

Pointers

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Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Action	9
3	Focus	25
4	Patience	51
5	Learning	63
6	Resilience	75
7	Humility	111
8	Confidence	133
9	Gratitude	145
10	Generosity	153
11	Leadership	167
	Bibliography	191
	Index	192

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

We all want to be better people, shout at the kids less often, get some perspective at work and call our friends and family more. We have a picture of a better version of ourselves but we're still fallible, lazy, tired and busy. Best intentions fall away and we forget our better selves. To make our jobs a little easier we can listen to Marcus Aurelius who tells us that without a goal we can't live consistently (§3.24). Thinking about the sort of qualities we want to show is a great first step but we need a little more help. Thinking about the sort of person we want to be and looking closely at the qualities they embody we can come up with a consistent goal, a set of high or even unattainable targets.

Even with our goal, we'll still fail. Badly. But to get us through the tough spots We're going to get help from philosophers, deities, sportsmen, fictional characters, artists and people who are far smarter than us.

The hope here is that we can turn to this set of *Pointers* at times when we're losing our way, forgetting what's important to us and the promises we've made about the sort of person we want to become.

The set of qualities we're looking to develop here are inspired in part by the Modern Virtues page from the School of Life¹, the majority of content is helpful quotes and aphorisms picked up from books and the internet. If you find one good idea in these

¹<http://bit.ly/1XoP0tE>

pages it will be directly at- trusted advisor Seneca
tributable to them (§5.1). would say, live well.
Good luck, and, as our

CHAPTER 2

Action

The *Pointers* here are not things to be mulled over and analysed in great depth, they're included to give us the little nudges and course corrections for our actions.

Without action of some kind our plans for improvement simply won't get very far. We need to look at the mammoth task in front of us and take that scary first step (and then the next). Taking action isn't always easy and choosing the right move (§2.17) at the right time (§4.2) can be stupefyingly hard. The hope is though that we won't be paralysed and we will make an impact on the things important to us.

We won't be successful all the time (in particular I'm not even be success-

ful much of the time) but by persevering (§2.14 and 6.1) we can chip away at the habits (and even relationships (§3.2)) that are slowing us down or even undoing good progress we've already made.

We need to remember what's important to us. Remember how much time we have and how we choose to spend it. Marcus often looks at how little life he's been allotted (and how much he thinks he has left) and it's a good reminder for people like us to just get on with it.

We also need to remember that people will see where we spend our time and the choices made. No matter what we say they will believe what they see (and don't see).

Action may not always bring happiness, but without action there is none.

Benjamin Disraeli 2.1

You may never know what results come from your action but if you do nothing there will be no result.

Mahatma Gandhi 2.2

Action expresses priority

Mahatma Gandhi 2.3

Fac aut tace

2.4

Do or be silent.

Code wins.

2.5

Demonstrate
don't explicate.

Robert Greene 2.6

When you come to a fork in
the road, take it.

Yogi Berra 2.7

Each of us lives only now in this brief instant.
The rest has been lived already or is impossible
to see

Marcus Aurelius 2.8

Do what nature demands. Get a move on if
you have it in you and don't worry whether
anyone will give you any credit for it. And
don't go expecting Plato's "Republic" either,
just be satisfied with even the smallest progress

Marcus Aurelius 2.9

When you confront a problem you begin to solve it

§11.12

Rudy Guillian 2.10

It's amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit

Harry S Truman 2.11

Stick to what's in front of
you;
Idea, action, utterance

Marcus Aurelius 2.12

Life is what happens while
you are busy making other
plans

John Lennon 2.13

Quality is not an act. It is
a habit.

Aristotle 2.14

How you do anything is how
you do everything

Ryan Holiday 2.15

If I cannot do great things
I can do small things in a
great way

Martin Luther King Jr. 2.16

To think is easy.

To act is hard.

But the hardest thing of all
is to act in accordance with
your thinking.

John Von Goethe 2.17

Although understanding
the theory behind the ac-
tion enables one to speak,
it is the practice which
enables one to act

Musonius Rufus 2.18

CHAPTER 3

Focus

As hard as it can be to take action, it's even harder to maintain the level of focus we need to on the right things. To help us find the right things we should think about what impact our efforts can produce (§6.14) and what price we'll have to pay. The sun will still hide behind the clouds on our day at the beach, the white van will still drive too close no matter how much we hope otherwise. Better to work on things we can control.

When we do identify the right things, we still squander our time and energy. We're too polite, putting ourselves and our priorities to one side to avoid offending people (§3.7 and 6.23), we make great gains on Twitter and Facebook while

we let our Amazing Book Idea gather dust (§3.12), we spend hours mindlessly scrolling around crappy sensationalist journalism when we could be reading an immersive novel (§5.1) or working on our beloved hobby (§11.1).

Epictetus reminds us that we need to gut things from our lives which take us away from the tricky but important business of improvement. We can be sure that nothing truly terrible will happen if we stop using social media. We can be confident that life will carry on if we leave the "mind numbing spirit crushing game shows¹" to someone else. There are so many ways to spend our time, we need to be careful not to waste it and that can require significant effort. Asking our-

¹Renton, Trainspotting

selves whether what we're doing right now is truly important to us (§3.14) is an incredibly useful habit to develop. Maybe we should call someone who's important to us and focus solely on that for starters. Let's take 15 minutes. The advice and guidance on the next few pages will still be here when we get back.

Call your mom

3.1

You are whatever the company you keep is

Lord Chesterfield 3.2

Let your mind dwell on examples of honor

Cicero 3.3

Steer clear of lifers, the toxic and charlatans.
You become who you know

Ryan Holiday 3.4

Never wrestle with pigs, you both get dirty
and the pig likes it

§3.19

George Bernard Shaw 3.5

From good men you will
learn good things, if you
mix with bad men you will
destroy even your existing
sense.

Theognis 3.6

Don't spend time with people you don't like

Prue Leith 3.7

You can do anything.
but you can't do everything.

§3.12

David Allen 3.8

Reaching your true potential involves choice.
How exactly you choose to excel is up to you.

Brian Colbert 3.9

No random actions, none not based on underlying principles.

Marcus Aurelius 3.10

If you're not doing what you love, you're wasting your time

§3.17

Billy Joel 3.11

You're better off not giving
the small things more time
than they deserve

Marcus Aurelius 3.12

Slow down and remember this;
Most things make no difference. Being busy is a form of laziness. Lazy thinking and indiscriminate action.

§3.14

Tim Ferriss 3.13

See: efficacy hacks² and a not to do list³.

²<http://bit.ly/1EDPjUQ>

³<http://bit.ly/1EDPu2H>

If you seek tranquillity, do less or (more accurately) do what's essential because most of what we say and do is not essential.

Ask yourself at every moment "is this necessary?"

Marcus Aurelius 3.14

There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.

Peter Drucker 3.15

If you wish to improve, be content to appear clueless or stupid in extraneous matters

Epictetus 3.16

Hard work is simply the refuge of people who have nothing better to do

Oscar Wilde 3.17

A man is successful if he gets up in the morning, goes to bed at night and in between does what he wants to.

§3.11

Bod Dylan 3.18

Never try to teach a pig to sing.
It wastes time and annoys the pig.

§3.5

Robert Heinlein 3.19

Parkinson's Law:

A task will swell in (perceived) importance and complexity in relation to the time allocated for its completion.

And so I'll treat them as the
law that binds us requires.
With kindness and with justice.

And the inconsequential
things?

I'll do my best to treat them
as they deserve.

Marcus Aurelius 3.21

The cucumber is bitter?
Then throw it out.
There are brambles in the
path?
Then go around them.

§3.7

Marcus Aurelius 3.22

Of each thought ask yourself:

- is it necessary?
- is it destructive to those around me?
- is it really what you think?
- is it just self indulgent?

If you don't have a consistent goal in life, how can you live it in a consistent way?

Marcus Aurelius 3.24

They should try to subordinate things to themselves
not themselves to things.

§11.21

Horace 3.25

The things you used to own.
Now they own you

Jack, Fight Club 3.26

Never look back unless
you're planning to go that
way.

Henry David Thoreau 3.27

It's a long road there's no
turning back

Funki Porcini 3.28

In six months you will have
discarded most of what you
claim is important right
now.

Ryan Holiday 3.29

Sometimes the hard stuff is
hard because you shouldn't
do it in the first place

Tim Ferriss 3.30

NoMFuP

Malcolm Tucker 3.31

Handy to remind ourselves what we should be paying attention to.

CHAPTER 4

Patience

We know how important action is, but acting

rashly, without care and attention can do serious harm to ourselves and can undo the good progress we've made towards our aims.

In many ways, for us at least, knowing where we're headed is more important than getting there quickly, especially when you consider that we may not even arrive. So we should consider that the manner in which we undertake the journey is at least as important as the destination.

To some patience can look like a lack of engagement or a lack of commitment but there's often more harm done through an emotional (over) reaction (§4.4) and certainly we're only likely to waste time and do everything badly if we act or speak angrily

(§4.14).

We know that we are expected to play the game with limited (or even inaccurate) information but we should take time to reflect and consider what we do know before committing to a course of action. We also need to be open to changing our plans as more facts are revealed (§7.15).

Acting in good faith after a consideration of the facts and taking counsel where we can will mean that even when the landscape changes and the actions we took weren't right in retrospect we can still stand by them in the light of what we knew at the time (§8.10). Dive in, on the other hand, and we can blunder from one poorly understood situation to the next and end up in an even weaker position than if we'd have

spent some time before rushing off. we don't make snap judgments and we don't let ourselves be carried away by the crowd.

It's a lot of effort to be patient enough to maintain a level of control so that we can act correctly, we don't fly into a rage, With a little help we can be sure we're up to it.

Ask yourself this question:
Am I in charge of this situation or is this situation in charge of me?

Anthony De Mello 4.1

Do not make war unless victory may be gained;
If there is a prospect of victory move;
If there is no prospect of victory do not move.

Sun Tzu 4.2

Impatience: perhaps the
single greatest pitfall

Robert Greene 4.3

How much more damage
grief and age do than the
things that caused them.

Marcus Aurelius 4.4

There are always more
of them before they are
counted.

§6.19

Ulysses S Grant 4.5

The senses don't deceive,
judgement deceives.

John Von Goethe 4.6

It is more important to
know where you're going
than to get there quickly

§3.24

Isocrates 4.7

Never content with a man
who has nothing to lose.

§4.2

Baltazar Gracian 4.8

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

§4.2

Robert Greene 4.9

Once the words are out, you cannot take them
back. Keep them under control.

Robert Greene 4.10

Wise men speak because
they have something to say;
fools speak because they
have to say something.

Plato 4.11

The best advice I ever got
was "shut up"

Ryan Holiday 4.12

Always say less than necessary¹.

¹<http://tcat.tc/1lwHzGd>

Light cares can talk huge
ones are strick dumb

Hippolitus 4.13

Never do anything when
you are in a temper, for you
will do everything wrong

Baltazar Graçian 4.14

Anger and emotion are strategically counterproductive. You must always stay calm and objective

Robert Greene 4.15

The best fighter is never angry

Lao Tzu 4.16

Fear is a bad advisor.

Angela Merkel 4.17

CHAPTER 5

Learning

We don't know enough. We'll likely never master our respective professions, hobbies and past-times, we'll never understand how others behave and what motivates them to any meaningful level but that shouldn't stop us from trying. Quite the opposite in fact. Maintaining an open mind¹ is a key trait for us to make sure we're in a position where we can grow and make progress towards our aims. Getting stuck into patterns of behaviour and allowing our comfort zones to shrink is a sure way to stop progress dead in its tracks.

There's an endless amount of knowledge our open minds can consume but learning in an undirected manner won't help us (§5.15 and 3.13). De-

ciding which topics (and even which authors) to consume is important enough to be given some serious thought. We can't just let anyone in so following recommendations from those we trust becomes a key strategy for learning.

Spending some time reviewing what we would like to learn should involve not just a look at our careers and the skills needed for the Next Big Project but a broader look at things we've enjoyed in the past and what topics we can look at in that area. If it happens that the topics you've enjoyed are the ones you use every day in your career then you're very lucky and if not? In that case we need to have a more detailed look (§3.18).

¹<http://mindsetonline.com/whatisit/themindsets/index.html>

No matter what we simply read more² so that choose, one way we can we make use of otherwise certainly learn more is to wasted time.

²<http://ryanholiday.net/how-to-read-more-a-lot-more/>

If I read a book and get one good idea from that \$20, then I've gotten one of the greatest deals of all time

Tom Peters 5.1

An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.

Benjamin Franklin 5.2

To forgive and forget means to have thrown away a dearly bought experience.

Arthur Schopenhaur 5.3

The art lies in concealing
the art

Horace 5.4

If people knew how hard I
worked, it would not seem
so masterful

Michelangelo 5.5

never expose the sweat and
labor behind your poise

Robert Greene 5.6

Never nitpick a heuristic

Nassim Taleb 5.7

You must see your attempt at attaining mastery as something necessary and positive

Robert Greene 5.8

The greatest danger you face is your mind growing soft and your eyes growing dull.

Robert Greene 5.9

to let one's mind go lax is, in effect, to lose it

Musonius Rufus 5.10

More listening, more learning
Fewer interruptions, fewer conclusions.

§7.15

Ryan Holiday 5.11

I would never die for my
beliefs because I might be
wrong

Bertand Russell 5.12

Does learning mean noth-
ing to you unless you know
that someone else knows
that you know it?

§7.12

Michel de Montaigne 5.13

It is a greater thing to make oneself impassable than to be impassable as a property of one's nature.

Michel De Monataigne 5.14

Isn't it the height of folly to learn inessential things when time is so desperately short?

§3.14

Seneca 5.15

Learn as if you were going to live but live as if you were going to die tomorrow.

Ryan Holiday 5.16

CHAPTER 6

Resilience

We can't have full control and so things won't always turn out as we'd hoped. Having the courage to pursue our goal in the face of unexpected changes of plan (§6.52), times of poor judgement (§6.3), and even after outright failures (§8.10) will mean that we'll still make slow progress towards our aim of a better self.

The challenges, of course, won't just come from us and our lapses in judgement or the fates changing their mind, others will see our improvement and resent us or even try to derail us (§6.9) our successes will make them feel uncomfortable after they fell revealed as lazy, cruel or arrogant. When that happens we need to remember that we were there not so long ago ourselves (§10.11) but we

need to keep focussed on what's truly important and what we're trying to achieve. Our route is hard enough without allowing other people to throw us off course (§3.7 and 6.12). Picking ourselves up and dusting ourselves off needs to become second nature. We may be lucky enough to have support from others at times but we know we can't rely on that, we can only rely on what we control and that is nothing more than our response to what has happened.

To reach our goals we don't need to be the best (§8.14), and in our case it doesn't really make sense to "be the best" as we'll always be able to improve in some way, but we do need to keep at it and no matter what happens acting as though we were already the better person

we want to be (§6.8). what they've done; it's up
No matter what's hap- to us how we react, it's up
pened, no matter what to us what happens next.
they've said, no matter

Fall seven times, stand
eight

§6.36

Japanese Proverb 6.1

Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing
can disturb your peace of mind

Christian D'Larson 6.2

When we are tired we are attacked by ideas
we conquered long ago.

Friedrich Nietzsche 6.3

All the meat and all that it wants.

Case, Neuromancer 6.4

It's just fat and muscle

6.5

You control the effort not the results

Ryan Holiday 6.6

We control our own actions and are responsible for them.

If we act wrongly we have done serious harm to ourselves

Marcus Aurelius 6.7

Does what happened stop you from acting with justice, generosity, self control, sanity, prudence, honesty and stright forwardness?

Marcus Aurelius 6.8

The world loves to blacken the radiant and
drag the sublime through the dust

Schiller 6.9

Haters gonna hate, hate, hate, hate, hate

§10.5

Taylor Swift 6.10

You don't need their approval

Danielle La Porte 6.11

Tranquility comes when you stop caring what they say

Marcus Aurelius 6.12

If you work hard to do what is right, do not be upset by roadblocks; think about how many of the things in your life haven't turned out as you wanted them to but advthey should have done.

Musonius Rufus 6.13

Ta eph'hemin
Ta ouk eph'hemin

Stoic phrase 6.14

what is up to us, what is not up to us.

Nothing either good nor
bad but thinking makes it
so

William Shakespeare 6.15

Real difficulties can be over-
come
It's only the imaginary ones
that are unconquerable

§4.5

Theodore N Vail 6.16

Problems are rarely as bad as we think they are, or rather, they are precisely as bad as we think they are

§6.47

Ryan Holiday 6.17

External things are not the problem. It's your assessment of them which you can erase right now

Marcus Aurelius 6.18

See things for what they
are,
do what we can,
endure what we must

Ryan Holiday 6.19

Not to give into adversity.
Not to trust prosperity.

And always take note of
Fortune's habit of behaving
exactly as she pleases

Seneca 6.20

You can't stop the waves
but you can learn how to
surf

§6.52

Jon Kabat Zin 6.21

All of our unhappiness comes from our inability
to be alone

Jean de la Brugere 6.22

A bore is someone who deprives you of solitude
without providing you with company

Gian Vincenzo Gravina 6.23

Strive to keep yourself free from unnecessary
entanglements and alliances

Robert Greene 6.24

Happiness depends on ourselves

Aristotle 6.25

Nothing can bring you
peace but yourself.

Nothing can bring you
peace but the triumph of
principles

Ralph Waldo Emerson 6.26

Everyone gets one life.
Your's is almost up and in-
stead of treating yourself
with respect you have en-
trusted your happiness to
others.

Marcus Aurelius 6.27

He who conquers others is
strong, he who conquers
himself is mighty

Lao Tzu 6.28

Success depends on previous preparation, and
without such preparation there can be no suc-
cess

Confucius 6.29

Proper planning prevents piss poor perfor-
mance

§6.29

6.30

Optimism is cowardice

Oswald Spengler 6.31

Hope is a poor hedge

Erik R. Sirri 6.32

2007, but likely earlier

Preparation not luck

6.33

So keep at it until it's fully digested. A strong stomach digests whatever it eats. A blazing fire takes whatever you throw on it and makes light and flame.

Courage doesn't always
roar.

Sometimes courage is the
quiet voice at the end of
the day whispering "I will
try again tomorrow"

§6.36

Mary Anne Radmach 6.35

Disgraceful for the soul to
give up while the body is
still going strong

Marcus Aurelius 6.36

Choose not to be harmed
and you won't feel harmed
Don't feel harmed and you
haven't been

Marcus Aurelius 6.37

It can ruin your life only if it
ruins your character. Otherwise
it cannot harm you.
Inside or out

Marcus Aurelius 6.38

Trust yourself more and others less

Robert Greene 6.39

Love all
Trust a few
Do wrong to none

William Shakespeare 6.40

I was once s fortunate man,
then fortune deserted me.

But true good fortune is
what you make for yourself.
Good fortune:

- good character
- good intentions
- good actions

Ambition: tying your well being to what other people say and do

Self-indulgence: tying it to the things that happen to you

Sanity: tying it to your own actions

§6.14

Marcus Aurelius 6.42

Straight not straightened

Marcus Aurelius 6.43

What is outside my mind
means nothing to it

Marcus Aurelius 6.44

The mind without passions
is like a fortress. No place
is more secure

Marcus Aurelius 6.45

Objective judgment now, at
this very moment.

Unselfish action now, at
this very moment.

Willing acceptance of all ex-
ternal events now, at this
very moment.

That's all you need

Marcus Aurelius 6.46

It is we who generate the
judgments inscribing them
on ourselves

Marcus Aurelius 6.47

When you judge another
you do not define them, you
define yourself.

Wayne Dyer 6.48

Care about what other people think and you will always be their prisoner

§6.14

Lao Tzu 6.49

It is reason and wisdom
which take away cares
not places affording views
over the sea

§6.25

Horace 6.50

Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed.

On purpose

§5.5

G. K. Nielson 6.51

Change is the only constant in life

Heraclitus 6.52

You can suffer the pain of change or suffer remaining the way you are.

Joyce Meyer 6.53

The more conflicts and difficult situations you put yourself through the more battle tested your mind will be.

§11.2

Robert Greene 6.54

This is the precept by which
I have lived:

Prepare for the worst, expect
the best and take what
comes.

Hannah Ardent 6.55

The burden is equal to the
strength of the horse

The Talmud 6.56

CHAPTER 7

Humility

We can't bear listening to empty claims and boasting, it's infuriating especially when people seem to be eating up the inflated claims. At times we fall foul of this behaviour ourselves, acting as though there's nothing we can learn from those around us, acting as though we have it all figured out, acting as though we know it all. No matter how masterful we are in a given area, we can be sure that there are those more accomplished than us and those who are less accomplished. In either case we should be ready to listen to them as they can both provide different and valuable view points to change our direction and improve our processes (§7.15).

We're not immune to needing help, we need to recognise that there are those who have skills

that we sorely lack and that asking for help is not a cause for embarrassment it's a chance for us to learn something new, patch our deficiencies and maybe build a new relationship. If we allow ego to stop us from admitting to ourselves that we need help we're doing ourselves a major disservice, we need to put that to one side and let the experts show us the way. Sometimes we'll be out of our depth and alone, in which case we know we need to do what's required to the best of our ability.

We're not immune to luck either, it's incredibly important to remember that the current situation is not just down to how awesome we are, that there's an element of fate involved too. We know that it's only truly our behaviour which is under

our control and to act as though that's not the case is incredibly short sighted. If we can keep this in mind we'll be open to new ideas, we'll be more self aware and we'll chip away at our weaknesses.

You are not a beautiful and
unique snowflake.

Tyler Durden 7.1

After the game the king and
the pawn go back into the
same box

Italian Proverb 7.2

You could leave this life
right now. Let that deter-
mine how you act.

Marcus Aurelius 7.3

He who does not employ
a guide cannot gain advantage
from the ground.

Sun Tzu 7.4

Take the help.

Danielle La Porte 7.5

Men of any worth soon come to see that they are in the hands of Fate and gratefully submit to be moulded by its teachings

Arthur Schopenhauer 7.6

Foolish is the man who delights in his good fortune, supposing it will never leave him.

§6.20

Euripides 7.7

If you're not humble life will visit humility upon you

Mike Tyson 7.8

To accept it without arrogance, to let it go with indifference

Marcus Aurelius 7.9

Everywhere, at each moment, you have the option:

- to accept this event with humility
- to treat each person as he should be treated
- to approach this thought with care, so that nothing irrational creeps in

§4.6

Marcus Aurelius 7.10

Be willing to be a beginner every single morning

§3.16

Meister Eckhart 7.11

Boasting is what a boy does, because he has no real effect on the world.

§7.13

Matthew Crawford 7.12

A superior man is modest in his speech but exceeds in his actions.

Confucious 7.13

Your opinion is either dependent on the facts or it's not;

When they change you should shift along with them

§6.21

Ryan Holiday 7.14

The facts were always there, of course, just unclear or hidden. Think clearly about what you're looking at.
cf. 8.10

Remember that to change your mind and accept correction are mere acts too

Marcus Aurelius 7.15

and so, under our control

The fool doth think he
is wise and the wise man
knows himself to be a fool

§4.11

William Shakespeare 7.16

Never be so self absorbed as
to believe that the master is
interested in your criticisms
of him, now matter how ac-
curate they are

Robert Greene 7.17

but always be ready to listen and use the criticism you
hear.

A great failing: to see yourself as more than you are and value yourself at less than your true worth

John Von Goethe 7.18

It is the folly of many to
mistake the echo of a Lon-
don coffee shop for the
voice of a kingdom.

Jonathan Swift 7.19

Diversity in counsel.
Unity in command.

§7.4

Cyrus the Great 7.20

The unnamed should not
be mistaken for the non-
existent.

Jon de la Brugère 7.21

CHAPTER 8

Confidence

It's a fine line between arrogance and confidence. We need to be sure about what we're about to do but we need to remember that we're only human and we will make errors in judgement, just as we have done in the past (§10.10).

We can't let our past (§8.18 and 8.19) define our self image and we can't let our past behaviour define how we behave now. Once we've learnt what we can from those events, we need to understand that we can't change what happened but using what we've learnt, we can have an impact on what happens next.

Unchecked, our negative self talk and fear of failure can be paralysing but if we structure our tasks and goals in the right way we can control it.

Somewhat. If we aim for things which are under our control we can be more sure of success. In areas where we have some control (or none at all) we need to consider what would constitute a successful outcome and what behaviours might influence that. We're not looking to win the Thursday night poker game, we're looking to make fewer errors than last week. We're not looking to get a raise at work, we're looking to consistently be valuable to our boss. We're not looking to win The Turner Prize, we're looking to hone our craft and produce a vast portfolio of work. Incidentally if we manage to consistently do those things we stand a much better chance of hitting the original external targets but that's none of our concern because we're

focussed on what we can control. . .

Ultimately we don't have control of how things will turn out as measured by external metrics and that can be a big hit on our confidence, but if we change our success crite-

ria and focus on internal metrics we stand a better chance of avoiding failure. Not entirely, of course.

Being bold enough to act in the face of that uncertainty is what we're aiming for.

Let go and move with the chaos that presents itself to you. From within it you will find endless oppourtunities that elude other people

Robert Greene 8.1

Life shrinks or expands
in proportion to one's
courage.

§6.21

Anais Nin 8.2

So often self confidence is
dependent on the basic but
elusive premise
"I'm fine as I am"

School of Life 8.3

On confidence¹

Don't water your weeds

Harvey Mackay 8.4

Any knid of resistance or obstacle that crosses
your path should be seen as yet another chance
to improve your work

Robert Greene 8.5

¹<http://www.thebookoflife.org/on-confidence/>

You can adopt the attitude that there's nothing you can do, or you can see the challenge as a call to action

§9.6

Catherine Pulsifer 8.6

You've already made it this far, might as well take one more step

§6.1

Ryan Holiday 8.7

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

Marcus Aurelius 8.8

You will fail eventually.
Whatever.

§6.8

Danielle La Porte 8.9

A mistake is not something
to be determined after the
fact but in the light of infor-
mation up to that point

Nassim Taleb 8.10

A failed attempt is just that and nothing more,
its not the end and its not fatal. Keep at it.

8.11

Failure cannot cope with persistence.

§6.35

Napoleon Hill 8.12

Our doubts are traitors, and
make us lose the good we
might oft win be fearing to
attempt.

William Shakespeare 8.13

You don't have to be the best you just have to be harder to destroy. You have to be relentless

§8.12

Ryan Holiday 8.14

You cannot display yourself too brazenly, yet you must get noticed. Create a distinctive (a subtly distinctive) style and image.

Robert Greene 8.15

Understand: you should be radiating confidence not arrogance and disdain

Robert Greene 8.16

He who demands little gets it.

Ellen Glasgow 8.17

You are not your genes

Danielle La Porte 8.18

Don't let someone else's
opinion of you become your
reality

Les Brown 8.19

Don't look for miracles you
yourself are the miracle

Henry Miller 8.20

CHAPTER 9

Gratitude

Just looking at the massively improbable set of circumstances needed to get us here in one piece we should be able to grab handfulls of gratitude from the air. We don't though, we take things for granted after a while. We forget quickly that we're lucky enough to be literate and high enough up Maslow's heirarchy of needs¹ to have time to focus on our better selves having ticked off the basics a long time ago.

It's not just the things we have already that we take for granted, it's someone taking extra effort on our behalf or extending an unexpected generosity to us. We become so cynicical that we expect others to be on the make or we sniffily say that they're

"just doing their job".

If we can't rely on ourselves to be grateful, we need a little help to remind us and correct our course.

The stoics had a, seemingly, counter-intuitive routine to make sure we appreciated the things we have and the people around us. They suggested that we occasionally take the time to imagine our life without our loved ones and our most treasured possessions (§9.2). By routinely putting ourselves through the loss of a limb or a loved one, we'll feel truly grateful when they are with you (or still connected to the rest of your body).

We know that we should behave as though this is our final day (§5.16 and

¹<http://bit.ly/1BYf2Nd>

7.3) so simply waking up for it but we'll be thankful
provides us with a great for the chances brought us
source of gratitude for the for improving ourselves by
day ahead. No matter focussing on the aims we
what else happens (§10.3) have.
not only will we be ready

Certainly, if a man of understanding still has himself, he has lost nothing.

Michel De Montaigne 9.1

When you kiss your wife or child, repeat to yourself, "I am kissing a mortal"

Epictetus 9.2

... and she may be gone tomorrow.

Treat what you don't have
as non-existent

Look at what you have,
the things you value most
and think how much you'd
crave them if you didn't
have them

§11.21

Marcus Aurelius 9.3

If the stars were to appear
but one night every thou-
sand years how man would
marvel

Ralph Waldo Emerson 9.4

The ability to express won-
der and amazement and
seem like you mean it, is a
rare a dying talent but one
that is still greatly valued.

§9.4

Robert Greene 9.5

Get used to your circumstances, complain about them as little as possible. Grasp whatever advantages they have to offer

§3.22

Seneca 9.6

It is so hard to forget pain but it is harder to remember sweetness. There is no scar for happiness

Chuck Palaniuk 9.7

CHAPTER 10

Generosity

Materially speaking, we know that it is better to help many than to live in luxury ¹, we don't need a top of the range car more than the homeless man needs the next meal. Professionally we can be equally tight fisted, grabbing at praise from our superiors and doing our peers down so we are first in line for the bonus and promotion. We don't need to do either of those things of course. Allowing others to take the credit for work we've played a part in or setting others up for success can feel like career suicide but, with time, we'll be seen as the person who brings up strong talent and the person we need on the project to make sure it's a roaring success.

Even when we behave like

this, we know other people are selfish, they will upset us and they'll unravel our plans. It doesn't mean they're out to get us (§10.4 and 10.3) even though it may feel like that from time to time.

As hard as it is, if we want to make progress towards our aims, we need to give people a break. It's part of our duty to lead by example. We know that focussing on things that happened in the past is fruitless, it won't change the situation and only adds to our own stresses. There are few things more pointless than behaviour like this. We don't have to forget the events, that might mean we'd be surprised next time around but turning them over and over?

There's no need to har-

¹Musonius Rufus, [4]

bour grudges (§)10.2, we spoken sharply or hurtfully
don't have that time to and we've been forgiven
waste, but we do need to and pass that favour on
remember the times we've (§10.11 and 11.11).

You've given and they've received it. And yet, like an idiot, you keep holding out for more. To be credited with a good deed? To be repaid in kind? why?

§2.11

Marcus Aurelius 10.1

Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die

§6.10

Malachi McCourt 10.2

Tell yourself this the people
I deal with today will be:

- meddling
- ungrateful
- arrogant
- dishonest
- jealous
- surly

§10.11

Marcus Aurelius 10.3

People are going to be like that from time to time and so long as you remember that you've been like that too you can see the behaviour for what it is.

Hanlon's Razor:
Never attribute to malice
that which can be ade-
quately explained by incom-
petence

§10.11

Robert J. Hanlon 10.4

or weakness or fear or hunger or . . .

Someone hates me? Their problem.

Mine: to be patient and cheerful with everyone (including them)

Marcus Aurelius 10.5

Because... hate will get you every time
Every time.

Ryan Holiday 10.6

If talking to oneself did not
look so mad no day would
go by without my growling
to myself "you silly shit!"
Yet, I do not intend that to
be the definition of me

§8.4

Michel De Montaigne 10.7

Always give with remember-
ing and receive without for-
getting

§11.11

Brian Tracy 10.8

Show kindness whenever possible.

§11.11

Dalai Lama 10.9

Hint: it's always possible.

That you've made enough mistakes yourself. You just like them.

§10.11

Marcus Aurelius 10.10

Forgiveness means a long memory of all the times when we wouldn't have gotten through life with someone cutting us some slack. It is recognising that living with others is not possible without excusing errors

School of Life 10.11

See the modern virtues ²

²<http://bit.ly/1XoP0tE>

Forgiveness means giving up hope of a better past

§2.8

Lily Tomlin 10.12

CHAPTER 11

Leadership

It doesn't matter whether we're leading an expedition, a household or just ourselves. Our behaviour is always influencing those around us and our actions speak volumes about the sort of people we are.

We're holding ourselves to an incredibly high set of standards; we need to recognise the efforts of others and be generous in our interpretation of their actions (§10.11), show gratitude when things go well, have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, be open to correction (from anyone) in the light of better information, let others know they're important to us by putting everything else to one side and focussing entirely on them when they need us (and making sure we're available when they do). Consistently measuring ourselves against these

standards will be hard and humbling for us. We will slip up from time to time. What matters is how we deal with those bumps in the road, will we let our heads drop or will we use the situation to our benefit? (§8.6) With sustained practice the gaps between the failures will lengthen and we'll set a better example as a result.

When things go wrong we need to move with a level of determination and confidence demonstrating that we have thought about our options and made a conscious choice about the next steps (§11.12). That's when we can be the most helpful, that's when we can calm things and that's when we're needed most. Acting as though we have already achieved the qualities we aspire to, acting as though we are already

the better versions of ourselves that we imagined at the start of the journey means we can have an incredibly positive impact on those around us. Of course, it doesn't matter whether anyone follows. Only that we try to lead.

When you are not practicing remember that someone else is and when you meet him he will win.

Bill Bradley 11.1

Races are won here not there. Where it is hardest to speed up not easiest

Ryan Holiday 11.2

A physician who heals a few is no less a doctor
than one who heals many

Musonius Rufus 11.3

Wise men make more opportunities than they find

Francis Bacon 11.4

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you sow.

Robert Louis Stephenson 11.5

As I grow older I pay less attention to what people say, I just watch what they do.

Andrew Carnegie 11.6

Pay less attention to the words people use and greater attention to the tone of their voice, the look in their eyes and their body language

§11.9

Robert Greene 11.7

Learning to listen is the most valuable thing you can do

§11.6

Robert Love 11.8

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

§11.8

Marcus Aurelius 11.9

People do not change, they
are merely revealed.

Anne Enright 11.10

Kindness gives birth to
kindness

Seneca 11.11

There is no use talking
about the problem unless
you talk about the solution

Betty Williams 11.12

Under promise; over deliver

§7.13

Tom Peters 11.13

You can't build a reputation
on what you're going to do.

Henry Ford 11.14

Be careful not to boast of
any success.

§7.12

Robert Greene 11.15

Be quiet, work hard, stay
healthy

11.16

use strict;
good servant, bad master.

Simon Cozens 11.17

Kings soon perish who make a habit of justifying their actions to their subjects by saying "I have the power" rather than "it is my duty"

Musonius Rufus 11.18

Be the chief but never the
lord

Lao Tzu 11.19

One man practicing sports-
manship is better than 100
teaching it

§11.14

Knute Roche 11.20

Life is defined by how much you do, how often you took the difficult path and were rewarded for it

Ryan Holiday 11.21

(not by how much you own)

Super-human effort is not worth a damn unless it produces results.

Shackleton 11.22

Recognise effort
Reward results

BAML 11.23

Close captures no crowns

Ryan Holiday 11.24

The ability to measure people and know who you're dealing with is the most important skill of all.

§11.10

Robert Greene 11.25

Do not impose on others
what you yourself do not de-
sire.

Confucious 11.26

Learn to ask of all actions,
"why are they doing that?"
Starting with your own.

§10.4

Marcus Aurelius 11.27

If it's in your control why do it? If it's in someone else's then who are you blaming? Blame no one
Set people straight if you can. If not just repair the damage.

§10.11

Marcus Aurelius 11.28

If they've done something wrong, correct them gently and show them how to improve.

If you can't do that the blame lies with you or no one.

§2.11

Marcus Aurelius 11.29

To undertake nothing:

- without purpose or at random
- for any other reason than the common good

Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened but go on like a clock . . . in a thunderstorm

Robert Louis Stephenson 11.31

In the end, if people mistrust you and resist your authority you have only yourself to blame.

Robert Greene 11.32

Ability will never catch up with the demand for it.

Confucious 11.33

It takes a great talent and skill to conceal a great talent and skill.

§5.5

Franois de La Rochefoucauld 11.34

Everything is judged by its appearance; what is unseen counts for nothing. Do not get lost in the crowd or buried in oblivion

Robert Greene 11.35

They may forget what you said but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Carl W. Buechner 11.36

Disclosure is disinfectant

Tim Ferriss 11.37

All defects are lighter in the open. They are most pernicious when concealed beneath a pretense of soundness

Seneca 11.38

We don't need to post our defects on Facebook, but we can spend some time thinking about them¹

Patience Wounded too often becomes rage.

Publius Syrus 11.39

¹<http://thephilosophersmail.com/PhilosophicalMeditation.pdf>

When you do things right,
people will wonder if you've
done anything at all

Remains of a computerised space probe, Futurama 11.40

It's not up to us to make
this a better place

Kate Tempest 11.41

It is. We can do it one person at a time.

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Start Publishing

Index

- Anais Nin, 137
Andrew Carnegie, 174
Angela Merkel, 61
Anne Enright, 176
Anthony De Mello, 54
Aristotle, 20, 93
Arthur Schopenhauer, 120
Arthur Schopenhaur, 67
- Baltazar Graçian, 58, 60
BAML, 181
Benjamin Disraeli, 12
Benjamin Franklin, 67
Bertrand Russell, 72
Betty Williams, 177
Bill Bradley, 171
Billy Joel, 34
Bod Dylan, 40
Brian Colbert, 34
Brian Tracy, 162
- Carl W. Buechner, 188
Case, Neuromancer, 80
Catherine Pulsifer, 139
Christian D'Larson, 80
Chuck Palaniuk, 152
Cicero, 30
Confucious, 125, 182, 186
Confucius, 95
Cyrus the Great, 131
- Dalai Lama, 163
Danielle La Porte, 85, 119,
140, 143
David Allen, 34
- Ellen Glasgow, 143
Epictetus, 39, 149
Erik R. Sirri, 96
Euripides, 121
- Francis Bacon, 173

- Franois de La Rochefoucauld, 187
 Friedrich Nietzsche, 80
 Funki Porcini, 47

 G. K. Nielson, 107
 George Bernard Shaw, 30
 Gian Vincenzo Gravina, 92

 Hannah Ardent, 109
 Harry S Truman, 17
 Harvey Mackay, 138
 Henry David Thoreau, 46
 Henry Ford, 177
 Henry Miller, 144
 Heraclitus, 107
 Hippolitus, 60
 Horace, 46, 68, 106

 Isocrates, 57
 Italian Proverb, 117

 Jack, Fight Club, 46
 Japanese Proverb, 79
 Jean de la Brugere, 92
 John Lennon, 19
 John Von Goethe, 22, 56, 129
 Jon de la Brugère, 132
 Jon Kabat Zin, 91
 Jonathan Swift, 131

 Joyce Meyer, 108
 Kate Tempest, 190
 Knute Roche, 179

 Lao Tzu, 61, 95, 106, 179
 Les Brown, 144
 Lily Tomlin, 165
 Lord Chesterfield, 30

 Mahatma Ghandi, 12, 13
 Malachi McCourt, 158
 Malcolm Tucker, 49
 Marcus Aurelius, 16, 18, 34, 35, 37, 42, 43, 45, 56, 82, 83, 85, 88, 94, 97–99, 101–105, 117, 122, 124, 127, 139, 150, 158, 159, 161, 163, 175, 182–185

 Martin Luther King Jr., 20
 Mary Anne Radmach, 98
 Matthew Crawford, 124
 Meister Eckhart, 124
 Michel De Monataigne, 73
 Michel De Montaigne, 149, 162
 Michel de Montaigne, 72
 Michelangelo, 68

- Mike Tyson, 121
 Musonius Rufus, 23, 70,
 86, 172, 179
 Napoleon Hill, 141
 Nassim Taleb, 69, 140
 Oscar Wilde, 39
 Oswald Spengler, 96
 Peter Drucker, 38
 Plato, 59
 Prue Leith, 33
 Publius Syrus, 189
 Ralph Waldo Emerson, 93,
 151
 Remains of a computerised
 space probe, Fu-
 turama, 190
 Robert Greene, 14, 55, 58,
 61, 68–70, 92, 100,
 108, 128, 137, 138,
 142, 143, 151, 174,
 178, 181, 186, 187
 Robert Heinlein, 40
 Robert J. Hanlon, 160
 Robert Louis Stephenson,
 173, 186
 Robert Love, 174
 Rudy Guillian, 17
 Ryan Holiday, 20, 30, 47,
 59, 71, 74, 81,
 88, 89, 127, 139,
 142, 161, 171, 180,
 181
 Schiller, 84
 School of Life, 138, 164
 Seneca, 73, 89, 152, 176,
 189
 Shackleton, 180
 Simon Cozens, 178
 Stoic phrase, 86
 Sun Tzu, 55, 119
 Taylor Swift, 84
 The Talmud, 110
 Theodore N Vail, 87
 Theognis, 32
 Tim Ferriss, 36, 48, 188
 Tom Peters, 67, 177
 Tyler Durden, 116
 Ulysses S Grant, 56
 Wayne Dyer, 105
 William Shakespeare, 87,
 100, 128, 141
 Yogi Berra, 15