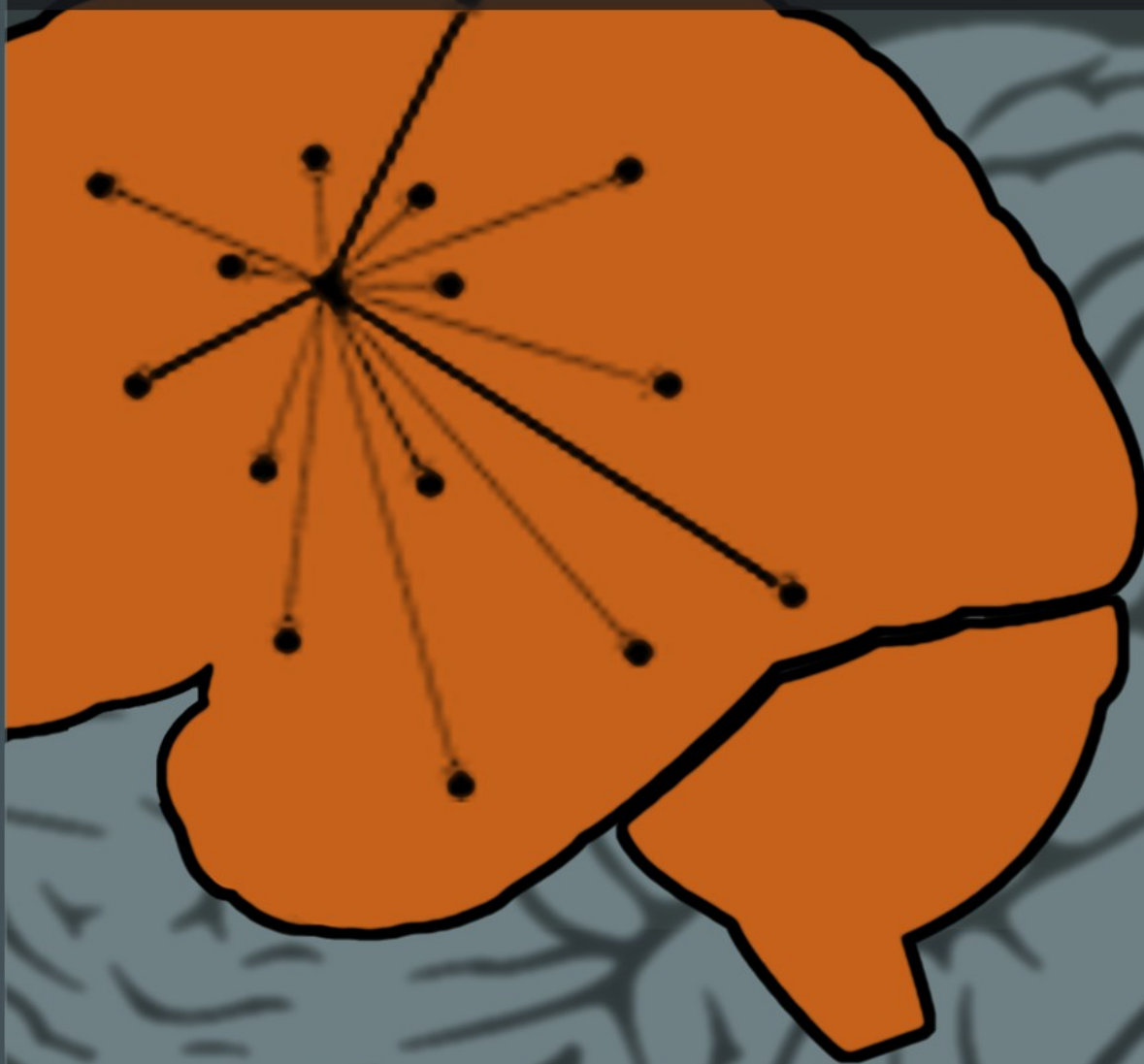


Insight.



CLEVERNESS. POSITIVITY. MASTERY.



Orange Insight

Guide to finding your purpose, changing identity and achieving mastery.

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Introduction

Hi! I am Ray Alez, and this is Insight – book about finding your purpose, changing your identity, and achieving the mastery.

It is a collection of ideas on what makes life full and worth living. This is a book for everyone who is looking to find their place in this world and purpose in life.

Book consists of 3 parts where you will find theories and techniques on finding your own path in life (Path), ways how to figure out who you really are and what thoughts and ideas define your personality (Identity), as well as practical tips and advice on how to improve your productivity and reach your goals (Mastery).

Let's start!

Path

The Meaning of Life

Why There Isn't Any and What to Do About It

Here's my view on the meaning of life or, to be more precise, the absence of it, and how to deal with that. So what is the meaning of life?



There is no meaning of life. Someone who is not a 150 years old zen monk may find this fact very unsettling. It is a bold statement, but I will explain to you why the meaning of life is just a non-existent concept. Sometimes people resort to irrational beliefs like religion to make sense to their lives. In a way this approach solves a lot of mysteries. This is an easy way to justify your actions, especially if there are other people believing in the same concept. For example, bad things that have happened to you could be explained by stars aligning the wrong way or the god testing you. However, this approach does nothing to the issues you are facing. This only puts you in a passive state which demotivates you to do anything about your life.

In one form or another, time after time we all have false beliefs about what is happening with our lives, especially when we are experiencing strong emotions like being in love or mourning loss of someone dear. It is important in such times to be observant of what you feel and think and be in control of which emotions will guide your life.

It is possible to be logical, face the reality, and at the same time to be excited about the world and have a great life. For a long time I have been searching for ideas and theories that would answer this age long question – what is the meaning of life. My journey was fruitful and I have come up with plenty great ideas that I would like to share with you.

Enjoy! I trust that you will find this book helpful in your life.

Good Questions

Why do you need a meaning? And when? It is normal to ask what the meaning of life is, but why do I need it so desperately? Imagine a world where everybody knew the only real and true meaning of life. I personally think that this world would suck, it would have no diversity and not too much of freedom. In a way it would be mechanical - everybody just doing the one thing they are supposed to do.

Also I have noticed that when I feel happy, I don't need any meaning. I seek for meaning only when I feel miserable, to justify doing things that I don't like to do. If I'm exactly where I want to be in life, I am just being, I don't need anything else to run after, I'm happy to be where I am and do what I do.

I used to chase little goals, but after achieving any of them I was forced to return to the same question: now what? I'm finally out of school, now what? I get the job of my dreams, now what? I quit the job of my dreams and now I'm free to do whatever I wish, now what? I felt the need to find a meaning to answer that, because I knew that after achieving something in my life, I'd come back to the same old question: "now what?". This phenomenon also rises another question. Imagine a situation where you would have an ultimate meaning in your life, an ultimate divine mission for you. Let's say that the god personally told you about it. What would you do after accomplishing it? Assuming that you don't instantly die after that, wouldn't you come back to the same question again? "I have achieved the purpose of my life, what am I going to do now?"

So, why do we need meaning? Here is my theory. We are used to have somebody to tell us what to do. This is how we learn at first. Our parents told us about the world as they see it, and we tried to operate accordingly. Later we learned a lot from other members of society that shared their insights on how the world is like. This seemed meaningful to us. Our actions such as getting good grades at school, getting in a good college, finding a job, finishing a project, etc. made sense. At some point we realized that we have grown up, and that the people who used to tell us what to do with our lives don't know that any better than we do. We have always had the purpose given to us by someone else. As the result we are not used to decide that for ourselves. We realize that we are free to do whatever we want, but we have no clue what to do with this freedom. We feel the urge to figure this out, and make the decision fast before we are too old. So we start looking for the ultimate parental figure to tell us what to do with our lives. We look for somebody who has all the answers, like our parents and teachers used to. We want a kind of eternal, preexisting meaning because we want to find answers somewhere outside of us, in the world because this is where we are used to finding them.

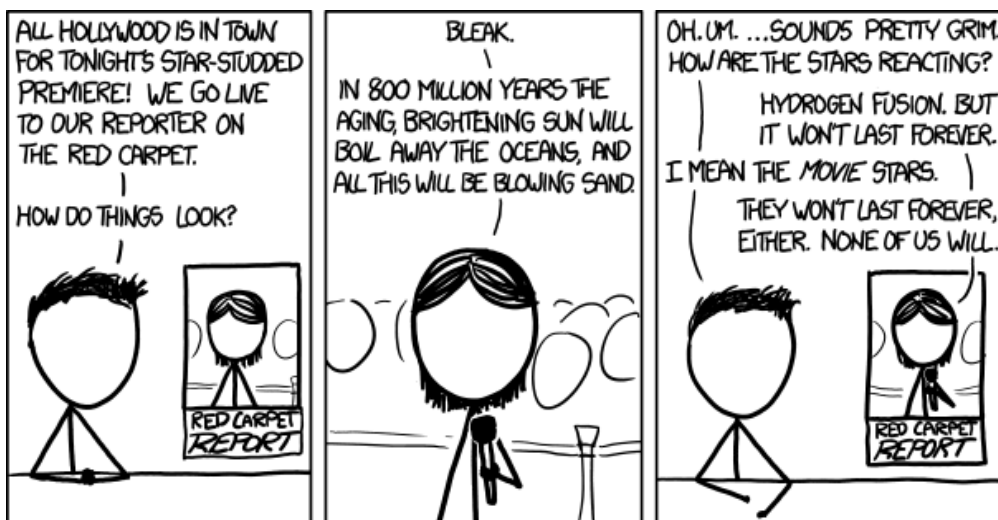
There Is No Meaning Of Life

The first argument of why there is no meaning to life is this: meaning implies an intelligent creator. If there is a purpose of something, this means that someone has created it. The existentialism philosophers such as Camus, Heidegger and Sartre came to a conclusion that nothing that exists has a meaning on its own. It might seem harsh at first, but if we look deeper, we can find out that this is true. No object, no person has a meaning unless someone has given it. For example, we might look at a knife as a useful tool. It serves a purpose to us. We can cut food with it or skin animals. However, a knife

in itself has no purpose. If there was no human to use it, it would just be an inanimate object. Even calling it an “inanimate object” is an attribution that is given by us, humans.

The meaning of life, the purpose of universe and if it is moving to some desired outcome, is possible only if somebody has made it for some reason, to achieve something. There is no reason to believe in that. Also if human life is the purpose of the universe, it has appeared surprisingly late. The universe has existed for billion years before even the earliest forms of life on the Earth appeared, so it is very unlikely to think that it was created with intention of making us, or even especially for us to do something very important.

The second argument is that you can't really change anything on a large scale. According to the contemporary science, the [Sun will explode](#), the universe will collapse eventually. The morbid truth is that you and everybody you care about will die. Everything that you have created will be permanently destroyed. Around 150.000 people die every day, and even more are born. Compared to this even the most horrible plane accidents or Bill Gate's charity look like a joke. The point is, even if I become a doctor or a fireman and save 1 life per week, or buy a gun and take out 10 people, it wouldn't matter on a large scale, it almost wouldn't influence the universe at all. In 100 years there will be nobody left who was affected by that, everybody will forget about it, not a single person will care.



Alright, now the depressing part is over. What can we do about this truth? How can we create meaning for our lives ourselves based on something that is rational?

Only Tools Have Meaning

We give meaning only to things that we find useful so the idea that our life would be useless is very upsetting. Since things on their own don't have a meaning, we don't have either. We can give a meaning to ourselves, a meaning that others can understand and accept too, there is no predetermined purpose or meaning for our lives. For a life to be worth living we have to give ourselves a purpose that is satisfying to ourselves and the ones around us. Only then our lives would have a meaning.

The Indian spiritual teacher [Osho](#) has created a great metaphor, and I would like to put it in here. What is the meaning of a hammer? Well, probably to hammer a nail. What is the meaning of a nail? It could be, for example, to put a picture on the wall. But what is the meaning of the picture? There isn't any, because "a picture is hanging on the wall" is what you wanted, it is the end result, you don't need it for anything. A picture hanging on the wall *is* the meaning. It also gives meaning to hammer and nail, but by itself it doesn't have any. Well, you could say that the meaning of the picture for you is to enjoy it, to feel good, but the logical chain of thought follows again - what is the meaning of feeling good then? To be happy? What is the meaning of being happy? Eventually you will end up with a thing that you want for itself, but this thing has no meaning, because you don't have anything to achieve by it. Life *is* this thing. In this sense life *is* the meaning of everything that you do.

The Ultimate Sandbox

Life is the ultimate sandbox. Your life doesn't have a meaning. You are completely free and not restricted by anything. I don't believe in god, but if I am wrong and there *is* a god, then he hasn't really tried hard to make clear the meaning of people's lives. One could argue that religious texts hold that wisdom. However, then what is the meaning of heretics on their own? Do they merely serve as a reminder how immoral (according to one's religion) they are? Are these people merely slaves for god's ways the same as believers? Absence of a particular meaning means freedom to make any choice you want. If you don't have a set path, you have all the options open for you. It is up to you to choose.

Although having no meaning to life can create a lot of confusion at first, in the end it does not make your life any worse at all. It can have zero effect on your experiences. It is up to you to choose how you lead your life. When you realize that there is no meaning to life, you are really the one leading it instead of letting others guide you. You're the one setting your own goals, you're the one in charge of the quality of your life.



Things That Make Life Worth Living

One of the reasons I so desperately wanted to have a meaning is because I wanted to have something really important in my life to care about. You might want to be a part of something bigger than yourself, to have a good reason to live, to be able to deal with bad things that happen sometimes. You might wish to have a reason that validates the effort you put in your actions and helps you moving forward when everything seems desperate.

Sometimes there are moments when you don't want to do anything, where you don't feel motivated. Everything we do takes some energy, so why bother? Well, there is a solution to that. You don't necessarily need a divine answer to what life is and what is the meaning of it to care about things.

There are things in life that can be very important to you regardless of their futility on the grand picture. Sometimes you have moments when you know "this is what's worth working and fighting for, this is worth my effort!" I feel that when I am around my friends, I really don't care if there is a point to what I do. I will do anything to have more of these beautiful moments, no matter how hard life can be. I know that if what I'm doing may lead me to these moments, it is worth doing. The meaning of life is completely irrelevant to that. You don't need any meaning when you are content and happy.

Some other similar things are knowledge and curiosity. When I was reading "[Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman](#)", I was exposed to Feynman's [contagious curiosity and excitement about life](#). At that time I was sick and miserable, dwelling on the pointlessness of existence. This book made me realize that I want to live. I wanted just to learn, to find out cool stuff about the world, to make jokes and to solve puzzles, to know things that Feynman knows. Not for a reason, just because they're fun and cool.

There are a lot of things that matter to you for themselves, things that give you will to live

and move forward not because of some grand significance, but just because you want to experience them, to enjoy them.

You probably can think of the similar things for yourself. If you can't yet, just trust me. Look around. There are people who are happy and amazing, who have found their reasons to live and do things, and that means that there *is* a way. It is possible and it is worth it. That is all that matters.

Motivation

Another reason why people keep searching for the meaning of life is motivation. It is kind of similar to the previous reason. If I would know my ultimate destiny, I surely would be always motivated and excited about what I do. That would make me very efficient and productive, which would make my life so much better.

Well, first of all, such desired outcome is not entirely true. Even people who *do* believe in higher purpose of their lives feel down and uninspired sometimes, so knowing the meaning is not a solution. Why? Because motivation depends not on your goals, but on your skills to keep yourself motivated, on your [emotional intelligence](#). The level of motivation you feel every day is based on your habits, on the quality of your life, on your skills, on a lot of different things, and all of them have something to do with your ability to get into good emotional state at will.

This is a completely different topic about which I will talk more in the Mastery part of the book, but my point is that knowing your meaning of life might affect your motivation a little bit, but in reality it is much less tied to your motivation than you might think.

The Purpose of Your Path

The next reason why you feel the need for meaning, is that you want to have a sense of purpose, direction in your life. It is good to know where exactly you should put all your effort and energy. You want to move forwards something good, you want to know what to do with your life. It feels good and has a lot of practical benefits. You want to know what to do, and it makes sense to look for the ultimate answer in life that will help you to decide what is right and what is wrong, and what to do next. If you don't know the answers, it might seem that the only thing that you can do is guessing.

It would feel very frustrating to spend your life guessing what is that you really like, what is that you can offer to the mankind, what is that will make your life fulfilled and purposeful. What if once you make your choice, it doesn't really do you and others good?

Would you guess when deciding important things in your life such as whom you should marry, how to spend your money, where should you live? It is natural that we'd rather know these things before simply guessing, especially if it concerns the most important question of the life – what is the purpose of it, what is the meaning of what I do?

Instead of blindly guessing, you can look inside yourself, see what it is that you like to do, what is the thing that people around you enjoy when you do it or present them with marvelous creations. What I am saying here is that there is a difference between having a meaning of life and choosing your own purpose. Choosing your purpose is better, because then it will be your own decision. You will be in complete charge of your life.

You don't need a parental figure telling you what to do with your life. Forget about it, think for yourself. Listen to society, listen to people. You might learn something from that, but don't let that be the only guide for you. You have some time in your hands to spend, decide what would YOU like to do with it. CREATE the answer for yourself and you will lead a life that is the best suited for you, an enjoyable life.

However, there is another philosophical struggle you can face. How can you be sure that the choices you make are the best possible ones? How can you be sure that you can count on your own judgment? This is where the belief in yourself kicks in. It is almost impossible to rationally predict possible outcomes of the goals you are moving toward. You can't even always predict the small steps you are about to take. That is why you have to have faith and devotion to your goal, if you create a vision that truly touches you, you have to believe in it. That is the first step to anything – imagining it, and believing that it is possible.

Imagine That The World Ends Tomorrow

Concepts of meaninglessness of life, inevitability of death and your attitude towards it are hard to grasp. To make it simpler, exaggerate the situation. Imagine that the world ends tomorrow or in 1 hour. This allows you to grasp what essentially is happening. Exaggeration just makes it easier to understand, it clarifies a lot of things. What would you think, feel or do about the situation if the world is ending? What wouldn't you think, feel or do? Would you feel depressed and experience apathy while sitting on a couch and watching TV, because nothing you can do would matter? Or would you run, jump and laugh as much as you can? Would you try to enjoy your time here while you still can?

Would you become selfish and commit crime or try to make people you like happier? What would you do? Would you spend some more time with your friends? Would you care about what people, who also will die tomorrow, think of you? Would you continue working on the boring job you have and keep doing things you don't like? Or would you

embrace the absurdity of life and try to have as much fun as you can?

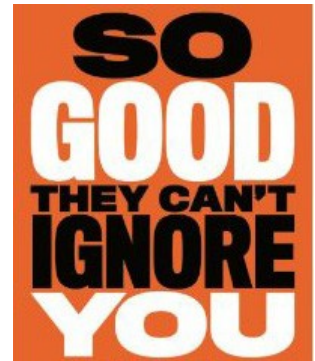
For Those Who Are Trying to Find Their Passion

I recently bought [this](#) book, and it has really interesting thoughts on the topic of paths you can take in your life. I had some moments of enlightenment that helped me with understanding how to choose my own path and how to get my passion back.

Here are some of my new ideas and realizations on this topic:
First and foremost: ***You don't find your passion, you create it.***

"Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked."

— Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*.



Trying to find passion outside of you implies that it is some supernatural thing that no one else has, that was put in you by god or something similar. That's bullshit. The same goes for talent. What one man can do, another man can do too. I believe in science and evolution, and I don't think that a person could have specific genes for being a passionate or a good writer, doctor, artist, pilot or whatever, while others don't. If an activity works for someone else, he is good at something and enjoys it, then it can work for you too. Not having "passion" is not an excuse to not do anything about your life. Passion is not a mystical power that only chosen ones possess. It is just passionate people are doing (maybe unconsciously) something right, and you aren't. You can understand what passion is and consciously learn to practice it, like anything else. If you don't have passion, you don't need to search for it or get depressed and settle for less. You need to create passion and learn how to dedicate yourself to an activity you find enjoyable.

You Don't Have To Feel Passion 100% of the Time.

At one point I had decided to be a self-development teacher, and was super-excited about it. But I don't feel such excitement all the time, not even most of the time. This means nothing. Emotions can be unstable, moods can easily shift from unexpected circumstances. You can't rely on your passion and feelings alone. Trust your higher self, trust the decisions that you make while being in the high state of mind, when you choose to dedicate yourself for a greater cause that would fulfill your life in long term. You have

been thinking for hours, weeks and months to choose the best occupation for you. You have made the best possible decision using the information that you have. The next day you wake up and you don't feel like doing that anymore. Feelings always come first to influence our decisions. We then use rationalization to justify how we feel. Our brain could deliberately think "oh, I don't feel the same passion, maybe it's not the right thing to do for me".

Instead of trying to find a different occupation that would or wouldn't make your passionate, just trust the decision that you have already made, commit to it (like [Tyler says](#)). Make the best decision that you can, then [roll with it](#), proactively build passion. Take action, learn the inner game (everything has inner game), move forward, learn the [flow](#), build the right linkages and neuro-associations (like Tony Robbins teaches). That's what will make you passionate as a result of it.

Search for ways to make what you do fun and exciting. Align your current emotions with the goals you've proactively set, not the other way around. You can read about specific techniques on how to reach the state of passion in the last part of this book. Methods such as mastering the inner game and getting in the state of flow where everything feels easy have helped me and a lot of other people too. That is why I have shared them with you in this book. However, by no means these aren't the only ones out there.

All You Need Is A Direction

Your ultimate goal is like a lighthouse that you are walking towards. When you realize you like a particular activity, like it more than other things, make mastering it your ultimate goal. Then break your ultimate goal down into smaller goals. Break the smaller goals down into even smaller steps, and step by step walk towards your goal. However, you have to know the ultimate destination to start walking. To find the ultimate goal of your life you almost have to find the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything. Such idea might be very frustrating and paralyzing. After I had achieved my dream and realized that "it actually isn't it", I started being afraid to make another decision. What if I'm going to be wrong again?

Now I've found a solution to that. You don't look for the "lighthouse" per se, all you need is a "compass" like the one Jack Sparrow had. Instead of searching for the ultimate goal, at the beginning all you need to know is the direction you would like to walk towards. Then just take the first step in that direction. When you start walking your path, you can correct the course on the road. This way you can start moving forward immediately, without even knowing the ultimate destination, and still end up where you really want to be. Each step forward that you take puts you closer to your ultimate goal, enables you to see what lies in front of you more clearly, so you can make more accurate decisions.

For example, a good friend of mine has a passion for theater. At first she didn't know where to start. She got in to the theater directing course at the academy only to realize later that her real goal in life is writing plays. She enjoyed doing that, people found her plays good, so she became a playwright. Some people might see the years she spent on studying something that is not her "call" wasted, but that is not true. These were her first steps towards achieving her goal. She didn't become a theater director, but she got known to what actually happens in the backstage, as well as met a lot of theater people that helped to stage her plays. Your first step towards your life goal can be way off your final position. However, don't underestimate the benefits you can get from it.

The Key Points

When it comes to doing work you love, following your passion is not a particularly useful advice. The conventional wisdom on career success that suggests following your passion is seriously flawed. That is not the way how most people actually end up loving what they do. Most people even don't have the passion for something to begin with anyway. Passion is not where you start looking for your path, it is just a side effect of "life well lived".

What you should focus on are your skills. If you possess certain skills, that means you have already invested time in obtaining them. If your friends like how you write, sing or how good you are at maths, even if you have never been published, sung in front of an audience or discovered a new proof for Pythagoras theorem, then you already have a good base for developing your skill.

People value others not by what they own, not by the qualities they can provide for society. We value others by what they offer to us. A carpenter can make a table for you, a barber can give you a haircut, theater performers entertain you, scientists work to make our lives easier by developing new technologies. These are just few of countless examples how people provide value for each other. If you offer value to the mankind, you'll get the joy of giving. Not only that, when we receive something of value, we often feel like returning the favor. Part of the passion is actually sharing what you have created or discovered, the feeling of investing in the society.

Don't just blindly follow your passion, become very good at something instead, and passion will follow you. In other words, if you do something at ease than most people and your kindness is returned, this creates motivation and passion to continue your work. Move your focus away from finding the right work and toward working the right way. Most people who love what they do started without passion. Preexisting passion is not what you need. Less than 4% of people initially have career-related passion.

The key is to force yourself through the initial work, gain skills. “Your problem is that you’re trying to judge all things in the abstract before you do them. That’s a mistake”. It is hard to predict what you will eventually love before doing it. You don't want to spend time doing your boring job in order to earn money so one day you could quit it and do what you think they would really enjoy, like painting, for example. What if you don't really like painting? What if it turns out to be less enjoyable activity than you imagine? “You’ll never be sure. You don’t want to be sure.” Type of the work does not necessarily predict how much people enjoy it. Loving your work is related to stuff like your experience and skills. Passion is a side effect of mastery.

What you want instead of passion, is [autonomy, competence and relatedness](#). The first two are results of mastery. There are some people that are convinced that there is a magic “right” job waiting for them, and that if they find it, they’ll immediately recognize that this is what they were meant to do. And when they fail to find it, they start job-hopping and self-doubting. That’s definitely what I did and I have met quite a lot of people that do the same not only in their years of youth, but even as men and women with gray hair.

What works is the craftsman mindset – focus on what value you are producing in your job, not the passion mindset – focusing on what value your job offers you. Instead of trying to promote your job, make money or develop career, focus on trying to get as good as you can possibly be, money and success are side effects of that. Focus on the quality that you produce, look what good can you offer to others. This can also help you to go through the initial pain period. If you focus on what you can offer to the world rather than what the world can offer to you, you will more likely enjoy the entry-level. When you are a newbie and focusing on what your work offers to you, it makes you hyper aware of what you don’t like about it. Instead of self-centered concerns about whether your job is the right job for you, put your head down and get really damn good at it. Focusing on giving provides you with initial reasons and motivation to do your work. As a side effect, you’ll eventually get passionate about that. What you do matters for your happiness a lot less than how good you are at it. Regardless of how you feel about your job right now, adopting the craftsman mindset will be the foundation on which you can build a compelling career.

There are few traits that define all great work: creativity, impact (or contribution) and control over what you do (freedom, making your own decisions). Most of the jobs don’t match these traits, these qualities are rare. If you want something rare and valuable, offer something rare and valuable in return such as your good skills, your mastery. Produce something of great value, and you’ll get creativity, impact and control in return. And the craftsman mindset, with its relentless focus on becoming “so good they can’t ignore you,” is a strategy that will enable you to do that.

This brilliantly points out and reflects my thoughts on my previous computer graphics job. I had both mastery and passion there, but why did I feel miserable? It was because I didn't believe in the importance of what I do. I didn't feel that my contribution is worthy. Passion is an emotion caused by mastery, but no amount of mastery and passion will help, if you believe that what you're doing is worthless. That is the issue of contribution and beliefs. You can still have fun doing such job, but it won't make you happy. Also the craftsman mindset won't work in case the job presents no growth opportunities or forces you to work with people you really dislike.

So, the way of finding your true passion is the following:

Do what you love -> Get good at this -> Make a contribution → Focus on offering value -> That gives you motivation to work a lot -> Get as good as you can possibly be, acquire mastery -> As the result you are passionate for what you do.

Then there are stories of successful people. These awesome people used their logic to find what's best of them based on their understanding of life at the moment (just like I did), and then they built their mastery that later converted into passion. Also I'd like to put a quote here from my favorite and absolutely genius movie Mr. Nobody (watch it, it's great): "Every path is the right path. Everything could have been anything else and it would have just as much meaning."

There Is No Talent

Talent and passion for something are not preexisting qualities, you are not born with them. You can understand and develop them like any other skill. You are able to learn and do everything that anybody else has ever done and even discover new occupations. The idea of having a talent really bothers me. I trust that it does more harm than good, and here's why:

Why Is Belief In Talent A Bad Thing?

Talents are like little idols that people worship, but in the end of the day nothing changes. This creates a situation where the believers in talent would give up before even trying, limit their options without finding out how things really are. Talent implies that you can be talentless, that without it you can't be as good as someone who has a talent, and if you happen to have it, you're most likely talented in only one thing, and couldn't do anything else just as well or switch professions. This belief is limiting potential.

Then why do people believe in talents? I think that happens for the same reason people used to believe in god who made storms, threw lighting bolts and had created the universe. Talent is a simple explanation for what people can not understand. Also it gives feeling of superiority to people who supposedly have it, and nice excuse not to do anything as long as you manage to convince others that you don't have it.

Talent Is a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Imagine a kid who drew a painting. We can easily assume that it was really bad, even if a kid is Michelangelo (I mean the artist, not the ninja turtle). Every kid draws badly. So this child goes to his mother, presents her the terrible picture and says: 'Hey, look what I have made!'. If the mother is wise and in a good mood, she will praise the kid, 'this is so beautiful, you are talented!'. Now the kid believes that he is good at drawing, and enjoys the praise. Of course, he will go and paint another one, and get even more praise for that.

By the time he comes to school, he has more experience at painting than other kids, therefore he is not only really better than everybody else, but also has a strong reinforced belief that he is 'gifted'. When other kids and teachers see his paintings, they start to believe in this as well. They reinforce the belief of the child even more, and also encourage him to paint more.

Of course, as the kid grows up and goes through life, this belief becomes even stronger. As a result we have a painter who believes in his talent, everybody else believes in it too, and he really good at what he does.

Where Is The Problem?

Obviously people whose parents weren't so nice will have a problem. Every new artist or scientist or sportsman will have a problem. One won't be able to know whether he is talented or not, until the society will tell him so. He could feel insecure and doubt himself until someone tells him that he is good. If the reviews a person gets are bad, even if they are just based simply on his inexperience, belief in talent can strongly influence his future actions and goals.

Of course, every young adult who wants to chose his own profession (as opposed to falling into it by choices that are made by others), or who just wants to learn a new thing will suffer from these beliefs. To learn anything you have to go through a phase where you are really bad at it. This phase is also the hardest to go through. You might feel unskilled, incompetent or useless in the field you have chosen to work in. It hurts even more if someone else points that out. It feels 'more true' because your feelings echo in other people's words. It is so much easier to give up, announce that you have no talent

and disappear from the scene.

It is not a problem that only kids face. Children even don't care that much because their living doesn't depend on that. It is normal. However, once a person becomes more self-conscious, he can get discouraged by that. He wasn't good at something as a kid, he did not magically become good when he first tried doing that, so he may come to a conclusion that he has no talent. That's how belief in talents may prevent a lot of people from doing great things that they could love with all their hearts.

There Is No Gene For Talent

Unless you're creationist (in this case you probably have even more damaging beliefs than belief in talent), you probably believe that we evolved through evolution. Scientists tell us that there were no very significant changes in human genome for the last 10,000 years. At these times people were living a nomadic lifestyle and had no such things as basketball, aircraft, or elaborate culture. So there's obviously no gene could evolve for being a talented basketball player, or pilot, or writer or painter.

For this reason I don't think that people who are very good at something are biologically better than anyone else. So unless you think that god gave them superpowers at birth, why would you think that somebody would be created for a particular profession. On top of that, if that would be possible, imagine if a talented pilot would be born 500 years ago, or a genius death-ray-device-operator would be born in our times. You should be very lucky then, to be born at the time when profession you're 'naturally good at' is already discovered.

Passion

The same logic works for passion. If somebody does something and really enjoys it, that means you can replicate it and enjoy the same thing as well. There is no inborn connection between you and pleasure in a particular activity. You weren't 'destined' to do anything, you can do whatever you want. So if, for example, you want to learn to do something, don't enjoy it very much yet, don't worry about that. You can develop your passion like anything else.

The last part of this book, *Mastery*, will help you with finding your passion. In essence, passion for an activity can only happen within the process. There is no way how you can feel enjoyment of an activity if you don't do that. I don't like doing dishes much, but sometimes, when I do them, I start to feel enjoyment, I get into the process, into the flow where the action I do is actually enjoyable.

Conclusion

People can do something right by accident without fully understanding what is happening. Sometimes you can see children guessing numbers when you ask them a simple mathematical question like 'how much is $15+28$?'. After few times guessing wrong, sometimes they actually guess it right. When you ask them, how did they suddenly knew the answer to this one, they usually tell a little lie that they 'knew it'. It is in human nature to find explanations to what is happening and if we lack knowledge or understanding, we can come to the wrong conclusions. Grownups do that too, sometimes even attribute their skills to supernatural powers that supposedly explain how come that they have accidentally guessed or did something right.

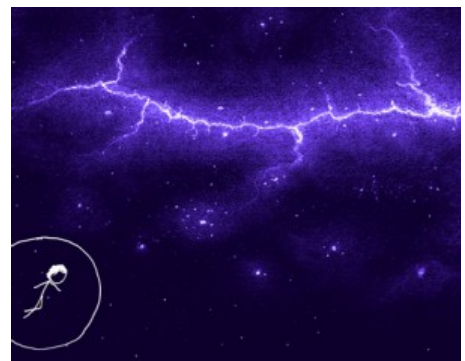
However, I think, that even if you don't understand something at first, you can rationally comprehend and replicate what has happened, and be just as good as any person who is considered talented. What one man can do, another man can do too if enough time and effort is put into it. It all comes down the level of skill, and this choice is entirely in your hands. You are free to choose to do anything that you want in your life, and don't let your superstitions guide you in your life.

Path and Purpose

I was trying to find my purpose for a long time, struggled with that a lot, I just had to 'get' it because of my compulsive need to understand what I do. To a certain extent we all have such need, so I came up with some ideas that explain the purpose of life and I am going to present them in this sub-chapter 'Path and Purpose'.

What Is Purpose?

Purpose is our choice of how to answer to the question "What do I want to do with my life?" very generally. When a scriptwriter creates a script for a movie, he starts with creating a plotline – a brief summary of what the movie will be about, what he wants to see in it, only the most important parts. Purpose is your plotline for your life. You have very limited time in this world, and instead of randomly straying from one activity to another it is better to have your own idea about what you want to do with this time. This way you avoid the feeling of your life being wasted.



Why Do You Want to Have a Purpose?

Purpose gives your life priorities and direction. It is your plan that helps you to define in which direction you want to go and what choices you want to make at any given moment.

It can increase motivation (although I don't think that purpose is the main source of motivation), help you to be more effective, to know what you are doing. If you have a particular goal to move towards, a purpose can help you to move faster and end up exactly where you want to be.

Having a purpose makes sense, because it gives you a reason to not slide into apathy or even self destruction when things go wrong, it makes you more focused and inspired to correct the course and move towards your goal.

You Create Your Own Purpose

The biggest problem about purpose I had to deal with was that I thought that I have to find it, that it exists somewhere and I needed to discover it. And I should better find the "perfect" one, because if it is the wrong one my life won't work. However, this thinking didn't went along very well with my rational and materialistic world view, with my beliefs about science and logic. Having a preset purpose implies that you were 'put on this earth for a reason', and that implies that you were put here by someone like god or gods. I don't see any reason to believe in this. In my opinion, life has [no particular reason](#) and wasn't created to achieve anything, it just happened.

It is our natural reaction to the world, to try to understand it, to explain it. After we more or less have an idea what something (in this case, life) is, we try to understand why something exists. If we can't come up with a conclusion, the easiest way is to attribute it to the supernatural, something we can't explain, but that could be possible. Once this is done, it eases our minds and we can forget about it because someone else is taking care of what to do with that. This is the easiest way to sabotage your dreams too.

I understand all these benefits of having a purpose, the ease of mind and how much it contributes to the motivation. I wanted to have a purpose so badly. So where did I get it?

I just created it the same way I did with the [passion](#) and [talent](#).

"Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked."

How To Create Your Purpose?

So the purpose does not have to be preexisting, divine or connected with you on some magical level. You can just choose it, by answering to this question “what do I want to do with my life?” The answer does not have to be perfect, in fact, that is impossible. You also can't really go wrong with answering ‘what do you want to do’. On top of that, you will be improving and refining your view on your purpose all the time. The path you are taking will be evolving and changing. So what you really need is to just find out what works for you for now, at this moment and near future.

The amazing American self-development author Steve Pavlina offers great and useful guidelines for creating your purpose, although he means that in a less general sense, like choosing a profession for yourself. This is what you actually need for practice. You also might want to listen to [this](#) and [this](#) audio recording. Here is my brief summary of his philosophy on the purpose in life: you want your purpose to ‘work’ in 4 general areas, which he calls ‘mind’, ‘body’, ‘heart’, and ‘spirit’.

1. **Heart** means that you need to love and enjoy doing that.
2. **Mind** means that you need to have the necessary skills for your ultimate goal or know a way how to get them.
3. **Body** means that acting on this purpose can provide for you, be a way to make money to satisfy your basic and not so basic needs.
4. **Spirit** means contribution, you need to feel satisfied with the thing that you do, to know that it makes world a better place.

He says that Heart is the most important field, because if you love what you do you naturally will get good at it, and that it will naturally lead to making money and making a positive contribution. In a way this is the passion part I have been talking about earlier.

In my opinion ‘**heart**’ area can be [created](#), just by getting good at what you do and learning to enter the [flow state](#). Passion for something comes just from being able to enjoy the activity you are doing. Having a lot of pleasure from doing something is what the flow state offers you. You can totally learn to get in this state. In the last part of this book I will discuss this more in depth.

‘**Mind**’ is also obviously a matter of learning, you can [get good at anything that you want](#) as long as there are no genetic or other physical limitations. This, however, matters only if your ultimate goal is connected with sports or similar areas where certain physical attributes are very necessary.

Body (or making money) just comes from your skills and wish to provide value for people (and exchange it for money or other goods). If you are making something good and

useful, it won't be a problem to exchange it for something that is valuable to you too. The aspect of offering something good, striving to do the best you can do so others would benefit, is an essential part of becoming a master. Nobody is a master if he or she is useless to society or some parts of it. To be a great parent, you have to provide value to your children, to be a great doctor, you have to offer the best care you can, to be a great painter, you have to make paintings that people enjoy.

Once you offer something that others really enjoy, you are fulfilling the last, one of the most important factors for your purpose in life and that is **contribution**. I think that this is easy to understand. Simply answer the question 'what change do I want to make in the world?'. It can be anything, as small and simple, or as grand as you want. Remember, you don't have to do this alone or within your lifetime, all you need is to feel satisfaction from contributing something that really matters to others.

For example, I have chosen 3 big dreams for myself, 3 major changes that I would like to see in the world, and you may notice that they are not too humble:

1. Making people more clever (I believe it would solve most of the world's problems);
2. Understanding the universe (in the way that the [theory of everything](#) in physics would do)
3. Longevity or immortality (making life longer or semi-infinite through advancement in biology, genetics or medicine)

Also, I would like to add another criteria to those that Steve Pavlina has – **values** and skills that you want to see in yourself, and your personal **preferences**.

Values mean your own values. These are the kind of qualities you love and respect in yourself and in other people the most, the kind of skills you want to develop, the kind of person you want to be. Values help and encourage you to get better while mastering your profession.

Preferences are all kinds of ideas that you have about your perfect profession already, things that you enjoy the most, what you prefer to do the most in your work field, what kind of genre to work in, etc. Sportsmen might prefer running shorter or longer distances, musicians might prefer playing jazz, rock music or academical music. Each person has their own preferences when it comes the way how they work in their field.

Here are examples of how I have applied these principles on my situation:

My values are written just below the logo of my website. They are: Cleverness, Positivity, Mastery. This is what I admire in people the most, and this is what I would like to see in

myself. Personally, my preference in the field of self development is research and theorizing. I would love to provide value by my thinking and creating new ideas.

So this is how and why I have made the decision about the perfect profession for me – personal development blogging:

1. I believe that by being a personal development blogger, I can make people more clever and let them have more positive view on their lives. That makes me feel like I am doing something that matters for me and for a part of the society too (though nothing really matters in a grand scheme of things.)
2. This choice of mine develops qualities that I would like to see in myself. It makes me more clever and positive. (Mastery is not related only to your profession, you can have it in anything.)
3. This is a kind of thing that I'm doing with my mind, by thinking. It gives me a challenge, thus providing fun solving problems and improving the ways I think.
4. I can learn it and get good at that.
5. I can learn to enjoy it. (At first I didn't and was frustrated, but now I'm starting to 'get' it, and I really, really like my choice now. It makes me happy.)
6. I can earn with this occupation by creating useful posts that contain value for others.

My second main desire (to understand the universe) explains my excitement about the science. This is a big passion of mine and my science studies help with my very main goal – improving myself and guiding others to smarter and happier lives. Since I value life so much, I am also interested in making life longer although my skills in biology are not as strong at the moment as the skills I have in self-improvement philosophy.

Notice that I didn't start with choosing profession. There are many lures to make people be in one profession or another such as prestige, good payment in comparison to other professions and many more. Don't let these social stigmas fool you. The masters in this world are the ones that follow their heart, follow their values and preferences. Nobody stays a salesperson, a lawyer or a businessman for long if that is against their values and preferences. What's worse, people with whom they work, can sense the displeasure they feel in their profession.

This could have been avoided with understanding your values and preferences and what matters to you. Professions are just tools that you are using to follow them. Professions are likely to change throughout your life. For example, I might do video blogging, or public speaking, or coaching, or even go and become a physicist, all these options would still fit my criteria.

Also I would like to note that the purpose is more like a process than a destination. You create it to guide your actions and to help you with making choices, not to achieve something in particular. Purpose is not the destination, it is the journey. However, having a purpose in your life helps you a lot with setting your goals.

What Is The Path?

I do not have a clear answer for that. I just felt that it is somehow connected with purpose and wanted to say in this book that walking your path is all that matters and all you that can do. This idea really simplifies the life, gives meaning to it and after all, makes it happy and well lived. Just do your best at walking your path, finding your way in the world, thinking and understanding things. Let go of everything else, because it is not really under your control. As long as you are doing your best to find your way in life, you can feel good about yourself, just because that is all that is within your powers.

Knowledge vs Practice

Knowing this is not enough to make your life fulfilled, you also need to take action. You can't expect to get happy, smart, good at what you do just by reading and learning a lot. Too much theory with too little practice can do you more harm than good. You need to burn fuel to create energy (and move forward). Learning is fuel, action is the process of burning it. The fuel also needs to be clean and good quality. Just like bad gasoline can damage your car, bad information can screw with your mind and your emotional state.

Knowledge is like a map that shows you the way to your goal. Learning is creating such map and practice is actually going out and walking towards your destination. Without a map you can get lost, but adding too much details is also not good, because then it would create more confusion than clarity. At some point the best way to figure out details of your path is to actually go there and look around. Some things are much more effective to find out when you actually need them, not before. It is simpler too.

Sometimes you just have no clue where your ultimate goal is, and even what it is. You might be in a situation where you feel that you have no way of finding a map for that. In this case what you need is a compass, like the one that Jack Sparrow (sorry, Captain Jack Sparrow) had. Sometimes all you need is a general direction to walk towards, and confidence that you will be able to correct the direction down the way.

After you have walked forward for a while, it will be much easier to figure out where to

go next. You will be able to see the next part of the path much more clearly, because you will be closer to it. You will already have the experience from the path you've walked already, so you will know what to expect. Sometimes you just need to set a smaller goal that you can already see from here and believe that when you get there, you'll find the rest of the path.

Identity

The Origins of Identity

Since the research on brain has progressed significantly in the last century, scientists now are able to tell us what every brain region is responsible for. For example, some parts of human brain influence the way how our senses work, others are responsible for our language or other skills working properly. However, there is no part of brain that is directly responsible for creating your personality. Things like alcohol, drugs, or physical traumas can dramatically affect your brain, and as a result also your character and your world view. Not only physical traumas or mental illnesses, even things like being hungry or horny can strongly change your mood and influence decisions.

If you lost all your memory and then were put into the environment where you are treated like king or like a worthless piece of garbage, you would form your personality accordingly. This draws us to the conclusion that your 'self', 'ego' or 'personality' is just a byproduct of the brain activity, reactions to social conditions and environment we live in. You can learn more on this by reading the book "[The Self Illusion: How the Social Brain Creates Identity](#)".

By the way, this is the reason I do not believe in souls or afterlife. Our personality so clearly depends on how we react to physical factors that influence us, that there is no reason to believe that our personalities are formed from something spiritual. Souls can't get drunk, souls can't forget things, but we can. If our personalities are influenced by things that we remember, by how drunk or hungry we are, they are based on physical factors and are by no means spiritual. It is clear that your soul is not your mood, or memories, or personality, or the world view, all of these things are contained within our brain. So, even if there was a non-material part of the life energy in me that can survive my physical death, it wouldn't matter much, because it has nothing to do with anything that I perceive as 'myself'.

You are just the sum of your memories and perceptions at any given moment, and in this sense, there is no such a thing as 'self'. Your brain creates a character that is useful to get by in the world, to determine how to act and how to relate with people. 'Self' is no more than just a thought, set of your beliefs, memories and ideas about who you are. This is amazingly useful information. This means that you can change your personality at any moment. This means that your past does not define who you are, that you can choose your perception and beliefs about yourself, you can define who you are.

So if your personality is not defined by your past or some spiritual source, then how should it be defined? I believe there is one most logical answer – 'whatever works best'. There is no logical reason to feel bad about yourself because it is just futile. Your 'self' is a mechanism that is supposed to help you to survive and interact with the world. 'Self' is how you choose to react to what happens within you and around you. It could be hard to imagine this at first, but the Jews that spent months and years in concentration camps manage to get some fun and happy times out of it. Taking the circumstances in consideration, it was by no means easy. However, some of them consciously made the choice on how they would feel.

Beating yourself or feeling bad about your looks is not necessarily 'realistic'. Even if you are ugly, poor, shy, feel sick or don't have the latest iphone, it is counterproductive to let such factors influence you in a bad way. It would only harm you, and therefore that would be irrational. The same is true also of the opposite – too grand self-image may also be bad for you. After I had realized that feeling bad about yourself is dumb, I jumped into the other extreme - I created this mega idea of how awesome I am. Needless to say, trying to live up to it turned out to be a huge source of stress.

So, let go of the self image completely. Don't let your beliefs about yourself define you. It sounds weird at first, I know. Understand that 'self' is not solid, it is not even real. You can be any person that you want at will. The same principle works on emotions too - it doesn't matter what caused them. The only emotions that make sense are the useful ones. Feeling bad because your grandmother has died is natural and understandable, but not logical. Don't justify your bad emotions by calling them 'realistic'. The only reasonable thing to feel is whatever works the best, whatever is most useful, productive, makes you better.

Also it is good to remember that your personality is what defines most of your experiences. Not only you shouldn't let your physical limitations to define how you feel, but you can also realize that physical limitations mean very little. If Tyler or Gandhi, or someone else you admire the most, would magically appear to have your body instead of you, they would achieve exactly what they've achieved, have whatever they have. Whatever you think stops you from having success would not stop them. Stephen Hawking is a great example.

So personality is all that really shapes your life, and it is entirely under your control, there are no reasons to not turn it into exactly what you want. Personality is usually shaped by our reactions to random influences and events. When you are growing up you're looking at role models and randomly 'borrowing' parts of the world view and beliefs from people that you meet. The good thing is that you can take this process in your own hands and direct it at will.

BTFA

Believing, Thinking, Feeling and Acting – these four things make you who you are. If you believe that you are a loser, and therefore think feel and act like one, you are one. If you BTFA like a cool or smart or beautiful person, you are one. Theoretically you can change any and all of these 4 parts at a single moment and transform completely.

It is not fucking easy, trust me, but at the same time – it is perfectly doable. Actually it is relatively simple to change at a particular moment, when you focus on that. The challenge is to stay that way for a long time and behave in that way 'naturally'.

One of the first things you could do once you get that initial impulse to change the way you believe, think and feel about yourself, is already showing this to other people too by your actions. It might seem absurd at first. How could you just simply go and tell someone that you look pretty when all you hear is that you are ugly. When you believe, feel and think of yourself as pretty, you start to act upon this belief – you alter your appearance as much as you can by wearing clothing that compliments your body or put on make-up if you are a girl. On a side note, although most people say that they would prefer 'natural' beauty, what everyone really values is others putting effort in pleasing them, in this case, your appearance.

Lose Your Ego After Only After Creating a Great Personality

"People who do not have self esteem sometimes try to get on the spiritual path, lose their ego, but the ego in the mature and healthy sense is precisely what they have failed to attain. They dream about giving away what they do not possess." -Nathaniel Branden

Recognize that your identity is not something unchangeable or even 'real', but at the same time that it can be a great tool that your mind creates to operate in the world, to make decisions and to guide your actions. You don't have to be a slave to your ego or identity, you don't have to define yourself by arbitrary rules that were made up by you long ago. But maybe before trying to 'lose your ego' it makes sense to create happy and healthy one?

Yes, ego is no more than just a thought, a character created by your brain, based on your memories and opinions about yourself. It has no control over you, it is not solid. But before getting rid of it, create a good and healthy one, that makes you happy, that you can use for your own good and for the good of others. Create an ego that works for you. You don't have to identify yourself with it, but you can use it.

It is the same as with “you’re not your mind”. You understand this idea, you dissociate with your mind, you can stop thinking at will, you are not a slave to your thinking anymore, but it doesn’t mean that you never think. You use it as a tool when needed, when it’s good for you, the only difference is that now you are in charge. You use your mind, you don’t destroy it. Instead of allowing your mind to be lame and weak, you use it when it does you good.

Do the same with your ego. Realize that you’re not your ego, but at the same time, let it be. Make it enjoyable and strong. Have strong self respect, believe that you are awesome and able to do anything, create a little narcissistic and very confident personality that is useful in so many situations. And at the same time learn to transcend it, be free from it, at the same time, not instead.

Rising guide

“...But remember, ‘They envy your money, your lifestyle, your women, never your WORK ETHIC or WISDOM....’ All this is a byproduct of the latter 2, and frankly the main reward in all this. The ability to work myself into the ground is reward in itself. I love it. All I want to do is work, this other shit is a mandatory break I take so my body can recover, so I can continue to do what I love — WORK!” -Tyler

I am extremely fascinated with ideas of personal transformation and identity change. It is wonderful that by using mind and will, learning and applying self development techniques a person can dramatically change, completely transform himself into something much bigger and better than he currently is. I write this for young people who are at the beginning of their journey like me. I will share the ideas and knowledge I have found or developed myself. I believe that they will rise from the low state and become the person you want to be.

Why

For me there is nothing more important in life than developing awesome qualities and becoming like one of the people I admire. Throughout my life I have experienced both being on the ‘dark side’ (when I was living as an unconscious zombie, the state most unhappy people do), and I have also experienced times of extreme passion, inspiration, pleasant alertness and awareness. I have seen what becomes of people who don’t put their mind to good use and don’t strive for more in their lives, people who have lived most of their life in the ‘low’ state. I have also seen people who consciously, actively, constantly work on their personal development.

The difference is extremely dramatic. This 'high' state of extreme alertness, flow, focus and a burning desire to do what you love is so wonderful and intense, that after experiencing it, I will do ANYTHING to live the rest of my life like that. There is nothing more terrifying for me than living the low consciousness lifestyle of horror, in which sadly most people are trapped in and are unlikely to ever escape. After being around the wonderful people whom I admire, around people who live great lives of passion, I will do ANYTHING to be one of them. Currently I am oscillating between 2 states, but I'm learning, and I know the way how to do that. Being the person you want to be means happiness. This is what matters the most, rest of the things are side effects or means to get there.

This is my leverage, there is nothing more important to me than that. I will become one of them, or I will die trying. If you can relate to these feelings and are after the similar goals too, keep reading. I will explain you the key ideas of this process of change.

Vision

Start with creating a vision – a clear idea of your perfect self, the perfect qualities, dreams and ideals. Find role models, find people to be inspired by. Look around and search for qualities that you admire the most, that are most important to you, that you want to see in yourself. Build a clear image of what the perfect version of yourself looks like.

Realize that your qualities, attitudes and self-perception come from other people too, not only yourself. As you were growing up, you were unconsciously 'borrowing' identities and behaviors from others by repeating them. This is how we all were learning as children. It is a naive process of learning, we accept all information as true unless we have other information that could possibly contradict it. Probably in our teenage years, most likely unconsciously even earlier we started to doubt the information we get because we had already some knowledge of how the world works and what life is about.

Now that we have some experience under our belts already, it is time to take the process of creating your world view and how you should be in your own hands. Consciously look for awesome people, find the best personalities, people whose lifestyle makes sense and appeals to you. Repeat what is working for you. It is time to try things out for yourself. It is time to search for activities, for occupation that makes you happy and fulfilled.

Choice and Ability

After struggling for quite a while trying to change myself I've finally understood what exactly one should do when changing personality. I have realized what really happens in our heads when we stop having the old set of bad behaviors and start implementing the

new set of good ones. It comes down to two very simple things: choice and ability. This may sound simple, but it took me some time to understand. Who you are and how you behave is not a magical predefined thing that is embodied into your head. Any kind of 'awesome' behavior is a result of your choice and your ability to do things that form your behavior. There is no magical switch that turns you into a different person, you just define the behavior, quality and attitude, then you want, you consciously choose to act according to them, and once you can – bam! There it is, you have it.

So after you have your vision, *choose* to be this kind of person. After you have made your choice, you can start working on learning and developing skills that you need to act like this person. This may not be simple, but it is a pretty clear and straightforward process that you know you can do. As you learn you will most likely oscillate between cool and uncool behaviors, but if you do it right, the percentage of time when you behave as a cool person will increase. When it will reach 51% point, the scales will tip, and you will start associating yourself with the person you desire to be more than with what you used to be.

Goals That Shape Your Qualities

The best way to develop skills that you want to see in yourself, is to set goals for yourself that require you to use them. Find your [passion](#), and step on the path to mastery, this is what will turn you into a better person and will make you embody the qualities you desire in the most natural way. Achievement of every little goal will be the reflection of your efforts, you will see that you can't get where you want to be without embodying the qualities that you need. This will force you to learn and to change in the most wonderful ways.

I love the example of Rearden, like I wrote in [this](#) article. He is a person who has never consciously worked on self-development, he was just striving for the complicated goal he was passionate about, and it created amazing attractive qualities in him as a side effect. Just striving for his goal and walking his path to mastery made him an amazing person with strong and beautiful character. I suppose this is what happens to all great people who have never focused on self improvement, but had a goal in their mind. Your advantage is that you understand this process now, and can become a great person by choice, not by coincidence.

Creating habits will support goals. A big part of shaping your identity is developing habits that support your goals and keep you happy doing them every day. Make sure that every day you are working on goals in the most important areas of your life, that you are constantly moving towards it. Goals are the things that move you forward and transform

you, habits are repetitive actions that you can get used to, and that can support you in staying consistent on your path. Make sure that when you're executing habits you're not just going through the motions, but constantly getting a little step closer to your goals. I will tell you more on how to create and keep habits later in this book.

Awesomeness Challenge

As I said earlier, BTFA means 'Believe, Think, Feel, and Act', and these are the main components of identity. Basically, if you BTFA like a certain kind of person, you ARE that person. Actually, as you've learned, your identity is just a set of your memories or beliefs about who you are. You can change your identity at this moment, just by starting to think, feel and act like the person you want to be, and to believe that you are that. This way you can become any person in an instant. The challenge, of course, is overcoming falling back into the old habits and thought patterns when you're stop focusing on that.

And this is where AC (Awesomeness Challenge) comes in. This is my extension upon Tony Robbins' ['positivity challenge'](#). You have a vision of your perfect self – the way the perfect you thinks, behaves or reacts to certain situations. You make a choice to BTFA like him or her. You can do this for 5 or 10 minutes deliberately, and see that it is working, you can mindfuck yourself into having any identity you want. The hard part is to *be* that person all the time.

It is pretty easy to feel confident and strong and happy while sitting on the couch, but when you're facing a complicated situation, it becomes much harder. The awesomeness challenge is about being that kind of person for 30 days (time it takes to develop a habit) no matter what.

The same way you are strengthening your muscles when working out, you can strengthen the qualities that you want. Deliberately place yourself into situations when it is hard to behave cool, set yourself challenges and face them with thoughts and behaviors of a cool person. It is very easy to go through tough stuff while whining and bitching and being weak, any person can do that and get no benefit out of that at all. Not only such attitude gives you nothing good, it does much harm. By complaining and whining you strengthen the belief that you and other people, other things are bad. Complaining is the worst thing to do, because not only it makes the other person feel bad, it gives them the power to decide whether they want to change the situation or not. You give the control of the situation in their hands.

AC is about realizing that, when you are facing problems bravely and being cool while dealing with them, that this attitude makes you stronger. Hard work may be damaging and soul destroying for a weak person, but when you're consciously working hard while being 'in' your awesome personality, it grounds yourself into it, it makes these qualities

stronger. This is how you develop a strong powerful character.

The Right Level of Expectations

To be able to actually move forward and stay on your path instead of freaking out and dropping it all in a couple of days, it is crucial to have the right level of challenges and expectations. I call this the 'flow state'. You will learn how to achieve it by reading the last part of this book - "Mastery". In essence, you want to make sure that you start with very simple steps and increase difficulty gradually as you become stronger and more accustomed to the challenge. Understand what you can and can't do at the level you're at, and adjust your expectation so that you feel happy and satisfied after accomplishing even very simple goals.

It may seem obvious, but it is a very common mistake. You want to live and develop at the edge of your abilities. If you try to do more than you can, you become freaked out, stressed, unsatisfied, and start developing negative associations with the process of growing and making yourself better. If you do what's below your capabilities, you are lazy, you stagnate, you teach your brain to do less than it can. Both options are very damaging.

Learn to [balance on the edge](#). Do the best you can. Once you have chosen a direction and start to take action, understand that doing your best is all that matters and all you *can* do, so derive happiness and satisfaction out of acting on your level. Don't be lazy, but also don't beat yourself up for not doing things you can't do yet or things that are out of your control. This is just useless and counterproductive. Understand what you can do, [make it a game that you can win with some effort](#). Trying to do more than that slows you down about as much as trying to do less.

Build The Right Associations

Build the right associations. The key source of motivation for people is value. We instinctively seek for everything that helps our survival and reproduction and avoid everything that threatens it. The way we perceive the value of something (you can think about threat as a negative value) is via emotions of pleasure or pain. We do what we perceive as or associate with pleasure and we are trying to avoid pain. This is what guides most of our behaviors on the instinctive, emotional level. Only then we rationalize emotion-guided behaviors with our minds to maintain the illusion of conscious control.

Learn and understand the mechanics of rationalization, learn to distinguish it from the 'true' rational thinking. Consciously build the right emotional associations with the new behaviors you want to install. Understand that 'not feeling like it' is not a good reason not

to act. Be the master of your emotions, not the other way around. Do like Tyler [says](#) – ‘teach your brain who the fuck is boss’.

Sometimes people start to act right when the pain of being a lazy loser outweighs the effort of taking the right action. You can help this process by finding a strong leverage and consciously learning new associations that link old, bad behaviors to pain and new, good ones to the pleasure and happiness of the wonderful future.

Keep going, trust the process, and at some point you will understand that you have been acting awesomely almost always for a long time already. If you compared yourself to you from what you were years ago, you would think “I’m the man now, I am the person I wanted to be”. This is what happiness is about. Once the time that you spend in your awesome state outweighs the time you spend in your lame state, your identity flips.

Win Or Die Trying

Your desire to do some particular activity is calculated by a simple formula:

[Motivation](#) = (perceived benefit of action)*(perceived probability of getting this benefit)

In other words, when everything else is equal, you will feel [twice](#) as motivated about working on the goal that you are 100% sure that you will reach than about a goal you are only 50% sure about.

This means that the more optimistic you are, the more you believe that you will get the results that you want, the more motivation you have. Understand that if you decide to become good at something, you can’t fail. Because if you will stick to ANY goal for 10-15 years there is NO WAY you won’t get good at that. Don’t just believe, *know* that you will succeed. Knowing that success is inevitable will dramatically multiply your motivation and help you with taking the right action

Shortcomings can make it harder to succeed, but this is irrelevant. You have only one life. If your dream is something that you are not willing to give up, you *will* succeed, and when you do, it won't matter how hard it was or how long it took.

Tips On Self-Control And Willpower



Staying motivated and being proactive is hard. Trying to follow through your decisions is one of the biggest problems that everybody who tries to get better at something faces. One of the most important skills for achieving your goals and becoming an awesome person is being able to be consistent, to act based on your decisions, not on the emotion you're feeling in the moment.

Of course, the best situation is when you are “naturally” driven to do the right thing, so you do that just because you want to. It is the best if you always try to do things that way because it is more fun and more efficient. However, often in order to make cool lifestyle easy and natural you need to implement some habits, switch your old action patterns and get used to new behaviors. I have come up with some ideas, advices, and understandings that have helped me (and will help you) to make this process much more clear and easy. Here they are:

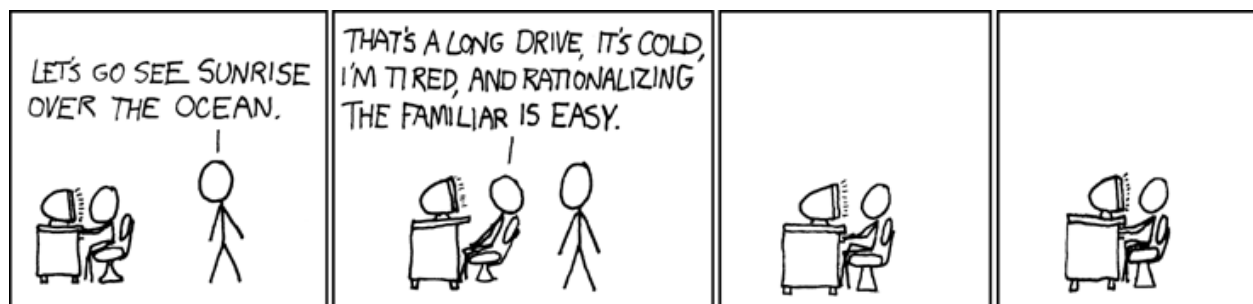
Distinguish Rationalization from the “Real” Thinking

Often you can spend a lot of time and energy just on deciding whether you should act the right way or “cut yourself some slack” and do what you feel like doing. For example, you have decided to follow a diet. The next day you start thinking “well, one little candy is not a big deal”, “so what, now will I never eat a cheeseburger in my life? That’s not cool”, “well, coffee is kind of healthy, energy drink could make me leaner”. And you start thinking that you have a logical dilemma here. At that moment you need to recognize: *This is not a problem of logic, thinking, understanding, it's an emotional issue.*

Rationalization is a psychological tool that everybody uses every day to maintain the illusion of being in control of their actions. We think that we act based on our logic, but very often we don't, in fact, most of the times we don't. Almost all our life decisions are made on emotions. What happens is that we act based on our feelings, and then our brain *rationalizes* them - logically justifies these actions.

And what you need to do is to learn to distinguish the “real”, normal thinking, when you use reason and logic to find out what's best for you, from rationalization, when you are basically just coming up with excuses to do what you feel like doing. Even long term decisions are based on your emotions. The difference is that in long term decisions you choose what is the best for you in the long run while impulsive decisions make you feel

good only for a short amount of time. You can think rationally and make real decisions about diet when you're feeling comfortable, but if you are hungry, don't trust your brain. The path to success is indulgence, not compulsion.



Another good way to call this is "trusting in your higher self". There are moments in your life when your mind is bright, sharp and alert, moments when you can think clearly and make the best decisions. This is your "higher self" - you in your best state. Also there are moments when you're angry, hungry, horny, lazy, sleepy etc. In these moments you are in haze and out of state, you can't think clearly. Make decisions when you're in your higher self, when you are in the mode of lower consciousness. Just trust them and don't argue. When you feel an impulse to stray away from your initial plan, realize that then it is not the best time to change the plan that you have developed when you were much smarter.

Sometimes I feel angry at someone for silly things. Since I know that whining, complaining or blaming won't do me any good, I search for the source of the problem. When emotions are intense, it is hard to start solving the problem immediately. It is much easier to complain, because it gives them the power to change things. Also if I blame someone, I don't need to put effort in solving the problem anymore.

However, in such cases the real problem is the way how I feel about the situation. This is where I choose what defines my personality. With the knowledge that I would only lose by giving power to solve this to another, I work on solving my emotional issue first. If I feel hungry, I seek how to satisfy the hunger. If I am angry at someone, I look for ways how to feel better, for example, leave the room until I cool down. It is important to recognize the real problem not to shift the responsibility.

To sum this up, learn to distinguish true thinking from rationalizations, recognize when you're in the lower consciousness. And once you do, realize that you don't have a logical problem, you don't need to "understand" anything right now. You already know **exactly** what is the right thing. You just don't feel like doing it. Don't have doubts anymore, trust

the decisions that you have made when you were in the higher state, when you could clearly see what you should do. Instead of dealing with understanding *and* emotion, all that is left is to deal with is only your emotion or mood. Choose to take the right actions. You know what is right, and your task is clear. Just do it and you will succeed.

Replace

You need to know that whatever negative habits you have, you have them for a reason. They satisfy some of your needs, and that is good. They are just doing this not in a way you like. For example, TV satisfies your need for stimulation and adventure, food that is rich in carbohydrates and lacks vitamins still satisfies your hunger. You can't just deny your needs unless you are like a 120 years old yogi, or the hulk of the willpower. So the first thing you can do is to find good and healthy ways to satisfy all of your desires. Do your research, this will make your life so much easier.

The first step of starting a diet is to fill your fridge with healthy food that is full with protein, vitamins and other things your body needs. The first step of quitting stupid TV shows is buying bunch of cool books you've always wanted to read. If you are thinking about going to the McDonalds, the first thing you can do is to eat food that gives you energy and satisfies your hunger, food rich in protein and vitamins. Your body needs fuel, but you can easily replace grains and sugars with milk or meat because the protein is proven to satisfy your cravings much better than carbohydrates. A lot of diets fail to work long term because people are suppressing their natural need for food that gives energy, because energy means calories. Dieting formula is really easy – take less calories than you use. If you eat food that is rich in protein and not much fat or carbohydrates, you take less calories because it helps you feeling less hungry.

If there is a need, don't deny it, don't try to suppress it, just satisfy it in a good way. Direct your focus. Use meditation to direct your thoughts. Master your emotions.

[Marshmallow experiment](#) is a cool, but a bit cruel experiment that was once done in Stanford. Scientists let the kids in a room where they were shown a tasty marshmallow. The children were told that if they won't eat this marshmallow in the next 15 minutes, they will come back and give them another one, so in the end they will have two. The scientists left the room and observed how kids are trying to resist their temptation. It turned out that all the kids who succeeded, were doing the same thing – turned away from it, found a distraction, a way to stop thinking about the marshmallow.



Understand that no way in hell you will act right. if you are constantly

thinking about the marshmallow. This will destroy your willpower in no time. If you want to do the right thing, consciously direct your focus away from thinking about doing the wrong thing.

The best way to learn to do this is to learn meditation. This will teach you to control your thinking, and think only the thoughts that you want.

Know that willpower is more emotional issue than an intellectual one. Trying to convince yourself to act right is fine, but don't "argue" with yourself. It is futile and only burns your willpower. Stop the "thinking" about whether you should do the right thing, and switch to thinking about something productive as fast as possible. Learn to control your emotions, develop [emotional intelligence](#), learn to feel what you want to feel at will.

Pain vs Pleasure

Our instincts tell us to seek for pleasure and avoid the pain. Our actions are controlled by the evolutionary oldest part of our brain – amygdala also known as reptilian brain. It is both a blessing and a curse. It helps us to protect ourselves from danger by controlling our actions. For example, if there is a volley ball unexpectedly flying to your face, it is amygdala that makes you cover your face with arms to protect our eyes and other more vulnerable body parts. On the other hand, amygdala is also responsible for our urge to satisfy our basic needs by making us feel hungry or lusty. It is the part of human brain that has developed the most recently, neocortex, that helps us suppressing these feelings so we could function better in the modern society.

Neocortex is the most lying part of our brain, a wonderful part that allowed mankind to create religions, complex cultures and technologies. With the help of neocortex you can stop associating value with things that can harm you in long run. What you need to do is to train your mind to associate the pain and pleasure you feel with the right thing. Condition yourself to associate the good things with the joy of life and fulfillment, with the ultimate pleasure. Associate the things that are bad for you in the long run with pain.

If you associate a hamburger with tasty nutrition it is almost irresistible. If you associate it with heart disease and cancer it becomes a lot less tempting. To create right associations you can use cognitive reframing.

[Reframing](#) is simply looking at things from a different angle, perceiving the world differently. For example, imagine that you are talking to a friend and you notice that he is starting to look around. You might start to worry whether you are boring him, whether he takes you seriously and cares about what you have to say. What you have done in this

situation is quickly jumping to conclusions that are negative. You have no reason to assume such things. Maybe you are boring him, but maybe he has deep concerns in his life so he can't focus on what you have to say at the moment. Reframing is essentially about seeking opportunities instead of problems. You could see this situation as an opportunity to talk to your friend about why he is acting this way.

Upwards/Downwards Cycles

Understand that your compulsive decisions can affect you a lot more than you think. It is very easy to do little things wrong. For example, if your problem is procrastination, you could play video games all day long when you have decided not to, because you think it is "not a big deal", "it's only for a day" and so on. Excuses.

But you need to also see the potential of your problem of procrastination to grow. All of your decisions and actions depend on each other, and every little step can trigger a positive chain of events, or negative. All youngsters that spend their days playing video games every day for years instead of studying or working started with just one day, even with only just one hour. There is always this "just one more level" they want to complete.

A example of how small things create good events would be you going to gym -> you get healthier and stronger -> your self esteem grows -> you are proud of yourself and inspired -> you decide to read a good book instead of watching tv -> you're even more proud, you want to eat healthier -> next day you feel even better so you're more likely to go to the gym again.

Bad decisions mess with your vision of yourself as a "cool guy", they harm all the areas of your life. You know that this is true. Eating a little cookie is not just about consuming little amount of carbohydrates, it makes you MUCH more likely to repeat the same thing. That is very real. I remember me being very happy, in a high state, doing tons of great stuff for a long time, then deciding to drink a little cup of coffee with chocolate one morning, and 3 days later I found myself depressed, eating crappy food and watching Simpsons.

Similar stuff happened to me more times than I would like to admit. [Always be aware](#), every little decision can trigger a chain of events, so when you decide to fail in executing an "unimportant" action, you need to see how it may really fuck you over in a bigger picture. It is very, very hard to discipline yourself again from anew, when you have felt the old temptations again.

See the big picture. Eating a little candy is not a big deal, but you know that eating a candy will put you three steps back in your dieting plan not because of its calories, but because of how you are treating yourself. It's not just about a candy. It represents your

patterns of behavior, the habits you are developing.

At the same time, focus on the good and beautiful things, all the happiness where your good decisions will lead to, even the smallest decisions.

Gradually Build Macro Momentum

Watch the video above, Tyler explains this idea amazingly. See the level that you are at, and gradually build up your powers to do more and more complicated things. Don't expect to get amazing in a matter of days, instead take right but simple actions that will make you great in a year, in a couple of years. Start simple and improve gradually.

They say that Rome wasn't built in a day for a reason. It takes time to become something grand, something much, much bigger than you are now. With willpower, effort and patience you will always succeed.

Avoid Micro Fuckups

This idea is related to the previous one. It is so easy, and so destructive to fail at little things. Learn to see the moments when you make a small, but wrong decision. These are the easiest to miss, and they are the ones that can bring you down the most. When you have a great momentum going on, no way you will start screwing up with something big because you see the harm behind it too clearly. Stay vigilant to spot the small setbacks. The same way like big achievements rarely start big, big failures also rarely start big. When you are doing good, you won't just get depressed, waste all your time playing video games or even start doing drugs, but it is very possible to gradually slide down into that. So be aware of micro-fuckups, little failures that can turn into a large trouble over time. See the pain behind them, focus on getting rid of it. Pay special attention to failures that seem like "not a big deal" and don't allow them to happen.

Identity Change

Don't just try to change your behaviors, try to change your identity. It means that instead of just developing new habits you also need to develop the right beliefs about yourself. New habits are the best support for your new identity, but it is easy to give up and go back to the old state if your beliefs about yourself haven't fundamentally changed.

It's easy for you not to murder people, or to not steal, or not do drugs because you know that you are not "that kind of person". You're not prohibiting yourself to do that, you just believe that you're not a person who would do such a thing. What you need to do is to develop similar kind of beliefs about all behaviors that you want to change. "I'm not the

kind of person who eats unhealthy food” “I am inspired and do what I do because I love it” “I’m not forcing myself to act right, that’s just the way I do things because I’m awesome” and so on.

Know that “the Last Time” is Always a Lie

How many last hamburgers, cigarettes or hours of playing video games you have had already? Saying that “I’m doing this for the last time” is always a lie. If you don’t have enough reasons to act right today, you won’t just magically have enough reasons to do that tomorrow, in the same situation.

It works similar if you postpone the thing you don’t want to do. Instead of having the “last cigarette” now, tell yourself that you can have one tomorrow. When tomorrow comes, tell yourself again, that you can smoke one tomorrow. If it is always tomorrow, the time for smoking never comes, and you there will come a day when it won’t matter to you if you smoke a cigarette tomorrow or not.

Operant Conditioning Technique

This technique is turning small bad habits into rewards. Give yourself rewards for good behavior. Instead of quitting chocolate forever, decide to eat one chocolate bar when you have deserved it, for example, after you have done 100 push ups. That way you won’t feel the pressure of cutting something that you like out of your life completely, and at the same time you will have a nice little motivation to do the good things.

For example, doing 100 push ups for a little chocolate bar will make you healthier than just not doing pushups, and not eating the chocolate. So this way you can turn a bad habit into a benefit for you. Such little rewards add a big boost to your desire to do something.

Do What Feels Good To You

As a conclusion to this sub-chapter, I would like to say: Don’t overestimate the willpower, it can get you only so far. Strive to achieve the real joy from what you’re doing, act right because it feels good. No tricks and advices will keep you motivated for a long time unless you are doing something that “works” for you, unless you’re getting a joy out of it, at least on some level.

Find ways to make doing the right thing fun and easy for you. It can be done by managing your expectations, being not outcome-dependent, learning the inner game, [learning to get into the flow](#), getting good at what you do, consciously developing your [passion](#), etc.

These are just few of the tools you can use.

Always look for ways to do what you love and love what you do. Life is too short to do things you don't like.

You Don't Have Problems

You really don't. Right now an average person lives better and has more opportunities than a king living 700 years ago could possibly have. We live in a society where everything is possible, available and relatively simple. I mean, holy crap, we can fly! Even the worst cellphone today is much better than people used to have 10 years ago. And there's no way to describe how much I appreciate the internet. I just want to remind you and myself that unless you or your loved ones are dying, you really do not have a problem. It is ridiculous to think about what kind of things upset us sometimes. I don't like cliches, but let's enjoy being alive, and let's appreciate the hell out of what we have.

There are a lot of people that have a lot less than you do, and yet they are much happier. And vice versa, somewhere in the world lives someone you would consider to be a sad and miserable piece of shit that has everything that you have ever dreamed about. Your happiness depends on your world view, on your attitudes, on your emotional intelligence, etc. Your environment and situation in life has very little to do with it, at least much less than you think. The situation you are currently living should have no effect on your happiness. There are very, very few things we don't have power over in our lives.

Do your best to fix things that you can fix, and let go of the rest. There's nothing in the world that can MAKE you miserable. I mean, there is almost absolutely nothing in the world that is impossible to deal with positivity. It is easy to understand if you just look back at yourself when you were younger. How many of the "problems" you had then do you still have? Usually "the problem" isn't the issue that bothers you, but the way how you approach it. With a little thought and effort you can seek for opportunities in any situation. It might seem sometimes that there is nothing to gain in one or the other situation, but all of them give you value. You get experience, you learn from every situation you are in. One friend of mine once said "there is no room without doors, there is always a way out if you keep searching for it". In tough times, keep looking for the exit and you will find it.

How Long Does it Take to Change Your Identity?

There is no particular moment when the deep identity change happens. It is a process that goes on all the time. You could probably say that it happens when one notices the change in himself. For example, for the long time you were a pathetic wreck, then started taking action, doing cool stuff, and at one moment you realize “yeah, I’m cool now”. Bam! – identity changed.

There were times in my life when I was miserable, then I started exercising. And at one point I was jogging in an early morning, and thought came to my mind “hey, I’m doing cool stuff for several weeks already, now I’m the man I want to be”. I was no longer thinking about myself as a sucker, I started identifying myself as a cool person. That was it. When this thought crosses your mind, your identity has changed.

Several months after that awesome moment some bad stuff happened in my life and I regressed back into misery. Then I started acting right again and changed myself. After that I fell back once more. Then rose again, fell again and so on. Identity is not a switch that can be only in two states. Identity is just a set of memories and beliefs about yourself.

I have already told you about the “BTFA” – Believing, Thinking, Feeling and Acting. At the moment when you start to believe that you are a certain kind of person; think, feel, and act like one, you become this person. You can shift into this new identity gradually or you can mindfuck yourself into it in an hour. Both WILL be an identity level change. After that it is just a matter of time for you to get used to your new identity and build strong set of beliefs around it.

You can find a point in your life where good thoughts about yourself outweigh the bad thoughts, where you stop saying “I’m a useless fuck”, and feel entitled to say “I’m an awesome man now”. However, this point is superficial. Identity level change starts when you start changing, and ends when you stop changing and are what you think you are.

How long does it takes for you to notice significant changes in your personality? It depends on person and the goal he or she has set. If you had reinforced bad beliefs about yourself for 50 years, of course, it will be hard and long process to change that. If you are a teenager and haven’t come up with a story about who you are yet, you can start believing anything you want about yourself at any moment. In this case identity level change will happen real fast.

DEEP identity change essentially is the same thing as a not deep identity change (that you can easily get when you are happy, or miserable, or drunk, or in any kind of mood). The only difference is in how long it has been reinforced. The longer you have your sets of beliefs about yourself, the more “legs” for the table you have, the stronger basis you have

for your beliefs about yourself, the “deeper” is the identity change.

Mastery

Introduction

In this part of the book you will find a collection of my tools, ideas and advices about learning and achieving goals. I assume that you are trying to achieve a long term goal that requires learning and achieving mastery at something. I will cover all the ideas on this topic of achieving mastery. However, you don't have to use all of them if your goal is smaller and simpler. Just take the basic ideas presented in this part of the book, learn the pattern and apply it to your situation.

Why Do You Need It

Since you are reading this book you already know why mastery is important, but I will tell that anyway. Setting goals is an incredibly useful tool for guiding your actions and achieving what you want and need. With the cool and effective techniques I am going to describe, you will be able to achieve mastery at almost any field you have set your eyes to.

I believe that you don't want to aimlessly wander around in your life until you get lost or die. I trust that you want to be in charge of your life, have the control of it and a clear direction to move towards. Setting goals is the right tool for that.

I am saying this right off the bat. I assume that you already know what you want or at least have a general direction how you would like to lead your life. You are most likely looking for tools to clarify it, to create a strong and precise structure that will make your dreams come true, to become reality. I trust that after reading the previous parts of the book, you have no more doubt on what is that you desire the most, what kind of path to take in your life.

Because you already have a clear goal in your mind, there is no need for a long introduction so let's get straight to the point.

Setting Goals

First of all, you have to define your goals. It is impossible to have just a vague idea on what kind of mastery you would like to achieve. Make your goals as clear and precise as possible. Even if what you want is abstract, like "I want to learn painting, blogging or any other kind of skill", it is still better that it is vague and general than no goal at all. Without

defining goal, there is no way that you could be defined as master of something.

The next part of defining your goal is a bit more complex. Your goal has to be measurable in a way, so you can always know whether you have achieved it or not. You have to be able to track your progress. In case of painting, you can set a goal to become an artist whose works are represented in exhibitions. In case of blogging, you can set a goal to have a certain base of readers of your blog.

When you have decided what exactly your goal is, it is time to think of how and when you are planning to achieve it. At first this might sound hard to do, especially if you are trying out new areas in your life, but once you are sure of your passion for a particular activity and use the tools that I am sharing with you in this part of the book, it will become crystal clear to you.

5 Year Long Term Goals

Since you want to get the most out of your life, start with understanding what is that you want in it. Choose few most important long term goals for yourself. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What are the 3-5 most important things that you've achieved by then, things that changed your life the most? These few most important goals will give you a general direction to move towards. They will help you with creating smaller goals that will allow you to achieve the big ones. It is the best if they cover the most important areas of your life such as work, relationships, health, etc.

Once you've done that, see if your goals are smart. Check if they match the [S.M.A.R.T.](#) criteria. This is a simple, yet effective tool that allows you to improve and define your goals better.

So your goals should be:

S.M.A.R.T.

Specific

I have written this earlier, but I can't put enough emphasis on how important this is. Your goal has to be specific, clear, unambiguous. There has to be no doubt on what exactly it is that you want to achieve. No matter what kind of situation you are facing, it is always better to know what exactly you want, try to create a precise image of the goal in your head, as clear as possible. If you skip this part of goal creation, your success is doomed at

the very beginning. It is like being blind with a blind dog as a guide dog. It might work out, but the chances of that are very slim. If you are to choose a guide in your life, make sure it is clear-cut and obvious.

Sum up your goal in one sentence. Think about what exactly you want to accomplish and for what reasons. Possibilities in your life are almost endless. If you create a vague goal, it is very likely that you will lose the reins of your life carriage and follow directions that are laid out by someone else. Knowing your goal will help you to focus your efforts and be more clear in your intent. You will see the world differently. You will instantly know whether the opportunity that arises is helping you to reach your goals or will it only lead you astray.

In order for a goal to be specific, you have to know not only what you want to accomplish, you have to know why you have chosen something as your goal. People face many temptations every day. Some of them help you with achieving your goal. Others help you with relaxing. Don't get me wrong. Even Einstein enjoyed a cup of coffee time after time, while he was working on theories that would change the way how people see the world. However, there are few people that have achieved as much as he has. It is much easier to live a careless life. That is how alcoholics and drug addicts have chosen to live their lives. They have no direction, no purpose in life. If they had a dream, a big dream to follow, they would probably give into temptation once in a while, drink a glass of wine or two, but their lives would be lead by their ultimate passion, a passion from which a big part of humanity could benefit like science, art or philosophy.

On the other side it is common in modern society to believe that having such ultimate life goal requires a lot of painful sacrifices. It is a sad belief, indeed, that if one is following his or her dream, it would come for a big price. It is not true. Not all great poets or inventors have suffered from poverty, not all great workers feel tedious while working. In contrary, the circumstances people are in are secondary, if they enjoy what they are doing.

So why you should choose something as your goal? Because of the benefits you get by accomplishing it. If you want to be a master of something, you have to choose a skill that you enjoy doing. It might not always be fun as playing a game or laying at the beach, but there is no reason to pursue mastery in activity you find dull or boring. It has to be something you love doing, that gives benefits you enjoy having. There is no need to pursue a career as an actor, if you don't enjoy public attention.

Now that you know what you want and why you want it, see if your goal is also measurable.

Measurable

You should always be able to tell whether you have achieved your goal or not and, if possible, how close you are to achieving it. You want to be able to see your progress towards your life goal. To know how close or far you are to achieving your goal, it has to be measurable. It is not possible to know how you have progressed towards your goal, if it is not measurable. You can't know even if you are actually moving towards your goal or away from it if there is no concrete criteria on how to measure its progress.

A measurable goal will help you stay on the right track, reach your smaller goals and feel the joy of achievement once you reach them. Later in this book I will give you tools that will help you with splitting your big goal into smaller parts so the measurements could be easily tracked.

All measurable goals are goals that have a definite way how to know if they are accomplished. If you want to be an accomplished painter, for example, you can set your big goal to have at least three personal exhibitions. If you have set your goal like this, you can easily track your progress. Once you have had your first personal exhibition, you know exactly how far you have gotten in reaching your goal.

Attainable

Your goal should be possible to achieve. It has to be reasonable, within your abilities, and you need to believe that you can do it. The best goals are challenging, but possible to attain, they are not extreme. It is important that your goals are within your reach, otherwise setting them would be meaningless.

When people are specifying the goals that are important to them, it is natural to look for ways how to make them come true. There are some attitudes, abilities, skills and financial capacity one can work on developing in order to reach the ultimate goal. However, there are also limitations that can't be overcome regardless of how much passion or money one has to make the dreams come true.

If your goal has to do with your physical attributes such as health, ability to sing or getting at better shape, there are genetic limitations which could possibly prevent you from reaching your goal. For example, it is possible to learn to sing, a lot of people are good at singing, and some of them even perform for big audiences in opera halls or rock concerts. However, it is very unlikely that a tone deaf person could master the skill of singing.

When it comes to physical shape, there are a lot of limitations too. All people can gain or lose weight to certain extent, but the body shape usually remains more or less the same.

It is impossible for a tall person with big bones to look like a tiny Christmas elf. On a side note, I'd like to mention that if you set your goal to lose weight, think of how to maintain it too. It is a common mistake to starve oneself for few months, lose some weight only to get it back month after quitting the diet. If your goal is to have healthy weight, regardless if you want to lose or gain it, it is important that you find a diet that you could enjoy for the rest of your life, a diet you wouldn't want to quit at all. When you are certain that you have the capacity to reach your goal, see if it really is important for you or the society you live in. This means that your goal has to be relevant.

Relevant

The goal that you are pursuing should matter to you. It should transform your life in the way that you want. If you have consciously chosen the 3 most important 5-year goals in the previous steps, it obviously won't be a problem. If you feel that the time, effort and resources you are investing in reaching your goal will pay off, the goal is relevant and worthwhile. It is worth pursuing.

Sometimes you might need support from others to accomplish your goal. If you want to be an accomplished painter, it is not enough to create a lot of paintings. You will need either a manager to help you with selling your artwork or create good relationships with people who might be interested in displaying or purchasing your art. If your art, or your blog posts, or your books match the needs of contemporary society, it is relevant to them. It is worth doing things that give benefit to both you and society. If you are an accomplished artist, you can earn living by making art and bring joy to the souls of people that love your paintings.

For a goal to be relevant, make sure that you are the right person to do it, and that it is the right time to make your goal true.

Time Bound

Set a particular date, a strict deadline by which you want to achieve your goal. According to the Parkinson's law "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." In order for you to be able to plan and be motivated to move forward, you want to know the date or at least an approximate time, by which you will achieve your goal.

If you ground your goals within a time frame, your efforts on completion will be more focused than when you have not set a certain time limit for yourself. A deadline or a milestone will give you a sense of urgency. Once in a while life happens and you have to give up your goal to focus on things that need immediate attention. If your goal is bound in time, it will be much harder to abandon it. If you set time frames for smaller goals, you

will know that you have to get this or that done this week, this month or within six months.

Correcting The Course

Once in a while you may be in doubt, whether the goals that you have set are good enough, you may worry that you will change your mind, or that circumstances may change, or that it won't necessarily work. Don't. It is important to understand that the goals that you have picked are needed to give you a general direction, a point to move towards from now on. The closer you will get, the more experience you will have and the better you will understand what is that you want and how it is done.

As you are going towards a goal, you will be correcting the course. I love the following plane metaphor: when a pilot is navigating a plane, he just starts moving in a general direction, and the closer he gets to the point of destination, the better he can adjust the course to end up in the right place. Pilots aren't be able to set a perfect course in the beginning, and if they would try, they would eventually lose the right track somewhere in the middle of flight. It is too hard to know everything that you are going to do from the start. However, the further you go, the clearer it gets.

Gather all the necessary information that you need for the start, then go. At the very beginning you just need the information that will allow you to take the first step. By the time you are done, you will already have an idea what to do next. That is way more productive and simple than trying to predict everything you can encounter on your journey before you have even started.

Trust your judgment, believe that you will be able to correct the course and make the right decisions as you go, be flexible when needed and find other ways in case something doesn't work. Often you may not have all the information needed to accomplish the goal, but the interesting thing is that you don't always have to. Get all the necessary information for starting, and believe that you are able to figure out the rest as you go.

Get On With It

Once you have put a reasonable amount of thought into setting your goals, get on with it, start working on it as soon as possible. Don't doubt yourself too much, don't get stuck in the indecision. There is a point where trying to think and plan more is counterproductive. Don't confuse planning with procrastination. Sometimes the worst choice and action is better than making no choice and continuing to be stuck. So make the best decision

based on the information that you have, and get on with it. Remember that you can always correct the course later. The sooner you start, the closer you are to reaching your goal.

Commit To The Goal

Commit to the course of action that you have chosen and have faith in yourself. You can consciously set a certain time (every week or month or even every evening) to reevaluate your goals and correct the course, but the rest of the time *align your thoughts, feelings, and actions* towards achieving the goal, and remove all the doubts. Make the 5 year commitments. It may be hard for you to figure out all of your life goals right now, but you can commit to the most important goal for 5 years, and then figure out what to do next.

Creating The Plan

After you have decided on your major goals, it is important to create the plan of achieving them. How exactly do you do that?

Breaking Down

Breaking down is a simple yet amazing tool that I am always using. In essence it is breaking down your complicated long term goal into 3-5 major steps that this goal consists of. Don't worry too much about the details, they will become clear later. Once you have divided your ultimate goal into 3-5 parts, focus on achieving the first of these steps.

That allows you to stop worrying about how to achieve this one large and complicated goal. Instead you can just figure out how to achieve the first part of it (which is, in fact, 3 times simpler and faster). By the time you have done that, start planning how to achieve the second part. Working on the second part will be much easier because you will already have a lot of experience and understanding from the efforts you have put in while achieving the first part.

However, the first step could also be complicated, so you will need to break it down one more time. Break the first step down into 3 other, much smaller steps on which you will work on to complete the big first step. If necessary, you can break down every single step that you have created.

Do this until you find a very clear and manageable task that you can accomplish in relatively short period of time. This task will be very easy to understand and solve, yet at

the same time it will be the best thing that you can do to achieve your goal. By the time you've done it, you will be able to move onto the next, then to the next and so on.

Once you have achieved the 3 smallest goals you will have completed the first larger goal. After reaching the 3 larger goals you will have achieved the first big step on the path to your ultimate goal.

You can roughly estimate how long it will take for you to achieve smaller goals. For example, if you estimate that the big goal will take you 3 years to accomplish, that means that the goals of the first breakdown level will take you approximately 1 year, the 2nd level would be 4 months, the 3rd level - slightly longer than a month. However, life isn't always perfect so different goals can sometimes take different amount of time to be achieved.

If we return to the accomplished painter example, your main goal could be having a personal art exhibition. For that you would need artwork that is worthy of representing, creating influence in artist society and finding a gallery that would like to organize your exhibition. The first big step of achieving this goal is painting. If you break down this big step into smaller ones, you would need art supplies and time for painting itself. Getting art supplies could be a quite easy step to achieve. When it comes to actual painting, you have to figure out how much time do you have that you could dedicate to this activity, as well observe how productive you are so you could find out how many good paintings you can create in the given amount of time.

The breakdown process might seem complicated at first, so I can offer you another nice tool that makes planning process very convenient and manageable. It's the goals table.

Navigation Map Of Your Goals

You can create a table of your goals that will help you with navigating the way to your ultimate goal. You can make your own table or use the one I have made for you and alter it according to your specific goal. In the first column write down your 3 most important long term goals. In the second column note down 3 big steps that are needed to accomplish each goal. In the 3rd column just write the 3 steps that it takes to accomplish the first big step. It should look approximately like this:

3 year goals	1 year goals	4 month goals	~1 month goals
1st goal	<i>1st year goal</i>	<i>1st 4 month goal</i>	<i>1st 1 month goal</i>
	<i>2nd year goal</i>	<i>2nd 4 month goal</i>	<i>2nd 1 month goal</i>
	<i>3rd year goal</i>	<i>3rd 4 month goal</i>	<i>3rd 1 month goal</i>
2nd goal	<i>1st year goal</i>	<i>1st 4 month goal</i>	<i>1st 1 month goal</i>
	<i>2nd year goal</i>	<i>2nd 4 month goal</i>	<i>2nd 1 month goal</i>
	<i>3rd year goal</i>	<i>3rd 4 month goal</i>	<i>3rd 1 month goal</i>
3rd goal	<i>1st year goal</i>	<i>1st 4 month goal</i>	<i>1st 1 month goal</i>
	<i>2nd year goal</i>	<i>2nd 4 month goal</i>	<i>2nd 1 month goal</i>
	<i>3rd year goal</i>	<i>3rd 4 month goal</i>	<i>3rd 1 month goal</i>

This way you will have a complete overview of your goals, your goal navigation map. You will be able to see its big picture (the first column, goals that you want to accomplish within a year), as well as the smallest goals in the last column, each of them you will accomplish in a shorter period of time.

The idea is to break down larger goals into smaller parts, to create a general plan. Obviously you can break them down into more parts than 3 or spend a different amount of time on each of them. You can adjust the scheme in any way you like. It is just convenient to divide a goal into 3 parts each. When you are creating your plan, it can be hard to predict how long a task will take. Use this tool to look at the big picture and figure out the general steps in the direction that you want. Once you have done this, if you want to create a precise plan, you can take the next 1-2 months, and draw a timeline, divide it into weeks or even days, depending on how precise you want to get. Then you can mark specific deadlines for each little goal. This way you can take best of the both worlds: general rough sketch and direction, as well precise timing.

If the difference of time between goals is big, for example, one is twice longer than another, you can just plan 2 months instead of 1 for accomplishing the first goal. If the difference is small, it doesn't matter now because you will allocate the time more precisely when you will execute them.

Daily Goals

Now that you have your own table, you can break it down even further. You should already have a very good idea of what you need to achieve in the next month, so you can figure out some daily goals for yourself. Think about the tasks that you need to do every day to be able to finish your first monthly goal. When you wake up in the morning, write down things that you need to do on that day that will help you to achieve your monthly goal. Start each day with setting your daily goals. Chose several most important things that you will be able to do today, write them down and in the evening make sure that you've

done them. If you work on this routine, your ultimate goal will be closer to you with each and every day.

Pomodoro Technique

Of course, once you have set your daily goals you may break each of them down into 3-5 small 20-30 minutes tasks. There is a great technique that can help you with that. It is called "[pomodoro](#)". This is a simple, yet very effective time-management method. The idea is that once you have set yourself a small task, work on it 25 minutes nonstop. After the 25 minutes have passed, take a short 5 minute break, then start another "pomodoro" - 25 minute work. It is a good idea to use a timer to track how much time you have used for both working and resting. Four "pomodori" form a set after which the break can be a bit longer (15-20 minutes).

This method helps you to focus and upgrades your productivity. It also encourages you to see any goal as a series of very small and understandable tasks that are easy to accomplish. If you are interrupted during a "pomodoro", the other activity should be postponed or "pomodoro" abandoned. Once you have completed a "pomodoro", you'll get a sense of accomplishment because a certain part of your ultimate plan is completed and because you'll get your well deserved short rest.

Some people choose their own time frames when applying "pomodoro" practice. If it feels better to you, you can work for an hour and then take a 10-15 minute break instead of focusing on 25 minute work segments with 5 minute breaks. You can experiment with time frames until you find the one that works the best for you.

"Pomodoro" is a great approach to work. If you want to learn more about "pomodoro" technique, you can read about it [here](#).

Developing Habits

30 Day Challenges

Now that you know your goals, from the largest to the smallest ones, you know exactly what to do. In this chapter I'll tell you the best way how exactly to reach your goals. A crucial part of making your wishes come true is developing habits. Achieving goals is a long term process, so after you know what you need to do to reach your goals, you want to develop a daily routine. It is important to set tasks so you get used to completing them. Achieving your goals has to become a part of your life, so that every day you're getting one step closer towards what you want.

One of the best ways to develop habits is challenges. They keep us motivated, and being successful at challenges can give you great inspirational power. The best habit developing challenges usually happen over a period of 30 days because brain readjusts and gets used to new behaviors in about a month. If you'll keep repeating the same thing every day for 30 days, it becomes natural and very easy for you.

Here's a nice tool for the 30 day challenge:

Habit Grid

Create a grid like the one in the next page. Each of the cells represents a day. For every successful day of the challenge, when you have accomplished all the tasks you wanted to, draw a tick (V). To make the 30 day challenge truly challenging, for every failure to do the days goal, erase 4 V's. So when you are beginning the challenge, you are setting out to do some particular action every day. If you miss one day, cross out 4 days.

V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
V	V	V					

Your goal is to fill the whole grid with checkmarks. By the time you've done that, it won't

take you almost any effort to continue performing your habits. You will work on your goals naturally, because you will be used to it then. This way you can very conveniently track your progress. After the whole grid is filled, congratulations, you have accomplished the 30 day challenge and developed a habit!

Gradually Implementing One By One

I have several tasks that I've decided to do every day. They include exercising, blogging, freelancing, learning physics, etc. It's hard to start doing all of them at once, so it is a good idea to start with getting used to doing one of them every day. Once I have developed one habit, starting to work on another one is easy. This way I have developed habits to accomplish 5 daily goals every day. Each of them contributes to my monthly goals, which then will combine into yearly goals. As the result, this practice will lead me to achieving my dreams.

Sadly there is no way how you could rush to the mastery. The essence of achieving greatness lies in developing habits that form slowly. However, once you can perform an action as a habit already, it will come easy to you. If the tasks are both exciting and challenging, they will also give you great enjoyment.

Principles Of Learning

Now that you know exactly what to do, have goals, clear plan and daily habits to support them, there is almost 100% certainty that you will succeed. Now let's look at the major principles that you might want to use in the process. These principles will help you a lot with achieving your goals.

Massive Action

First of all, take massive action. Learning without doing is like reading books about body building without ever going to the gym. Your knowledge about the subject is like a map that shows you how to get to the goal. Action is actually moving forward and walking a way towards the fulfillment of your dreams. At the very beginning you just need to find only the minimum necessary knowledge to be able to start acting. Don't procrastinate by reading tons of books before you start. You will learn all the information that you need along the way.

Come up with a practical challenge, figure out the first little step that you need to take and take it. If you are reading information for a good practical reason, you will learn much faster than if you are reading just for the theory. Massive action is the main force

behind progress, this is the source of real experience.

Stop Procrastinating

Sometimes it is very easy to start a task, other times you might find yourself doing anything but what you should be doing. It might be because of several reasons. The most common ones are fear of failure, perfectionism and disorganization. Nobody has reached perfection or succeeded by doing nothing. There are countless “I would be a great writer if only I had enough time” and similar excuses people use to justify themselves. Once you overcome your fear and perfectionism, you will stop being stuck in your situation. You will be in control of your actions, become better at what you do and get closer to reaching your dreams.

If you think that the task you are about to do is not enjoyable, then you should know that no action is enjoyable until you get into it. It gets enjoyable only once you get in the flow.

Get In The Flow

Flow is a state of being completely immersed in what you're doing. When you are in the flow, you are completely focused, present, and very efficient. This state feels incredibly good, I believe this is the reason why people enjoy doing complicated things like science or art.

In order to be in the flow or, as it is sometimes called, the state, you need a clear, precise goal which should be just *a little* bit more complicated than what you normally do. Even if the task is clear, engaging and interesting, it could take some time for you to enter the state. It is perfectly normal. Not being into the task at the very beginning is common for most people, so don't give up too early. If you lose focus, just gently get your attention back to the question you are thinking about or the action you were doing.

The flow is very similar to the state of meditation. It brings enjoyment. When you are doing something very exciting, time seems to pass much faster, and you don't care about the outcome of what you are doing. You are into the process. The task becomes interesting. By the way, “inter esse” in Latin means “to be into”. The flow refers to the action you are into, action that interests you.

If you wish to read more about the flow, you can do it [here](#).

Deliberate Practice

The second, equally important principle is deliberate practice. This means consciously setting challenges for yourself and solving them. Deliberate practice is constantly

pushing forward instead of just going through repetitive motions. To reach mastery at anything, just learning is not enough. Once a person has learned a lot, he or she has a good knowledge base or a good set of skills. What makes masters stand out from people with good knowledge or good skills at something, is deliberate practice.

If you think, for instance, about music students, you would notice the difference in performances between the ones that have just learned the necessary minimum and the ones that have practiced on their initiative. Excellence is not merely performing a skill a big number of times, it grows out of the ways *how* one practices. People that become masters are continually practicing a skill at more challenging levels on their own initiative. The best motivation for deliberate practice is the next learning principle – passion.

Cultivate Your Passion

Enjoying what you do is crucial. You *need* to love what you do to get really good, it is not optional. If you don't love what you do, you are doing the wrong thing. Reaching mastery at anything is a long process, it is a marathon, not a sprint. You won't get too far relying only on your willpower. There is that saying that you need 10,000 hours of practice to become a master at a skill. Nobody can put so much effort into something that is not enjoyable. Also life is too short to do things that you don't like. But if you don't feel strong passion now, don't worry. Passion is not a preexisting quality that you either have or don't have. It is something that you can learn and develop. Look for ways to do that. [This](#) post may help you with that.

Understanding Comes First

This concept is similar to deliberate practice.

Don't rely on your subconsciousness. Don't expect to get good by mindlessly doing something over and over again without understanding how things actually work. Hoping that you are "training your subconsciousness" is a weak argument. Hopes that mere repetition will make someone better don't pay off in the long run. Even worse, what if you are doing something the wrong way all the time? The more you repeat it, the more you develop the habit of doing things the wrong way. This can if not ruin your path to mastery, then push you back a lot. You'd have to relearn the things and forget your old habits.

This is why it is important to start with doing things slowly, understanding each step. Only *then* your brain gets used to the process, and you won't have to put much focus on it. Understanding enables you to perform a skill faster and more efficiently or focus on

more precise details. Don't try to skip to this part, don't hope that you can get good without detailed understanding of how you're doing it, comprehension always comes first. Only with understanding comes speed and efficiency.

Consistency

Getting good at something is a long term task. Getting better consistently is a lot more important than getting better fast. Approach everything you do with this idea in mind. Do not rush, keep the big picture in mind. Make sure that you are not pushing yourself too much so you wouldn't quit. If you need to take a break to focus your thoughts, do so. It is much better than taking nootropics or even drinking coffee on regular basis. You need to keep steady pace, you need to be able to keep doing what you're doing in a month, in a year. Always remember your main goal. This is why your health matters. A sick person can't be an achiever. It simply won't work out.

Develop habits that you can do every day, habits that will naturally lead you to where you are going to be in long term.

The Inner Game

Every activity has outer game, these are things that you do physically, your practical skills; and inner game that are your attitudes to what you do, your mindset, everything that happens in your mind while going towards your goal. The inner game is equally important to the outer game. Learn it, pay attention to it. The inner game includes your ability to focus and deal with stress and fears, your state of mind, your emotional intelligence, your expectations etc. If you feel stuck or unable to move forward, it is possible that the problem is not in your knowledge or in technical execution, but in your inner game.

Know That You Can

If you do anything for 10 years straight, there is no way you won't become a master. Of course, if you employ the principles of learning I have shared with you in this chapter. Understand that, if you won't quit, success is inevitable. Don't let anybody mess with your confidence, don't let others tell you what you can or cannot do. There is a difference between intelligent course-correcting and irrational fears or doubts. It is a cliché, but "believe in yourself". Once you have made a decision – don't doubt it. If failing is not an option for you, you won't fail.

Shortcomings Are Irrelevant

If there is no way in hell you are going to give up something in your life, if you've decided to accomplish your goal no matter what, that means that this *is* happening. Therefore, your shortcomings can't stop you. It doesn't matter how hard it gets or how long it takes, if in the end you are going to achieve your dream, which you are not willing to give up.

If you are afraid that you are not clever enough, not pretty, not skillful, or whatever else, you will become as clever, confident or skilled as you need in the process. You will find a way around any other shortcoming that you have.

Other Advices And Tips

Managing Expectations

You need to clearly understand what you can and can't do. If you are constantly expecting from yourself something impossible, something that is way beyond your abilities, it will just make you stressed and frustrated. In the result you'll be counterproductive. You would be less productive if you are unhappy and unsatisfied.

The same, of course, is true of the opposite. If you are expecting too little, you will just get lazy and progress slower than you can. This is also not good for your goals and yourself. Manage your expectations and make sure that the tasks are both interesting and challenging, but still doable.

You Are Not Your Skill

All people have certain sets of skills and abilities. First, let's make the difference between these two clear. An ability is the quality of being able to do something. It is something we are born with and can do with little to no effort. Almost all people have abilities to see, to hear or to move. Some people have a natural ability to be observant or caring, for example. A skill, on the other hand, is a learned capacity to carry out tasks in efficiently with the minimum outlay of time, energy or both. In other words, we learn and practice skills and eventually get better by performing them. Some people have skills in music, others have skills in languages, some are very efficient at performing technical tasks. Even simple things such as cooking or being a good conversationalist are skills that people learn and practice.

Our abilities is who we really are. Abilities can limit our potential. Not all people can become successful bodybuilders or weightlifters because not all of us are genetically

suited for such tasks. In a way this is good. If all of us would be excellent at something, there would be no excellence at all. It would be just the norm then.

Skills can be learned over time. They can be forgotten too if they are not practiced enough. All masters were novices at some point in their lives. If you don't have a skill, it should have nothing to do with the way how you feel about yourself. If you have gotten bad at something because you haven't practiced it, you can still get back on the track.

When it comes to skills, being good is the result of what you have been practicing. It is impossible to instantly change the set of skills you have. However, you have the power to do what you are good at to make it even better. What matters is your actions. If you are not good at something at the beginning, don't let that influence how you feel about yourself. If you are following your dreams and putting effort to make them true, you will feel good about yourself.

If you want to learn more on when to be self-critical and when it is better to stay calm and carry on, read this [blog post](#).

Take Action

Make action your only criteria for success. In fact, action is the most important criteria for succeeding at anything. When there is no action, there is no way you can get anything done. You can't be directly in control of your skills or results. What you can control is the actions you take. As long as you are following your goals and doing your best, feel happy and satisfied about that. Sometimes it might be hard to find motivation to do something, but remember that you can always strive to get in the flow, when everything you do feels natural and easy.

105%

Always be engaged in what you do, use all your powers, all your capacities and constantly improve them. Never do anything halfheartedly. If you have decided to do something, get the most out of it, and do it in the most efficient way. Try to do your absolute best, try to do something more than before. If you are on your way to become a ballet dancer, jump a bit higher than you could before. If you are a scientist, try to explore ideas that might seem crazy at first. In short, strive to do 105% of what you can do now.

You can't develop your skills, if you are not stretching your limits. You would end up being trapped in the position you are right now. It might be an already good position, but

if you don't improve yourself, someone else could not only reach your position, but even take it over by being better than you are.

CANI

CANI is an acronym that stands for “Constant And Neverending Improvement”. Tony Robbins came up with the CANI idea inspired by the Japanese word “kaizen”. “Kai” means “change” and “zen” stands for “good”. If you are committing to getting better at what you do every day, you are constantly improving yourself. If you set a little goal every day that makes you better in some area, you will reach mastery in unusual time. By being in synch with the principles of CANI, you are growing as a person and living your life at its fullest.

Consistency

Achieving mastery at anything is a long term process. Don't count on rules or tricks to get it fast. Remember that you don't have to get good at what you do within a week, or a month. You need to get good at this *eventually*. Rushing will not speed up this process, it will only ruin it. Therefore, choose tools and make decisions that will work in a long run. Do sustainable things that will keep you healthy, happy, and moving forward in a year, in 5 years, in 10 years. Set out for the long run. If you are consistent and not rushing to reach your goal, you might reach it much faster than you expect it.

No Rules Just Tools

All the ideas are just tools designed to help you. They can be useful, but not obligatory. Use whatever works, abandon or change everything else. Improvement is a process of exploration. You might find wonderful advice and tools, but they are hidden among a lot of tips and tricks that don't work well, don't work at all and in the worst case, can even harm your progress.

People are quick to give advice, especially in fields at which most of us has some experience such as relationships, maintaining health and similar. Just go to any person and ask an advice in one of those fields. Almost certainly all people would be willing to share their insights. In this age of information technologies it is easier than ever to find advice on virtually anything. There is a wide range of opinions on how things work or how to do something more efficiently. If the idea or advice you have just found sounds reasonable, give it a try and see for yourself how it works.

Do What Works The Best

This is simple. Do whatever works the best. You could get confused by emotions, or social conditioning. However, don't do anything if it is counterproductive, just because it is easier or, even worse, just because you are expected to do it. Sometimes the things that feel easy are simply efficient, other times "easiness" is just an excuse for laziness. Don't get distracted, don't fall into the "auto-pilot" reactive mode, where you are just reacting on the situation around you. Don't be the subject of the events that happen around you, be the cause of them!

You are in charge of your personal development. You are the only person in this world that can improve your skills and powers. Use your logic to figure out what works the best, what you can or can not control, come up with the plan of action and then execute it. Feel good about it, be proud for doing the best thing you can do. Remember, doing the best thing that is in your power is all that matters.

Conclusion

Nobody is born a master at something. All our skills take time, patience and effort to develop. The process of becoming a master is long. In fact, true self-development lasts for a lifetime. There are many obstacles you can face in your quest to mastery, many unexpected things, but don't let that stop you. The only way how you can make your dreams come true and become a master at whatever you have set out your mind to, is by going towards your ultimate goal.

I trust that the tools I shared with you in this part of the book will come in handy when you are not sure which direction to go or how to know if what you doing is right. Follow your heart, follow your dreams, act and achieve your goals!

Summary

"One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself."
-Leonardo da Vinci

Before I bid you farewell, I would like to thank you for taking your time and reading this book. I hope that it has given you good ideas on how to improve yourself and become the best possible person you can be so you can get the most out of your life. A fulfilled life is the only life that is truly worth living.

It was a true pleasure to share my experience and insights with you. Life isn't always easy even if you have set your life goal. You might come to a point where you question your own intentions, where you question your willpower or abilities. In these times you might want to pick up this book and reread the relevant passages.

I wish you all the best on reaching your life goal!

If you like this book and are curious about my work, you are always welcome to visit my website:

<http://digital-mind.co/>

Illustrations belong to Randall Munroe and his amazing webcomic xkcd.com