



WHAT

SO

I'VE

FAR

LEARNED

WRITTEN BY

JON WESTENBERG





---

# INTRODUCTION

---

When I was a kid, I was certain that my life would go in a set, clear path. I was certain that my life was going to look a certain way, feel a certain way. I was going to be a rockstar and a billionaire, before I was 30. When I was a kid, I had no idea about how the world worked, and what made it tick.

Looking back now, I don't see myself as being naive, I don't see myself as being a clueless dreamer. I see a kid who had a lot to learn, and didn't yet realize that the only way to learn it was by jumping into the wilderness and letting life happen, time and time again, with an open mind and a willingness to get the shit kicked out of him.

I've been on a journey, ever since then, ever since I was 18. Ever since I walked off a job on the grill at McDonald's and started my first company, a venture that would one day end in total failure. I've been on a journey to uncover what makes me who I am, and what makes failure so integral to my own personality and growth.

A part of that journey has been writing, constantly, every single day. Writing has helped me to translate the lessons I've learned about myself, about success, about entrepreneurship and about people and how they fail and get back up again.

A part of that journey has been learning to help the people who read my work - the people who are struggling with their own problems and their own challenges. The people who are desperate for change or for a win or for a lucky break.

Those people often ask me if they can read my work in a book, something to return to time and time again. Well, that's what this is. This is what I've learned so far.

# WHAT I'VE LEARNED

(SO FAR)



# 1

## MY TIME HAS A BANK BALANCE



Our bodies, time and minds have a bank balance.

The people around us, the projects we work on, everything we do, it all subtracts from that balance. When you make a payment in any one area, you have to make a withdrawal from a finite resource that you can't always replenish.

Life is about making transactions. And I'm not talking about treating it like it's some shitty business deal like Donald fucking Trump, I'm talking about the simple fact that every choice we make is a transaction.

If I stay up late tonight writing emails and reading *The Lean Startup* after my partner falls asleep, I am making a deposit into my productivity, into my business, and into my readers.

But to do that, I'm making a withdrawal that I can't deposit into other areas—my energy for tomorrow morning, my sleep, my patience if things go wrong over the next 24 hours.

The same goes for when I work on my business too much, when I should be focused on other areas of my life.

If I'm making a deposit into getting shit done on a weekend that could probably wait for a Monday, I'm making a withdrawal from the account I have to draw on for my cat, my Xbox, my family, my mental health, and—pretty crucially—the love of my life, Emily.

That's why you'll rarely find me answering an email or a Snapchat on a Sunday. I'm just not interested in that transaction, because I know which accounts I value more.

I spend my time more meaningfully now.

So here's the thing. We believe that we have an endless balance, in all of these accounts. Or at least, we fucking act like it. But it's not the case at all. Right now, this blog post that I'm writing, it's taking a certain number of keystrokes that I will not get back.

It's taking a certain number of seconds and moments that I will not get back.

This withdrawal is something that I can't make again, not in the same way. When I start to think about what I do, and frame it like that, it's pretty confronting. It forces me to consider whether what I'm doing is worth the withdrawal, is worth the transaction.

To me, this post is worth that withdrawal, because it's a subject that's hugely important to me, that I can't get out of my head. To me, there's no regret associated with this transaction. There's no buyer's regret.

But what if I was doing something else with this time? With this energy? With my mind? What if I was scrolling endlessly through Twitter? Arguing with some shithead who doesn't like my blog? Reading hot takes on the new iPhone calling it the end of humanity? Watching viral videos? Would I have buyers' regret then?

Almost definitely.

I didn't used to think this way. And I wasted so much time. I would throw away an incredible amount of time and energy just clicking on random crap that meant nothing to me, or reading celebrity slideshows, and I can't get a refund on those transactions.

I can't get a refund on the resources that could have been spent on my family before I moved out of home. On friends who I've now lost contact with. On projects I was passionate about. On business ideas that could have made a difference. On art, on music, on my health, on my interests.

That's not to say I think life has to always be "productive."

Fuck no. I don't do lifehacking, I don't believe that life has to always be accomplishing something in order to be of value.

There's nothing I love more than just getting a pizza and turning on a sitcom.

But because I know that's an activity that makes me happy, that makes me spend time with people I love, that makes me turn off my brain and stop thinking about work, that makes a memory I can treasure one day (more than I'd treasure burying my face in my Blackberry) I know it's a valuable transaction.

So I know that when I make that withdrawal, it's not going to be wasted. At all. And it's the same when I make a withdrawal to eat breakfast out on a weekend, or turn down a Skype call because I value a transaction that lets me be there for my family more than a transaction that lets me make a business move.

I think about my life in terms of transactions, not because I want to maximise it—but because I want to minimise the waste. The waste that comes from throwing my energy and my time away and not giving it generously to the people and the ideas that matter.

Life is worth so much, and a bank balance that isn't made up in dollar signs can't always be replenished. You don't get this shit back by buying a lottery ticket or flipping houses. You don't get this shit back at all.

# 2

## BILLIONAIRES ARE NOT GODS



Please. Please, stop.

Stop believing that billionaires are better people than you, by sheer virtue of the fact that they're rich.

Stop believing that billionaires are role models, are aspirational figures, are the people we should be looking up to at all times.

Stop believing that billionaires' schedules, fitness regimes, beliefs about the future, spending habits, spirituality or morning routines are the key to happiness.

Stop believing that the 10 things they have in common are traits that you could, should, or must have.

Stop believing that being a billionaire is the ultimate goal in business, entrepreneurship or life.

Stop believing that billionaires are geniuses, visionaries, prophets, gurus, or somehow pre-ascended members of a superhero team.

Just, you know...stop.  
Because billionaires aren't perfect people.

They're often people who have achieved a lot. They're people who have worked hard, on good ideas. They're people who have turned failure into success. They're people who have made their dreams a reality.

I accept all of that. I'm down with it all. But none of it makes them people who can do no wrong, and none of it makes them people who are above judgement, above reproach or above the rest of us.

And yet, we hold them up that way, all the time. All the fucking time. Remember Elizabeth Holmes? CEO of Theranos? Remember how we all fawned over her and took her words as gospel, the same way we do with every other billionaire?

How does that sound, now that the company and the CEO is in disgrace, there's doubt that the machines ever even worked, and it's all come crashing down?

Or what about Peter Thiel. The billionaire who so, so many entrepreneurs and founders idolise and look up to. Well, that visionary genius has recently destroyed a publication, for right or wrong, because he didn't agree with what they published.

Plus, billionaires haven't achieved anything on their own. Believe me. Elon Musk didn't take a spanner and a blowtorch and build the SpaceX rocket in his garage. He hired brilliant engineers who did that. He also didn't invent the Tesla single handedly. Again, brilliant engineers.

And while we're on that subject, Steve Jobs didn't sit down with a piece of paper and design the fucking iPhone either.

Billionaires are people who have great ideas, sure. But they don't execute those ideas alone, and they don't do it in a goddamn vacuum. What they achieve, they achieve through managing and guiding and collaborating with other brilliant people.

But none of this means that billionaires are bad people, either. They're not. Because being good or bad isn't a trait that can be ascribed to having a certain amount of money. Being rich doesn't make you a genius, being successful at building one company doesn't mean everything else you do is going to be successful, and none of that makes you a perfect human.



And I think believing billionaires are the pinnacle of achievement is just an incredibly unhealthy thing for founders, for entrepreneurs, and for anyone else.

If you're basing what you do on chasing that standard, you're embracing a pretty fucking shite yard stick for personal and professional achievement.

Do I respect Elon Musk? Fuck yes. But because he built something cool and is trying to change the world. Not because he's a billionaire.

Do I respect Bill Gates? Fuck yes. But because he built something cool and is trying to change the world. Not because he's a billionaire.

# 3

## NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE (IF YOU KNOW HOW TO START)



You know how to eat an elephant? One bite at a time. If you want your dream to eat the world, it's going to happen the same fucking way.

I don't believe that anything is impossible, if you know how to take the first step. Because that first step is where 8 people out of every 10 give up and throw in the towel.

When you look at the big goals, the big dreams that you want to reach, and you see them as a massive collection of Scary Shit That Must Be Done, you're never going to be able to do anything.

You'll be paralysed with inactivity and uncertainty. That's what happens when you look at founding a blog and you can't separate the first minuscule steps from your end goal of hundreds of thousands of published words.

That's what happens when you look at founding a startup, and instead of seeing the day to day work, all you see is that huge valuation that you desperately want to chase.

That's what happens when you look at writing a book, and instead of seeing the plans that must be sketched out, all you see is an impossible-to-reach word count.

In all of those examples, you're fucked if you don't know how to start.

That's the truth of it.

But in all of those examples, if you have the first steps mapped out, achieving your goals becomes way more possible.

Your first steps matter. But what those first steps actually ~are, and whether they're the wrong or right steps, that's not entirely important. The important part is just having a first step to begin with, and taking it, and learning from it.

Whatever you want to do, you need to define a simple first step that you know is achievable. Sit down with a piece of paper and brainstorm it. The first step needs to be something that you know is possible.

It could be as small as registering a domain name. It could be as big as signing your first client.

It could be as crucial as writing your first line of code. It could be as difficult as cold calling 10 companies.

The first step is going to define all the steps that follow. Not by setting you on a path that can't be changed, but by setting yourself out as an entrepreneur, or a creative who gets shit done.

If you want to change the world, first work out what pants you want to put on when you do it. The steps that follow are going to be a shit tonne easier.

# 4

## LIFE IS ABOUT MAKING SACRIFICES



I talk to a lot of entrepreneurs. People often want my advice, or my help. They come to me when they're struggling with their growth, their plans, or their decisions, and I talk to as many as I can.

I often notice a theme though.

People who come to me, know exactly what they should be doing. They're not stupid, and they're not blind.

The problem is, what they should be doing is hard. And because it's hard, because there are some awfully big trade offs, they want someone else to do one of 2 things:

- 1. Tell them there's another, easier path to follow.**
- 2. Make them do the hard stuff that they can't make themselves do.**

But I always come back to one point that has to be made.

If they weren't giving up something, if they weren't making that trade off, would what they achieve really be worth anything to them?

It's like winning the lottery. There are so many stories of people who've won the lottery and had millions of dollars dropped in their laps, only to piss it all away in a matter of a few years. And I think it's generally because they didn't value that cash money.



They didn't struggle for it. They didn't give up anything to get it. So to them, it didn't mean all that much.

When you've given up something in order to reach your dreams, you're going to appreciate every success more. And feel every failure more, too—but with the added knowledge that you gave what you had and gave it your best shot.

When I was younger, I used to want to get everything I dreamed of, without making sacrifices or compromises. That all changed when I fell in love a few years ago, and started to learn that to have someone in my life who means the world, I have to give away a few parts of myself.

Some of those parts are small—drinking white wine every now and then instead of red because she doesn't enjoy red. Some of them are big...giving up touring in a band in order to build a life together. But all of them have been worth it.

Life is about compromising, trading, and striking deals. That's inescapable, no matter how simply you live, or how pure your motivations are. Everyone is trading something to get what they want.

When you first think about that, it seems cynical, and dark almost. But I don't see it that way. I see it as a part of being human, recognizing that we can't just want, and to have our wants become reality. We have to give up some of what we've got to get more, whether what we're seeking is money, power, or just someone to love.

And I think that it's vital to remember—making that trade off, giving up something of value to you, that's a key part of achieving anything. You don't get to just have it all. You have to know what you're willing to give.

# 5

## DISTRACTIONS CAN BE DEALT WITH



I'm often distracted. Ask my partner, she'll tell you that shiny things grab my attention in a way that just isn't healthy for a grown ass man. Every time I read something or thin of an idea, I'm zooming off at a million miles per hour with this crazy urge to build, do, try new things.

Every time I see someone building a product that I love, I'm distracted. I want to build something like that, I want to solve a problem like that. It's got nothing to do with my core mission, or the reason that I do what I do. It's just something shiny that I want to try.

Every time I hang out with my friends who are musicians, I want to start a band and go back on tour like I used to, playing crummy shows in crummy pubs, but I can't. It doesn't work like that. I know what I'm doing with my life, and getting back into touring is just another distraction.

Every time I see a service based company, I want to start that. Every time I see a software based company, I want to start that.

I want to sell sneakers, paint murals, write sitcoms. I want to start a food truck, start a game studio, do anything that looks exciting...

But these are just distractions. They're distracting me from doing the work that really matters, they're distracting me from doing the work that is going to have an impact on the direction of my life and the things that I want to do and achieve.

They're even distracting me from just relaxing and enjoying my down time, because I start to fill up every waking hour with exploring new distractions, every day.

So what do you do with these distractions? What do you do when you get those momentary flashes of inspiration that tell you to abandon everything and focus on something more fun?

### **You let yourself get distracted.**

Seriously, try it. When a distraction comes along, give yourself 20 minutes to explore it. Write some notes on it. Save those notes. Treat it like ideation, not distraction. What looks like a waste of time right now could be a life changing idea when you return to it later on.

If you treat these distractions as creative diversions, it can actually be really good for you. It can shake things up, free your mind a little, and get you to think outside the box.

### **Use a scratch pad**

I've written about scratch pads before. I'm a big believer. I keep a scrappy little notebook nearby at all times, and when a distraction comes along that I don't have time to think about or ideate over I just scribble it down on the page and move right along.

Getting it out of my head and into ink is a great way for me to stop it blocking my work.

Distractions don't have to break your flow completely, if you can just deal with them quickly and move right along. This is a habit that can be tough to get into, but it's super useful.

### **Keep a mission statement**

If you're finding yourself being distracted by something, by everything, write a mission statement that sums up what you're really trying to do.

By always returning to those two statements, I can identify whether some new idea fits into the wider picture of what I want, what I need to do. And when I refocus in that way, I tend to uncover newer energy and excitement about what I'm really doing!

### **Make yourself accountable**

I'm a pretty lucky guy. My partner is also very startup/tech/entrepreneur oriented, and she runs operations at a service marketplace here in Sydney. If I feel like I'm distracted, nothing helps like running through my ideas and challenges with her over a bottle of wine, because she does keep me accountable.

She'll ask me, "how does that fit into project X, that really matters to you?" That question is hard to answer if I'm not focused and working steadily.

In general, the best thing to do with distractions is to treat them like challenges, treat them like blessings, and focus on the way you manage them. There's never any use to getting shitty with yourself for being distracted in the first place—if you're at all creative, you probably can't help the distractions.

I know I can't.

A distraction doesn't have to mean you completely lose your way. It can mean you find a new way, find a new outlet, or find a second wind on your real focus.



# 6

## NEVER TRY TO HIDE FROM WHO YOU REALLY ARE



I think it's pretty natural to be scared of showing yourself. That's something we are all prone to. We talk about letting our hair down, showing the real Us, removing the veils and the mysteries and the hidden parts that we keep locked away.

I'm like that, too. Or at least I used to be. I can remember when I got my first ever full time job, trying to store away my Misfits T-shirts and pretend that I wasn't a weirdo little punk kid, I was a quote-unquote Businessman.

That was pretty pointless. I was trying to deny who I was because I didn't think it worked with the new Me that I wanted to project, I didn't think people would respect me for being a little out there, for being a little odd.

I'd never do that anymore. Over the last 10 years, I've come to understand that it's okay to be a fucking weirdo. It's okay to be stranger than your average, and it's okay to let that freak flag fly.

I've learned it, because it's my biggest point of difference, it's what sets me apart.

People aren't easy to categorise, if you get through the surrounding, protecting layers and start to explore their core. When you get deeper than the suit and tie, deeper than the job, deeper than the TV shows they like to watch on the weekend, you can find that there's something crazy about almost anyone.

We're all very much unique products of our own individual backgrounds. That's undeniable. We've all been through stuff that has transformed and shaped us, whether it was hard times or punk rock music.

Our histories, our pasts, the things we love, the things that stop us from fitting in perfectly, should never be ignored.

If you try to beat them down, if you try to squeeze and pressure them out of yourself, it's never healthy. It's downright emotionally deadly, in fact.

You're denying something that is intrinsically related to your entire personality, something that has given you the baseline that the rest of your life is built on.

**How do you think your carefully built walls are going to crumble, when you remove their foundations?**

**How do you think you can ever remain stable, if you've got nothing stable to stand on?**

For entrepreneurs, for creatives, even for accountants, it's the same story. Trying to make yourself fit in, is just not healthy. Trying to ignore the fact that you're a total fucking weirdo is only going to make you angry, frustrated, depressed and isolated.

So what do you have to do? Turn up to work in a hoodie and Cannibal Corpse shirt? No, not necessarily. Although, I tend to.

What you have to do is accept yourself for who you really are, and accept that pushing and pulling yourself into a caricature of what you think someone in your life or job should look like, isn't going to make you successful.

Acceptance is the hardest part of living. That's the truth. But if you can manage it, you might just find a little happiness at the end of the line.

# 7

## YOU HAVE TO GIVE YOUR HUSTLE A BREAK



Where did this come from? When did we all start believing that over work is the way of success, that anything less than being pushed to the edge of what is personally possible equates to not even trying?

It's widely accepted in startups, and it's just unhealthy. I'm going to tell you something that I know to be true.

Hustle is important, but hustle isn't worth shit if the hustler has collapsed from exhaustion. I've seen that time and time again, from young founders and seasoned entrepreneurs who have bought into the hustle-as-existence mentality.

These are the folks working 12 hour days, 7 days a week, grinding it out to make their startups happen, losing a little bit of themselves with every passing second of over time.

The accepted truth is that if they do that, if they punish and push themselves to the absolute max, the universe will reward them with success, and that's bullshit.

## **You are not Superman**

I always hated the Superman comics. They felt so pointless, because the character was so overpowered and awesome that to make the story worth anything, the writers had to ignore his invincibility or conveniently forget the basic rules of his universe.

That perfection isn't something that you have. It's not something you are ever going to have. If we're talking life goals, you'd be better off basing yourself on Lex fucking Luthor than Superman, because anything else is just unhinged.

You aren't Superman, and pretending you are will damage you in more ways than one. It's vital for an entrepreneur to be aware of her limitations, and remain in touch with her vulnerability. At the very least, the physical ones.

If you let yourself believe you're invincible, that way lies madness. And hubris. And just generally winding up being kind of a tool.

## **Your body is going to betray you**

This applies no matter how many smoothies you drink or how often you "crush it" at the gym. Your body will fail you, if you push and push it too far. Your body will quit. It will walk out on you.

Overwork is not something that you can just do without consequences. A lack of sleep, an overload of stress, even too much time spent staring at a screen—sooner or later, you'll be on the edge and it won't take much to push you over it.

I've worked a lot of all nighters, drinking Red Bull and popping caffeine pills like tic tacs and my body has never let me forget it. Don't be like that. You'll never achieve anything if you're in hospital with a breakdown.

## **You can't enjoy anything if you don't make the time for it**

Where are you really going? Where are you trying to end up?

Because wherever it is, if you want to enjoy that, if you want to actually experience it, you need to slow the fuck down. You're not going to enjoy your coveted success if you're an emotional, physical and spiritual mess.



No level of success is worth trading your body your heart or your soul for.

No level of success is worth dying the slow death of un-conquerable overwork and over stress, with no end in sight and no way to take back the years you've lost.

The next time someone tells you that to succeed in a startup or as a creative that you need to work 130 hour weeks, or be at a desk on a Saturday afternoon, you can tell them to go fuck themselves.

And if they want to find out more, just give them my email address and I'll explain it to them with a bunch of colourful graphs that they'll understand.

I'm not even kidding.

The fact is, being an entrepreneur and a creative—these are awesome things to do. They contribute to my life in an incredibly positive way. But there's a lot of poison out there in the form of contagious and callously incorrect ideas.

The worst is the mythologised worship of overwork and hustle as God. I've watched some people I truly respected crumble underneath that pressure, with ideas I loved disappearing as collateral damage, and with their personalities altered by a system wide collapse.

Give your hustle a break. Don't sacrifice yourself on the altar of the grind.

# 8

## HURTING PEOPLE WILL ONLY DESTROY YOU



You know, I've burned a lot of bridges and hurt a lot of people.

That's going to be a part of my legacy, whether I like it or not.

There are a lot of folks out there who have a legitimate reason to point and me and say "there goes an asshole."

I've spent a lot of time doing what I thought was the best thing for me, and me alone, and damn the cost to anyone else. I was ready to spill metaphorical blood to get what I want.

When I speak to students—which is something I try to do often—I do my best to impart that to them.

When you're younger, before you've been tested, you don't tend to think about the effect your actions have on others, and you don't tend to give a shit. You've spent so long striving to win, that it becomes paramount, and anything else just isn't on the radar.

I've seen this happen a lot with creatives and with startup entrepreneurs.

They try and get everything they can out of you, contacts and leads and advice and free shit and every ounce of energy you've got, and then they dump and burn you on their way out.

They treat you as though you just have a certain amount of usefulness, and once they've drained it, they don't need shit from you anymore.

The thing is, if you act like that, you don't know the implications of what you're doing. You don't know the implications of treating other people like they're expendable, of hurting and churning the people around you in order to get what you want.

Some of those implications will be measurable, and they'll directly affect your road ahead. You'll be unpleasantly surprised by how frequently those you've burned come into each others' orbits—and how soon you'll need their help, as unlikely as that seems, when it's too late to get it.

But there are some things that aren't measurable too. You can't measure what it can do to your happiness.

But bad blood is bad for business. I've learned that the hard way, when I could have just learned it by watching the fucking Godfather. Bad blood is bad for the soul, and the motivation, and it's bad for your fire and your heart, and it turns people against you. It turns their trust against you, it turns opportunities into dust. It turns the best you've got into the worst you'll ever see.

I believe that there's no point in hurting people, or burning bridges, or betraying trust. It's cruel, it's pointless, and it rarely makes you a winner. Sometimes, it just makes you lonely.

Blood is bad for business. Hurting people is bad for business. And you're going to fall into both traps, sooner or later—that's almost inevitable. If you've lived your life believing you never have, I guarantee you that if you turned around and asked, a lot of people wouldn't agree with you.

When I look back on the past 27 years, I know that there's many things that I'm just not proud of. I guess that's a universal quality of evolving and growing as a person. The real trick is turning that into a better road ahead, and ensuring that the same mistakes aren't just repeated. That's tough. Tough, but necessary.

And you won't lose that much, by learning it. There's always a better way, even if it's not as easy, even if it's a shit tonne harder. That's okay. There's an old saying, they who live by the sword will die by it. That's a concept I've wrapped my head around, and I don't want to face my own edge again.

# 9

## YOU ALWAYS THINK YOU HAVE IT WORSE



I had a message on Twitter this week from a young guy in Texas. He's in his late teens, and he's looking to become a designer, and he told me he's feeling pretty down about his dreams.

The reason was, he felt he was so far away from the action, so far away from where the real projects were being built, and where the real opportunities were waiting.

It hit me like a tonne of bricks, because when I was his age, I felt exactly the same way about living in Australia instead of the USA. I grew up (and still live) thousands and thousands of miles from Silicon Valley, from the tech companies and startups I wanted to join, from the music scenes that I wanted to be a part of.

This guy lives in the state where they hold SXSW, a conference I've always wanted to go to but can't manage, because it's so fucking far away. I can remember reading about it every year when I was a teenager and saying...someday.

I told him that it's okay to feel down about what you're trying to do, and realizing any dream is a pretty tough proposition. But you have to work with what you've got. Because everyone in the world feels like they've got it worse than someone else.



Everyone in the world feels like if they just had person X's life, or resources, or gifts, or location, then they could accomplish huge things. But person X is going through that exact feeling. And person X is working with whatever the fuck they've got.

We all wish we were dealt a better hand, right? I mean, if my parents had been rich, I wouldn't have had to work at McDonalds to buy my first second hand Macbook. If I'd been born in America, I could have moved to San Francisco and joined the tech scene there.

But the truth is, we can't waste our lives worrying about that shit. Particularly not as creatives, I mean we're meant to be resourceful enough to take disparate materials and turn them into art, music, books and software. We're supposed to be able to build companies around our passions.

We're supposed to be able to make do with what we've got in order to do what we want.

Because in the end, it's not about the hand we're dealt. We can wish it had been different, but wishes aren't worth shit for pennies. All we can do, what we have to do, is play the best game we can with the cards we've got.

I think if you asked almost anyone, no matter their success, they'll tell you that at one point or another, they wished their lives were different. That's something that humans just do. That's probably why the first ever war was fought between our ancestors.

You always think you have it worse than someone. And you know what, maybe you do. But you won't change it by wishing for it. All you can do is make what you've got work for you.

# 11

## YOU NEED TO STAY HUNGRY



The difference between winning and losing is how much you want it. And wanting it bad enough doesn't mean you'll automatically make it. The most important part, if you're a creative, if you're an entrepreneur, if you want to get into the ring and go a few rounds with fate, is staying hungry.

The people who change the world, they stay hungry. They look at what they want to do, and they look at what they want to change, and they don't resign themselves, they don't call it a day. They don't say they're satisfied.

The hunger is what drives you. The hunger is what makes you excited to wake up in the morning, and it's what gives you the power you need to keep gunning for your goals when you take a hit, or you're reeling from a loss.

The hunger is what pushed Steve Jobs to get back in the game after he was ousted from Apple. The hunger is what pushes Elon Musk to release a master plan that some people call ambitious and others call insane.

The hunger is what makes me write 2,000 words every single day and lie awake with ideas and concepts running through my head.

The hunger is what turns you into your own secret weapon. The hunger is what makes you want what other people tell you that you can't fucking have. The hunger is your best friend, and your worst boss, and the kind of manager you'd hate if they were a real person.

The hunger is what challenges you, it's what makes your work better, and it's what makes you believe your work is the worst you've ever done, no matter how good it is.

I want you to stay hungry. I want you to always be focused on beating your own forecasts, your own expectations and your best track time. That's where a creative grows, they don't grow by stagnating. If you stand still, you're only going to spoil, and you'll never improve.

When I look at the artists I respect—people like The Clash, like Fugazi, like Douglas Coupland, like Blink 182—they had that hunger. It made them push the boundaries of their own art and try to turn it into something larger than life, larger than living, larger than them.

What else would make a pop punk band record with Robert Smith from the Cure and make an entire album with Pink Floyd as their biggest influence? What else would turn a hardcore punk musician like Ian McKaye into one of the boldest and most inventive musicians of our time?

I don't think there's any chance of becoming what you have the potential to be if you don't stay hungry folks. If you don't keep on pushing the boundaries. If you don't keep striving to be more than you are, more than you've been.

Stay hungry, folks. When that bell goes off, you'll be back in the ring going toe to toe with the champ, toe to toe with your own limitations.

# CHANGE THE WORLD.

CHANGE YOURSELF.



## JON WESTENBERG

[WWW.JONWESTENBERG.COM](http://WWW.JONWESTENBERG.COM)

[WWW.CREATOMIC.CO](http://WWW.CREATOMIC.CO)