can perceive, experience, think about, is the surface layer of reality, less than the tip of an iceberg. Underneath the surface appearance, everything is not only connected with everything else, but also with the Source of all life out of which it came.

In the proximity of death, the whole concept of ownership stands revealed as ultimately meaningless.

No ego can last for long without the need for more. Therefore, wanting keeps the ego alive much more than having.

Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.

The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be; otherwise, you will be forced to relive the past again and again.

The greater part of most people’s thinking is involuntary, automatic, and repetitive. It is no more than a kind of mental static and fulfills no real purpose. Strictly speaking, you don’t think: Thinking happens to you. The statement “I think” implies volition. It implies that you have a say in the matter, that there is choice involved on your part. For most people, this is not yet the case. “I think” is just as false a statement as “I digest” or “I circulate my blood.” Digestion happens, circulation happens, thinking happens.

The fundamental difference between an instinctive response and an emotion is this: An instinctive response is the body’s direct response to some external situation. An emotion, on the other hand, is the body’s response to a thought.

Every human being emanates an energy field that corresponds to his or her inner state, and most people can sense it, although they may feel someone else’s energy emanation only subliminally.

Physicists have discovered that the apparent solidity of matter is an illusion created by our senses. This includes the physical body, which we perceive and think of as form, but 99.99 % of which is actually empty space. This is how vast the space is between the atoms compared to their size, and there is as much space again within each atom.

I believe that being successful as an entrepreneur requires you to get lots of things done. You are constantly faced with decisions and there is always incomplete information. This paralyzes most people. Not you. Entrepreneurs make fast decisions and move forward knowing that, at best, 70 percent of their decisions are going to be right.

Real entrepreneurs are contagious. They are filled with ideas and they get those ideas onto paper. That paper can be in the form of wireframes or in the form of a PowerPoint plan. Or worst case your ideas can be conveyed verbally. But they GET THINGS DONE.

Anyone who has been an entrepreneur before will tell you that much of being successful in the early days is about pure survival. As an entrepreneur you’re always under-resourced. You want to hire a crack team of developers but you haven’t raised enough money yet. You want that key marketing resource from Google but he’s on a fat salary that you can’t match. You’re trying to get contacts to get you that introduction to Ron Conway to sprinkle his legitimacy on your company through an angel investment. All of these things are nearly impossible for most entrepreneurs. And tenacity alone won’t yield positive results. In fact, tenacity with no inspiration is often annoying, yet with a little ‘inspiration’ and charm it can be motivating.

If you really want to earn you need to be in the top three or four in the company. Best to be a founder.

Wind extinguishes a candle and energizes fire. Likewise with randomness, uncertainty, chaos: you want to use them, not hide from them. You want to be the fire and wish for the wind.

If you want to become antifragile, put yourself in the situation “loves mistakes”—to the right of “hates mistakes”—by making these numerous and small in harm.

The idea pervades classical literature: in Ovid, difficulty is what wakes up the genius (ingenium mala saepe movent),

The excess energy released from overreaction to setbacks is what innovates!

Information is antifragile; it feeds more on attempts to harm it than it does on efforts to promote it. For instance, many wreck their reputations merely by trying to defend it.

When you starve yourself of food, it is the bad proteins that are broken down first and recycled by your own body—a process called autophagy. This is a purely evolutionary process, one that selects and kills the weakest for fitness.

“what did not kill me did not make me stronger, but spared me because I am stronger than others; but it killed others and the average population is now stronger because the weak are gone.”

for a self-employed person, a small (nonterminal) mistake is information, valuable information, one that directs him in his adaptive approach;

We need to learn to think in second steps, chains of consequences, and side effects.

But just as with the color blue, having a word for something helps spread awareness of it.

My point is that wisdom in decision making is vastly more important—not just practically, but philosophically—than knowledge.

My idea of the modern Stoic sage is someone who transforms fear into prudence, pain into information, mistakes into initiation, and desire into undertaking.

A Stoic is a Buddhist with attitude, one who says “f\*\*\* you” to fate.

For antifragility is the combination aggressiveness plus paranoia—clip your downside, protect yourself from extreme harm, and let the upside, the positive Black Swans, take care of itself. We saw Seneca’s asymmetry: more upside than downside can come simply from the reduction of extreme downside (emotional harm) rather than improving things in the middle.

“An agent does not move except out of intention for an end,”

We use randomness to spoon-feed us with discoveries—which is why antifragility is necessary.

No, we don’t put theories into practice. We create theories out of practice.

power in life is that he never lets the other person frame the question.

Michelangelo was asked by the pope about the secret of his genius, particularly how he carved the statue of David, largely considered the masterpiece of all masterpieces. His answer was: “It’s simple. I just remove everything that is not David.”

The greatest—and most robust—contribution to knowledge consists in removing what we think is wrong—subtractive epistemology. In life, antifragility is reached by not being a sucker.

So knowledge grows by subtraction much more than by addition—given that what we know today might turn out to be wrong but what we know to be wrong cannot turn out to be right, at least not easily.

As to liquid, my rule is drink no liquid that is not at least a thousand years old—so its fitness has been tested. I drink just wine, water, and coffee.

For the Stoics, prudence is connatural to courage—the courage to fight your own impulses

The best way to verify that you are alive is by checking if you like variations. Remember that food would not have a taste if it weren’t for hunger; results are meaningless without effort, joy without sadness, convictions without uncertainty, and an ethical life isn’t so when stripped of personal risks.

D.I.Y. encourages us to reject authority and hierarchy, advocating that we can and should produce as much as we consume.

Andy Warhol once said, “Good business is the best art.”

the only way to learn about anything is to break it thoughtfully, then to make it work again,”

Pirates highlight areas where choice doesn’t exist and demand that it does. And this mentality transcends media formats, technological changes, and business models. It is a powerful tool that once understood, can be applied anywhere.

Lao-Tzu, the founder of Taoism, famously said that when leaders lead well, people feel that they did it themselves and that it happened naturally. Pirates are experts at leading communities in this way, bringing people products, services, and sounds they didn’t know they couldn’t live without.

Albert Einstein once said, “No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it”;

Take your big idea. Next, think about the end users, Who are they? What do they want?

information wants to be free, but customized information wants to be really expensive.

the thing to fear is not piracy, but obscurity.

A form of self-interest that powers both youth cultures and open-source culture is the desire to create identity.

Keeping it real and striking a chord with a huge audience is how hip-hop took over, but keeping it real is a trend bigger than hip-hop, now used to speak to consumers, voters, and entire nations.

The only way to move the crowd and rally a community is with genuine connections.

Marketers can’t sell us meaning; we have to find it in their products, and if we do, and we’re passionate about them, we’ll happily tell everyone we can.

A legendary hero is usually the founder of something—the founder of a new age, the founder of a new religion, the founder of a new city, the founder of a new way of life. In order to found something new, one has to leave the old and go on a quest of the seed idea, a germinal idea that willhave the potential ofbringing forth that new thing. — Joseph Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces

together with the vision and passion that characterize the best entrepreneurs. As with great artists, these are innate qualities that make successful serial entrepreneurs a rare breed.

The greatest risk—and hence the greatest cause of failure—in startups is not in the development of the new product but in the development of customers and markets. Startups don't fail because they lack a product; they fail because they lack customers and a proven financial model.

a successful startup's first release is designed to be "good enough only for our first paying customers."

writing down the answer to "If they could wave a magic wand and change anything at all, what would it be?" gives you a tremendous leg up on how to present your new product.

Positioning your product against the slew of existing competitors is accomplished by adroitly picking the correct product features where you are better.

If you could wave a magic wand and change anything in what you do, what would it be?" I call these the "IPO questions." Understand the answers to these questions and your startup is going public.

You cannot learn and discover while you are executing. You can do one or the other, but not both.

Can you reduce your business to a single clear, compelling message that says why your company is different and your product worth buying? That's the goal of a value proposition

If you are creating a new market, or trying to reframe an existing one, you are probably going to come up with a transformational value proposition. Transformational value propositions deal with how the solution will create a new level or class of activity - i.e. something people could never do before.

Growth came from product innovations, unique acquisition channels that their competition hadn’t considered, and rigorous optimization driven by analytics and a deep understanding of their customers.

Your objective should be to remove complexity from the initial user experience and messaging in order to highlight this core user perceived value. Often this means burying or even completely eliminating features that don’t relate to this gratifying experience.

wait until you understand why certain customers love your product; then obsess over every element of this customer experience.

I always begin a new startup marketing assignment by looking for any untapped existing demand. Demand harvesting is much easier than demand creation – and it has a faster sales cycle.

Visualize every detail of your business when it’s successful. You should be able to answer questions like: How will customers discover us? What will be their first experience? When will they realize they’ve found something great (what specifically will they be doing)? Why will they think it’s great/important? Why will they think it’s better than the old way? How will they describe us to other people? How will their experience evolve with our business? When and how will we generate revenue? How will we reinvest that money to accelerate the business? Why will the whole model be repeatable and scalable?

the purest form of Metrics Driven Marketing is direct response marketing – which should be the primary marketing approach of all startups.

the key to sustaining rapid growth is understanding your “must have” experience and then aligning the entire business around that experience. This includes aligning the product roadmap, funnel optimization, and messaging.

My best epiphanies that led to big boosts in growth have always followed concentrated face-to-face engagements with customers.

how we’ve been able to drive hundreds of thousands of new users through social media in recent startups. OK, here it is: effective customer development… By figuring out who needs your product/service, why they need it, what constitutes a gratifying experience with the product/service and getting more of the right type of people to this gratifying experience (highlighting the right benefits and reducing barriers) social media can become a powerful driver for your business too.

The right growth hacker will have a burning desire to connect your target market with your must have solution. They must have the creativity to figure out unique ways of driving growth in addition to testing/evolving the techniques proven by other companies.

And I’ve always preferred to be underpaid than overpaid (much better job security). I have a feeling that this is a key characteristic of most people that have had success in their career.

The best breakthroughs initially come from immersion in customer problems and then later from understanding the customer experience and benefits of your solution.

Companies increasingly find that their economic value is a function of the strength of the habits they create.

User habits are a competitive advantage. Products that change customer routines are less susceptible to attacks from other companies.

The ultimate goal of a habit-forming product is to solve the user’s pain by creating an association so that the user identifies the company’s product or service as the source of relief.

Dorsey believes a clear description of users — their desires, emotions, the context with which they use the product — is paramount to building the right solution.

One method is to try asking the question "why" as many times as it takes to get to an emotion.

To initiate action, doing must be easier than thinking.

B = MAT, which represents that a given behavior will occur when motivation, ability, and a trigger are present at the same time and in sufficient degrees.

“Take a human desire, preferably one that has been around for a really long time… Identify that desire and use modern technology to take out steps.”

influencing behavior by reducing the effort required to perform an action is more effective than increasing someone’s desire to do it.

of 42 studies involving over 22,000 participants concluded that these few words, placed at the end of a request, are a highly-effective way to gain compliance, doubling the likelihood of people saying “yes.”[xcii] The magic words the researchers discovered? The phrase, “but you are free to accept or refuse.”

Looking for nascent behaviors among early adopters can often uncover valuable new business opportunities.

“start by entering the conversation already going on in your prospect’s mind”.

Interest = Benefits + Curiosity. The same holds true for your email subject lines.

In your emails, instead of just writing about your topics, tell a story that illustrates your points.

Copy cannot create desire for a product. It can only take the hopes, dreams, fears and desires that already exists in the hearts of millions of people, and focus those already existing desires onto a particular product.”

Fundamentally, marketing must refocus away from selling product and toward creating relationship.

And the best way to prepare yourself for the fast-paced, ever-changing competitive world of marketing is to prepare yourself to think.

the key to winning over this segment is to show that the new technology enables some strategic leap forward, something never before possible, which has an intrin-sic value and appeal to the nontechnologist. This benefit is typically symbol-ized by a single, compelling application, the one thing that best captures the power and value of the new product.

part of what defines a high-tech market is the tendency of its members to reference each other when making buying decisions—is absolutely key to successful high-tech marketing.

no meaningful marketing program can be implemented across a set of customers who do not reference each other.

Visionaries are that rare breed of people who have the insight to match an emerging technology to a strategic opportunity,

Understand their dream, and you will understand how to market to them.

By isolating the psychographics of customers based on when they tend to enter the market, it gives clear guidance on how to develop a marketing program for an innovative product.

The fundamental principle for crossing the chasm is to target a specific niche market as your point of attack and focus all your resources on achieving the dominant leadership position in that segment.

All of them describe a similar process, in which analytical and rational means are used extensively both in preparation for and in review of a central moment of performance. But in the moment itself, the actual decisions are made intuitively.

The fundamental rule of engagement is that any force can defeat any other force—if it can define the battle.

Positioning is the single largest influence on the buying decision. It serves as a kind of buyers’ shorthand, shaping not only their final choice but even the way they evaluate alternatives leading up to that choice.

Most people resist selling but enjoy buying. By focusing on making a product easy to buy, you are focusing on what the customers really want. In turn, they will sense this and reward you with their purchases.

Here is a proven formula for getting all this down into two short sentences. Try it out on your own company and one of its key products. Just fill in the blanks: • For (target customers—beachhead segment only) • Who are dissatisfied with (the current market alternative) • Our product is a (new product category) • That provides (key problem-solving capability). • Unlike (the product alternative), • We have assembled (key whole product features for your specific application).

business model innovation is about creating value, for companies, customers, and society.

Values may be quantitative (e.g. price, speed of service) or qualitative (e.g. design, customer experience).

companies should focus on one of three value disciplines: operational excellence, product leadership, or customer intimacy.

A designer’s job is to extend the boundaries of thought, to generate new options, and, ultimately, to create value for users.

Successful innovation requires a deep understanding of customers, including environment, daily routines, concerns, and aspirations.

Adopting the customer perspective is a guiding principle for the entire business model design process.

As Pablo Picasso said, “I begin with an idea and then it becomes something else.” Picasso saw ideas as nothing more than points of departure. He knew they would evolve into something new during their explication. Crafting a business model is no different.

Design attitude demands changing one’s orientation from making decisions to creating options from which to choose.

To focus on the red ocean is therefore to accept the key constraining factors of war—limited terrain and the need to beat an enemy to succeed—and to deny the distinctive strength of the business world: the capacity to create new market space that is uncontested.

Effective blue ocean strategy should be about risk minimization and not risk taking.

four key questions to challenge an industry’s strategic logic and business model: • Which of the factors that the industry takes for granted should be eliminated? • Which factors should be reduced well below the industry’s standard? • Which factors should be raised well above the industry’s standard? • Which factors should be created that the industry has never offered?

Having identified a trend of this nature, you can then look across time and ask yourself what the market would look like if the trend were taken to its logical conclusion. Working back from that vision of a blue ocean strategy, you can identify what must be changed today to unlock a new blue ocean.

A company should never outsource its eyes. There is simply no substitute for seeing for yourself. Great artists don’t paint from other people’s descriptions or even from photographs; they like to see the subject for themselves. The same is true for great strategists.

As Aristotle pointed out, “The soul never thinks without an image.”

companies need to build their blue ocean strategy in the sequence of buyer utility, price, cost, and adoption.

You should not let costs drive prices.

Key to unlocking an epidemic movement is concentration, not diffusion.

neuroscience and cognitive science shows that people remember and respond most effectively to what they see and experience: “Seeing is believing.”

In the realm of experience, positive stimuli reinforce behavior, whereas negative stimuli change attitudes and behavior.

Brilliant thinking is rare, but courage is in even shorter supply than genius.

small groups of people bound together by a sense of mission have changed the world for the better.

All companies must be “lean,” which is code for “unplanned.” You should not know what your business will do; planning is arrogant and inflexible. Instead you should try things out, “iterate,” and treat entrepreneurship as agnostic experimentation.

a great business is defined by its ability to generate cash flows in the future.

every startup should start with a very small market. Always err on the side of starting too small. The reason is simple: it’s easier to dominate a small market than a large one. If you think your initial market might be too big, it almost certainly is.

Whatever Einstein did or didn’t say, the power law—so named because exponential equations describe severely unequal distributions—is the law of the universe. It defines our surroundings so completely that we usually don’t even see it.

Bob Dylan has said that he who is not busy being born is busy dying.

But the most valuable companies in the future won’t ask what problems can be solved with computers alone. Instead, they’ll ask: how can computers help humans solve hard problems?

1. The Engineering Question Can you create breakthrough technology instead of incremental improvements? 2. The Timing Question Is now the right time to start your particular business? 3. The Monopoly Question Are you starting with a big share of a small market? 4. The People Question Do you have the right team? 5. The Distribution Question Do you have a way to not just create but deliver your product? 6. The Durability Question Will your market position be defensible 10 and 20 years into the future? 7. The Secret Question Have you identified a unique opportunity that others don’t see? Whatever your industry, any great business plan must address every one of them.

if you can’t monopolize a unique solution for a small market, you’ll be stuck with vicious competition.

Jobs’s return to Apple 12 years later shows how the most important task in business—the creation of new value—cannot be reduced to a formula and applied by professionals.

Publishers of music, literature, movies, software, and television are like proverbial canaries in a coal mine—the first casualties of a revolution that is sweeping across all industries.

human societies have always been punctuated by periods of great change that not only cause people to think and behave differently, but also give rise to new social orders and institutions.

the new Web is principally about participating rather than about passively receiving information.

Every company needs to constantly adjust their boundaries to meet ever-changing demands and opportunities. This means that boundary decisions are at the heart of business strategy. What capabilities should be in and what should be out?

Customer value, not control, is the answer in the digital economy.

all innovations are ultimately cumulative, with each generation of advances resting on the previous.

companies should treat their various functions and operations as component pieces that they can pull apart and recombine as necessary.

Focus on the critical value drivers

Always strive to be the best at what your customers value most and partner for everything else.

The three golden rules—nobody owns it, everybody uses it, and anybody can add services to it—are what distinguish the Internet from any previous communications medium.

He thinks effective leaders manage chaos the way a kindergarten teacher manages her students. “Experienced teachers allow a degree of freedom at the start of a session, then intervene to stabilize desirable patterns and destabilize undesirable ones,” he says. “And when they are very clever, they seed the space so that the patterns they want are more likely to emerge.”"

the future belongs to marketers who establish a foundation and process where interested people can market to each other.

One of the key elements in launching an ideavirus is concentrating the message. If just 1% or even 15% of a group is excited about your idea, it’s not enough. You only win when you totally dominate and amaze the group you’ve targeted. That’s why focusing obsessively on a geographic or demographic or psychographic group is a common trait among successful idea merchants.

An idea merchant realizes that the primary goal of a product or service is not just to satisfy the needs of one user. It has to deliver so much wow, be so cool, so neat and so productive that the user tells five friends. Products market themselves by creating and reinforcing ideaviruses.

being brave and bold in the creation of ideas is the only reason you went to work today.

Words matter. Understanding exactly what we’re talking about makes it far easier to actually do something about the world around us. That’s why I take such great pains to invent new words and get us all thinking about exactly what they mean.

traction is growth. The pursuit of traction is what defines a startup.

At any stage in a startup’s lifecycle, one traction channel dominates in terms of customer acquisition. That is why we suggest focusing on one at a time,

Marc Andreessen, founder of Netscape and VC firm Andreessen-Horowitz, sums up this common problem: “The number one reason that we pass on entrepreneurs we’d otherwise like to back is their focusing on product to the exclusion of everything else. Many entrepreneurs who build great products simply don’t have a good distribution strategy. Even worse is when they insist that they don’t need one, or call [their] no distribution strategy a ‘viral marketing strategy.’”

Understanding how people are already doing things today gives you a leg up in understanding how you might help them do that better. You just want to help people do what they already want to do. After you understand how they are already sharing, collaborating or communicating, figure out how your product can make that better.

Letters from a Stoic (Seneca, Lucius Annaeus)

He who would arrive at the appointed end must follow a single road and not wander through many ways.

write about the problems facing your target customers

“It’s research and learning and understanding your partner’s business before you start picking up the phone or sending emails. You need to understand what’s on their side of the table – what are their issues?

“Some of the most successful startups grew by making bets on emerging platforms that were not yet saturated and where barriers to discovery were low… Betting on new platforms means you’ll likely fail if the platform fails, but it also dramatically lowers the distribution risks described above.”

This is the essence of intuitive heuristics: when faced with a difficult question, we often answer an easier one instead, usually without noticing the substitution.

anything that occupies your working memory reduces your ability to think.

The law asserts that if there are several ways of achieving the same goal, people will eventually gravitate to the least demanding course of action. In the economy of action, effort is a cost, and the acquisition of skill is driven by the balance of benefits and costs. Laziness is built deep into our nature.

When you are actively involved in difficult cognitive reasoning or engaged in a task that requires self-control, your blood glucose level drops.

The notion that we have limited access to the workings of our minds is difficult to accept because, naturally, it is alien to our experience, but it is true: you know far less about yourself than you feel you do.

A reliable way to make people believe in falsehoods is frequent repetition, because familiarity is not easily distinguished from truth. Authoritarian institutions and marketers have always known this fact.

If you care about being thought credible and intelligent, do not use complex language where simpler language will do.

creativity is associative memory that works exceptionally well.

It is the consistency of the information that matters for a good story, not its completeness. Indeed, you will often find that knowing little makes it easier to fit everything you know into a coherent pattern.

The technical definition of heuristic is a simple procedure that helps find adequate, though often imperfect, answers to difficult questions. The word comes from the same root as eureka.

anchoring effect. It occurs when people consider a particular value for an unknown quantity before estimating that quantity.

My advice to students when I taught negotiations was that if you think the other side has made an outrageous proposal, you should not come back with an equally outrageous counteroffer, creating a gap that will be difficult to bridge in further negotiations. Instead you should make a scene, storm out or threaten to do so, and make it clear—to yourself as well as to the other side—that you will not continue the negotiation with that number on the table.

“Plans are best-case scenarios. Let’s avoid anchoring on plans when we forecast actual outcomes. Thinking about ways the plan could go wrong is one way to do it.”

“Risk” does not exist “out there,” independent of our minds and culture, waiting to be measured. Human beings have invented the concept of “risk” to help them understand and cope with the dangers and uncertainties of life. Although these dangers are real, there is no such thing as “real risk” or “objective risk.”

an important principle of skill training: rewards for improved performance work better than punishment of mistakes.

Regression effects are ubiquitous, and so are misguided causal stories to explain them. A well-known example is the “Sports Illustrated jinx,” the claim that an athlete whose picture appears on the cover of the magazine is doomed to perform poorly the following season. Overconfidence and the pressure of meeting high expectations are often offered as explanations. But there is a simpler account of the jinx: an athlete who gets to be on the cover of Sports Illustrated must have performed exceptionally well in the preceding season, probably with the assistance of a nudge from luck—and luck is fickle.

Confidence is a feeling, which reflects the coherence of the information and the cognitive ease of processing it.

declarations of high confidence mainly tell you that an individual has constructed a coherent story in his mind, not necessarily that the story is true.

Remember this rule: intuition cannot be trusted in the absence of stable regularities in the environment.

Optimistic individuals play a disproportionate role in shaping our lives. Their decisions make a difference; they are the inventors, the entrepreneurs, the political and military leaders—not average people. They got to where they are by seeking challenges and taking risks. They are talented and they have been lucky, almost certainly luckier than they acknowledge.

premortem. The procedure is simple: when the organization has almost come to an important decision but has not formally committed itself, Klein proposes gathering for a brief session a group of individuals who are knowledgeable about the decision. The premise of the session is a short speech: “Imagine that we are a year into the future. We implemented the plan as it now exists. The outcome was a disaster. Please take 5 to 10 minutes to write a brief history of that disaster.”

We concluded from many such observations that “losses loom larger than gains” and that people are loss averse.

This preference for the status quo is a consequence of loss aversion.

The aversion to the failure of not reaching the goal is much stronger than the desire to exceed it.

You will do yourself a large financial favor if you are able to see each of these gambles as part of a bundle of small gambles and rehearse the mantra that will get you significantly closer to economic rationality: you win a few, you lose a few. The main purpose of the mantra is to control your emotional response when you do lose. If you can trust it to be effective, you should remind yourself of it when deciding whether or not to accept a small risk with positive expected value.

“It is often the case that when you broaden the frame, you reach more reasonable decisions.”

we must get used to the idea that even important decisions are influenced, if not governed, by System 1.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that happiness is the experience of spending time with people you love and who love you.

Nothing in life is as important as you think it is when you are thinking about it.

How we cultivate our relationships is often the greatest determinant of the type of life we get to live. Business is no different. Real business isn’t done in board meetings; it’s done over a half-eaten plate of buffalo wings at the sports bar, or during the intermission of a Broadway show.

How do people decide they like each other? They talk. They exchange ideas. They listen to each other. And eventually, a relationship forms. The process is no different for building relationships with customers.

55 percent cite great service, not product or price, as their primary reason for recommending a company. 66 percent said that great customer service was their primary driver for greater spending.

If you’re not passionate enough about what your company does to find fuel for conversation every day, for hours on end, with as many people as possible, maybe you’re in the wrong business.

the intent of push tactics must be to create a pull opportunity, for that’s what creates emotional bonds between consumers and brands.

The Thank You Economy works when you build a sense of community around your brand, not when you simply sell to it.

The stars in this business era will be those who are consumed with their work (and happy about it) and have the patience to pursue one small victory at a time.

“Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick”

His habit of inviting every eminent man within reach to his table, then plunging into the depths of that man’s specialty (for Roosevelt has no small talk), exposes but one facet of his mind at a time, to the distress of some finely tuned intellects.

“Reading with me is a disease.”

“The young man never seemed to know what idleness was,” “Iron self-discipline had become a habit with him.”

Theodore’s habit, in moments of joy or sorrow, had always been to reach for a pen, as others might reach for a rosary or a bottle.

It is not often that a man can make opportunities for himself. But he can put himself in such shape that when or if the opportunities come he is ready to take advantage of them.

“He would go at a thing as if the world was coming to an end,”

his only instinct was to sleep less and labor more. he combined the principles of maximum production and perpetual motion.

He makes a lot of enemies too, but so does anybody who is fit to live

his extraordinary ability to translate thought into deed—with such blinding rapidity, sometimes, that the two seemed to fuse. Roosevelt had “that singular primitive quality that belongs to ultimate matter—the quality that medieval theology assigned to God—he was pure act.”

the one plain duty of every man is to face the future as he faces the present, regardless of what it may have in store for him, turning toward the light as he sees the light, to play his part manfully, as a man among men.”

the best way to become a billionaire is to solve a billion-person problem.

when Steve Jobs said that the goal of every entrepreneur should be to “put a dent in the universe”—he wasn’t talking about inventing the next Angry Birds.

Ten years from now, according to research done at the Babson School of Business, more than 40 percent of today’s top companies will no longer exist.

an exponential organization as one whose impact (or output)—because of its use of networks or automation and/or its leveraging of the crowd—is disproportionally large compared to its number of employees.

“It’s the ability to see ahead that truly set each of these men apart,”

goal setting is one of the easiest ways to increase motivation and enhance performance.

Good entrepreneurs don’t like risk. They seek to reduce risk. Starting a company is already risky . . . [so] you systematically eliminate risk in those early days.”

flow follows focus. It is a state of total absorption.

“being in flow is a critical aspect of success. Flow states allow an entrepreneur to stay open and alert to possibilities, which could exist in any partnership, product insight, or customer interaction. The more flow created by a start-up team, the higher the chance of success.

The very best people to help you with your next project are those who helped you or watched you succeed with your last.

if you’re lacking a track record, make one.

He consistently strives to broaden his view by thinking in probabilities.

“I have a very simple metric I use: Are you working on something that can change the world? Yes or no?

Engagement is always about getting that conversation going and keeping it going.”

if you’re the person organizing a new community,22 then driving a high level of interactivity must be your primary responsibility. Every community manager is first and foremost a conversational caretaker.

Lying may even be a prerequisite for succeeding as an entrepreneur—after all, you need to convince others that something is true in the absence of good, hard evidence.

A good metric is comparative. Being able to compare a metric to other time periods, groups of users, or competitors helps you understand which way things are moving.

This is by far the most important criterion for a metric: what will you do differently based on changes in the metric?

Never start a company on a level playing field—that’s where everyone else is standing.

Long-term stickiness often comes from the value users create for themselves as they use the service. It’s hard for people to leave Gmail or Evernote, because, well, that’s where they store all their stuff.

You need to identify the riskiest areas of your business as quickly as possible, and that’s where the most important question lies. When you know what the right question is, you’ll know what metric to track in order to answer that question.

almost all successful founders we’ve met is their ability to work at both a very detailed, and a very abstracted, level within their business.

Big, lucrative startups are often the result of wildly audacious solutions to problems people didn’t realize they had.

The MVP should include the simplest, least-friction path between your user and the “aha!” moment you’re trying to deliver.

Learning was the measure of success.

The key to the growth hacking process is the early metric, (which is also known as a leading indicator—something you know today that predicts tomorrow).

The indicator should come early in the user’s lifecycle or conversion funnel. This is a simple numbers game: if you look at something that happens

“Sustainable growth programs are built on a core understanding of the value of your solution in the minds of your most passionate customers.”

The trouble with innovation is that truly innovative ideas often look like bad ideas at the time. That’s why they are innovative – until now, nobody ever figured out that they were good ideas.

The primary thing that any technology startup must do is build a product that’s at least 10 times better at doing something than the current prevailing way of doing that thing. The second thing that any technology startup must do is to take the market. If it’s possible to do something 10X better, it’s also possible that you won’t be the only company to figure that out. Therefore, you must take the market before somebody else does.

When we meet with entrepreneurs, the two key characteristics that we look for are brilliance and courage.

If you want to build an important company, then at some point you have to scale.

in good companies, the story and the strategy are the same thing.

Mastering Bitcoin: Unlocking Digital Cryptocurrencies, Andreas M. Antonopoulos

Nature demonstrates that decentralized systems can be resilient and can produce emergent complexity and incredible sophistication without the need for a central authority, hierarchy, or complex parts.

Like an ant colony, the bitcoin network is a resilient network of simple nodes following simple rules that together can do amazing things without any central coordination.

Think of the public key as similar to a bank account number and the private key as similar to the secret PIN, or signature on a check that provides control over the account. These digital keys are very rarely seen by the users of bitcoin. For the most part, they are stored inside the wallet file and managed by the bitcoin wallet software. These mathematical functions are practically irreversible, meaning that they are easy to calculate in one direction and infeasible to calculate in the opposite direction. Bitcoin uses elliptic curve multiplication as the basis for its public key cryptography. A private key can be converted into a public key, but a public key cannot be converted back into a private key because the math only works one way.

Whereas a check references a specific account as the source of the funds, a bitcoin transaction references a specific previous transaction as its source, rather than an account.

Transaction fees are calculated based on the size of the transaction in kilobytes, not the value of the transaction in bitcoin.

I was taught, and I believe with all my head and heart, that companies are worth the "present value" of "future cash flows".

Portfolio theory says that you can maximize return and minimize risk by building a portfolio of assets whose returns are not correlated with each other.

A CEO does only three things. Sets the overall vision and strategy of the company and communicates it to all stakeholders. Recruits, hires, and retains the very best talent for the company. Makes sure there is always enough cash in the bank.

The founding team of a software company should have a strong product manager on it (often that is the founder) and should have at least several strong software developers on it who can write most of the code.

Decide what you’re going to do this week, not this year. Figure out the next most important thing and do that.

Great businesses have a point of view, not just a product or service.

Lots of things get better as they get shorter. Directors cut good scenes to make a great movie. Musicians drop good tracks to make a great album. Writers eliminate good pages to make a great book. Getting to great starts by cutting out stuff that’s merely good.

Things that people are going to want today and ten years from now. Those are the things you should invest in.

Never hire anyone to do a job until you’ve tried to do it yourself first.

Inspiration is a magical thing, a productivity multiplier, a motivator. But it won’t wait for you. Inspiration is a now thing. If it grabs you, grab it right back and put it to work.

Yet the truly unique feature of our language is not its ability to transmit information about men and lions. Rather, it’s the ability to transmit information about things that do not exist at all. As far as we know, only Sapiens can talk about entire kinds of entities that they have never seen, touched or smelled. myths give Sapiens the unprecedented ability to cooperate flexibly in large numbers.

Large numbers of strangers can cooperate successfully by believing in common myths.

Ever since the Cognitive Revolution, Sapiens has thus been living in a dual reality. On the one hand, the objective reality of rivers, trees and lions; and on the other hand, the imagined reality of gods, nations and corporations. As time went by, the imagined reality became ever more powerful, so that today the very survival of rivers, trees and lions depends on the grace of imagined entities such as gods, nations and corporations.

We did not domesticate wheat. It domesticated us. The word ‘domesticate’ comes from the Latin domus, which means ‘house’. Who’s the one living in a house? Not the wheat. It’s the Sapiens. the evolutionary success of a species is measured by the number of copies of its DNA.

Culture tends to argue that it forbids only that which is unnatural. But from a biological perspective, nothing is unnatural. Whatever is possible is by definition also natural.

Even among chimpanzees, the alpha male wins his position by building a stable coalition with other males and females, not through mindless violence.

The ability to maintain peace at home, acquire allies abroad, and understand what goes through the minds of other people (particularly your enemies) is usually the key to victory.

Hence an aggressive brute is often the worst choice to run a war. Much better is a cooperative person who knows how to appease, how to manipulate and how to see things from different perspectives. This is the stuff empire-builders are made of.

Such contradictions are an inseparable part of every human culture. In fact, they are culture’s engines, responsible for the creativity and dynamism of our species. Just as when two clashing musical notes played together force a piece of music forward, so discord in our thoughts, ideas and values compel us to think, reevaluate and criticise. Consistency is the playground of dull minds.

It is an iron rule of history that what looks inevitable in hindsight was far from obvious at the time. Today is no different.

Banks are allowed to loan $10 for every dollar they actually possess, which means that 90 per cent of all the money in our bank accounts is not covered by actual coins and notes.2 If all of the account holders at Barclays Bank suddenly demand their money, Barclays will promptly collapse (unless the government steps in to save it).

‘The profits of production must be reinvested in increasing production.’ That’s why capitalism is called ‘capitalism’. Capitalism distinguishes ‘capital’ from mere ‘wealth’. Capital consists of money, goods and resources that are invested in production. Wealth, on the other hand, is buried in the ground or wasted on unproductive activities.

Capitalisms belief in perpetual economic growth flies in the face of almost everything we know about the universe. A society of wolves would be extremely foolish to believe that the supply of sheep would keep on growing indefinitely.

If we accept the biological approach to happiness, then history turns out to be of minor importance, since most historical events have had no impact on our biochemistry. History can change the external stimuli that cause serotonin to be secreted, yet it does not change the resulting serotonin levels, and hence it cannot make people happier.

Money, social status, plastic surgery, beautiful houses, powerful positions – none of these will bring you happiness. Lasting happiness comes only from serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin.

“narrative emerges from violations to expectations.” The more you wonder what will happen next, the more you pay attention. And the more attention you pay, the more you hear, notice, and retain.

The tragedy of our species is that we’re wired for narrative, yet live in a world that’s random.”

lack of preparation is the number one reason why executive candidates fail to win over prospective employers in job interviews.

Its importance is only surpassed by the Internet itself as an evolution in communications.

Cryptographic hash is a complex algorithm that performs a very basic task–transforming text of arbitrary length (an entire book, a document, a sentence, or even a single word) into a fixed-length string of numbers that appears random. Thus, generating a digest is easy, but deriving the original text from the digest is impossible. Employing the analogy of the human fingerprint, given a single fingerprint, we would find it impossible to identify the person who left it unless that person had been fingerprinted beforehand.

Paper cheques can bounce up to a week or two later. Credit card transactions can be contested up to 60 to 180 days later. Bitcoin transactions can be sufficiently irreversible in an hour or two.

everything is based on crypto proof instead of trust. The root problem with conventional currency is all the trust that’s required to make it work.

Then strong encryption became availableto the masses, and trust was no longer required.

if I only ever did things that I was 100% certain were going to work out for the best I would never accomplish anything new and interesting.

all fiat (i.e., government-decreed) currencies throughout history have always died, and you should not expect your country’s currency to prove an exception to this rule. Gold and silver are a store of value over the long term because of their limited supply and their usefulness. Bitcoin also has a limited supply—the 21 million bitcoins planned as of 2140—and has proven so far to be very useful as an easy form of payment over the Internet, its natural medium.

The public key is easily derived from the private key but the reverse is nearly impossible.

Two of the most important characteristics of good design are discoverability and understanding. Discoverability: Is it possible to even figure out what actions are possible and where and how to perform them? Understanding: What does it all mean? How is the product supposed to be used? What do all the different controls and settings mean?

Experience is critical, for it determines how fondly people remember their interactions.

Affordances determine what actions are possible. Signifiers communicate where the action should take place. We need both. the term signifier refers to any mark or sound, any perceivable

the hardest part of producing a product is coordinating all the many, separate disciplines, each with different goals and priorities.

root cause analysis: asking “Why?” until the ultimate, fundamental cause of the activity is reached. What about radical ideas, ones that introduce new

The brain is structured to act upon the world, and every action carries with it expectations, and these expectations drive emotions.

More and more evidence is accumulating that we use logic and reason after the fact, to justify our decisions to ourselves (to our conscious minds) and to others.

Constraints are powerful clues, limiting the set of possible actions. The thoughtful use of constraints in design lets people readily determine the proper course of action, even in a novel situation.

We should treat all failures in the same way: find the fundamental causes and redesign the system so that these can no longer lead to problems. if the system

One of my rules in consulting is simple: never solve the problem I am asked to solve. Why such a counterintuitive rule? Because, invariably, the problem I am asked to solve is not the real, fundamental, root problem. It is usually a symptom.

Engineers and businesspeople are trained to solve problems. Designers are trained to discover the real problems.

Technology changes the way we do things, but fundamental needs remain unchanged.

Products based on disruptive technologies are typically cheaper, simpler, smaller, and, frequently, more convenient to use.

Consistently, established firms attempt to push the technology into their established markets, while the successful entrants find a new market that values the technology.

Firms that sought growth by entering small, emerging markets logged twenty times the revenues of the firms pursuing growth in larger markets.

There are enormous returns and significant first-mover advantages associated with early entry into the emerging markets in which disruptive technologies are initially used.

Markets that do not exist cannot be analyzed: Suppliers and customers must discover them together.

Those that run out of resources or credibility before they can iterate toward a viable strategy are the ones that fail.

when this performance oversupply occurs, it creates an opportunity for a disruptive technology to emerge and subsequently to invade established markets from below.

disruptive technology were those framing their primary development challenge as a marketing one: to build or find a market where product competition occurred along dimensions that favored the disruptive attributes of the product.4

Historically, disruptive technologies involve no new technologies; rather, they consist of components built around proven technologies and put together in a novel product architecture that offers the customer a set of attributes never before available.

Disruptive technology should be framed as a marketing challenge, not a technological one.

the onion theory of risk. If you’re an investor, you look at the risk around an investment as if it’s an onion. Just like you peel an onion and remove each layer in turn, risk in a startup investment comes in layers that get peeled away — reduced — one by one. Your challenge as an entrepreneur trying to raise venture capital is to keep peeling layers of risk off of your particular onion until the VCs say “yes” — until the risk in your startup is reduced to the point where investing in your startup doesn’t look terrifying and merely looks risky.

If you don’t have a really solid idea as to how you’re dramatically different from or advantaged over known and unknown competitors, you might not want to start a company in the first place.

The most valuable thing you can do is actually build your product. When in doubt, focus on that. The next most valuable thing you can do is get customers

Raising money is never an accomplishment in and of itself — it just raises the stakes for all the hard work you would have had to do anyway: actually building your business.

a startup executive must “roll up her sleeves” and produce output herself. There are no shortage of critical things to be done at a startup, and an executive who cannot personally produce while simultaneously building and running her organization typically will not last long.

Colin Powell says, “You know you’re a good leader when people follow you, if only out of curiosity.” So project boldness, and have that glint in your eye where people know you’re up to something big.

if you really are high-potential, you’re naturally going to be seeking out risks in your career in order to maximize your level of achievement, Seek to be a double/triple/quadruple threat.

Capitalism rewards things that are both rare and valuable. You make yourself rare by combining two or more “pretty goods” until no one else has your mix…

Once you have picked an industry, get right to the center of it as fast as you possibly can. Optimize at all times for being in the most dynamic and exciting pond you can find. That is where the great opportunities can be found.

Never, ever, think about something else when you should be thinking about the power of incentives…

in creative fields, the power law rule — also known as the 80/20 rule — definitely applies: A small percentage of the workers in any given domain is responsible for the bulk of the work. Generally, the top 10% of the most prolific elite can be credited with around 50% of all contributions, whereas the bottom 50% of the least productive workers can claim only 15% of the total work, and the most productive contributor is usually about 100 times more prolific than the least. those who generate the most contributions at the end of a career also tend to have begun their careers at earlier ages, ended their careers at later ages, and produced at extraordinary rates throughout their careers.

Quality of output does not vary by age… which means, of course, that attempting to improve your batting average of hits versus misses is a waste of time as you progress through a creative career. Instead you should just focus on more at-bats — more output. Think about that one.

Chance presents only a faint clue, the potential opportunity exists, but it will be overlooked except by that one person uniquely equipped to observe it, visualize it conceptually, and fully grasp its significance.

In a highly uncertain world, a bias to action is key to catalyzing success, and luck, and is often to be preferred to thinking things through more throughly.

Steve was like a sponge. He wanted to know about everything and everyone.

marketing to the group conversation—the megalogue—must be seamlessly incorporated.

Aspiration. It’s a mix of desire, hope, imagination, creativity, fearlessness, and a few other ingredients, among which last but not least is belief—specifically, a belief that whatever it is that’s the focus of the aspiration is obtainable.

the unapologetic approach, now that is the definition of cool!

Music, interestingly enough, developed originally to connect tribal members to one another and allow religious adherents to commune with a higher power. This is to say that music, by its nature, breeds culture.

Credibility in the pop culture marketplace is everything. It’s a lesson worth underlining—credibility is everything.

Daring, dreaming, and doing became my threefold mantra early on, and it would serve me well at every stage of my career.

What’s essential is that there are shared values between that star and the product the star is being asked to put him- or herself on the line for.

products are not what sells; an understanding of culture is what sells.

The job of the translator, as a rule in the new economy, is to find the sweet spot between the brand’s core values and the cultural cues. As the

Strategic thinking is the art of outdoing an adversary, knowing that the adversary is trying to do the same to you.

The strategic insight is that other people’s actions tell us something about what they know, and we should use such information to guide our own action.

anticipate the future decisions and use them to make your earlier choices.

you have to take some risks, it is often better to do this as quickly as possible.

A useful way to evaluate a strategy is to measure how well it performs against itself. If one thinks in terms of evolution, the “fittest strategies” will become dominant in the population. As a result, they will encounter each other often. Unless a strategy performs well against itself, any initial success will eventually become self-defeating.

Without any effect on his expectations, there will be no effect on his actions.

one resorts to chance as the means of keeping

one resorts to chance as the means of keeping the other player from exploiting any systematic behavior on your part.

Like any strategic move, it aims to influence the other’s actions by altering his expectations.

The trick is to get a critical mass of people to switch, and then the bandwagon effect makes the new equilibrium self-sustaining.

there really are only two key things that matter in the actual term sheet negotiation—economics and control.

Entrepreneurs should do their research on the firms they are talking to in order to understand who they are talking to, what decision-making power that person has, and what process they have to go through to get an investment approved.

You must have the mind-set that you will succeed on your quest. When we meet people who say they are “trying to raise money,” “testing the waters,” or “exploring different options,” this not only is a turnoff, but also often shows they've not had much success. Start with an attitude of presuming success. If you don’t, investors will smell this uncertainty on you; it'll permeate your words and actions.

There are only a few key things most VCs look at to understand and get excited about a deal: the problem you are solving, the size of the opportunity, the strength of the team, the level of competition or competitive advantage that you have, your plan of attack, and current status. Summary financials, use of proceeds, and milestones are also important. Most good investor presentations can be done in 10 slides or fewer.

“give more than you get.” And never forget the simple notion that if you want money, ask for advice.

Our belief is that you should always negotiate honestly.

it's your responsibility as the entrepreneur to make sure you understand your cap table. This

There are only three things that matter when negotiating a financing: achieving a good and fair result, not killing your personal relationship getting there, and understanding the deal that you are striking.

The single biggest mistake people make during negotiation is a lack of preparation.

Networks, especially electronic networks, exhibit near-biological behavior.

Technology and life must share some fundamental essence.

the number of links among files in this network (think of all the links among all the web pages of the world) is about equal to the number of synapse links in your brain. Thus, this growing planetary electronic membrane is already comparable to the complexity of a human brain.

In the past 10,000 years alone, in fact, our genes have evolved 100 times faster than the average rate for the previous 6 million years.

If all technology—every last knife and spear—were to be removed from this planet, our species would not last more than a few months. We are now symbiotic with technology.

With very few exceptions, technologies don’t die. In this way they differ from biological species, which in the long term inevitably go extinct. Technologies are idea based, and culture is their memory. They can be resurrected if forgotten, and can be recorded (by increasingly better means) so that they won’t be overlooked. Technologies are forever.

As we age we are really a river of cosmically old atoms. The carbons in our bodies were produced in the dust of a star. The bulk of matter in our hands, skin, eyes, and hearts was made near the beginning of time, billions of years ago. We are much older than we look.

The city as a whole is a wonderful technological invention that concentrates the flow of energy and minds into computer chip-like density.

the course of biological evolution is not a random drift in the cosmos, which is the claim of current textbook orthodoxy. Rather, evolution—and by extension, the technium—has an inherent direction, shaped by the nature of matter and energy. This direction introduces inevitabilities into the shape of life.

Proteins—the essential molecules of life’s diversity—are also ultimately governed by a limited set of recurring laws.

If discovery is a lottery, the greatest discoverers buy lots of tickets. Once an idea is “in the air” its many manifestations are inevitable.

In all times we find that most inventions and discoveries have been made independently by more than one person.

Yet as science has shown, even though water is destined to become ice crystals when it is cold enough, no two snowflakes are the same. The path of freezing water is predetermined, but there is great leeway, freedom, and beauty in the individual expression of its predestined state.

this freely chosen aspect of ourselves is what other people remember about us. How we handle life’s cascade of real choices within the larger cages of our birth and background is what makes us who we are. It is what people talk about when we are gone. Not the given, but the choices we made.

Our body size is, weirdly, almost exactly in the middle of the size of the universe. The smallest things we know about are approximately 30 orders of magnitude smaller than we are, and the largest structures in the universe are about 30 orders of magnitude bigger.

The “long tail” of niches and personal customization is a characteristic not merely of media but of technological evolution itself.

Some theoretical physicists, including Freeman Dyson, argue that free will occurs in atomic particles, and therefore free choice was born in the great fire of the big bang and has been expanding ever since.

More than half of the living species on this planet are parasitic. That is, they depend upon another species for their survival in at least one phase of their life. At the same time, biologists believe that every organism alive (including parasites themselves) hosts at least one parasite. This makes the natural world a hotbed of shared existence.

The elaborate system of law that undergirds Western societies is not very different from software. It’s a complex set of code that runs on paper instead of in a computer, and it slowly calculates fairness and order (ideally).

When people maximize their set of talents, they shine because no one can do what they do. People fully inhabiting their unique mixture of skills are inimitable, and that is what we prize about them.

In my own experience this principle has never failed: In any game, increase your options.

The best “open-ended” choice is one that leads to the most subsequent “open-ended” choices.

I realized that becoming a master of karate was not about learning 4,000 moves but about doing just a handful of moves 4,000 times.

To build your business into the Ultimate Sales Machine, you need to be in a primarily proactive mode.

Keeping a list will double your productivity right away.

The key to being productive is to stick to the six most important things you need to get done that day.

Put the most important task first. This simple step will give you a tremendous sense of control and accomplishment.

the secret to creating change: you have to put people in pain.

And only 1 percent—the most effective executives—possess the rare combination of both tactical and strategic abilities.

The one who gives the market the most and best information will always slaughter the one who just wants to sell products or ser vices.

Superstars never crumble. They have tremendous faith in themselves, and nothing can convince them they can’t do any job.

I have a rule about selling: never lie.

Who sells to the exact buyer you want to reach but doesn’t sell your type of product or ser vice?

The most effective ads have a headline that follows this important rule: “Tell me what you want to tell me in 3.2 seconds.

Don’t tell me what it is. Tell me why it is valuable.

being a strategist means that you maximize everything including the words you use.

Just be sure you are painting a picture of their future and not just your products. Remember that features tell, benefits sell. Don’t tell them what it is, but rather why they need it.

When Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak built their first motherboard, they didn’t envision the iPhone. Visions can start small. Visions should start small. They’re incremental, like building Legos:

Find out where you have an advantage and stick to that.

Take the action that’s difficult. Take the action that pushes you.

It’s tough to find famous examples of companies, artists, or individuals who have a low ACTION score (close to 0, say), because by definition, if you’ve heard of them, they probably took plenty of ACTION.

work backward from the experience of cracking open the box from its taped seal.

You’re always pitching. You never stop auditioning. Even for Spike, even Mark Zuckerberg, even for the president. You will always keep pitching, and you will always have to deal with rejections. This doesn’t mean you should give up; it means you’re human and you have a pulse.

building a personal brand looks more like creating a religion than creating a marketing deck.

I’m constantly asking myself, “What’s my unfair advantage? What’s my technological advantage?” Is it a supply-side technology? Is it a sales technology? Is it a technology in the way that my people communicate to the consumers? What’s your unfair advantage? You have to ask that. Otherwise you’re just in the business of selling cogs.

If you’re never making ugly shit, then you’re never taking chances, and you’re never pushing yourself to make the sublime.

you’ll be done with failure the day you’re done breathing.

virtually all situations can be handled as long as presence of mind is maintained.

growth comes at the expense of previous comfort or safety.

Growth comes at the point of resistance. We learn by pushing ourselves and finding what really lies at the outer reaches of our abilities.

Mental resilience is arguably the most critical trait of a world-class performer, and it should be nurtured continuously.

I have long believed that if a student of virtually any discipline could avoid ever repeating the same mistake twice—both technical and psychological—he or she would skyrocket to the top of their field.

What made him the greatest was not perfection, but a willingness to put himself on the line as a way of life.

The theme is depth over breadth. The learning principle is to plunge into the detailed mystery of the micro in order to understand what makes the macro tick.

I can’t tell you how liberating it is to know that relaxation is just a blink away from full awareness.

Cautious silence is the holy of holies of worldly wisdom.

Work is the price which is paid for reputation. What costs little is little worth.

Keep the Imagination under Control; sometimes correcting, sometimes assisting it.

All men are idolaters, some of fame, others of self-interest, most of pleasure. Skill consists in knowing these idols in order to bring them into play. Knowing any man’s mainspring of motive you have as it were the key to his will.

Excellence resides in quality not in quantity. The best is always few and rare: much lowers value.

That is the great advantage of a commanding position--to be able to do more good than others.

Know how to Choose well. Most of life depends thereon. It needs good taste and correct judgment, for which neither intellect nor study suffices.

Choose an Heroic Ideal; but rather to emulate than to imitate.

Reputation depends more on what is hidden than on what is done;

One must not depend on one thing or trust to only one resource, however pre-eminent. Everything should be kept double, especially the causes of success, of favour, or of esteem.

The attention you pay to yourself you probably owe to others.

Have the Art of Conversation. That is where the real personality shows itself. No act in life requires more attention, though it be the commonest thing in life.

Select your Friends. Though this is the most important thing in life, it is the one least cared for.

Few are the friends of a man’s self, most those of his circumstances.

Worries die away before a man who asserts himself.

The wise man anticipates such errors: he may always hope for the best. but he always expects the worst, so as to receive what comes with equanimity.

Attempt easy Tasks as if they were difficult, and difficult as if they were easy. In the one case that confidence may not fall asleep, in the other that it may not be dismayed.

Nothing really belongs to us but time, which even he has who has nothing else.

the essential should come first and accessories afterwards if there is room.

Use human Means as if there were no divine ones, and divine as if there were no human ones. A masterly rule: it needs no comment.

Dangers are the occasions to create a name for oneself; and if a noble mind sees honour at stake, he will do the work of thousands.

He was disciplined and precise, constantly recording ideas in a notebook he carried with him, as if they might float out of his mind if he didn’t jot them down. He quickly abandoned old notions and embraced new ones when better options presented themselves.

“the regret-minimization framework” to decide the next step to take at this juncture in his career.

“Jeff was always an expansive thinker,

“But I want you to understand that from this day forward, you are not bound by the old rules.”

he is far more consumed with pressing forward than looking back.

I was generally looking to do anything I could to expand.

It was a bold move but even then I knew that it is only by being bold that you get anywhere. If you are a risk-taker, then the art is to protect the downside.

As Oscar Wilde pointed out, ‘The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.’

Fun is at the core of the way I like to do business and it has been key to everything I’ve done from the outset. More than any other element, fun is the secret of Virgin’s success.

However tight things are, you still need to have the big picture at the forefront of your mind.

I have always lived my life by making lists: lists of people to call, lists of ideas, lists of companies to set up, lists of people who can make things happen. Each day I work through these lists, and it is that sequence of calls that propels me forward.

he was eminently practical; and whatever subject it was necessary or desirable for him to be informed about, his strong, quick mind soon went to the bottom of it."

"Never give reasons for what you think or do until you must. Maybe, after a while, a better reason will pop into your head."

his mind was irradiated with Napoleon's truth that "the whole secret of the art of war lies in being master of the communications."

in war, as in life generally, the longest way round is often the shortest way there.

I don't desire my biography to be written till I am dead.

Like snow which is squeezed into a snowball, direct pressure has always the tendency to harden and consolidate the resistance of an opponent, and the more compact it becomes the slower it is to melt.

The unexpected is the key to victory, and it may well have been worth the price even of an unsuccessful assault to increase his future scope for it.

No general ever had a more acute sense of proportioning the end to his means,

Sherman's confidence was of the type which is born of accomplished facts, not of-mere conceit of his own qualities,

the truths that the way to success is strategically along the line of least expectation, and tactically along the line of least resistance,

Among men who rise to fame and leadership two types are recognizable-those who are born with a belief in themselves and those in whom it is a slow growth dependent on actual achievement. To men of the last type their own success is a constant surprise, and its fruits the more delicious, yet to be tested cautiously with a haunting sense of doubt whether it is not all a dream.

His consistency is seen to be almost unparalleled among the great figures of history, and for the reason that none was more governed by reason or less influenced by instinct.

Growth marketing is a scientific way of increasing the value of your venture that removes all assumptions, conjecture and guesswork.

Data. Time. Money. Growth. Always living in consideration of these four items, you will begin to develop a broader understanding of the why behind everything you do.

Play scared; the odds are against you.

the best marketing advice I can give you is to ask yourself... is my funnel set up to take as much as I can from every visitor?

If you can learn how to squeeze everything you can out of someone, enable them to tell their friends about you and still make them love your product, you’re a growth marketer.

there are only five metrics any startup should focus on: ● Acquisition ● Activation ● Revenue ● Retention ● Referral