One of live entertainment’s unique qualities is that compared with most other businesses, competition typically drives prices up.

By the time he released the paper, he had already coded the entire system. In his own words, “I had to write all the code before I could convince myself that I could solve every problem, then I wrote the paper.”

General purpose technologies are pervasive, eventually affecting all consumers and companies. They improve over time in line with the deflationary progression of technology, and most important, they are a platform upon which future innovations are built. Some of the more famous examples include steam, electricity, internal combustion engines, and information technology.16 We would add blockchain technology to this list.

In an increasingly digital world, it only makes sense that we have digital commodities, such as compute power, storage capacity, and network bandwidth.

Part of the reason we don’t know how old money is, is because we have yet to discover a civilization so old that it didn’t have money. We know money is as old as civilization.

One thing that surprises people is that money is older than writing. We know this because when we look at archeological discoveries of writing, we find hieroglyphics and we find cuneiform. When we look at all of these ancient forms of writing, guess what they’re writing about. Money. They’re writing ledgers. All of the ancient writing we find, the first forms of writing, are ledgers. They are writing about money. Because money is older than writing.

Bitcoin is a currency. Bitcoin is a network. Bitcoin is a technology. And you can’t separate these things. A consensus network that bases its value on currency does not work without the currency. You can’t just do the blockchain without a valuable currency behind it, and the currency doesn’t work without the network. Bitcoin is both.

What is a wallet? A wallet is something that stores money. Not in bitcoin it isn’t. The money isn’t in the wallet; the money is on the network. The wallet contains keys. So, it’s not a wallet; it’s a keychain.

money is a matter of belief, even faith: belief in the person paying us; belief in the person issuing the money he uses or the institution that honours his cheques or transfers. Money is not metal. It is trust inscribed.

Borrowers were expected to pay interest (a concept which was probably derived from the natural increase of a herd of livestock),

If I drew a histogram of the heights of the male students in my financial history class according to their frequency, the result would be a classic bell-shaped curve, with nearly everyone clustered within around five inches of the US average of around 5’ 10". But in financial markets, it doesn’t look like this. If you plot all the monthly movements of the Dow Jones index on a chart, there is much less clustering around the average, and there are many more big rises and falls out at the extremes, which the statisticians call ‘fat tails’.

evolution certainly offers a better model for understanding financial change than any other we have.

Dr. Land and Steve were both looking at the center of the table the whole time they were talking. Dr. Land was saying: “I could see what the Polaroid camera should be. It was just as real to me as if it was sitting in front of me before I had ever built one.” And Steve said: “Yeah, that’s exactly the way I saw the Macintosh.” He said if I asked someone who had only used a personal calculator what a Macintosh should be like they couldn’t have told me. There was no way to do consumer research on it so I had to go and create it and then show it to people and say now what do you think? Both of them had this ability to not invent products, but discover products. Both of them said these products have always existed—it’s just that no one has ever seen them before. We were the ones who discovered them.

Like Land and Jobs, Evan was more of a discoverer than an inventor. He explored the world around him in college and pulled Snapchat out of it. He also didn’t believe users could tell him what they wanted—he simply had to discover what was next and show it to them.

When I asked a question because I didn’t understand something, I was reassured that the term was standard, and therefore agreeable. I forgot that the idea of STANDARD is a construct. It simply does not exist. So rather than attempt to further understand the document, I accepted it. It wasn’t until a bit later, when the company had grown and we needed more capital—that I realized I had made a very expensive mistake.

Conforming happens so naturally that we can forget how powerful it is—we want to be accepted by our peers—we want to be a part of the group. It’s in our biology. But the things that make us human are those times we listen to the whispers of our soul and allow ourselves to be pulled in another direction.

“I think our team would say that I’m very decisive but I change my mind a lot. Which is sort of a unique combination,”

Systems learn by removing parts, via negativa.

it is at the foundation of evolution that systems get smart by elimination.

remember that the heroes of history were not classicists and library rats, those people who live vicariously in their texts. They were people of deeds and had to be endowed with the spirit of risk taking.

Revolutions are unarguably driven by an obsessive minority. And the entire growth of society, whether economic or moral, comes from a small number of people.

Society doesn’t evolve by consensus, voting, majority, committees, verbose meetings, academic conferences, tea and cucumber sandwiches, or polling; only a few people suffice to disproportionately move the needle. All one needs is an asymmetric rule somewhere—and someone with soul in the game. And asymmetry is present in about everything.

an employable person is the one you will never find in a history book, because these people are designed to never leave their mark on the course of events. They are, by design, uninteresting to historians.

Stay human, take as much as you can, under the condition that you give more than you take.

one needs a decent university “name” to get ahead in life. But we have evidence that collectively society doesn’t advance with organized education, rather the reverse: the level of (formal) education in a country is the result of wealth.

Not everything that happens happens for a reason, but everything that survives survives for a reason.

Warren Buffett. He did not make his billions by cost-benefit analysis; rather, he did so simply by establishing a high filter, then picking opportunities that pass such a threshold. “The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything,” he said.

nothing without skin in the game.

Life punishes the vague wish and rewards the specific ask. After all, conscious thinking is largely asking and answering questions in your own head. If you want confusion and heartache, ask vague questions. If you want uncommon clarity and results, ask uncommonly clear questions.

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.” It’s a short reminder that success can usually be measured by the number of uncomfortable conversations we are willing to have, and by the number of uncomfortable actions we are willing to take. The most fulfilled and effective people I know—world-famous creatives, billionaires, thought leaders, and more—look at their life’s journey as perhaps 25 percent finding themselves and 75 percent creating themselves.

“People think focus means saying yes to the thing you’ve got to focus on. But that’s not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully. I’m actually as proud of the things we haven’t done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things.”

courage was more important than confidence. When you are operating out of courage, you are saying that no matter how you feel about yourself or your opportunities or the outcome, you are going to take a risk and take a step toward what you want.

The mind is just as malleable as the body. We spend so much time and effort trying to change the external world, other people, and our own bodies, all the while accepting ourselves the way we were programmed in our youths. We accept the voice that talks to us in our head all the time as the source of all truth. But all of it is malleable, every day is new, and memory and identity are burdens from the past that prevent us from living freely in the present.

“Diversity in counsel, unity in command.”

criticism is not failure. If you’re not being criticized, you’re probably not doing anything exceptional.

Macro patience, micro speed. They should not care about the next eight years, but they should stress the next eight days.

Show up in every moment like you’re meant to be there, because your energy precedes anything you could possibly say.

“You can do so much in ten minutes’ time. Ten minutes, once gone, are gone for good. Divide your life into ten-minute units and sacrifice as few of them as possible in meaningless activity.”

You can’t neglect your wife for four years and then say, “Okay, now it’s my wife years.” Relationships don’t work that way, and neither does your health or your fitness. . . . Figuring out a system, so that the stuff you need to do all the time happens, even while you might be placing disproportionate focus on one thing, is pretty important.

you must be guided by the actions of the enemy in attempting to secure a favorable position in actual warfare."

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 we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. 20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.

Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy. 2. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.

Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing. 32. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.

The faster you run, the more the world moves with you and the less you make progress. Life is a chess tournament in which if you win a game, you start the next game with the handicap of a missing pawn.

anything that increases reproductive success will spread at the expense of anything that does not—even if it threatens survival.

Each gene is descended from a gene that unwittingly jostled to get into the next generation by whatever means was in its power. Cooperation between them is marked, but so is competition. And it is that competition that led to the invention of gender.

Jealousy is a “human universal,” and no culture lacks it. Despite the best efforts of anthropologists to find a society with no jealousy and so prove that it is an emotion introduced by pernicious social pressure or pathology, sexual jealousy seems to be an unavoidable part of being a human being.

love is an admired emotion, whereas jealousy is a despised one, but they are plainly two sides of the same coin—as anybody who has been in love can testify. They are both part of a sexual proprietary claim.

a monogamous society a woman often chooses a mate long before he has had a chance to become a “chief,” and she must look for clues to his future potential rather than rely only on his past achievements. Poise, self assurance, optimism, efficiency, perseverance, courage, decisiveness, intelligence, ambition—these are the things that cause men to rise to the top of their professions. And not coincidentally, these are the things women find attractive.

I had an aching sense that our time is short, shorter than we ever know, short as a morning run, and I wanted mine to be meaningful. And purposeful. And creative. And important. Above all . . . different.

The single easiest way to find out how you feel about someone. Say goodbye.

You are remembered for the rules you break.

It seems wrong to call it “business.” It seems wrong to throw all those hectic days and sleepless nights, all those magnificent triumphs and desperate struggles, under that bland, generic banner: business. What we were doing felt like so much more.

And those who urge entrepreneurs to never give up? Charlatans. Sometimes you have to give up. Sometimes knowing when to give up, when to try something else, is genius. Giving up doesn’t mean stopping. Don’t ever stop.

sustainable competitive advantage is created by the coordination of activities that are not easily duplicated

Seducers are never self-absorbed. Their gaze is directed outward, not inward. When they meet someone their first move is to get inside that person’s skin, to see the world through their eyes.

Do not leave your reputation to chance or gossip; it is your life’s artwork, and you must craft it, hone it, and display it with the care of an artist.

Time is the greatest weapon you have. Patiently keep in mind a long-term goal and neither person nor army can resist you.

Told that his ideas had nothing to do with reality, he would answer, “So much the worse for reality!”

Look at the people around you. Forget their social, exterior, their obvious character traits: look behind all of that, focusing on the gaps, the missing pieces in their psyche. That is the raw material of any seduction.

You might think it is better to reason with people, explain your ideas. But it is hard for an audience to decide whether an argument is reasonable as they listen to you talk. They have to concentrate and listen closely, which requires great effort. People are easily distracted by other stimuli, and if they miss a part of your argument, they will feel confused, intellectually inferior, and vaguely insecure. It is more persuasive to appeal to people’s hearts than their heads. Everyone shares emotions, and no one feels inferior to a speaker who stirs up their feelings. The crowd bonds together, everyone contagiously experiencing the same emotions.

The emotions you are trying to arouse should be strong ones. Do not speak of friendship and disagreement; speak of love and hate.

As adults we tend to overvalue our childhood. In their dependency and powerlessness, children genuinely suffer, yet when we get older we conveniently forget about that and sentimentalize the supposed paradise we have left behind.

“Output will tend to be greater,” Grove wrote, “when everybody strives for a level of achievement beyond [their] immediate grasp. . . . Such goal-setting is extremely important if what you want is peak performance from yourself and your subordinates.” While certain operational objectives must be met in full, aspirational OKRs should be uncomfortable and possibly unattainable.

We don’t hire smart people to tell them what to do. We hire smart people so they can tell us what to do. —Steve Jobs

“We do not learn from experience . . . we learn from reflecting on experience.”

That was our biggest advantage: We aimed higher.

Say you have some rocks, and a bunch of pebbles, and some sand, and your goal is to fit as much of everything as you can into a wide-mouth, one-gallon jar. If you start with the sand, and then the pebbles, the jar will run out of room for all the rocks. But when you start with the rocks, add the pebbles, and save the sand for last, the sand fills the spaces between the rocks—everything fits. In other words, the most important things need to get done first or they won’t get done at all.

Stretch goals can be crushing if people don’t believe they’re achievable. That’s where the art of framing comes in.Clever manager that he is, Shishir cut our BHAG down to size. While one billion daily hours sounded like an awful lot, it represented less than 20 percent of the world’s total television watch time. Introducing that context was helpful and clarifying, at least for me. We weren’t gunning to be arbitrarily big. Rather: There was another thing out there way bigger than us, and we were trying to scale up to it.

I’ve worked for some great leaders in my day. They were all very different, but one thing they had in common was this cold, sober focus. If you sat down with them for twenty minutes, they were completely uncluttered in their thinking. They could drill down very clearly on what needed to be done.

his standard was simple: perfection. That’s what he taught us individually and as a group—to believe it could be achieved and then achieve it

There is no guarantee, no ultimate formula for success. However, a resolute and resourceful leader understands that there are a multitude of means to increase the probability of success. And that’s what it all comes down to, namely, intelligently and relentlessly seeking solutions that will increase your chance of prevailing in a competitive environment. When you do that, the score will take care of itself.

there is a significant price to pay to be the best.  
  
maintain an ongoing level of concentration and focus that is abnormally high;

I directed our focus less to the prize of victory than to the process of improving—obsessing, perhaps, about the quality of our execution and the content of our thinking; that is, our actions and attitude.

“What assets do we have right now that we’re not taking advantage of?”

Accuracy, accuracy, precision in execution of everything at all levels. No sloppiness. Game-level focus was the price of admission.

No leader can control the outcome of the contest or competition, but you can control how you prepare for it.

For members of your team, you determine what their inner voice says. The leader, at least a good one, teaches the team how to talk to themselves. An effective leader has a profound influence on what that inner voice will say.

one person is charged with setting the standard and demonstrating what it means: you.

“The impression was gaining ground with me that it was a good thing to let the money be my slave and not make myself a slave to money.”

When he rested his head on the pillow at night, he warned himself, “Because you have got a start, you think you are quite a merchant; look out, or you will lose your head—go steady. Are you going to let this money puff you up? Keep your eyes open. Don’t lose your balance.”

his tight-fisted control of details and advocacy of unbridled expansion. Daring in design, cautious in execution—it was a formula he made his own throughout his career.

Even as a young man, Rockefeller was extremely composed in a crisis. In this respect, he was a natural leader: The more agitated others became, the calmer he grew.

One of Rockefeller’s strengths in bargaining situations was that he figured out what he wanted and what the other party wanted and then crafted mutually advantageous terms. Instead of ruining the railroads, Rockefeller tried to help them prosper, albeit in a way that fortified his own position.

“Do not many of us who fail to achieve big things … fail because we lack concentration—the art of concentrating the mind on the thing to be done at the proper time and to the exclusion of everything else?”

With a talent for seeing things anew, Rockefeller could study an operation, break it down into component parts, and devise ways to improve it.

Few outsiders knew that one of Rockefeller’s greatest talents was to manage and motivate his diverse associates. As he said, “It is chiefly to my confidence in men and my ability to inspire their confidence in me that I owe my success in life.”17 He liked to note that Napoleon could not have succeeded without his marshals.

He believed there was a time to think and then a time to act. He brooded over problems and quietly matured plans over extended periods. Once he had made up his mind, however, he was no longer troubled by doubts and pursued his vision with undeviating faith. Unfortunately, once in that state of mind, he was all but deaf to criticism. He was like a projectile that, once launched, could never be stopped, never recalled, never diverted.

Throughout his life, the mutable Rockefeller had continually re-created himself while adhering to certain core principles. As H. G. Wells wrote, “Manifestly he has grown and broadened at every stage of his career.”

The rules will be different for each finite game. It is, in fact, by knowing what the rules are that we know what the game is.

Rules are not valid because the Senate passed them, or because heroes once played by them, or because God pronounced them through Moses or Muhammad. They are valid only if and when players freely play by them.

It is a principal function of society to validate titles and to assure their perpetual recognition.

When a person is known by title, the attention is on a completed past, on a game already concluded, and not therefore to be played again. A title effectively takes a person out of play. When a person is known only by name, the attention of others is on an open future. We simply cannot know what to expect. Whenever we address each other by name we ignore all scripts, and open the possibility that our relationship will become deeply reciprocal.

Inasmuch as power is determined by the outcome of a game, one does not win by being powerful; one wins to be powerful. If one has sufficient power to win before the game has begun, what follows is not a game at all.

As in the Zen image we are not the stones over which the stream of the world flows; we are the stream itself. As we shall see, this ceaseless change does not mean discontinuity; rather change is itself the very basis of our continuity as persons. Only that which can change can continue: this is the principle by which infinite players live.

The more powerful we consider persons to be, the less we expect them to do, for their power can come only from that which they have done. After athletic contests in which major titles have been at stake, it is common for the audience to lift the winners to their shoulders, marching them about as if they were helpless—in the sharpest possible contrast to the physical skill and energy they have just displayed.

possessed can have the status of art. If art cannot become property, property is never art—as property. Property draws attention to titles, points backward toward a finished time. Art is dramatic, opening always forward, beginning something that cannot be finished.

Since art is never possession, and always possibility, nothing possessed can have the status of art. If art cannot become property, property is never art—as property. Property draws attention to titles, points backward toward a finished time. Art is dramatic, opening always forward, beginning something that cannot be finished.

War presents itself as necessary for self-protection, when in fact it is necessary for self-identification.

If to look is to look at what is contained within its limitations, to see is to see the limitations themselves. Each new school of painting is new not because it now contains subject matter ignored in earlier work, but because it sees the limitations previous artists imposed on their subject matter but could not see themselves.

At its root all language has the character of metaphor, because no matter what it intends to be about it remains language, and remains absolutely unlike whatever it is about.

a radio must cease to exist as equipment and become sound. A perfect radio will draw no attention to itself, will make it seem we are in the very presence of the source of its sound.

Genuine travel has no destination. Travelers do not go somewhere, but constantly discover they are somewhere else.

Nature does not change; it has no inside or outside. It is therefore not possible to travel through it. All travel is therefore change within the traveler, and it is for that reason that travelers are always somewhere else. To travel is to grow.

A culture can be no stronger than its strongest myths.

As myths make individual experience possible, they also make collective experience possible. Whole civilizations rise from stories—and can rise from nothing else.

I far prefer to get people telling stories about how they experienced a problem area in the past. In particular, try to find out if they have tried to solve the problem. What triggered their search for a solution? How did they look for a solution? What did they think the solution would do, before they tried it? How did that particular solution work out? And if they are struggling to remember specifics, help them set the scene of their story: what part of the year or time of day? Were you with anyone?

Many of the interconnections in systems operate through the flow of information. Information holds systems together and plays a great role in determining how they operate.

An important function of almost every system is to ensure its own perpetuation.

Systems thinkers see the world as a collection of stocks along with the mechanisms for regulating the levels in the stocks by manipulating flows.

Model utility depends not on whether its driving scenarios are realistic (since no one can know that for sure), but on whether it responds with a realistic pattern of behavior.

Hierarchies evolve from the lowest level up—from the pieces to the whole, from cell to organ to organism, from individual to team, from actual production to management of production. Life started with single-cell bacteria, not with elephants. The original purpose of a hierarchy is always to help its originating subsystems do their jobs better.

Everything we think we know about the world is a model. Every word and every language is a model. All maps and statistics, books and databases, equations and computer programs are models. So are the ways I picture the world in my head—my mental models. None of these is or ever will be the real world.

At any given time, the input that is most important to a system is the one that is most limiting.

As we try to imagine restructured rules and what our behavior would be under them, we come to understand the power of rules. They are high leverage points. Power over the rules is real power.

Let’s face it, the universe is messy. It is nonlinear, turbulent, and dynamic. It spends its time in transient behavior on its way to somewhere else, not in mathematically neat equilibria. It self-organizes and evolves. It creates diversity and uniformity. That’s what makes the world interesting, that’s what makes it beautiful, and that’s what makes it work.

What Musk has developed that so many of the entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley lack is a meaningful worldview. He’s the possessed genius on the grandest quest anyone has ever concocted. He’s less a CEO chasing riches than a general marshaling troops to secure victory.

“When Elon gets into something, he develops just this different level of interest in it than other people. That is what differentiates Elon from the rest of humanity.”

He exhibited a deep insight into human nature that helped his companies pull off exceptional marketing, technology, and financial feats. Musk was already playing the entrepreneur game at the highest level and working the press and investors like few others could.

If you told him that you made a particular choice because ‘it was the standard way things had always been done,’ he’d kick you out of a meeting fast. He’d say, ‘I never want to hear that phrase again. What we have to do is fucking hard and half-assing things won’t be tolerated.’

“Most people who are under that sort of pressure fray,” Gracias said. “Their decisions go bad. Elon gets hyperrational. He’s still able to make very clear, long-term decisions. The harder it gets, the better he gets.

He will pick the most aggressive time schedule imaginable assuming everything goes right, and then accelerate it by assuming that everyone can work harder.”

It’s almost a binary experience for him. Either you’re trying to make something spectacular with no compromises or you’re not. And if you’re not, Musk considers you a failure.

“Elon came to the conclusion early in his career that life is short,” Straubel said. “If you really embrace this, it leaves you with the obvious conclusion that you should be working as hard as you can.”

Human beings are not accustomed to being perfect, and few areas of human activity demand it. Adjusting to the requirement for perfection is, I think, the most difficult part of learning to program.

when schedule slippage is recognized, the natural (and traditional) response is to add manpower. Like dousing a fire with gasoline, this makes matters worse, much worse. More fire requires more gasoline, and thus begins a regenerative cycle which ends in disaster.

conceptual integrity is the most important consideration in system design. It is better to have a system omit certain anomalous features and improvements, but to reflect one set of design ideas, than to have one that contains many good but independent and uncoordinated ideas.

the general model for successful tech companies, contrary to myth and legend, is that they become distribution-centric rather than product-centric. They become a distribution channel, so they can get to the world. And then they put many new products through that distribution channel.

No committee ever built anything great. So related to that, no board ever built anything great. Boards can be helpful; they can be sounding boards. But you do not want the board to be running the company. And the larger the board, the more you’re going to find yourself spending time just keeping them up-to-date and in sync. The way my

One technique I learned, actually from Brian Chesky at Airbnb, is to go find the five best people in Silicon Valley that do that role, and just have coffee with them. And just chat. In that dialogue, I think you form an ability to benchmark the differences between an A+ and a B+, so that when you meet new candidates,

Optimally, most product management time should be going towards defining the product, prioritizing trade-offs, spending time with customers, and working with various functions on launch, feature iteration, and communication.

You can’t break the rules until you know how to play the game.

the more I tried to exert power directly, the less powerful I became.

you can’t force your will on people. If you want them to act differently, you need to inspire them to change themselves.

my job as a coach was to make something meaningful out of one of the most mundane activities on the planet.

What I liked about basketball was how interconnected everything was. The game was a complex dance of moves and countermoves that made it much more alive than other sports I played.

“Only to the extent that we expose ourselves over and over to annihilation can that which is indestructible be found in us.”

Power is only power until you exert it. It’s all perception.

I wasn’t as creative or cultured as they were, but I was a lot smarter and more hardworking than most of them. Insecurity and ambition make a powerful cocktail.

I postmortemed everything, and never made the same mistake twice.

We worked insanely hard, but we fostered the illusion of working impossibly hard. I believed momentum was everything—once a company relaxed, it was done for.

“If you aim at the target, you lose all your power. You have to hit through the target to really smash it.” To get where you want to go, you have to set out to go even further.

To imagine that we are not always in control of what we do is a frightening thought, but in fact it is the reality. We are subject to forces from deep within us that drive our behavior and that operate below the level of our awareness. We see the results—our thoughts, moods, and actions—but have little conscious access to what actually moves our emotions and compels us to behave in certain ways.

Emotions evolved for a different reason than cognition. These two forms of relating to the world are not connected seamlessly in our brains.

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

see other people as phenomena, as neutral as comets or plants. They simply exist. They come in all varieties, making life rich and interesting. Work with what they give you, instead of resisting and trying to change them. Make understanding people a fun game, the solving of puzzles.

Instead of being slaves to this energy, we channel it. That is the essence of rationality.

You want to retain the elasticity of spirit you had as a child, interested in everything, while retaining the hard-nosed need to verify and scrutinize for yourself all ideas and beliefs. The two can coexist. It is a balance that all geniuses possess.

We are the most successful social animal on the planet. For hundreds of thousands of years our hunter-gatherer ancestors could survive only by constantly communicating with one another through nonverbal cues.

The word personality comes from the Latin persona, which means “mask.” In the public we all wear masks, and this has a positive function.

For each weakness there is a corresponding strength.

the mind operates by contrasts. We are able to formulate concepts about something by becoming aware of its opposite.  
complacency would be a dangerous evolutionary trait for a conscious animal such as humans. If our early ancestors had been prone to feeling content with present circumstances, they would not have been sensitive enough to possible dangers that lurked in the most apparently safe environments.

When we strive to go against this grain, to consider more deeply the consequences of what we do and the nature of our long-term priorities, we are straining to realize our true human potential as the thinking animal.

The years teach much which the days never know.

When it comes to the ideas and opinions you hold, see them as toys or building blocks that you are playing with. Some you will keep, others you will knock down, but your spirit remains flexible and playful.

You are not born with fixed intelligence and inherent limits. See your brain as a miraculous organ designed for continual learning and improvement, well into old age. The rich neural connections in your brain, your creative powers, are something you develop to the degree that you open yourself up to new experiences and ideas. View problems and failures as means to learn and toughen yourself up. You can get through anything with persistence. View the way people treat you as largely flowing from your own attitude, something you can control.

You must become aware of your own dark side. In being conscious of it you can control and channel the creative energies that lurk in your unconscious. By integrating the dark side into your personality, you will be a more complete human and will radiate an authenticity that will draw people to you.

It is not the number of hours you put in but the intensity and consistent effort you bring to it.

Fighting for a cause is known as a force multiplier—the greater the connection to the cause, the higher the morale, which translates into greater force.

His motto in life was ostinato rigore, “relentless rigor.” Whenever Leonardo was given a commission, he went well beyond the task, poring over every detail to make the work more lifelike or effective. No one had to tell him to do this. He was ferociously diligent and hard on himself.

Over the course of ten years, it was through continual thought experiments, day and night, exploring every possible solution, that Albert Einstein finally came up with the theory of relativity.

In your expressive work, never shy away from anger but capture and channel it, letting it breathe into the work a sense of life and movement. In giving expression to such anger, you will always find an audience.

We are born and enter the stream of life, and each day it carries us closer to death. Time is linear, always advancing, and there is nothing we can do to stop its course.

We can describe the contrast between life and death in the following manner: Death is absolute stillness, without movement or change except decay. In death we are separated from others and completely alone. Life on the other hand is movement, connection to other living things, and diversity of life forms.

Let us look at the pedestrians in any busy city and realize that in ninety years it is likely that none of them will be alive, including us. Think of the millions and billions who have already come and gone, buried and long forgotten, rich and poor alike. Such thoughts make it hard to maintain our own sense of grand importance, the feeling that we are special and that the pain we may suffer is not the same as others’.