

LIFE LESSONS LEARNED FROM  
BEST-SELLING BOOKS



# GUIDELINES

By Paul Minors

© 2016 Paul Minors. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author or publisher (except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages and/or show brief video clips in a review).

Disclaimer: The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation. This work is sold with the understanding that the author is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. The author shall not be liable for damages arising here from. The fact that an organization or website is referred to in this work as a citation or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author endorses the information that the organization or website may provide or recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that internet websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

# Table of Contents



## **Introduction**

Page 3



## **1. Productivity**

Page 5



## **2. Leadership**

Page 16



## **3. Business**

Page 26



## **4. Health**

Page 38



## **5. Life in General**

Page 49



## **6. Happiness**

Page 63



## **7. Habits**

Page 74



## **6. Confidence**

Page 85



## **Closing Thoughts**

Page 97



## **Your Guidelines**

Page 98



## **Reading Resources**

Page 100



## **References**

Page 101

# INTRODUCTION

Books. They're great aren't they? Filled with ideas from the world's top performers, CEO's, athletes, philanthropists and storytellers. There's a certain romance attached to the idea of purchasing a new book, flicking through the pages, smelling the fresh paper and embarking on a new adventure or beginning a new lesson.

The potential value derived from a book is significantly greater than the cost of purchase the book, and so they become an extremely cost effective way to improve yourself. I love the idea that you can tap into the mind of the world's top performers, learn how they think and operate, all for a minor cost.

Take [\*Meditations\*](#) for example. Written over 2,000 years ago by Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, this book is filled with the lessons and ideas from a man who, at the time, was the most powerful person in the world. The lessons in this book have been translated and preserved for thousands of years, now available for \$6 in paperback or for 75 cents on the Kindle.

My personal reading list only ever gets longer and longer. I try my best to keep up and consume as much as I can. In an effort to really learn from each book, I produce book summaries (also [available for download](#)) and deliberately slow down in order to fully consume each lesson. I'm particularly interested in books related to business, productivity, marketing, entrepreneurship and leadership. As these are the areas I seek to better myself in the most and so they consume the majority of my reading time.

As I've read more and more books, I've noticed specific themes begin to emerge. The same ideas, although presented in different words, seem to come up again and again. While each author presents their own take on an idea, there is inevitably some overlap.

This book, Guidelines, is a summary of those key themes. It's the master summary of all my book summaries. Split into key sections including productivity, business, health, leadership and life in general, this book is aimed at business owners, marketers, leaders and high performers who want to better themselves and accomplish more. The purpose of this book is to present you with the highly specific and actionable things you can do to be more effective in your work. In essence, listing a set of guidelines for how to do better work.

While writing Guidelines, I have revisited numerous books to pull out the most important ideas and summarise them for you here. This meant carefully curating which ideas to include and which ones to leave out. When deciding what to include, I set the requirement that before adding a guideline, I had to find multiple sources to back up what was being said. This meant that even though I had some of my own great ideas of guidelines to include, they were left out as I couldn't find the evidence to support them.

It's easy to consume books and never make any changes in your life. It's much harder to recognise the need or opportunity to change and implement the necessary steps. My hope is that by reading Guidelines, you will become a more action orientated person. Someone who will actually do the things these books talk about. Please keep this in mind as you read, not only Guidelines but any book for that matter. You should consume, learn, apply and execute... Let's go!



# PRODUCTIVITY

# PRODUCTIVITY

"I don't have time" is one of the most common struggles I hear people talk about. It's easy to feel frustrated and overwhelmed when we try to be more organised and plan out our days only to have the plan ruined by endless distractions. When this happens, focusing and sustaining "deep work" is almost impossible. As we try to catch up, we get further away from actually accomplishing our goals and end up spending less time on the things we really care about.

A couple of years ago, I made a discovery. After completing an online course to help find my "why" (my purpose), I learned that I'm the kind of person that's incredibly driven by self-improvement and accomplishing more. Whether that's at work, or in terms of my health, relationships or personal life.

When I learned this about myself, I realised something; if my WHY is to accomplish more, then productivity is HOW I do this.

It makes sense right? When you're more productive, more organised and get more done in less time, this is the best way to reach your goals and get more out of life. Think about the most successful people you know (however you define success). Chances are, they're a pretty productive type of person.

Gary Keller, author of [\*The ONE Thing\*](#) said it best:

---

*"Personal productivity is the building block of all business profit. The two are inseparable. A business can't have unproductive people yet magically still have an immensely profitable business. Great businesses are built one productive person at a time. And not surprisingly, the most productive people receive the greatest rewards from their businesses."*

---

Whether you're a business owner or an employee, I hope you can see how productivity is the vehicle you can use to rise to the top.

In this first section of Guidelines, I'm going to summarise what I consider being some of the most important productivity principles to live by.

## 1. Focus more on less

Too often, we make ourselves unnecessarily busy with mediocre tasks and unimportant work. Why?

I think it's because being "busy":

- Makes us feel important. When we're racing around, jumping between different projects and people, we feel more needed. And it's good to feel needed, right?
- Is expected of us. When you have a job, you're expected to be working all the time. If you're not as busy as the person sitting next to you, well surely you can't be adding as much value to the company, can you?
- Is something we enjoy. Often we get bored when there's nothing to do, so we make ourselves busy with lots of "stuff". This creates a false sense of productivity.
- Is something we can use an excuse. If someone questions why you didn't do something, or why a result wasn't that good, you can just say you were too busy. Problem solved!

Numerous books have discussed the idea of focussing more on less. In other words, allocating the same or even more time to fewer tasks. For example, instead of spending an 8-hour day working on 10-20 small tasks, spend those same 8 hours on a couple of essential things.

Greg McKeown opens his book, [\*Essentialism\*](#), by describing the way of the essentialist:

---

*"The way of the Essentialist means living by design, not by default. Instead of making choices reactively, the Essentialist deliberately distinguishes the vital few from the trivial many, eliminates the nonessentials, and then removes obstacles so the essential things have clear, smooth passage."*

---



Similarly, the founders of 37 Signals (now more commonly known as Basecamp) and authors of the book, [\*Rework\*](#), Jason Fried and David Heinmeier state in their book:

---

*"Workaholics don't actually accomplish more than nonworkaholics. They may claim to be perfectionists, but that just means they're wasting time fixating on inconsequential details instead of moving on to the next task."*

---

The benefits of focusing more on less should be obvious. By cutting out everything that's not essential and all the smaller tasks that give the impression of productivity, you can focus more time and energy on the few tasks that actually matter. The key here is to ensure you identify the correct tasks to focus on in the first place.

Gary Keller goes so far as to suggest focusing on just one thing at a time:

---

*"'Going small' is ignoring all the things you could do and doing what you should do. It's recognizing that not all things matter equally and finding the things that matter most. It's a tighter way to connect what you do with what you want. It's realizing that extraordinary results are directly determined by how narrow you can make your focus."*

---

Next time you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by work. Force yourself to focus on a couple of essential tasks. Spend some time identifying the few tasks that are going to increase your ability to reach your goal. Spending just a little time identifying the few, or even the single most important task and then giving this task 100% of your time and energy will pay massive dividends in the future.

## **2. Say "no" to everything that's unimportant**

Part of focusing more on less comes from learning to say no. It's very easy to get preoccupied with every new idea that enters your head. It's even easier to get distracted by seemingly important requests from colleagues, friends and family. Learning to say no is one of the most important skills you'll need to master in order to hone your ability to focus.

McKeown notes the following in Essentialism:

---

*"The point is to say no to the nonessentials so we can say yes to the things that really matter. It is to say no—frequently and gracefully—to everything but what is truly vital."*

---

So you see, it's by saying no that you can give yourself the freedom, the time and mental bandwidth to focus on the more important tasks. The tasks that really matter and that contribute significantly more towards your desired outcome.

Circling back round to our friends at Basecamp:

---

*"Start getting into the habit of saying no—even to many of your best ideas. Use the power of no to get your priorities straight. You rarely regret saying no. But you often wind up regretting saying yes."*

---

Learning to say no is a discipline. We say yes because it's easier than facing a moment of awkwardness that can come from saying no. But in the long-run, when someone approaches you with a request, you're doing that person and yourself a disservice by committing to something you shouldn't be doing.

This is exactly why Tim Ferriss, author of the New York Times best seller, [\*The 4-Hour Work Week\*](#), challenges readers to say "no" to absolutely everything, simply to practice the art of refusal:

---

*"Refuse to do all things that won't get you immediately fired. Be selfish. Get comfortable with saying "no".*

---

When you start saying "no" and free up more time for essential work, you'll be amazed at the relief and productivity that results from this greater sense of focus.

### **3. Budget time for tasks, then add 50%**

After cutting your to-do list to the essential few and saying “no” to everything else, it's time to schedule the time to work on the tasks that remain.

Kellar supports the idea of time blocking as a way of setting aside the required time to work on your most important tasks:

---

*“Go to your calendar and block off all the time you need to accomplish your ONE Thing. Everything else—other projects, paperwork, e-mail, calls, correspondence, meetings, and all the other stuff— must wait.”*

---

This idea is great, in theory. However, the issue with scheduling is that generally our estimates are always going to be wrong. Too often I've gotten caught out after thinking a simple task will only take 30-minutes, only to have my estimate ruined by some unexpected distraction or complication. Adding 50% to your estimate is a great way of planning for unforeseeable setbacks.

To further validate this idea, McKeown notes:

---

*“The Essentialist looks ahead. She plans. She prepares for different contingencies. She expects the unexpected. She creates a buffer to prepare for the unforeseen, thus giving herself some wiggle room when things come up, as they inevitably do.”*

---

To improve the accuracy of your estimates, Fried and Heinmeier recommend breaking up tasks into its component pieces before scheduling time for work and estimating a tasks duration:

---

*“The solution: Break the big thing into smaller things. The smaller it is, the easier it is to estimate. You're probably still going to get it wrong, but you'll be a lot less wrong than if you estimated a big project.”*

---

Your sense of accomplishment at the end of the day depends on your ability to prioritise your tasks and get the work done. Focus more energy on fewer tasks and give yourself more time than you think you need to complete this work. This is far more conducive to your personal productivity than it is to rush

through 10 smaller, less important tasks and work longer than you need to because your time estimates were off. Do yourself a solid and use these last three guidelines together for maximum efficiency.

#### **4. Stop trying to remember everything**

This one still catches a lot of people out. Trying to remember everything you need to do, errands you need to run, appointments and important information is like trying to hold water with your bare hands.

In today's technology-driven world, we're spoilt for choice when it comes to tools, apps and services that make it easier to organise all of the stuff in your life.

In [\*Manage Your Day to Day\*](#), Mark McGuinness notes the following:

---

*"Capture every commitment that you make somewhere that you'll see it."*

---

The key word here is to "capture" everything. This means getting it out of your head and stored somewhere you're going to be able to process and see it. This could be in a notebook, on your calendar, in your task list or in some other app like [\*Evernote\*](#). The storage medium will depend on what type of information you're capturing and what needs to be done with it. For example, time sensitive appointments and errands belong on your calendar while action orientated tasks should go on your task list. Other reference material, information, ideas and brainstorming can be digitally stored in Dropbox or Evernote.

In the famous productivity book, [\*Getting Things Done\*](#), author David Allen notes:

---

*"Collecting all your work together and getting everything out of your head is the first stage of mastering your workflow. By gathering everything together like this, you don't need to actively try and remember to do things. Instead you're collecting it so it can be put into a system that will do the reminding for you."*

---

Allen reinforces the idea that your system should do all of the heavy lifting for you. Calendar appointments can be set to alert you of specific events and task apps can remind you of crucial deadlines. Instead of trying to remember to test your fire alarms, set a reminder to repeat once a month. Instead of trying to remember all your social events and personal commitments, add them to your calendar and rest easy knowing you'll never be late again.

## 5. Create “focussed work” conditions

Dealing with distractions is one of the most common issues I hear people talk about when it comes to productivity. Especially if you work in an office environment, you're almost guaranteed to have your work disrupted by someone or something in the office hijacking your attention. On top of that, finding time to focus in between meetings, phone calls, email exchanges, instant messages and other distractions is almost impossible.

Often people feel productive when they fill their day with these seemingly important activities. In reality, the magic only happens when you have an opportunity to focus and produce high-quality work (not when you're sending emails).

Fried and Heinmeier make a great comparison between focusing while you're working and REM sleep:

---

*“Getting into that zone takes time and requires avoiding interruptions. It's like REM sleep: You don't just go directly into REM sleep. You go to sleep first and then make your way to REM. Any interruptions force you to start over. And just as REM is when the real sleep magic happens, the alone zone is where the real productivity magic happens.”*

---

So, how do you get into this zone? How do you eliminate the distractions and create the perfect environment to do your focussed work?

Cal Newport, author of [\*Deep Work\*](#) talks about the importance of making deep work part of your routine:

---

*“The key to developing a deep work habit is to move beyond good intentions and add routines and rituals to your working life designed to minimize the amount of your limited willpower necessary to transition into and maintain a state of unbroken concentration.”*

---

To make it part of your routine, you can schedule time for deep work in your calendar. Set aside a few hours each morning, when energy levels are higher, when you can separate yourself from others and focus on your most important and high-energy tasks.

In *Manage Your Day to Day*, Christian Jarrett makes an interesting observation about the need to physically remove distractions so there are no temptations to grab your attention:

---

*“Kill the background noise; turn off your phone, e-mail, and any apps unrelated to your task. Even the presence of background activity (and temptation) can drain your focus. Even if you’re not using the Internet, because it’s there it requires willpower to ignore it, which reduces our mental power. i.e. Ignoring distractions isn’t enough, we have to remove them. Tackle the projects that require “hard focus” early in your day. Self-control—and our ability to resist distractions—declines as the day goes on.”*

---

Often, getting into the zone and eliminating distractions requires that you change your environment all together. As you become accustomed to focussing in this new environment, you will be able to get into the zone of focussed work faster.

The key is to make focussed work part of your daily routine and to develop a habit of finding the time and space to get into this zone. As you do, you’ll come to cherish this time as you start to produce your best work in these deep work states.

## **6. Set strict work requirements**

Before committing to a new project, a colleagues request or embracing a new idea, make sure the work passes a set of strict criteria that you’ve predetermined will warrant your time.

In the 4-Hour Work Week, Tim Ferriss discusses two key concepts; Pareto's Law which says that 80% of outputs come from 20% of inputs. And Parkinson's law which says that a task will swell in perceived importance in relation to how much time is allocated to the work.

---

*"There are two synergistic approaches for increasing productivity that are inversions of each other: 1) Limit tasks to the important to shorten work time (80/20). 2) Shorten work time to limit tasks to the important (Parkinson's Law). The best solution is to use both together: Identify the few critical tasks that contribute most to income and schedule them with very short and clear deadlines."*

---

In order to prioritise, McKeown recommends using extreme criteria and applying what's called the 90% rule. The 90% rule suggests that when you evaluate a decision, you decide on the most important criteria for making a decision, then if an option scores less than a 9 out of 10 for that criteria, it's an immediate no.

---

*"If you rate it any lower than 90 percent, then automatically change the rating to 0 and simply reject it. This way you avoid getting caught up in indecision, or worse, getting stuck with the 60s or 70s."*

---

For example, if your main criteria for choosing which book to read next is how much future benefit you'll get from that book, then if a book scores 8 out of 10, reject it and find a book that you expect to be more useful for your line of work that scores a 9 or 10.

Kellar challenges his readers to ask one focusing question to evaluate ideas and prioritise work:

---

*"What's the one thing I can do, such that by doing it, everything else will be easier or unnecessary?"*

---

Finding a task that satisfies this question is a challenge in itself. But investing the time into finding a task that meets this strict requirement will pay back

huge dividends in the future and is far more effective than quickly moving from one unimportant task to the next.

## Action steps

- ✓ Each day, ask yourself; "Of all the things I need to do, what are the 1 to 3 things that I have to do today? Which of these things will advance me forward the most?"
- ✓ Budget time for these 1 to 3 tasks. Plan out in your calendar when you're going to do the work and how much time you're going to allocate to them, then add 50% to your estimates.
- ✓ Decide on strict decision-making criteria for doing work. Before accepting a request to do something, what are the filters or requirements for you to justify doing that thing?
- ✓ Set up a capture system. Use apps like [Evernote](#) and [Dropbox](#) for storing ideas and information. Use your calendar for capturing time-based commitments. Where possible, clear your email inbox and get information into one of these places.
- ✓ Decide when and where to do your focussed work. This could be at home in the early morning, or in a spare conference room in the office. Schedule time for your deep work and set this to repeat.





# LEADERSHIP

# LEADERSHIP

Whether you're a business owner, manager, team captain, player or parent, it's pretty likely that at some point in your life, you'll need to call on leadership skills to get the job done. It's important to remember, being a leader isn't necessarily about being the boss and giving the orders. As speaker and author Simon Sinek says:

---

*"There are leaders, and there are those who lead".*

---

Even though you might not be the person making the decisions, doesn't mean you can't be the kind of person people are inspired to follow.

Most of us have been in a position where we felt discouraged by a bad leader. It could have been a boss who didn't show enough appreciation or a team captain who couldn't boost morale.

In a past role, I witnessed first hand the effect a bad leader can have on an organisation. A new leader was introduced into our thriving company. He came on too strong, failed to listen, manipulated the employees and lost people's trust. I watched as the new managers presence swept through the company like a plague. It was literally like watching the company get sick as morale tanked and motivation evaporated into thin air. As I felt my contribution in the company falter and my ability to learn stall, this was one of the reasons I had to leave.

All of this could have been avoided by following a few simple leadership principles.

## **7. Actually care**

The famous TED speaker, Simon Sinek, sums up the role of a leader perfectly in his book, [\*Leaders Eat Last\*](#):

---

*“Being a leader is like being a parent, and the company is like a new family to join. One that will care for us like we are their own . . . in sickness and in health. And if we are successful, our people will take on our company’s name as a sign of the family to which they are loyal.”*

---

Leaders should want what is best for their employees and give them every opportunity to succeed. It's not about hoarding all the power and being accountable for every action. Instead, it's about giving power and responsibility to the team:

---

*“The role of the leader is not to bark commands and be completely accountable for the success or failure of the mission. It is a leader’s job instead to take responsibility for the success of each member of his crew. It is the leader’s job to ensure that they are well trained and feel confident to perform their duties.”*

---

Jim Collin’s, author of the famous leadership book, [\*Good to Great\*](#), examines what it takes to be a “level 5 leader”. Someone who can take a company from being merely good, to simply great. The key is to put the well-being of the company and its success ahead of everything else, including personal gain and prestige. When talking about what it takes to be a “level 5 leader” he says:

---

*“They set up successors for success, they are extremely modest, they have unwavering resolve. Ultimately they cared and focused a lot more on their companies, than their own personal profile or success.”*

---

In his book, [\*Creativity, Inc\*](#), Ed Catmull, the CEO of Pixar, discusses in detail the importance of looking after employees as part of the creative process. In fact, this is one of the attributes that really sets the company apart and allows them to hire the best creatives in the world:

---

*"If we are in the for the long haul, we have to take care of ourselves, support healthy habits, and encourage our employees to have fulfilling lives outside of work. Supporting your employees means encouraging them to strike a balance not merely by saying, "Be balanced!" but also by making it easier for them to achieve balance."*

---

In the context of business, caring for others extends beyond just the boundaries of an office. It means caring for the customer as well. In fact, when talking about the greatest marketing tactic of all time, author of [Crush It](#), Gary Vaynerchuk cites just one word:

---

*"Care."*

---

Caring for others means having a genuine interest in the other person's well-being. Caring means putting the other person first before yourself. And caring means taking on personal risk so that others may succeed.

## **8. Show your appreciation**

To demonstrate that you care, show appreciation for the people you work with. This is one of the best ways to make people feel valued and to get them to follow your lead. Most of us have been in a situation where we've done something for someone else only to have the work go unnoticed. When this happens, it can feel pretty crappy and as a result, our motivation and sense of accomplishment can falter.

Dale Carnegie, author of [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#) notes the following:

---

*"Give honest, sincere appreciation. Be "heartly in your approbation and lavish in your praise," and people will cherish your words and treasure them and repeat them over a lifetime – repeat them years after you have forgotten them."*

---

I like this quote because it highlights something very important; showing appreciation means a lot more to the other person than it does to you. It costs

you nothing to show appreciation and yet when you make someone feel valued, they'll remember this for a long time.

I was once invited to my ex-bosses house for a summer BBQ along with a few other select employees. In a company of 60+ staff, to have been invited along with only a handful of other people meant a great deal to me. I felt that my hard work had been noticed and my contribution was valued. My boss and his wife who put on the BBQ probably didn't think much of the occasion, but I was extremely proud of myself and still remember the event very clearly. I've been to lots of BBQs and this one was no different. But it was the gesture that meant so much to me. It was the sentiment and the visual display of appreciation that made me feel so valued as an employee.

When discussing this key principle, Carnegie goes on to say:

---

*"If you and I will inspire the people with whom we come in contact to a realization of the hidden treasures they possess, we can do far more than change people. We can literally transform them."*

---

This is the point I'm making. The impact of the appreciation is far greater than the cost of giving it. Which is why it amazes me when leaders don't take every opportunity to make someone feel valued. It doesn't have to mean giving them a bonus or tangible reward. Your words are more than enough...

## **9. Hire the best, as slow as you can**

Bear with me here... The first part of this guideline is pretty self-explanatory; hiring the best is incredibly important.

Jim Collins uses the analogy of a bus to describe a business. When discussing the idea of hiring the right people, he says:

---

*"Look, I don't really know where we should take this bus. But I know this much: If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great."*

---

This statement perfectly articulates why hiring the right people is so important. When you gather a team of rock stars, it doesn't matter what you do or where you plan on taking your company, a team of high performers is more likely to do great work.

What do I mean by "the best"? It doesn't necessarily mean the person with the most skill or experience. As Simon Sinek describes in his book [\*Start with Why\*](#):

---

*"Great companies don't hire skilled people and motivate them, they hire already motivated people and inspire them."*

---

This means hiring people with the right attitude, who's passion and beliefs align with the culture of the company. Sinek isn't the only person to support this idea, Collins is another advocate of hiring based on character:

---

*"Hire based on character rather than skills or educations. Not that these things aren't important, but it becomes harder to teach if the character won't support it."*

---

Hiring the right people is obvious. But hire them as slow as you can? What on earth do I mean?

Fried and Heinmeier make the case that making a quick hire should be avoided (even if that means passing on a great candidate) if the work they'll be doing hasn't been clearly defined or worked out:

---

*"Pass on hiring people you don't need, even if you think that person's a great catch. You'll be doing your company more harm than good if you bring in talented people who have nothing important to do."*

---

Instead, they propose hiring to solve pains in the company. This means hiring when the extra work becomes too much of a burden and when not hiring someone to do the work becomes a big enough problem. And when you do get around to hiring someone, make sure the person doing the hiring knows what the work entails:

---

*“Never hire anyone to do a job until you’ve tried to do it yourself first. That way, you’ll understand the nature of the work. You’ll know what a job well done looks like.”*

---

Collins makes another great case for hiring slowly and limiting the growth of your company to the speed of which you can find the right people.

---

*“When in doubt, don’t hire—keep looking. A company should limit its growth based on its ability to attract enough of the right people.”*

---

Rushing through the hiring process in order to maintain company growth is only going to cause issues further down the line. To use Collins’ analogy; it’s much harder to get people off the bus once they’re already on.

## **10. Focus on purpose**

A leader needs vision. They need to have a clear picture in their mind about the goal the team is working towards and how they’re going to get there. This is all well and good, but it’s not enough. What really inspires people is purpose. Purpose is the fuel that drives us towards the vision. It’s the reason customers make a purchase and it’s the key to rallying a team behind a leader.

Simon Sinek is one of the biggest advocates of this idea. His TED talk on the importance of finding your WHY and his book *Start with Why* sums up the importance of purpose perfectly:

---

*“Very few companies know why they do what they do (and it’s not to make money, this is a result). Why do you get out of bed in the morning, what is the companies purpose, and why should anyone care?”*

---

Identifying why your team exists and the purpose you’re serving is what differentiates you from the competition. It allows you to hire the best possible people and retain them over the long run.

Gary Vaynerchuk further supports the importance of purpose in his first book, *Crush It*:

---

*"If you're going to live and breath your business and personal brand, you have to love what you do. This is what will set you apart from the rest and make you jump out of bed each morning."*

---

This raises the question; what's the difference between purpose and following your passion? The way I see it, passion is doing what you love, which gives you a sense of purpose or a reason to do the work. One fuels the other and both are equally important.

When working out your purpose, think about the following from David Schwartz in [\*The Magic of Thinking Big\*](#):

---

*"Think above trivial things. Focus your attention on big objectives. Before getting involved in a petty matter, ask yourself, "Is it really important?"  
Grow big by thinking big!"*

---

Questioning whether something is truly important is something we often overlook. It's easy to get caught up in things we think are important and this clouds our sense of purpose. Think back to what's already been covered; focus more on less and make sure the thing you do decide to focus on is truly important and worthwhile. Question why you're doing what you're doing and think about the impact you'd like to have on the world. Then, you'll find your purpose.

## **11. Be the leader you'd like to be lead by**

Think of a leader in your life who truly inspires you. Whether it's a teacher, manager or team captain, hopefully, you can think of someone that you're happy to follow. Chances are they make you feel good and help you to become a better version of yourself. With this in mind, when you find yourself in a leadership role, be the kind of leader you'd like to be lead by.



Because an organisational culture flows down from the top, it's even more important that as a leader, you think and act in a way you'd like others to mimic. Schwartz summarises this idea perfectly:

---

*"Think progress, believe in progress, push for progress. Think improvement in everything you do. Think high standards in everything you do. Over a period of time subordinates tend to become carbon copies of their chief. Be sure the master copy is worth duplicating."*

---

As we saw previously, Sinek poses the idea that leaders are like parents. Similar to how a parent wants the best for their children and will make personal sacrifices to make sure the children succeed, a leader should be willing to do the same.

---

*"Leaders are the ones who are willing to give up something of their own for us. Their time, their energy, their money, maybe even the food off their plate. When it matters, leaders choose to eat last."*

---

Listening to this, who wouldn't want to be lead by this kind of person? Who wouldn't want to follow someone they know has their best interest at heart and who will do anything to help them succeed? Be that kind of person.

One of the ways you can become the kind of leader you'd like to follow is to ensure there is a sense of mutual respect between the leader and followers. Revisiting the ideas of Dale Carnegie, which are so brilliantly simple, he says:

---

*"Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, 'You're wrong.'"*

---

This last part is particularly important. By avoiding saying "you're wrong" a leader can help a follower save face and they'll continue to respect the leader. If for example the leader was to point out the mistake in this manner, the follower is likely to feel demoralised and disheartened. Instead, do as Carnegie suggests:

---

*"Calling attention to one's mistakes indirectly works wonders with sensitive people who may resent bitterly any direct criticism."*

---

Don't you want to follow someone who show's respect for your ideas? Be this kind of leader...

## **Action steps**

- ✓ On a regular basis, make an effort to show people that you care about them. Do something selfless for them and expect nothing in return. Show good faith and communicate your trust.
- ✓ Likewise, make an effort to show your appreciation for others. Commend even the smallest of achievements and show that you value their efforts.
- ✓ Be on the constant lookout for high-class employees. Hire based on mindset and worry less about skill (which can be taught later). Before hiring, make sure you can justify the position and understand the work.
- ✓ Focus on your purpose. If it isn't clear, find your purpose. Answer the questions: "Why do we do what we do?" and "What do we believe in?".
- ✓ Make a list of all the leaders that inspired you. Teachers, managers, captains and parents. Then list the qualities and attributes that you admire most about them. Do what you can to adopt as many of these traits as possible.



# BUSINESS

# BUSINESS

When I went to University, I studied business and decided to major in entrepreneurship. Why? The way I see it, the job of an entrepreneur is to push boundaries and create something new that people value. It's an exciting vocation that requires an incredibly diverse set of skills. It's my passion and enthusiasm for entrepreneurship that lead me to start my website and create an online business.

I love reading the biographies of famous entrepreneurs who have had a significant impact on the world; from Steve Jobs to Richard Branson and Elon Musk. It's fascinating to learn where these people come from and what experiences lead them down their path to success.

Where government organisations are often slow to act and limited in their approach to solving problems, entrepreneurs think much bigger and bolder. They often take on great personal risk in order to bring new ideas to market and push the human race forward.

When we think of entrepreneurs, we often think of the big names that run the world's biggest companies. But as Eric Ries, author of [\*The Lean Startup\*](#), says, entrepreneurs are everywhere:

---

*"Entrepreneurs are everywhere. Regardless of industry, company size or your role, entrepreneurs are everywhere. You don't necessarily have to be the founder to apply entrepreneurship."*

---

An entrepreneur is anyone who's taking on personal risk to build a business. This chapter lists the guidelines that entrepreneurs should follow when starting and growing their businesses.

## **12. Follow your passion**

When you start your own business, it's a lot of hard work. There's an endless list of things to do, challenges to overcome and a limited supply of time and capital. With this in mind, following your passion is important as it keeps you motivated and moving forward. If you love what you do, it's easier to get out of bed and put in the hard yards to build and grow your business each day. Compare this with working on a business you're not passionate about and you'll see that when the passion isn't there, you have to face an added mental battle of doing something that doesn't excite you.

Jim Collins lists three crucial components organisations need in order to go from good to great. He argues that organisations must identify what they're passionate about, what drives economic growth and what they can be the best in the world at. The intersection of these three requirements is something he calls the "Hedgehog Concept" and is what the entrepreneur should focus on. When discussing the importance of passion, he makes the comment:

---

*"It may seem odd to talk about something as soft and fuzzy as "passion" as an integral part of a strategic framework. But throughout the good-to-great companies, passion became a key part of the Hedgehog Concept. You can't manufacture passion or "motivate" people to feel passionate. You can only discover what ignites your passion and the passions of those around you."*

---

Bear in mind, this doesn't necessarily mean you have to be passionate about a specific product or service. The passion can be related to the processes of the business and how you do things. It can be about what the business stands for and how it helps people.

As I eluded to earlier, being passionate about your business is what helps you to get through the tough times and persist until you reach your goals. To illustrate this point, let's imagine two identical entrepreneurs start a business selling a similar product in the same market. They both have the same skills and come from the same background. However, one of them is extremely passionate about their business and the product they're selling. The other entrepreneur has the same financial goals but isn't passionate about the product. When the going gets tough and both entrepreneurs encounter problems with the product or perhaps they aren't getting the market

penetration they anticipated, who would you expect to persist for longer before giving up? If you had to invest in one of the entrepreneurs, who would you back? Probably the one who's more passionate right?

One of my favourite entrepreneurs, Richard Branson, CEO of the Virgin Group, sums up his philosophy on business in this simply quote:

---

*"Everyone wants to be a millionaire. I always tell them the same thing. I have no secret. There are no rules to follow in business. I just work hard and, as I always have done, believe I can do it. Most of all, though, I try to have fun."*

---

If you Google pictures of Richard Branson, chances are you'll be met with images of Branson smiling. When he says he just wants to have fun, he really means it.

Even though entrepreneurship is a tough gig to get involved in, there's no reason why you can't have fun in the process of building your business. As these authors have demonstrated, it doesn't just give you an advantage, it's a core requirement of entrepreneurship.

### **13. Scratch your own itch**

As well as pursuing an idea you're passionate about, scratching your own itch, or satisfying your own desire is highly recommended. This can be solving a problem that you have or creating a product or service you personally would like to use. When you're the consumer, you have a distinct advantage as you think more like your target market (because you are the target).

If you don't have a product or service that people want to buy, it doesn't matter how good your marketing is. As Ryan Holiday, author of [\*Growth Hacker Marketing\*](#) notes:

---

*"The best marketing decision you can make is to have a product or business that fulfils a real and compelling need for a real and defined group of people—no matter how much tweaking and refining this takes."*

---

One of the ways you can make this easier is to create something you want to use. If you want the product, so will other people...

Fried and Heinmeier are big supporters of this idea. As the creators of Basecamp, an online project management tool, not only are they the software designers, but they use their own product every day.

---

*"The easiest, most straightforward way to create a great product or service is to make something you want to use. That lets you design what you know—and you'll figure out immediately whether or not what you're making is any good."*

---

In The Lean Startup, Eric Ries talks about the importance of continual learning and testing as a means of creating a product that people want.

---

*"The value hypothesis tests whether a product or service really delivers value to customers once they are using it."*

---

This process becomes a lot easier when you start to remove some of the guesswork as you and the other members of your team actually get to use and benefit from the product or service you're creating.

## **14. Persist with quick wins**

Being patient and persistent is one of the most common pieces of advice you'll hear when it comes to entrepreneurship and with good reason. Building a business takes time; often a lot longer than you anticipate. You're almost guaranteed to face setbacks that slow your progress and make assumptions that end up being wrong. I've certainly experienced this while growing my website and I continually remind myself to be patient and keep trying new things.

Vaynerchuk sums up this idea perfectly:

---

*"Building a business and success takes time. You have to live your passion. Think of building a business as a marathon, not a sprint."*

---

To briefly revisit our previous guideline, Vaynerchuk then highlights why it's so important to do what you love so that you can persist through the tough times:

---

*"You have to love what you do as it's the only way you'll keep going. And even if you fail, you won't have any regrets because you were doing what you loved."*

---

To make it easier to persist over the long run, a number of authors advocate the idea of focusing on small or quick wins in order to sustain your forward momentum. Greg McKeown notes the following in *Essentialism*:

---

*"Research has shown that of all forms of human motivation the most effective one is progress. Why? Because a small, concrete win creates momentum and affirms our faith in our further success."*

---

Instead of trying to work on a massive project with a big end result, like making \$1,000,000 or reaching 10,000 customers, you can break this up into the smaller things you need to do in order to reach each of these goals. For example, one of the highest impact tasks to reach your sales and customer goals could be to sign up 1,000 new customers per week via Facebook paid advertising. It's much easier to be motivated when the goal you're working towards can be realised over the short-term and this is what keeps you moving forward.

Fried and Heinmeier further support this idea in the following quote:

---

*"Momentum fuels motivation. It keeps you going. It drives you. Without it, you can't go anywhere. If you aren't motivated by what you're working on, it won't be very good. The way you build momentum is by getting something done and then moving on to the next thing. No one likes to be stuck on an endless project with no finish line in sight. Being in the trenches for nine months and not having anything to show for it is a real buzzkill. Eventually, it just burns you out. To keep your momentum and motivation up, get in the habit of accomplishing small victories along the way. Even a tiny improvement can give you a good jolt of momentum."*

---



I really like that opening line: "Momentum fuels motivation". Keep this front of mind and remind yourself that the key to persistence is to fuel your motivation with momentum. Then go and create momentum by having some quick wins. Set yourself up for success by focusing more on less (like we talked about earlier) to ensure you give the truly important and high impact tasks the time they deserve and fuel your motivation.

I want to end my explanation of this guideline by throwing a spanner in the works. While it's incredibly important to persist and work hard, make sure you persist on the right things and aren't investing more time on tasks or projects with no future. This warning comes from entrepreneur and expert marketer, Seth Godin. In his book, [\*The Dip\*](#), he describes a phenomenon when you experience a dip in your progress curve while working on new projects:

---

*"Almost everything in life worth doing is controlled by the Dip. At the beginning, when you first start something, it's fun. Over the next few days and weeks, the rapid learning you experience keeps you going. Whatever your new thing is, it's easy to stay engaged in it. And then the Dip happens. The Dip is the long slog between starting and mastery. A long slog that's actually a shortcut, because it gets you where you want to go faster than any other path."*

---

Yes, persisting through the dip is important to get to the other side. But Godin goes on to advise the importance of quitting when you reach a cul-de-sac:

---

*"It's a situation where you work and you work and you work and nothing much changes. It doesn't get a lot better, it doesn't get a lot worse."*

---

When you reach a situation like this, you need to quit as soon as you can so you can start working on the right projects again. This doesn't mean you're giving up. It simply means you're abandoning your short-term efforts so you can focus on other activities that are going to help you achieve your long-term vision.

To recap; persist and be patient. Focus on small wins to sustain your momentum and motivation. Use this to navigate the dip (but be cautious of investing too much time into dead end projects).

## 15. Be quick and dirty

Ideas are one thing, but settling on an idea and executing is a whole different ball game. When you settle on an idea, it's easy to get caught up in speculation as you attempt to answer all the unknowns related to your idea. The biggest mistake you can make is to waste time creating a product that nobody wants. And because the time of an entrepreneur is so limited, it's important to get to market and test your assumptions with a "dirty", half-baked version of your product as quick as you can.

Eric Ries spends a lot of time in his book, *The Lean Startup*, talking about the importance of testing assumptions using a minimum viable product or MVP. If you aren't familiar with this term, learn it now:

---

*"Once clear on these leap-of-faith assumptions, the first step is to enter the Build phase as quickly as possible with a minimum viable product (MVP). The MVP is that version of the product that enables a full turn of the Build-Measure-Learn loop with a minimum amount of effort and the least amount of development time. The minimum viable product lacks many features that may prove essential later on. A minimum viable product (MVP) helps entrepreneurs start the process of learning as quickly as possible."*

---

The purpose of the MVP is to test your assumptions in the real world. It doesn't have to be a fully formed product. It just needs to include enough to test your core ideas.

Often, these early versions of your products need fewer features than you think. The following quote from Rework further supports the idea of getting your basic product into the market as quick as you can:

---

*"When is your product or service finished? When should you put it out on the market? When is it safe to let people have it? Probably a lot sooner than you're comfortable with. Once your product does what it needs to do, get it out there."*

---

Fried and Heinmeier go on to emphasize that good enough is fine:

---

*"Find a judo solution, one that delivers maximum efficiency with minimum effort. Judo solutions are all about getting the most out of doing the least. Whenever you face an obstacle, look for a way to judo it."*

---

In the 4-Hour Work Week, author Tim Ferriss discussed the idea of "micro-testing" as a means of validating ideas before you begin manufacturing and marketing:

---

*"Micro-testing involves using inexpensive advertisements to test consumer response to a product prior to manufacturing."*

---

Ferriss uses an approach whereby you use online advertising to drive traffic to a website that captures the payment and billing information of customers. Before the final checkout, the user is advised that they will be charged when the product ships in a few weeks (after the product idea has been validated and manufacturing has begun). The argument here is that once customers have shown their commitment by handing over their payment details, then you can safely assume there is demand for your idea.

Testing your ideas and getting to market with a quick and dirty version of your product can be a big time saver. This guideline will ensure you avoid investing too much time in the early stages of entrepreneurship focusing on ideas that don't have a future.

## **16. Invest in You.Inc**

Entrepreneurs invest a lot of time and energy in their businesses, their employees, customers and shareholders. Keeping these stakeholders happy is important, but remember to look after number 1 and at the end of the day, you'll do a better of serving these other people.

Hal Elrod, author of [\*The Miracle Morning\*](#), dedicates his entire book to the idea of using your morning routine to invest in yourself so you can create the successes you desire:

---

*"In order for you to stop settling for less than you deserve—in any area of your life—and to create the levels of personal, professional, and financial success you desire, you must first dedicate time each day to becoming the person you need to be, one who is qualified and capable of consistently attracting, creating, and sustaining the levels of success you want."*

---

Elrod goes on to explain how morning rituals that include self-improvement practices like meditation, reading, journaling, affirmations and visualisation can greatly improve your mental outlook and the method in which you approach life.

Laura Vanderkam, author of [\*What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast\*](#) further supports the idea of waking early and using this time to invest in yourself:

---

*"Successful people have priorities they want to tackle, or things they like to do with their lives, and early mornings are the time when they have the most control of their schedules"*

---

She goes on to discuss three key areas that these successful people invest time in to during the early hours of the day; career, relationships and yourself. This could involve learning something new, spending time with family or exercising and focusing on personal well-being.

One of Vanderkam's biggest arguments supporting the idea that personal development should be a priority in the morning is because of our depleting willpower that reduces during the day:

---

*"Willpower is like a muscle. If it is overused it will run out of effectiveness. All activities during the day require willpower and so stuff done in the morning is normally more productive. But like a muscle, it can be strengthened."*

---

Anyone who's experienced a lull in motivation and productivity in the afternoon will know this feeling. Most of us get more done in the morning when our energy levels and willpower are stronger.

Strengthening your willpower is an idea that author Ryan Holiday discusses in his book, *The Obstacle is the Way*. Holiday argues that with increased willpower you have a greater ability to overcome adversity and challenges:

---

*“No one is born a gladiator. No one is born with an Inner Citadel. If we’re going to succeed in achieving our goals despite the obstacles that may come, this strength in will must be built.”*

---

This is, of course, something that takes great practice. One of the ways in which Holiday says you can strengthen your will is to be more accepting of everything that's outside of your control. By acknowledging that the unexpected will happen and to anticipate challenges, you can prepare yourself to take action:

---

*“After we discard our expectations and accept what happens to us, after understanding that certain things—particularly bad things—are outside our control, is this: loving whatever happens to us and facing it with unfailing cheerfulness. It is the act of turning what we must do into what we get to do.”*

---

Investing in yourself can occur in many different forms. Whether you spend time reading, learning, writing, meditating, sleeping, exercising or journaling, devoting some energy to one or many of these activities will pay back dividends later. Investing in yourself will help you to better serve others, achieve your business goals and become a better version of yourself.

Choosing to be an entrepreneur certainly isn't one of the easiest decisions you can make. Remember, even though you aren't running your own business, doesn't mean you can't apply these guidelines in your own place of work and to your own life. Following your passion and investing in yourself are guidelines that everyone can benefit from. By now you should have learned a bit more about what makes entrepreneurs different. Now go and use this to become a better version of yourself.

## **Action steps**

- ✓ Before starting a new business, identify the things you care about most. Solve the problems you're currently experiencing. List your answers to the following questions: What social groups do you belong to? What sports and hobbies do you enjoy? What would your friends say you're passionate about? How do you like spending your spare time? What do you think about in the shower?
- ✓ Solve the problems you currently experience. List your answers to the following questions: What holds you back on a day to day basis? What do you struggle with that you wish you didn't? Which tasks or activities would you like to make easier?
- ✓ Be patient. When the going gets tough, remind yourself that business is a long game.
- ✓ Look at your to-do list and make the tasks even smaller. Think about what you need to do in order to complete each unit of work. Focus on the small steps and celebrate small wins.
- ✓ Test your ideas as quick as you can. Talk to real people, experiment with real product concepts, test actual marketing channels. Stop guessing and start testing.
- ✓ Set aside some time each day to invest in your personal and mental well-being. Read a book, meditate or journal.



# HEALTH

# HEALTH

Living a healthy lifestyle is one of my biggest priorities. I view health as a multiplier for everything else in life. When you feel good in your body, when you feel strong, energetic and healthy, this makes everything else in life easier. When you feel healthy, it's easier to concentrate and do better work. When you feel healthier you can work harder and put more into every project, and relationship. It's not hard to see how being healthier, taking fewer sick days and having more energy literally allows you to do more of everything.

With this in mind, improving or maintaining your health should be pretty high on your list of priorities. And let me emphasize, health should not, under any circumstances, be compromised. I don't care if you're busy, if you have kids or no motivation. Living a healthy lifestyle along with caring for your friends and family should come before everything else.

The health industry is chock full of books that help you to live a healthier lifestyle. While I've done a bit of reading in this space, I've only scratched the surface. For this section of the book, I'm going to focus on top-level concepts as I can't possibly cover all the different ways to manage your health. While some people may be trying to diet and lose weight, others might be trying to build muscle or increase their flexibility. Therefore, I'm focusing on the key principles, a lot of which I'm sure you will have heard before, but it's worth repeating to get the basics right.

## **17. Get plenty of sleep**

I'm sure this isn't new advice for you. In fact, I almost feel stupid adding this as a guideline in the book. But in case you aren't respecting the importance of sleep, then please take a second to hear what I (and a bunch of much more intelligent authors) have to say.



All the time you're awake, your body is in a catabolic state. This means it's breaking down and getting weaker. Sleep is an anabolic state and is when your body repairs itself.

Shawn Stevenson, author of the book, [\*Sleep Smarter\*](#), lists a whole heap of reasons why you should value your sleep:

---

*"There isn't one facet of your mental, emotional or physical performance that's not affected by the quality of your sleep. The consequences of sleep deprivation aren't pretty either. Try immune system failure, diabetes, cancer, obesity, depression and memory loss to name just a few. In regards to how sleep affects your productivity, you may think by sleeping less and working more you can accomplish more. This is a big no-no. When you're sleep deprived, you get slower, less creative, more stressed and studies show that sleep deprived individuals can take up to 14% longer to complete tasks and make 20% more mistakes when they do."*

---

It's odd that when people are busy, sleep is often sacrificed in order to get more work done. Many people make the mistake of thinking that by working longer hours, you can accomplish more, when in fact, the opposite is more conducive to increased productivity. Here's what Greg McKweon had to say in *Essentialism*:

---

*"In a nutshell, sleep is what allows us to operate at our highest level of contribution so that we can achieve more, in less time. Sleep will enhance your ability to explore, make connections, and do less but better throughout your waking hours."*

---

By looking after yourself and ensuring you get enough good quality sleep, you can produce better results during your working hours.

The key to developing a healthy and sustainable sleep routine is consistency. Getting into a habit of going to sleep at a similar time each night will help you to fall asleep easier and quicker than if you change your bed time each evening. I particularly like what Laura Vanderkam has to say about the benefits of building habits:

---

*“Once things become habitual, they operate as automatic processes, which consume less willpower.”*

---

I like the idea that by creating a habit, you can trigger an automatic response from your body. In other words, by being consistent with your sleep habits, your body will naturally go to sleep each night, meaning less time tossing and turning in bed.

In terms of other things you can do to improve your sleep quality, refer to Shawn Stevenson's book, *Sleep Smarter*, where he discusses caffeine curfews, blacking out your room, avoiding screens before bed, getting enough natural light during the day, sleeping naked and staying cool.

To begin with, respect the need for quality sleep like you would with exercising or eating correctly. Sleep is easy. By being consistent with your sleep schedule and getting a quality 7 to 8 hours each night, it's hard to go wrong.

## **18. Eat whole foods and avoid sugar**

Eating well and staying healthy is easy if you follow a few simple principles. Now please keep in mind, I'm not a nutritionist, nor am I a doctor. I'm simply sharing my own opinion on what to eat and if you have any questions or concerns, go and talk to an expert.

When it comes to eating right, I believe in consuming whole foods and avoiding processed goods and in particular, food containing refined sugar.

Author Michael Pollan has spent over 25 years researching and writing about food and what to eat. Much of his writing has now been distilled down into a few simple principles that he discusses in his book, *[In Defense of Food](#)*. In fact, Pollan summarizes everything he's learned in just seven words:

---

*“Eat food, mostly plants, not too much.”*

---

There's not much more to it than this. By "food", Pollan is referring to whole foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and meat. The test of whether something is a whole food or not is to ask yourself if a caveman would recognise the product as food. So biscuits and chocolate, unfortunately, don't make the cut.

For a long time we thought fat was the source of our health problems, but now, sugar is becoming the new enemy. Sugar hides in lots of different products, many of which are perceived to be healthy. For example fruit juice and yoghurt both typically contain refined sugar. Food blogger, journalist and author Sarah Wilson tells us exactly how much sugar you should consume per day in her book, [\*I Quit Sugar\*](#):

---

*"I advise eating no more than 6-9 teaspoons of added sugar a day (3 teaspoons for kids). Since publishing my first book, both the World Health Organisation and the American Heart Association have come out with the same recommendations (right down to the teaspoon!). Added sugar does not include whole fresh fruit, but does include fruit juice."*

---

The problem with sugar is that it's used for fuel quickly. This is great if you need a quick hit or if you're running a marathon. But it's less than ideal if you spend a large portion of the day in front of a computer not really exercising. If you've ever felt that mid-afternoon lull in productivity, this is often due to your body running out of fuel. Instead, follow Pollan's advice and fuel your body with whole food, fruits and vegetables. Healthy fats like avocado, nuts and coconut oil are a great source of slow burning energy that lasts much longer throughout the day. You'll also have a clearer, more focussed mind and your body will thank you for it later in life.

## **19. Exercise early and often**

Getting up early and incorporating exercise into your morning routine is one of the most common characteristics of highly successful people. While studying the time logs of successful CEOs, Laura Vanderkam noticed the common trend that all of the participants would schedule time for exercise in the morning instead of the end of the day:

---

*"These are incredibly busy people. If they make time to exercise, it must be important, and if they do it in the morning, there's probably a reason. Indeed, some research has suggested that morning exercise has more beneficial effects than exercising at other times."*

---

Vanderkam quotes a study from the Appalachian State University that comments on the biological reasoning behind this theory:

---

*"One possible explanation is that the body releases stress hormones when you wake up, and working out in the morning counteracts those hormones. Working out later in the day gives the stress hormones more time to take effect."*

---

Numerous studies and authors have commented on the benefits that come from morning exercise. In Sleep Smarter, Stevenson cites a study that looked at the sleep patterns of participants who worked out at 7am, 1pm and 7pm:

---

*"What they discovered was that people who exercised at 7 am slept longer and had a deeper sleep cycle than the other two groups. In fact, the morning exercisers had up to 75 percent more time in the reparative "deep sleep" stage at night."*

---

Stevenson makes the added comment that when you workout in the evening, there isn't enough time for your bodies core temperature to drop before bed, which can lead to restlessness or shallower sleep.

Among other important morning rituals, Hal Elrod further emphasizes the importance of exercise in your morning routine:

---

*"Morning exercise should be a staple in your daily rituals. When you exercise for even a few minutes every morning it significantly boosts your energy, enhances your health, improves self-confidence and emotional well-being, and enables you to think better and concentrate longer."*

---

By now I hope we can agree that morning exercise is important. In terms of what you should actually do, the rules are less strict. Each of the quoted

authors is making the point that something is better than nothing. Whether that's going for a walk, run, swim, lifting weights or playing a sport, get up and get going. To ensure you get a healthy balance, try alternating your routine and incorporating a few different disciplines into your weekly routine.

Getting regular exercise doesn't just improve your health. It's also about setting you up for a successful and productive day. It's about helping to improve your mental and emotional strength (which we've already talked about), lowering your stress levels and just generally making you feel awesome.

## **20. Have a positive conversation with yourself**

The way you talk to yourself and the thoughts that consume your mental space have an incredible impact on your approach to the world. Not only that but maintaining a healthy mindset and positive outlook is essential if you want to live a healthy lifestyle. Because what's the point in having the perfect body and heaps of energy if your mind is rotten with self-defeating thoughts?

To highlight this idea, in *The Magic of Thinking Big*, author David Schwartz states the following:

---

*"Upgrading your thinking upgrades your actions, and this produces success."*

---

As Schwartz indicates, positive thinking is a prerequisite to execution and accomplishment. If you find yourself procrastinating or not getting to where you want to be, perhaps you need to address your internal dialogue. But how do you "upgrade your thinking"? Schwartz goes on to recommend the following:

---

*"Give yourself a pep talk several times daily. Build a "sell-yourself-to-yourself" commercial. Remind yourself at every opportunity that you're a first-class person."*

---

Hal Elrod discusses the idea of using affirmations as a way of cultivating a positive and healthy mindset. An affirmation is essentially a statement about yourself that you repeat in your mind:

---

*"Affirmations are one of the most effective tools for quickly becoming the person you need to be to achieve everything you want in your life. Affirmations allow you to design and then develop the mindset (thoughts, beliefs, focus) that you need to take any area of your life to the next level."*

---

Elrod uses the example of Muhammad Ali, the famous boxer, who repeated the simple words "I am the greatest" until he became the boxing champion of the world.

One of the most practical ways you can cultivate a healthy and positive mindset is to remember that the way you perceive things is a choice. Remember that you get to decide how to feel about the seemingly bad things that happen. This is an idea that forms the backbone of Ryan Holiday's book, *The Obstacle is the Way*:

---

*"Just because other people say that something is hopeless or crazy or broken to pieces doesn't mean it is. We decide what story to tell ourselves. Or whether we will tell one at all. Welcome to the power of perception. Applicable in each and every situation, impossible to obstruct. It can only be relinquished. And that is your decision."*

---

To implement these ideas, incorporate affirmations into your daily routine. It doesn't require any extra time. When you're alone, either in the car or on the toilet, take a minute to remind yourself how great you are. And remember that when bad things happen, you get to decide how to perceive them. Keep these simple ideas in mind and you'll be amazed at how the power of positive self-talk can boost your mood and enable further success in your life.

## **21. Keep it natural**

Whenever possible, opt for the more natural approach. Whether that's choosing between a glass of water or a diet coke, working in a dimly lit office

or working near an open window or outside. And of course, when choosing between artificial food and supplements, stick to the natural alternatives.

Shawn Stevenson highlights some of the amazing benefits of exposing yourself to natural light during the day and how this impacts your hormone response system and ability to sleep at night:

---

*"Light signals your hypothalamus (your bodies master hormone gland) and all other organs and glands to be alert and wake up. Sunlight exposure (yes, it has to be natural light), triggers your body to produce optimal levels of daytime hormones and regulates your biological clock. Melatonin, the hormone that creates optimum sleep conditions in your body, is produced during the day and is heavily affected by exposure to light. Basically, by getting more sunlight during the day and limiting light exposure in the evening, you're on your way to a magic sleep formula that really works."*

---

Stevenson recommends getting enough sunlight particularly during the hours of 6 and 8:30am when you're waking up. The natural light in your eyes will prompt your body to be alert and is a great alternative to a caffeine fix. If you typically wear sunglasses in the morning, try keeping these stashed away until later in the day and use the opportunity in the morning to get plenty of natural light.

Stevenson goes on to recommend "grounding yourself" with the earth as a way of balancing the electronic charge in your body:

---

*"The earths electromagnetic surface has huge benefits on the human body. The body is actually a conductor and every day you go through cellular damage, simply by living your life. Scientists have found that the earths surface is brimming with free electrons that can easily be absorbed by the human body. Grounding the body increases the surface charge on red blood cells and thereby reduces blood viscosity and clumping."*

---

So what does this mean? Transferring free electrons to the body improves your blood flow and reduces the risk of contracting heart disease. It also lowers inflammation in the body and even reduces stress. Yep, you heard me right. All this from simply touching the earth.



When it comes to keeping it natural, ensure you get enough water into your body during the day. Similar to how the natural light helps you to feel more alert in the morning, water wakes up your digestive system and prepares it for action.

Now, I'm not suggesting you stop drinking all other beverages, but make water the priority first thing in the morning. Author, Hal Elrod discusses the idea of getting enough water in the morning when your body is likely to be dehydrated from 8 hours of sleep:

---

*"It's crucial that you hydrate yourself first thing every morning. After 6-8 hours without water, you'll naturally be mildly dehydrated, and dehydration causes fatigue. Often when people feel tired—at any time of the day—what they really need is more water, not more sleep."*

---

One of the simplest ways you can ensure you get enough water is to drink from a bottle, not a glass. Drinking from a bottle is easier as you can carry it around with you all day without risk of spilling water on your desk or in the car.

Megan May, author of [\*The Unbakey\*](#) takes the natural approach one step further and is a big advocate of eating raw. The official definition of raw food is any food that hasn't been heated above 46 degrees Celsius. Raw food tends to contain more nutrients and enzymes that aid in the digestion process (which typically get destroyed during cooking). Here, May discusses the benefits of raw food:

---

*"Once you begin to increase the raw, plant-based foods in your diet, you probably won't worry too much about the science behind it because, quite simply, you'll feel great. You can look forward to benefits such as increased energy and clarity, a more light-hearted outlook, stronger immunity, glowing skin and strengthened nails. You will feel satisfied with less of the cooked, processed foods you were eating, because your body is getting all the nutrients it needs."*

---

Opting for natural alternatives should be a no brainer. If you have a choice between the artificial and natural, opt for the latter. Get into the habit of



checking the ingredients on food packaging and if there's anything in there you don't recognise, put it back on the shelf. As Stevenson recommends, get plenty of natural light and be sure to ground yourself on a regular basis. These are simple concepts, so no excuses for not getting in touch with your inner hippie.

## **Action steps**

- ✓ Decide on a regular sleep cycle. Decide what time you're going to go to bed and what time to wake up. Stick to this plan and respect your need for sleep.
- ✓ Clear your kitchen of processed and artificial food. Fuel your body with whole foods like fruit, vegetables, nuts and meat and avoid sugar like the plague.
- ✓ Gradually try and get up earlier each day. Make this a slow change so it's easier to sustain. Use the extra time in the morning to exercise and strengthen your body. Decide on a few activities you can alternate between e.g. going to the gym, running, walking, swimming etc...
- ✓ Write down an affirmation about yourself that communicates the person you'd like to become. Repeat this to yourself every day.
- ✓ When faced with the decision between natural and artificial, opt for the natural alternative.



# LIFE IN GENERAL

# LIFE IN GENERAL

When I started my website, I decided to blog about productivity because I like the idea of being more effective and efficient in everything that I do. But why is this? Why should anyone care about doing things better or quicker?

The way I see it, when you can be more productive, you have a greater capacity to accomplish your goals and get what you want in life. I view productivity as a vehicle that helps you to become the best version of yourself, so you can realise your full potential and get more out of life.

When people talk about the meaning of life and what you want to get out of life, my answer is pretty simple. Personally, I'd like to enjoy my time on this planet, make great friends, love my family, be healthy and have fun doing things that make me feel fulfilled.

In this chapter, I'd like to discuss some guiding principles to help you live a happier, healthier and more enjoyable life.

## **22. Listen**

Hearing someone talk and actually listening to the words they're saying are two completely different things. It's easy to nod along, hear what's being said and give the impression that you're listening. To listen means to understand other people's perspectives and take action. Even if that action is doing nothing, to understand and have respect for other people's point of view is a skill that more of us need to master.

In his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, author Dale Carnegie talks about listening as one of the fundamental principles to get people to like you:

---

*"If you aspire to be a good conversationalist, be an attentive listener. To be interesting, be interested. Ask questions that other persons will enjoy answering. Encourage them to talk about themselves and their accomplishments."*

---

This doesn't mean approaching someone with a false sense of respect. If you listen while continuing to formulate your own ideas in your head instead of actually responding to the other persons view point, you're doing things wrong. You actually have to care about the other person and have an appreciation for what they have to say.

Listening and understanding the other persons viewpoint will improve your ability to win that person over and eventually convince them to your way of thinking (assuming you don't change your opinion after hearing their words). Marcus Aurelius further supports the importance of listening and understanding other people:

---

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

---

I like this idea of getting inside the other person's mind. This means really standing in the other person's shoes, trying to imagine the world through their eyes and really thinking about how they feel.

Fried and Heinmeier discuss the importance of listening in a business context when it comes to dealing with unhappy employees and customers:

---

*"When people complain, let things simmer for a while. Let them know you're listening. Show them you're aware of what they're saying. Let them know you understand their discontent."*

---

When you show that you care by listening with intent, you'll be amazed at the response you can get from other people. Often we have to fight to be heard. We go into an argument with the preconceived idea that the other person isn't going to listen and we're going to have to build a case to win the other person over. But when you're met with someone who listens and respects your opinion, it almost catches us out by surprise and in response, our respect for

that other person goes up. Even if we eventually come around to their way of thinking, the fact that they cared enough to listen commands great respect.

## **23. Put family first**

When we have our heads down working on other things, whether that's studying, working or building a business, it's easy to forget about those closest to us. Because these people are so close to our daily lives, they're often the first to get sacrificed because they're there all the time. It sounds weird but it's true. If you've ever been in a relationship where one person feels stressed out and takes it out on the other person even though it's not their fault, you'll know exactly what I mean.

In Rework, the authors cite the importance of sending employees home at 5pm to spend time with family in order to add constraints on their work day:

---

*“When people have something to do at home, they get down to business. They get their work done at the office because they have somewhere else to be. They find ways to be more efficient because they have to. They need to pick up the kids or get to choir practice. So they use their time wisely.”*

---

It's an interesting idea to think that by working less and encouraging employees to spend more time with family that you can actually make them more productive during the hours that they're in the office.

One of the things that makes Richard Branson such an incredible entrepreneur is his approach to balancing work and personal life. To Branson, there is no separation between the two, there is just life and that's it. In his book, Screw It, Let's Do It he emphasizes the importance of putting family first:

---

*“We all need a strong support network. Even though I was taught to stand on my own feet, without my loyal family and friends I would be lost.”*

---

This makes a lot of sense. You can make a considerable amount more progress in a more efficient way when you're supported by those closest to you. In order to have their support, they have to come first.

On the surface, Apple founder Steve Jobs may have seemed like a ruthless and hard working person who stopped at nothing. One of the interesting differences between Walter Isaacson's biography of the entrepreneur, titled [\*Steve Jobs\*](#) and Brent Schlender's, [\*Becoming Steve Jobs\*](#), is the focus on Jobs as a family man. During his writing, Schlender interviewed many of the employees and friends who were closest to Jobs to find out more about his personal life. In the public eye, Jobs would keep the focus of interviews on Apple and its product line, but as Senior Vice President, Eddy Cue described:

---

*"Steve really just had two things he cared about in his life, Apple—and to some extent, Pixar—and his family."*

---

When Job's health started to deteriorate, it was the thought of this family that lead him to the decision to step down as CEO of Apple.

If you think about the happiest moments in your life, chances are you'll think of a family memory. Whether that's a birthday, Christmas, getting married or welcoming your first child into the world, these are the memories that stick. At the end of the day, you can always find another job or start a new business, but you only get one family. Look after them.

## **24. Maximise your mental power**

You can be physically strong, you can be emotionally stable and you can be intelligent. Be without mental power and determination, your ability to succeed is greatly diminished. As we've already touched on, mental ability comes from investing in yourself and strengthening your willpower. But more than that, it's your ability to take control of your thoughts and emotions. Think about that for a second... When you open yourself up to the idea of controlling how you think and feel, it's an incredibly empowering feeling.

To emphasize this, here are a few quotes from Marcus Aurelius:

---

*"Your ability to control your thoughts—treat it with respect."*

---

and

---

*"Choose not to be harmed—and you won't feel harmed. Don't feel harmed—and you haven't been."*

---

The idea that you get to choose how you feel is incredible. Your ability to feel happy and content literally exists inside of you right now. There's nothing anyone else can say or do to make you feel a particular way. Sure, people say things to us that might make us feel sad or annoyed, but that's only because we're choosing to react. I don't know about you, but when I first read this and realised that I have a choice about how I get to feel, I felt like instantly uplifted.

Once you've accepted the fact that increased mental ability is a choice, what else can you do to cultivate a healthy mindset?

Author, Hal Elrod talks about using silence as a means of strengthening your mental ability:

---

*"Silence is one of the best ways to immediately reduce stress, while increasing your self-awareness and gaining the clarity that will allow you to maintain your focus on your goals, priorities, and what's most important for your life, each and every day."*

---

Practising silence can be achieved by meditating, praying, deep breathing or just sitting silently with your thoughts. In a world where we're only a few taps away from instant entertainment in the form of a smartphone, these moments of silence are a valuable opportunity to slow down and refocus.

Of course, one of the increasingly popular ways to boost your mental power is to practice meditation or mindfulness. As author Jeff Sanders points out in his book, [\*The 5AM Miracle\*](#), meditation has emerged as one of the most common characteristics shared among the world's high performers:

---

*"Without a doubt many, if not most, productive high achievers incorporate some form of meditation, prayer, and/or affirmations in their morning routine. Though these three habits are obviously different, they share the similarities of*

*calm, focussed thought on something positive and inspirational. That's the goal and it works wonders."*

---

This isn't just speculation. A lot of research has been conducted on the health benefits of meditation which Stevenson looks at extensively in his book, Sleep Smarter:

---

*"Meditation enhances the release of the "feel-good" hormones and endorphins, lowers stress and inflammation in the body. Meditation can help improve your focus, creativity, memory, imagination, productivity, performance and attention. Meditation literally changes the shape of your brain and it increases the size of your alpha waves when focusing. These are the brain waves where imagination, visualisation, memory, learning and concentration are heightened."*

---

You can get started with meditation by spending just 5 minutes a day focusing on your breath. It's advised to incorporate meditation into your morning routine as a way of wiping the slate clean at the beginning of a new day. Over time, your ability to focus and stay calm will improve as the different parts of your brain that control fear and anxiety actually start to become less responsive. How cool is that?

Get into the habit of spending a few minutes a day on a mental workout. As well as meditation and silence, you can use journaling and free writing as a way of expressing yourself and making sense of all those thoughts in your head. Above all, remember that your ability to feel mentally strong already exists inside of you. You just need to tap into it.

## **25. Spend less than you earn**

While I'm not a financial expert, having spent the best part of a year (at the time of writing this) working as a mortgage adviser, I've been exposed to people from all walks of life in all sorts of financial situations. When it comes to managing your money and growing your wealth, there are all sorts of tricks you can use lower the interest you pay on your mortgage and earn more credit card rewards points. But when it comes to fundamental concepts, I feel this particular guideline is crucial to get right.



Spending less than you earn sounds simple, and yet so many people make the mistake of racking up big credit card debts and living outside of their means. When you do this, you develop a bad credit rating and it makes borrowing money for a holiday or to buy property that much more difficult.

In their book, [\*The Millionaire Next Door\*](#), authors Thomas Stanley and William Danko examined the common characteristics between America's wealthiest individuals and found living within your means to be top of the list:

---

*"We live well below our means. We wear inexpensive suits and drive American-made cars. Only a minority of us drive the current-model-year automobile. Only a minority ever lease our motor vehicles."*

---

As author Ramit Sethi discusses in his book, [\*I Will Teach You to be Rich\*](#), living within your means comes down to being more frugal. This doesn't mean being cheap and never spending money, it means being more deliberate about what you choose to spend your money on:

---

*"Frugality is not about simply cutting your spending on various things. It's about making your own decisions about what's important enough to spend a lot on, and what's not, rather than blindly spending on everything."*

---

This means deciding what you do and don't value. If you don't mind paying lower rent on a smaller, less appealing apartment, you can save the money you need to eat out at fancy restaurants.

When you follow this guideline, you'll see that increasing your wealth relies on two options. You can either spend less. The problem with this is that there's a limit to what you can save. The second option is to earn more. Easier said than done, but there's an almost endless limit to what you can earn. If you work full-time, besides negotiating a raise, consider using your spare time to freelance or start a side business. This doesn't necessarily require all the time in the world and earning an extra thousand dollars a month is easier than you think.

## 26. Be likeable

Being likeable, as well as just feeling nicer, makes life a lot easier. When you have people like you, they're more open to listening to you and following your direction. They're also more likely to show you respect and they'll support you when the going gets tough.

When I wrote this guideline, I thought, "This is obvious. Surely everyone already does this and likes being liked". But when you think about it, there are generally going to be people in your life whom you like more than others. Some people are just easier to like. Do you know anyone who seems to lack a sense of self-awareness who comes across as less likeable? These people are always harder to deal with. Don't be this kind of person.

In the Magic of Thinking Big, David Schwartz highlights the importance of being liked so that you're less of a burden on others and so that you can create a support network that helps you to succeed.

---

*"Make yourself lighter to lift. Be likeable. Practice being the kind of person people like. This wins their support and puts fuel in your success-building program."*

---

I like this first part of the quote, "Make yourself lighter to lift". People who are less likeable are always hard work. You never know whether they're happy with you or disappointed. You always feel like you're a second away from disappointing them or doing something wrong. I used to have a boss like this. It's horrible. Making yourself lighter to lift means being less of a burden and less like hard work. Nobody wants to feel like this towards you, so make it easy on them.

In his book, Leaders Eat Last, Simon Sinek highlights the importance of being liked as a way of performing better as a leader. During his research, Sinek looked closely at the human bodies use of hormones to make us feel good in order to be more likeable:

---

*"Serotonin and oxytocin incentivize us to work together and develop feelings of trust and loyalty. I like to call these the "selfless" chemicals. They work to help strengthen our social bonds so that we are more likely to work together and to cooperate, so that we can ultimately survive and ensure our progeny will live on beyond us."*

---

What this means is that nature has programmed us to feel good when we work together. In other words, these hormones guide us and help us to be more likeable so that other people will get along and cooperate with us so that our species can survive. So even before you do anything to be more likeable, just know that your body wants you to be liked so that it can get the support it needs to survive.

What can you do to be more likeable? In his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie lists a range of important concepts like smiling, using the other person's name, making other people feel important and being a good listener. Among all the principles he discusses, the following stands out as being the most important:

---

*"If you want others to like you, if you want to develop real friendships, if you want to help others at the same time as you help yourself, keep this principle in mind and become genuinely interested in other people."*

---

This means caring about the other person and their interest. It means listening and hearing what they have to say and acting upon it, instead of merely absorbing the words without taking action to show you care. When you show interest, it demonstrates that you care about the other person's best interests and in return, they like you more.

If you think back to Sinek's explanation of oxytocin and serotonin. When you show someone that you care about them, they feel safer and more understood. When this happens, their bodies secrete these hormones to make them feel good and as a result, they like you more.

Being likeable isn't always easy. Sometimes a situation may call for you to be more assertive or discipline others. When this happens, challenge yourself to

be more likeable during the process. Ask yourself, would it be easier to manage this person or situation if I were more liked? Would the other person be more likely to listen? Show restraint and demonstrate self-control. Be more likeable during the process and you're far more likely to reach a positive outcome.

## **27. Live in the here and now**

As motivated people, it's easy to get caught up obsessing about the future and achieving our goals. The fact that you're reading this book says something about you as a person. It says you're someone who's interested in self-improvement and are likely to be someone who thinks a lot about where they're heading and what they want the future to look like. While this is a good trait to have, remember to live in the here and now. Be present and appreciate what you have at this point in your life. Obsessing about the future or dwelling on the past means you fail to enjoy what's actually important, which is, what's happening around you in the moment.

In *The Obstacle is the Way*, author Ryan Holiday makes a good case about why living in the moment is important and why we shouldn't use the past or future as an excuse for giving up:

---

*"It doesn't matter whether this is the worst time to be alive or the best, whether you're in a good job market or a bad one, or that the obstacle you face is intimidating or burdensome. What matters is that right now is right now."*

---

He goes on to highlight that the obstacles and problems we face are only made challenging by the way we perceive them. It doesn't matter what's happened in the past or what the obstacle could mean for the future. These thoughts shouldn't influence what's important which is making the right decision based on where you are right now.

---

*"The implications of our obstacle are theoretical—they exist in the past and the future. We live in the moment. And the more we embrace that, the easier the obstacle will be to face and move."*

---

In Essentialism, Greg McKeown discusses how being present is required in order to help you prioritise and identify the most important tasks to work on right now:

---

*"When faced with so many tasks and obligations that you can't figure out which to tackle first, stop. Take a deep breath. Get present in the moment and ask yourself what is most important this very second—not what's most important tomorrow or even an hour from now."*

---

Now this doesn't mean you should forget about the future. Of course, what you do today will have an impact on what you achieve a week, month or year from now. But when you feel overwhelmed with things to do, let this all drop away. Focus instead on what's most important right now. Use the here and now as a filter for identifying your most important tasks.

Living in the here and now doesn't just mean living in the present moment, it also means being more aware of your current environment. In Manage Your Day to Day, Scott Belsky points out how easy it is to distract yourself using technology and challenges the reader to instead focus on being present during the day:

---

*"These days, when a meeting, movie or lecture comes to an end we immediately check in to social channels to see what's going on. Take a break from checking your smartphone during transitional moments, and open yourself up to opportunity and serendipity. Take the time to see how you're feeling, be in the present and chat to someone you don't know. It's amazing what secrets you can unlock in your mind and around you."*

---

As we come to the end of this book, I'd like to leave you with this idea from Hal Elrod:

---

*"Give yourself the gift of investing just 30 days to make significant improvements in your life, one day at a time. No matter what your past has been, you can change your future, by changing the present."*

---

This quote does a great job of communicating something very important; it doesn't matter what's happened in the past, you can't change this. However, if you want to change the future you need to focus on the present moment and how you're living your life right now.

Above all else, remember that if you forget to live in the present, you risk missing all the amazing moments that are going on around you right now. Moments you'll never get back. You may find you get to the future and it's not what you expected. You may find yourself looking back regretting not being more present. You'll be thinking that you won't make the same mistake again without even realising that by dwelling on the past you're missing another beautiful moment. Remember to be present every day. Don't obsess about the future, stop dwelling on the past and enjoy the here and now.

## Action steps

- ✓ When having a conversation with others, make an active effort to talk less. Even when there's a lull in the conversation, challenge yourself to not break the silence. You'll be amazed at how much extra information you can gather. After listening, take action on those words to communicate you've really heard the other person.
- ✓ Even when you get really busy and overwhelmed, leave plenty of time in your week for hanging out with friends and family. Schedule regular catch ups with friends and make an effort to reconnect with one old friend per month.
- ✓ Treat your mind with respect. Use practices like meditation, journaling, affirmations and positive self-talk to create a stronger, more powerful mental attitude.
- ✓ Track your income and expenses using apps like [Mint](#) or [PocketSmith](#). Work out a figure for your monthly income and average monthly expenses. Make sure the latter is the smaller number. Look at the categories where you spend the most money to work out where you have room to cut back on discretionary spending. Look at your sources of income and work out where else you can earn money from e.g. boarders, freelancing, coaching etc...

- ✓ Be likeable by using other people's names, listening to them, showing respect and smiling. Be the kind of person you'd like to have as a friend. Talk to your existing friends to work out the qualities they most admire in you (if they're a good friend, they'll have no problem with this).
- ✓ When you find yourself drifting off thinking about the past or the future, remember to live in the here and now. Set up visual queues as reminders. e.g. sticky notes, posters or other symbols. Take a second every day to write down or say what you're grateful for right now.



**HAPPINESS**



# HAPPINESS

Welcome to this newly added chapter to Guidelines. In the last chapter, I touched on some ideas you can adopt to be happier and healthier. Since writing the first edition of Guidelines, I've spent a lot more time thinking about this idea of happiness. What is it? How do you create more happiness in our lives? What does it mean to be happy and where does it come from? In this chapter, I'd like to dedicate more time to happiness. Because this is what it's all about, right? Why do we do anything? Usually, it's so we can be happier or make our friends and family happier.

In my research on Happiness, I was inspired by books like *The Obstacle is the Way* and *Meditations* and I went a step further. I turned to books like [\*A Guide to the Good Life\*](#), [\*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\\*ck\*](#) and [\*You are a Badass\*](#) to learn more.

As you'll see, I've drawn on stoic teachings for most of these guidelines. I'm not trying to advocate stoicism as being the best philosophy to adopt. I appreciate that there are many paths, philosophies and religions that lead to happiness, which is perhaps why this topic is so complicated. The lessons learned through my research can be adopted by anyone and don't require you to subscribe to a particular belief, which is why I felt they're so appropriate for this book.

The biggest lesson I've come to learn is that happiness doesn't come from things or even people. It comes from us. You are the only one with the power to make yourself happy and it doesn't require you to have a specific salary or item of clothing. You can feel happiness right now if you want.

## **28. Think about the negative**

In your life right now, think about your worst case scenario. What's the worst that could happen? You could be fired or your business could fail. You could lose your home, or worse, a family member.

How would thinking about the worst case scenario help us to be happier? As Seneca, one of the great stoics describes, bad things happen but you can prepare yourself for the future so that you may move on quickly instead of dwelling on the past:

---

*"If a man takes this into his inmost heart and looks upon all the misfortunes of other men, of which there is always a great plenty, in this spirit, remembering that there is nothing to prevent their coming upon him also, he will arm himself against them long before they attack him."*

---

William Irvine, author of *A Guide to the Good Life* spent a great deal of time studying the various stoics as well as the topic of happiness and further emphasises this principle as being one of the most important lessons of stoic teaching.

---

*"The Stoics recommended that we spend time imagining that we have lost the things we value—that our wife has left us, our car was stolen, or we lost our job. Doing this, the Stoics thought, will make us value our wife, our car, and our job more than we otherwise would. This technique is, I think, the single most valuable technique in the Stoics' psychological tool kit."*

---

Quite simply, by imagining our lives without the things and people we value, we will come to appreciate them more. Another benefit of negative thinking is that it can prepare us for when these bad things inevitably happen so that we move on and not dwell on the past or live with regret:

---

*"If we think about these things, we will lessen their impact on us when, despite our efforts at prevention, they happen."*

---

In *The Obstacle is the Way*, Ryan Holiday highlights the fact that these worst case scenario situations are completely outside of our control and so we shouldn't delude ourselves to think they won't happen.

---

*"Your world is ruled by external factors. Promises aren't kept. You don't always get what is rightfully yours, even if you earned it. Not everything is as clean and straightforward as the games they play in business school. Be prepared for this."*

---

Holiday goes on to highlight that if we don't think negatively, we will actually encourage further unhappiness when bad things happen:

---

*"If this comes as a constant surprise each and every time it occurs, you're not only going to be miserable, you're going to have a much harder time accepting it and moving on to attempts number two, three, and four. The only guarantee, ever, is that things will go wrong. The only thing we can use to mitigate this is anticipation. Because the only variable we control completely is ourselves."*

---

While the stoics can teach us a lot, I have to say, I enjoy how bluntly Mark Manson puts it in his book, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* and notes how "staying positive" isn't always healthy:

---

*"Staying Positive. While there is something to be said for 'staying on the sunny side of life,' the truth is, sometimes life sucks, and the healthiest thing you can do is admit it."*

---

If you're going to adopt this idea and think negatively, I recommend finding a routine time each day to spend a few minutes imagining life without the things you value. It could be as you lay in bed at night, or on your commute or drive to work.

If you're driving to work thinking about the mountain of stuff you have to do, instead, think about what it would be like to not have a job at all. Or if you're worried about not being able to afford that new phone or shiny gadget, think about what it would be like to have no phone, or to live on a dollar a day. And

in regards to the people in your life, imagine what life would be like without your closest friends and family. When you do this, you'll feel a new sense of appreciation and motivation to take advantage of each opportunity to spend with the people closest to you.

## **29. Don't worry what other people think**

It's funny how often we concern ourselves with what other people think. Even people we barely know or likely won't see again. Why should we put so much emphasis on judgement from others? And yet it impacts how we dress, what we say and how we act.

Yes, the opinions of the people closest to us are important. With this guidelines, I'm talking about more casual acquaintances and people you don't know, in other words, the least important people in your life.

As Jen Sincero notes in *You Are a Badass*:

---

*"Do not waste your time giving a crap about what anybody else thinks of you. We throw a wet blanket of ho-hummary over our lives when we live in fear of what others might think, instead of in celebration of who we are."*

---

But I think Marcus Aurelius put it best in *Meditations*:

---

*"It never ceases to amaze me: we all love ourselves more than other people, but care more about their opinion than our own. If a god appeared to us—or a wise human being, even—and prohibited us from concealing our thoughts or imagining anything without immediately shouting it out, we wouldn't make it through a single day. That's how much we value other people's opinions—instead of our own."*

---

I love this quote as it makes a very strong point; why would you value the opinions and thoughts of others more than your own? If you have a belief or desire that someone doesn't agree with, are you going to let that person influence your beliefs?

Sincero makes the case that you shouldn't let the opinions of others influence who you are:

---

*"You are responsible for what you say and do. You're not responsible for whether or not people freak out about it. What other people think about you has nothing to do with YOU and everything to do with THEM. All that matters is what's true for you, and if you can stay connected to that without straying, you will be a mighty superhero."*

---

This advice is easy to give, but how do we turn this idea of not caring what other people think into habit? Irvine gives us some practical insight for dealing with this issue:

---

*"One way to overcome the obsession of caring what people think, is to realize that in order to win the admiration of other people, we will have to adopt their values. More precisely, we will have to live a life that is successful according to their notion of success. Consequently, before we try to win the admiration of these other people, we should stop to ask whether their notion of success is compatible with ours."*

---

This is the single best piece of advice I've come across during my research and it's the point that sticks in my head. Questioning other people's values and ideas of success is a great way of reminding yourself whether their admiration is worth pursuing.

Although not directly linked to the idea of other people, I have to share this advice from Mark Manson:

---

*"Not giving a fuck does not mean being indifferent, it means being comfortable with being different. To not give a fuck about adversity, you must first give a fuck about something more important than adversity. Whether you realise it or not, you are always choosing what to give a fuck about."*

---

In the case of other people, you should learn to feel indifferent about what other people think. If they like you, that's cool. If they don't, well that's fine too.

Your ability to choose what to care about and how to feel is your greatest power.

### **30. Don't rely on stuff to make you happy**

During my research into happiness, I noticed this piece of advice kept coming up again and again from numerous different authors. Material possessions don't make us happy. This isn't a new idea. In fact, I bet you've heard this already. But I'd like to take things a step further and advocate for the idea of actively owning less. In other words, don't just restrict what you buy, but actively try and declutter your life of material possessions that don't add value.

Minimalism is slowly gaining more and more traction as people realise that owning less can, in fact, make us happier.

Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus have become more well-known since the release of their popular Netflix documentary, *Minimalism*. In their book, [\*Minimalism\*](#), they make the link between stuff and happiness, perfectly.

---

*"The material possessions we accumulate will not make us happy. We all know this, and yet we often search for life's meaning through accumulating more possessions. Real happiness, however, comes from who we are—from who we've become. Real happiness comes from within. Likewise, discontentment is also a result of who we've become."*

---

They go on to emphasize that happiness isn't the end goal. They argue that living a "meaningful life" is more important and that happiness is simply a byproduct:

---

*"Of course, happiness is not the point—a meaningful life is. We must stop searching for happiness and instead start looking for meaning. If our short-term actions align with our long-term values, we'll find purpose in whatever we're doing. Paradoxically, it is this way of living—living deliberately—that leads to true happiness. Not ephemeral or fleeting happiness, but lasting contentment that is reinforced by a life of discipline, attention, awareness, and intentionality. Happiness is merely a byproduct."*

---

In *A Guide to the Good Life*, Irvine explains why owning more stuff doesn't make us happy:

---

*"We humans are unhappy in large part because we are insatiable; after working hard to get what we want, we routinely lose interest in the object of our desire. Rather than feeling satisfied, we feel a bit bored, and in response to this boredom, we go on to form new, even grander desires."*

---

When I first read this, it was one of those "penny drop" moments. It just made so much sense. If you think about any time you've upgraded your phone or received a pay rise, it's amazing how quickly we become immune to our new state. The new phone loses its appeal all too quickly and our spending adjusts to absorb the pay rise so it's like it never happened.

This is known as "hedonic adaption". It's the process by which we experience an initial rush of excitement then adapt so that we no longer appreciate the things we have. Instead, we take them for granted and so we have to go and get a bigger, better thing to experience the same rush of excitement.

In [\*The Power of Less\*](#), Leo Babauta makes the argument:

---

*"Many of us live our lives without limits, we have too much stuff to do, too much information, too much clutter, too many papers. Being limitless is weak. Learn to focus yourself with limits, and you'll increase your strength."*

---

This explains why we always need more. You don't get a certificate to say you're happy when you reach a certain income or when you own a specific thing. Because there is no limit to what we can own we end up chasing more and more in order to try and quench our thirst for happiness.

Instead, we should, as Leo Babauta puts it, have the strength to live within a limit so that we can put a cap on the amount of stuff we need. By limiting how much we need, we learn to appreciate what we already have instead of always feeling like something is missing. I also find that when you limit yourself to living with less and when you only purchase things that are of real

value, you value these things more instead of your appreciation for items being spread over hundreds or even thousands of possessions.

### **31. Focus only on what you can control**

You may have noticed this idea crop up a few times over the course of this chapter. If happiness comes from within us, then it has to come from what we can control. Our thoughts, perceptions and beliefs about the world around us. To recap Ryan Holiday from earlier in this chapter. *"Your world is ruled by external factors"*. If you rely on external, uncontrollable factors (like people and things) to bring you happiness, you are almost guaranteed to live a life yearning for more.

Instead, as Holiday identifies in *The Obstacle is the Way*:

---

*"Perceptions can be managed. Actions can be directed. We can always think clearly, respond creatively. Look for opportunity, seize the initiative. What we can't do is control the world around us—not as much as we'd like to, anyway. We might perceive things well, then act rightly, and fail anyway."*

---

This is the key. We get to decide how to perceive a situation and then choose how to respond. These are the things we can control and are the tools we can use when approaching happiness.

Irvine quotes a number of the great stoics when discussing this idea of control:

---

*"While most people seek to gain contentment by changing the world around them, Epictetus advises us to gain contentment by changing ourselves—more precisely, by changing our desires."*

---

This is the opposite way of thinking to the popular Steve Jobs quote *"Those who are crazy enough to think they can change the world usually do"*. Yes, it's nice to not limit ourselves and to think we can change the world, but I suggest approaching this advice with a caution and balancing ambition with what you can control.



William Irvine also quotes the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius:

---

*"Besides having complete control over our goals and values, Marcus points out that we have complete control over our character. We are, he says, the only ones who can stop ourselves from attaining goodness and integrity. We have it entirely within our power, for example, to prevent viciousness and cupidity from finding a home in our soul."*

---

But I think Seneca put it best:

---

*"External circumstances have very little importance either for good or for evil: the wise man is neither elated by prosperity nor depressed by adversity; for he has always endeavoured to depend chiefly upon himself and to derive all his joys from himself."*

---

One way to change your approach to control is to simply let things happen. In *You Are a Badass*, Sincero makes the argument that we should surrender to the universe and give up control. What will happen will happen. It's up to us to then live with what the universe has dealt out for us:

---

*"What often happens is that, regardless of our best intentions and hard work, we're trying to control our circumstances by using our limiting beliefs and old patterns. We think that we need to try and take charge of the situation (fear based thinking) instead of having faith and gratitude and allowing The Universe to deliver (love based thinking)."*

---

The message here is the same every time. By focusing on what you can control, namely, your beliefs, thoughts and perceptions, you can choose not to be put down by the bad things around you and you have it within your power to live in a state of constant joy. Remember the following from Marcus as a reminder of this power:

---

*"Your ability to control your thoughts—treat it with respect"*

---

## Action steps

- ✓ Practice negative visualization by imagining your life without certain things or people. Visualize how you'd feel if you lost the things you value. A good time to do this is while you commute, when you're in the shower or laying in bed at night. After you finish the exercise, you'll be amazed at how you look at things with a new sense of appreciation.
- ✓ Don't worry what other people think. Remind yourself that you can't control other people's thoughts or how they feel towards you. This is especially true of the new people you meet. Remind yourself that you should only care what other people think if they're values align with your own.
- ✓ Try and declutter your life of material possessions that you don't need. [The Minimalists](#) blog is a great place to start learning about minimalism. When you own fewer things, you'll appreciate the things you've kept a lot more. You don't have to go full-blown minimalist, but decluttering your life, even just a little bit can make you feel 10 times more organised and relaxed.
- ✓ Remind yourself that happiness comes from within and from what you can control. Namely, your thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. As you feel yourself being influenced by external triggers, ask yourself, is this within my control?



# HABITS

# HABITS

For the third version of Guidelines I wanted to write about what readers really want to learn about. I get numerous emails everyday and a really common response is people asking for advice on implementing positive habits and banishing the bad ones. A couple of the books I read in research for this chapter were [\*The Power of Habit\*](#), [\*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People\*](#), [\*What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast\*](#), [\*50 Positive Habits to Transform your Life\*](#) and [\*Superhuman by Habit\*](#). All of these books provided advice on how to get habit's to truly stick and inspiration for what kind of habits we should be implementing more in our lives.

Habits are something that we all adopt instinctively. A habit is a behavior or activity that you do instinctively to save time and increase productivity. When done so instinctively, you can complete a task or activity without much thought in an almost automatic way. Habits can be applied to all areas of our lives; personal, work, health, fitness, mental and social. And although a lot of people associate habits with negativity, only assuming that habits can be bad, this couldn't be further from the truth. Habits can be an essential tool for improving your life, increasing your productivity or developing new skills.

Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit* explains that once a habit is well established, your brain takes a back seat in the decision making process. it actually uses this time to rest or focus on something new:

---

*"Habits emerge because the brain is constantly looking for ways to save effort. The brain will make almost any routine into a habit because it allows our brain to ramp down more often."*

---

## 32. Find a trigger for your habits

In the beginning, habits need quite a lot of nurturing. It's not just the simple matter of deciding to take on a new habit and going for it. You have to consider how it's going to fit into your life and if it's something you can do regularly. You'll need to establish a new routine and the best way to do this is to create a 'trigger' that will encourage you to carry out your new habit regularly. It's also important to only take on habits that you are physically capable of and that you already understand a little bit about.

Stephen R. Covey, author of international best-seller *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* explains the relevance of knowledge, skill and, desire in creating new habits:

---

*"A habit is the intersection of knowledge, skill and, desire. Knowledge is the what to do and the why. Skill is the how to do. And desire is the motivation, the want to do. In order to make something a habit, we have to have all three. "*

---

In the context of fitness, Covey explains that you need knowledge, skill and, desire before you can truly implement a new fitness regime. When considering a new running schedule, you first need to have the knowledge. Know that you will be running a few KM's every morning and you are doing it because you want to reach the goal of running a marathon. You need the skill, the ability to physically run. And finally, you need the motivation, the desire to improve your speed and improve your overall fitness and wellbeing.

Charles Duhigg places a lot of emphasis on the importance of cues when building new habits. Cue's are designed to trigger the habit, they need to be simple and straightforward. There are 3 key steps when it comes to creating a new habit:

---

*"Create a cue, then identify the reward. And finally, find the craving that will encourage and drive the habit loop. "*

---

The key to getting a habit to last is to have your brain expect the rewards, to crave the sense of accomplishment once the habit has been completed.

---

*"Cravings are what drives habits."*

---

Referring back to the running example, to get started you need to choose a simple cue. Covey recommends leaving your running clothes laid out on the floor next to your bed. Encouraging you to put them on as soon as you wake up. Establish a clear reward, consider treating yourself to a delicious, healthy breakfast upon your return, or buying a coffee on the way to work later.

Duhigg's point reinforce the importance of creating a trigger or a cue, and the incorporation of a reward, once you've completed the habit, is another handy motivation technique. The motivation or desire as Covey calls it is literally going to be the driver of any new habit. Without that crucial element, there's no way you'll be able to find momentum and stay consistent.

### **33. Replace bad habits with good ones**

When thinking about habits, it's easy to jump to the assumption that habits are bad, you think about things like smoking, or eating junk food. And most people assume that bad habits are the hardest to tackle and the easiest to adopt. How do you stop doing something that's so automatic, and something that brings you a sense of pleasure.

Tynan, author of *Superhuman by Habit* explains that:

---

*"Good habits aren't more difficult to execute than bad habits, they're just harder to build. With bad habits, what you can do is replace the existing habits with more useful habits, ones that are aligned with how you want to think and act. "*

---

Duhigg agrees with Tynan. He explains that you can't simply eliminate a bad habit. You can only change the habit. If you can identify the cue that triggers the bad habit and identify the reward, then all you need to do is replace the action.

---

*"The golden rule: if you use the same cue, and provide the same reward, you can shift the routine and change the habit. Almost any behavior can be transformed."*

---

Bad habits are never going to benefit you, or bring you any joy. Bad habits are the ones that hold you back and prevent you from living your best life. That's why it's so important to acknowledge the things we do that have a negative impact and change them. As Tynan appropriately states:

---

*"If we don't have good habits, then there is a ceiling to what we can accomplish, personally and professionally."*

---

We all know that bad habits are usually damaging and do not benefit our health or personal growth. Rather than trying to simply give up a bad habit, try replacing it with something new, something that will improve your overall well-being, or increase your productivity and work.

### **34. Use your willpower to enforce good habits**

When building new habits and encouraging them to actually stick, the concept of willpower comes up a lot. Willpower or self-control isn't something you either have or don't have. It is something that can be improved upon and used to enforce and make your habits stick.

Laura Vanderkam, author of *What the Most Successful People do Before Breakfast* describes your willpower as similar to a muscle. Just like your muscles, over-use will lead to burn-out, while the correct use and appropriate practice will increase your strength. For this reason, Vanderkam suggests you start your day with the most important habits, this will ensure that your willpower is at it's strongest.

---

*"Getting things down to routines and habits takes willpower at first, but in the long run it actually preserves willpower."*

---

Interestingly, Duhigg also refers to your willpower as a muscle. Something that needs to be exercised in order to get stronger. Duhigg explains that many people assume that willpower is something you either have or you don't. But the reality is that:

---

*"Willpower is a learnable skill, something that can be taught."*

---

Although Tynan believes that it is possible to increase your willpower capacity, he does believe that we each only have a limited amount of willpower available. And this is why using your willpower initially to build new habits will be a rewarding process. Eventually, you'll be able to continue with these habits without requiring a lot of willpower.

---

*"The glorious benefit of a habit is that it converts something that requires a lot of willpower and focus into something that becomes automatic and outside of our conscious thought."*

---

Vanderkam, Duhigg and, Tynan all believe that to some extent your willpower can be increased. It's a valuable tool in the development of habits, particularly in the early stages before that automation kicks in.

### **35. Be consistent and create long-lasting habits**

When you first take on a new habit whether it be an exercise regime or committing to getting up earlier, there's a certain level of excitement that comes with a new venture. This will drive you forwards with your habit for the first week or two. But after that, the excitement wears off. This is when it becomes critical to continue being consistent in order to avoid falling off the wagon.

In the context of getting a habit to stick, Vanderkam has this to say:

---

*"Practice. Practice is, simply, performing or working on something repeatedly to become proficient."*

---



You can't expect a habit to become 'easy' or 'second nature' immediately. You have to practice, almost every day, until it becomes automatic.

When it comes to the early days of establishing a new habit, consistency is key. Tynan explains that it's all about creating a momentum:

---

*"Missing two days of a habit is habit suicide. Missing one day of a habit reduces your chances of long-term success by 5% while missing two days reduces it by 40%. Miss three days and you may as well be starting over."*

---

Habits take time to become established parts of your routine, it's especially important in the early days that you complete your habit daily. It may not be as critical that you never miss a day once the habit is well and truly automated, but in the first month or so, do everything you can to ensure that you never miss a day.

You have to commit to the habit, and acknowledge that it's going to take time. As Charles Duhigg puts it:

---

*"Change may not be fast and it isn't always easy. But, with time and effort, almost any habit can be re-shaped."*

---

It's also important to accept that things don't always go to plan. Sometimes, we won't be able to complete our habit, but it may be completely out of your control. In some situations, you may not be able to complete your new routine in exactly the same way, but this is not a reason to not do it at all. Using the fitness example, Tynan suggests that when on holiday, don't simply stop your fitness regime. You may not have access to your usual gym or equipment, nor have the exact amount of time. But a quick jog outdoors and a few sets of press ups and sit ups in any hotel room is better than doing nothing at all. Tynan explains, that in these situations, you just need to do it - even if you do a terrible job.

---

*"Remember the power of a habit isn't in the individual execution but in the consistency. It is far worse to skip doing something than to just do a terrible job of it."*

---

All of the above-mentioned authors make it pretty key that consistency is key when forming a new habit. Doing a habit one day is a great start, but its the repetitive nature of doing it over and over that is going to help make it stick. And that's why it's important to make sure you select a habit that is manageable, something that can fit into your day, every single day.

### **36. Choose the right habits**

It can be easy to fall into the trap of trying to adopt too many habits at one time. It's better to take them a few at a time, give yourself a chance to focus on the habit and give it your full attention. The previous sections in this chapter have outlined that you need to have knowledge, skill ,and motivation, you need to have willpower, you want to select habits that improve your overall well-being and you need to ensure that you can complete the habit daily without fail.

---

*"Start small, become consistent and increase and a manageable pace."*

---

Tynan explains that the first habits you should tackle are the 'high priority habits' and you have to care about the habit and be truly passionate in order for it to stick. If you're looking for habit inspiration, try asking your close friends what they think you could work on. Look outside of your comfort zone for things you wouldn't usually do and take a close look at your social skills, these can be extremely beneficial to work on.

Tynan also explains that there tends to be two different kinds of people when it comes to forming habits. Some of us find it easy to add new things into our lives, and others prefer to subtract things:

---

*"It's undoubtedly a good thing to work on both the ability to be an adder or subtracter. However, there's no harm in leaning on your strengths when constructing habits."*

---

There are a few different categories that your habits can fall under, and it's important to ensure that you develop good habits in all areas of your life. Author of *50 Positive Habits to Transform your life*, Michael Chapman, and author Tynan agree on the following categories as the most important:

1. Health/Fitness Habits
2. Mental/Positivity Habits
3. Lifestyle/Organisational Habits
4. Developing/Expansion Habits
5. Social Habits

Chapman encourages everyone to create a habit that promotes staying active:

---

*"Try and remain active throughout the day. Exercise releases endorphins which makes us happier and sharper."*

---

Find a way to stay active that you enjoy, if you're someone who hates running or walking on your own, find a local leisure centre that runs fitness classes you can join. Or perhaps you need something you can do at home, there are countless at home yoga videos you can find on YouTube and follow along.

Chapman also believes that a positive outlook can have a really strong impact on your life:

---

*"One of the most powerful changes that you can make, is to change how you view the world around you - how do you look at it negatively? How can you change this?"*

---

Tynan and Chapman both agree that we have too much stuff in our lives, that if we removed some of the clutter, we'd feel less tied down and generally happier.

---

*"Many of us, including myself, are wrapped up in our worldly possessions. From our cars to our TVs. Give stuff away, let go of anything that doesn't bring joy."*

---

This idea ties in nicely with author Marie Kondo's work in her book; *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. As Kondo states;

---

*"The best way to choose what to keep and what to throw away is to take each item in one's hand and ask: "Does this spark joy?" If it does, keep it. If not, dispose of it. This is not only the simplest but also the most accurate yardstick by which to judge."*

---

Making an effort to exercise, stay positive and eliminate possessions that don't bring you any joy is going to make a real difference in your life. You'll find your overall well-being and general outlook on life will be dramatically improved.

In regards to personal development habits and expanding your knowledge and productivity, Chapman has one tip:

---

*"Simply setting your alarm for one-hour earlier can be one of the most positive actions you will ever take."*

---

Getting up one hour earlier is a really valuable habit to take on. Just that extra hour in the mornings will allow you to have some time to yourself. Whether you want to focus on doing things you enjoy such as walking in the fresh air, reading a book, or if you want to use the time to work on some work totally undisturbed, it will be one of the best moves you've ever made.

Not all habits need to be based on your own personal development. When it comes to our social habits, author Stephen R. Covey has a lot to say, he places emphasis on the importance of seeking to understand people better:

---

*"Communication is the most important skill in life. We spend most of our waking hours communicating. But consider this: you've spent years learning how to read and write, learning how to speak. But what about listening?"*

---

I'm sure that many areas of your life could do with some improvement, but do remember not to take them all on at once. Commit to just one or two habits in the beginning, select ones that you're truly passionate about and commit to doing them every single day. Once they feel habitual and automatic, you can start looking for new habits in a different area of your life.

## **Action Steps**

- ✓ First of all, try to understand if you are someone who will do better at subtracting bad habits, or if you're more likely to add in good habits. Consider this: in regards to health, are you more likely to go to the gym, or to cut out junk food? When you've established what you are better at, you can get started working on your habits.
- ✓ Ask close family and friends what areas of your life they think you could improve on or develop. Sometimes it's a good idea to get a fresh perspective. Consider what they suggest and work on creating a better habit.
- ✓ Identify which habits you currently have, can you identify the individual cues and rewards? Try and switch out the bad habits for better ones.
- ✓ Remember to start small, just introduce one or two new habits at a time. Give them a really good chance to become well-established before you begin a new one. It's not a race.
- ✓ Try to commit to any habit for 30 days, try and complete the habit every single day, and if circumstances change and you can't complete it, make sure you do it the next day. Never skip more than 1 day in a row.
- ✓ Consider checking out the [Today HQ app](#), this is what I use to track my habits!



# CONFIDENCE

# CONFIDENCE

A lot of people assume that confidence is something you're born with. The reality is that confidence can be built, but it can also be broken. I get a lot of people reaching out for advice on how to be more confident, how to stop self-doubt and how to stop holding themselves back. When thinking about confidence I automatically think about Jen Sincero and her book [\*You are a Badass\*](#). Sincero's book really aims to empower the readers, she acknowledges a lot of problems that we all seem to face and identifies different strategies for conquering these hurdles. This book was the starting point for my research of this chapter. The other books I've drawn influence from are; [\*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\\*ck\*](#), [\*Grit\*](#), [\*A Guide to the Good Life\*](#), [\*The Art of Non-Conformity\*](#), and [\*Re-awaken the Giant Within\*](#). Each of these books offered inspiration and advice on how to build up confidence and banish self-doubt.

It's easy to associate confidence with the person who's the loudest in the room and makes the most jokes or the person who seems incredibly successful in their career and seems to have it all together. However, confidence is one of those tricky concepts that's hard to truly define. It's less about what you portray on the outside and more about how you feel on the inside. Sometimes the loudest person in the room is actually feeling incredibly insecure and nervous, being outspoken might just be a facade. And the successful career-woman or man may seem like they have everything under control, and the power-suits they wear may scream confidence when deep down, they struggle with speaking up in meetings and find it difficult when presenting proposals to clients.

It's likely that at some point in our lives, we'll all face a period where our self-confidence is lacking, whether we have an experience that knocks us back or we were never really that confident in the first place. I've compiled some of

the best information and tips from a few of my favourite books that will hopefully offer some insight and assistance.

### **37. Acknowledge your fears, don't let them overwhelm you.**

Fear is something we are all familiar with, but it's important that we don't let our fears rule our lives. Fear can hold us back from the things we love or the things we are truly capable of. To feel fear is a perfectly natural response, and in some cases, fears are designed to prevent you from danger. Often, fears are something we've built up in our heads to be a bigger deal than they really are. And acknowledging these fears can help you move past them and make real progress. Chris Guillebeau, the author of *The Art of Non-conformity*, explains what exactly fear is and its role in your self-doubt.

---

*"Fear begins with an undefined worry, a voice in the back of your head that says you're not good enough, you won't succeed with anything big or significant, and you might as well give up and stop trying to stand out. "*

---

Fear can be overwhelming, it can prevent us from doing things we love, or trying new things. And if you continue to avoid the things you fear, the fear itself is only going to increase. It's important to remember that as Guillebeau stated, the fear is just a voice in your head, it's not the reality.

Guillebeau has a couple of steps you can take to overcome your fears.

---

*"1. Conquering a fear begins with acknowledging the fear. 2. Accept the worst case scenario, this will help you put things into perspective. 3. Smash through the fear, just do it."*

---

Jen Sincero, author of *You are a Badass* explains that when we live in fear, especially if we fear that we might not live up to other people's expectations, we're only doing ourselves a disservice. Living this way will only leave you miserable and scared of doing the things that you love. Sincero recommends using faith as a way to combat your fears:



---

*"Faith is having the audacity to believe in the not-yet-seen. Faith is the muscle you use when you decide to blast outside of your comfort zone and transform your life into something that's practically unrecognizable to you in your present reality. Faith smothers your fear of the unknown. Faith allows you to take risks. Faith is the stuff of "leap and the net will appear."*

---

Sincero emphasises the importance of balancing the strength of your faith versus your fear, you have to have faith in yourself and in the universe, and that has to outweigh your fear of failure.

Failure is something we often fear the most, Mark Manson, author of *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* explains that as adults, we do everything we can to avoid failure. We associate failure with fear and uncertainty. And because of this train of thought, we don't ever become truly successful at something. Pursing big goals means potentially failing first, and this failure creates so much anxiety that most people simply don't try. Interestingly enough, this is something we have learned as we have matured, as children, we use failure as a tool for learning. In the process of learning to walk, children fall down many times. This doesn't mean they give up on walking altogether. They get up and try again.

---

*"We can be truly successful only at something we're willing to fail at."*

---

In fact, Chris Anderson, author of *TED Talks* actually suggests that you use fear to your advantage, he considers it to be an asset, especially in the context of public speaking.

---

*"Use your fear as motivation, It can be the driver that will persuade you to prepare for a talk properly."*

---

It's important to remember that the unknown is not something to fear, it can be something to welcome and embrace. When it comes to facing your fears, don't cower away from them. Acknowledge the fear, consider the worst case

scenario, this will help you realise that the outcome might not actually be that bad. And finally, as Guillebeau puts it; 'smash through the fear!'

### **38. Don't let other people's opinions define you**

Similar to guideline number 29, this simple tip is probably the hardest issue to overcome, but equally the most important. It's so easy to get caught up in what other people think about you. We've all heard it before, but Sincero really pushes the idea that you have got to stop worrying about what everybody thinks of you. Who cares what they think? You do you and celebrate it. Living in fear that we might not meet other people's expectations only leaves you miserable and scared of doing the things you love.

Jen emphasises that you cannot control what people think or do, the only thing you can control is what YOU say and do. People's opinions of you says more about them than it does you. Stay true to yourself!

---

*"Give yourself permission, and the means to be who you are"*

---

You learn to consider other peoples judgments of you from a young age, it's something you learn organically at school. Performance-based learning means that you're constantly awaiting a grade for your work, or recognition from your teacher for your work. You might be so proud of a painting you did in art class, but if the teacher gives you a C, it's easy to let that overshadow your own opinion.

---

*"You are responsible for what you say and do. You're not responsible for whether or not people freak out about it. What other people think about you has nothing to do with YOU and everything to do with THEM. All that matters is what's true for you, and if you can stay connected to that without straying, you will be a mighty superhero."*

---

The reality is, in everyday life people probably aren't looking at you, judging what you wear or what you do. They are too preoccupied with their own problems. So stop worrying, wear whatever you want, do whatever you want.

Nobody else's opinion should prevent you from being you. As Mark Manson so eloquently puts it:

---

*"It's about being comfortable with being different."*

---

Chris Anderson agrees and stresses the importance of being true to yourself;

---

*"Your goal is not to be Winston Churchill or Nelson Mandela. It's to be you. If you're an artist, be an artist; don't try to be an academic. Just be you"*

---

William Irvine explains that in stoic philosophy, it's important to be indifferent to what other people think of us.

---

*"Epictetus advises us not to seek social status since if we make it our goal to please others, we will no longer be free to please ourselves. We will, he says, have enslaved ourselves."*

---

It's important to remember that you are a wonderful, individual, human being. There's nobody quite like you, and nobody that looks like you on this planet. And that's something worth celebrating. If we all looked the same, had the same personality or did the same job, just how boring and dull would this world be. Celebrate your individuality and never let someone else's opinion define or change you. Just because they don't agree with what you wear or what you do does not make them right. It just makes them different. And that's OK.

### **39. Stop comparing yourself to people on social media**

It's so easy to compare yourself to celebrities, influencers or even people you went to high school with on social media. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have provided a platform for people to post snippets of their lives for everyone to see. But it's so important to remember that people are posting their "highlight reel". They aren't posting a picture of themselves the minute they wake up, with bed hair, pimple cream on their chin and their 10-year-old

holey t-shirt. Instead, pictures are posted after hours of makeup, 6 outfit changes and 32 photos to get the perfect lighting and angle.

Mark Manson, author of *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* highlights how technology these days means that we are flooded with images and content every day, but he reminds us to remember that it's not an accurate reflection of reality:

---

*"Having the Internet, Google, Facebook, YouTube means that all day, every day, we are flooded with the truly extraordinary. The best of the best. Nonstop. Yet the vast majority of life is unextraordinary, indeed quite average."*

---

It's easy to get caught up in these so-called realities. But it's up to you who you follow online, what magazines you read and which videos you watch. Jen Sincero explains how your reality is entirely formed by what you choose to focus on and the way that you interpret it. By choosing the wrong things to focus on, it's easy to feel down about yourself, feel like you don't live up to certain expectations. But, if you stop looking at the things that bring you down, you'll find yourself feeling happier and ultimately freer.

---

*"Our entire experience on this planet is determined by how we choose to perceive our reality. All you have to do is make the choice to let go of everything you're so attached to that's not serving you and manifest the reality that you want. Life is an illusion created by your perception, and it can be changed the moment you choose to change it."*

---

We now in an age flooded with information, social media, news updates, all reporting on the extraordinary few. Leaving us feeling below average, insecure and desperate. Mark Manson explains the perils of this new age:

---

*"Technology has solved old economic problems by giving us new psychological problems. The Internet has not just open-sourced information; it has also open-sourced insecurity, self-doubt, and shame."*

---

If you find yourself looking at these people online, comparing yourself, and feeling inferior, then maybe it's time to take a look at who you follow. Stop following anyone that makes you feel bad about yourself. There are plenty of people online who are more authentic and share the trials and tribulations of real-life online, try following someone who can be a real role model.

#### **40. Embrace things outside of your comfort zone often**

Consider your confidence to be like a muscle, you need to use it regularly in order for it to get stronger. Whether it's learning a new skill, joining a local club full of people you don't know or asking a stranger for a coffee, get out there and try something new. Comfort zones are exactly as they sound, comfortable. And it's easy to be perfectly content within your little bubble. But, you're never going to grow or progress if you don't try new things. As Tony Robbins famously put it:

---

*"All growth begins at the end of your comfort zone."*

---

In his book [\*Unshakeable\*](#), Robbins explains that as humans, it is our natural instinct to stay within our comfort zone. But the only real way to grow is to expand your horizons and break through that barrier.

Mark Divine, author of [\*The Way of Zen\*](#) believes that all of us are capable of 20x what we may think we are. He explains that:

---

*"Comfort imprisons us in a low-grade fear of suffering. We naturally shy from the things that hurt, not understanding how much this pattern debilitates us and keeps us from experiencing life to it's fullest. We must define our comfort zone and get the heck out of it!"*

---

Mel Robbins, author of [\*The 5 Second Rule\*](#) explains that stepping outside of your comfort zone is an act that takes an incredible amount of courage, to face something you find difficult or scary is no easy task.

---

*"Every single day we face moments that are difficult, uncertain, and scary. Your life requires courage."*

---

Mel Robbins explains that in order to step outside of your comfort zone you just have to start. Even the smallest step or the smallest action will create a momentum or chain reaction in your confidence building.

---

*"By pushing yourself to take the simple steps of moving your life forward, you create momentum and experience a sense of freedom and power that's hard to accurately describe."*

---

William Irvine draws on Stoic philosophy in his book *A Guide to the Good Life*. He explains that the Stoics actually inflicted small amounts of discomfort upon themselves, as a way of increasing their confidence and enjoyment of life. Irvine agrees with Mel Robbins in that small steps and experiencing small amounts of discomfort will only increase your confidence over time.

---

*"A person who periodically experiences minor discomforts will grow confident that he can withstand major discomforts as well, so the prospect of experiencing such discomforts at some future time will not, at present, be a source of anxiety for him."*

---

You have to be willing to step outside of your comfort zone, take risks, and continue to follow through if you want to reap the benefits. Challenge yourself, grow and develop, always be moving forward, never stay stationary, never get comfortable. And through doing this, you'll continue to boost your confidence and achieve things you never thought possible.

## **41. Manage your own expectations and acknowledge your own wins**

It can be easy to expect a lot of yourself. For some reason, humans tend to hold themselves to the highest standards. And this can be damaging, it can mean that you constantly feel like your failing, damaging your confidence and

holding you back from true growth. We can't all be athletes, celebrities or famous musicians. It's OK not to stand out and to simply be you. Accept that you are more than likely always going to be mediocre. And that's OK. Just because you're not the best at something, doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. You can do anything you want to do.

Mark Manson explains that in reality, most of us are pretty average at things whether it be work, sport or a hobby. And if you are exceptional at one thing, then it's more than likely that you are thoroughly average at other things. And that's just the harsh reality, the majority of us don't get to be exceptional.

---

*"If everyone were extraordinary, then by definition, no one would be extraordinary."*

---

In order to be mentally healthy and secure, you need to accept certain truths of life. The fact is that no matter what you do in your life, you're unlikely to make a real impact in the world, you're likely to only ever be average and that the majority of your life will be bland, boring and mundane. You need to accept this and accept that it's OK.

Manson explains that once you accept this, you will be relieving yourself of the pressure to succeed, and once this pressure has gone, you will boost your confidence, feel happier, more vibrant and more alive.

---

*"You are great. Already. Whether you realise it or not. Whether anybody else realises it or not. And it's not because you launched an iPhone app, or finished school a year early, or bought yourself a sweet-ass boat. These things do not define greatness."*

---

In Jen Sincero's chapter titled 'Your Brain is Your Bitch,' she explains how critical your thinking is. She emphasises the power of your own thoughts and how these construct your reality. If you can change your thinking, you can change your reality:

---

*"It's just as easy to believe we're awesome as it is to believe we're sucking at things."*

---

You should always be proud of yourself. Not in an egotistical, arrogant way. But in a way that allows you to acknowledge your achievements and recognise your own skills. Getting the balance right and having a sense of humble pride is an attractive quality.

Getting a pay rise, for example, is always something to celebrate. Enjoy the moment and be proud. Don't dwell on the fact that you didn't get as much as a fellow colleague, or that the jump wasn't as big as last year. Just celebrate the win!

Sometimes you might not succeed at something you tried. And that's OK, it doesn't mean your confidence needs to take a hit. Celebrate the fact that you tried. Angela Duckworth, author of *Grit* explains why a focus on pure talent can be dangerous, and why the effort should be just as celebrated:

---

*"Why do we place such emphasis on talent? Or why fixate on the extreme limits of what we might do? Focus on talent distracts us from something that is at least as important. Effort"*

---

It's not about lowering your standards or becoming someone with no goals or drive. It's about managing the expectations you hold yourself accountable to. Are they realistic? Learn to accept your own imperfections, these are inevitable and necessary for personal growth. Despite what you may think, everyone has imperfections and weaknesses. There's not a human on earth that's perfect. Acknowledge the wins and learn from the losses.

## **Action Steps**

- ✓ Acknowledge one fear that you have, write it down on a piece of paper. Identify the absolute worst case scenario. Then consider how you would feel facing that fear. Then get out there and face it.



- ✓ Try to step outside of your comfort zone at least once a week. Start small, but every time you do something that makes you feel slightly uncomfortable, you will be exercising and boosting your confidence.
- ✓ Learn to be comfortable with being different, accept that no two people are the same and that's the way it should be.
- ✓ Don't avoid doing things simply because you don't excel at them. If you enjoy doing it, then do it. Never let a 'lack of talent' hold you back.
- ✓ Be proud of any wins, no matter how small. Acknowledge these and recognise that you did well.
- ✓ Stop following anyone online that makes you feel bad about yourself. There are plenty of people online who are more authentic and share the trials and tribulations of real-life online, try following someone who can be a real role model.

# CLOSING THOUGHTS

My biggest request as we come to the end of this book is that you take action on the advice being given. Bear in mind that the guidelines in this book, as you've seen, have been backed up by numerous prestigious authors. Collectively, across the books we've looked at, that's years worth of research and writing distilled down into a few actionable and easy to follow steps.

As I mentioned in the beginning, it's easy to read books and never take action. But I would argue, that if you don't take some sort of action after reading, you've wasted all that reading time for nothing. What's the point in consuming content, without taking action or using it to your advantage?

I encourage you to stay hungry and never let your thirst for knowledge dry up. No matter how busy you get, make sure you always leave enough time in your week to read even just a few pages of a book.

If you're interested in any of the quotes mentioned, please consider supporting these brilliant authors by purchasing and reading the full version of the books that have been cited.

Thanks for reading Guidelines. To finish off, I'd like to leave you with one of my favourite quotes from Marcus Aurelius:

---

*"How to Act: Never under compulsion, out of selfishness, without forethought, with misgivings. Don't gussy up your thoughts. No surplus words or unnecessary actions."*

---

# YOUR GUIDELINES

When I started writing this ebook I reached out to readers of my blog and my email subscribers to get your ideas on what to include in the book. I received a bunch of great replies and I just had to share them. Listed below are the rules and guidelines that you guys like to follow in life:

*"If an opportunity or item does not add any value to my personal life or business, it stays out of my life!" - Enricho Nahler*

*"My rule of living is that you have fully understand "the mess" before you can make meaning out of it and overcome it. I try to know myself well and embrace the mess & stress that comes along, because every mess is a great chance to add meaning to my life! I have a blog called "making meaning from mess" - Alaina Tetrick*

*"Hi Paul, for me 'defining the next action' crucial to keeping momentum and moving your projects forward. Whether reviewing emails, at the end of a meeting, one to one conversations simply by asking 'what is the next action here' I found it really powerful and helpful for everyone, provides clarity and helps maintain focus. If you currently do not use this technique I recommend everyone trying it for a day and enjoy the difference! I have read a ton of productivity books and techniques over many years not sure who I can credit this to - possibly Dave Allen, getting things done?" - Kathleen Breslin*

*"The rule I (almost) always follow is, "Write out key categories that support meaningful living and, once a month, assess progress against them and determine what you need more of and less of in the coming month. In doing this consider intention (individual, collective), action (individual, collective), related relationships, and environmental factors (both obstacles and supports)." Categories I use include "spiritual development and meditation", "connecting with others", "community service", "business and professional", "health&fitness - exercise and movement", "health&fitness - diet" etc. etc. Obviously different*

*people would define categories that are important to them (e.g. "community service" wouldn't necessarily fit Enrico's golden rule below--or would it?--it all depends on intention or sense of value). Some categories are quite dynamic and others (e.g. meditation) quite stable. This hodgepodge has emerged over time and so no one reference. The idea around what you need more of/less of is a recent addition and inspired by a reference in Google Rules to a way of using feedback in performance assessment but I (mis?)appropriated it for this kind of regular review. The notion of considering intention, action, relationships, environment etc. comes from Ken Wilbur/Integral Theory." - Guy*

*"The golden rule I always follow is "Journal it". Every morning I have a few journal prompts that I created that boost my mind into productivity mode. Things like "What is the most important task today?" "What didn't I get done yesterday and why?". These types of prompts help me reflect on my own productivity and learn from my own distractions. I used to be a master procrastinator, I feel I have moved on now!" - Ryan Patrick*

*"Hey Paul, the golden rule which I follow is "learn anything new daily & be better from yesterday" - Suraj Maidur*

*"My personal guideline is one by David Allen and it's the 2 minutes rule. If a task can be done in under 2 minutes, I do it RIGHT AWAY. It's not worth putting on my to-do list and it saves me a ton of time in the long run." - Anick Globensky-Bromow*

--

Thanks to everyone who contributed ideas.

Paul

# READING RESOURCES

## Reading tools

[Audible](#) (*affiliate link*) - Get a free 30-day trial and your first audio book for Free. \$14.95 per book after that.

[Kindle Unlimited](#) (*affiliate link*) - Read or listen to an unlimited number of books per month for just \$9.99. You can start by signing up for a free 30-day trial.

[Goodreads](#) - A social network for reading. Great for building your own reading list and sharing book suggestions with friends.

## Useful articles

[Books to base your life on \(the reading list\)](#) - Ryan Holiday

[How to read 300% faster in 20 minutes](#) - Tim Ferriss

[How to read more - a lot more](#) - Ryan Holiday

[How to read more \(and read better\)](#) - Mike Vardy

[How to use Evernote and Workflow to create a book list - Fast](#) - Brett Kelly

[Read to lead: How to read books above your "level"](#) - Ryan Holiday

# REFERENCES

Allen D. *Getting things done: The art of stress-free productivity*. 33rd ed. New York: Sound Ideas/Simon & Schuster Audio; January 1, 2002.

Aurelius M, Hays G. *Meditations: A new translation (modern library)*. Modern Library; May 14, 2002.

Carnegie D. *How to win friends and influence people*. Pocket; July 20, 1970.

Catmull E, Wallace A. *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the unseen forces that stand in the way of true inspiration*. United States: Random House; April 8, 2014.

Chapman M. *50 Positive Habits to Transform Your Life*; CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform; September 2, 2016.

Collins JC. *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap ... And others don't*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers; 2001.

Covey S. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press; August 15, 1989.

Divine M. *The Way of the Seal; Think Like an Elite Warrior to Succeed*; Readers Digest; December 26, 2013

Duckworth A. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*; Scribner; May 3, 2016

Duhigg C. *The Power of Habit*. Random House; February 28, 2012.

Elrod H. *The miracle morning: The not-so-obvious secret guaranteed to transform your life (before 8am)*. HAL ELROD; 2012.

Ferriss T. *The 4-Hour work week*. London: Ebury Publishing; 2008.

Fried J, Hansson DH. *ReWork: Change the way you work forever*. United Kingdom: Ebury Press; March 18, 2010.

Glei JK. *Manage your day-to-day: Build your routine, find your focus, and sharpen your creative mind (the ggU book series)*. Publisher unknown; May 21, 2013.

Godin S. *The dip: A little book that teaches you when to quit (and when to stick)*. United States: Portfolio Hardcover; May 10, 2007.

Guillebeau C. *The Art of Non-Conformity: Set Your Own Rules, Live the Life You Want, and Change the World*; Tarcher Perigee; September 7, 2010.

Holiday R. *Growth hacker marketing: A Primer on the future of PR, marketing and advertising*. United Kingdom: Profile Books; October 2, 2014.

Holiday R. *The obstacle is the way: The ancient art of turning adversity into opportunity*. London: Profile Books; May 1, 2014.

Irvine WB. *A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy*. Oxford University Press; November 4, 2008.

Isaacson W. *Steve Jobs: A biography*. New York: Thorndike Press; November 4, 2011.

Keller G, Papasan J. *The one thing: The surprisingly simple truth behind extraordinary results*. Austin, TX: Bard Press TX; April 1, 2013.

Manson M. *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life*. Macmillan Australia; 2016.

May M. *The Unbakery: Raw organic goodness*. Auckland: Beatnik Publishing; 2014.

McKeown G. *Essentialism: The disciplined pursuit of less*. 1st ed. Crown Business; April 15, 2014

Newport C. *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*. Grand Central Publishing; January 05, 2016.

Pollan M. *In Defense of food: An Eater's manifesto*. New York: Penguin Group USA; January 1, 2008.

Ries E. *The lean startup: How today's entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful businesses*. New York: Books on Tape; September 13, 2011.

Robbins M. *The 5 Second Rule: Transform your Life, Work and Confidence with Everyday Courage*; Savio Republic; February 28, 2017.

Robbins T. *Re-Awaken the Giant Within*; Robbins Research International; 2013.

Robbins T. *Unshakeable: Your Guide to Financial Freedom*; Simon & Schuster Ltd; February 28, 2017.

Sanders J. *The 5 A.M. Miracle: Dominate your day before breakfast*. United States: Ulysses Press; December 30, 2015.

Schlender B, Tetzeli R. *Becoming Steve Jobs: The evolution of a reckless upstart into a visionary leader*. United States: Crown Business; March 24, 2015.

Sethi R. *I will teach you to be rich*. Workman Publishing; March 23, 2009.

Sincero J. *You Are a Badass: How to Stop Doubting Your Greatness and Start Living an Awesome Life*. Running Press; 2013.

Sinek S. *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*. Portfolio Penguin; January 07, 2014. In-line

Sinek S. *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. New York: Penguin USA; October 29, 2009.

Stanley TJ, Danko WD. *The millionaire next door: The surprising secrets of America's wealthy*. Atlanta, GA: Longstreet Press; October 25, 1996.

Stevenson S. *Sleep smarter: 21 essential strategies to sleep your way to a better body, better health, and bigger success*. United States: Rodale Books; March 15, 2016.

Schwartz DJ. *The Magic of Thinking big*. New York: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group; July 1, 1990.

Tynan. *Superhuman by Habit: A guide to becoming the Best Possible Version of Yourself, One Tiny Habit at a Time*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform; September 9, 2014.

Vanderkam L. *What the most successful people do before breakfast: How to achieve more at work and at home*. United States: Portfolio; September 5, 2013.

Vaynerchuk G. *Crush It!: Why NOW Is the Time to Cash In on Your Passion*. 1st Edition ed. Harper Studio; October 13, 2009.

Wilson S. *I Quit sugar: Simplicious*. United Kingdom: Macmillan; December 31, 2015.