

“In my whole life, I have known no wise people who didn't read all the time — none, zero”
- Charlie Munger

Every Sunday, I share insights from a book I read. Reading allows me to find answers to questions about business, purpose, love, money, relationships, family, health and everything in between. I collect these insights. Now I am sharing them with you. These emails can be long reads because they usually condense highlights from 250+ pages and 10+ hours of reading. If any of the bulleted insights interest you, scroll below the signature to dive deeper into each one. I hope these emails make you learn and grow.

This week's stories come from the book [Discipline Is Destiny](#).

34 INSIGHTS FROM THE BOOK

(EACH INSIGHT IS DETAILED BELOW THE SIGNATURE)

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2. Freedom Requires Discipline. Discipline Gives Us Freedom.
3. Yes You Can But Should You?
4. You Have More Responsibility When You Are More Successful
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29. Give Your Best To Do Your “Main Thing”
30. Don't Try To Change Others

- 31. Being The “Boss” Is A Job. Being A Great Leader Is Something You Earn.
- 32. With Success Comes More Responsibility
- 33. Asking For Help Isn’t Giving Up, It Is Refusing To Give Up
- 34. Roll With The Punches



Harsh Batra
Founder



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(1) IT IS THE DOING THAT MATTERS

Words don't matter. Deeds do.

“We become builders by building and we become harpists by playing the harp,” he wrote. “Similarly, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions.”

We do the work, today and always, because it’s what we’re here for.

He worked harder than anyone. “Fitness was almost a religion to him,” one teammate would say of him. “I am a slave to baseball,” Gehrig said. A willing slave, a slave who loved the job and remained forever grateful at just the opportunity to play.

When you love the work, you don’t cheat it or the demands it asks of you.

Once you start compromising, well, now you’re compromised ...

It’s this love of toil, of the process that defined someone like Lou Gehrig.

(2) FREEDOM REQUIRES DISCIPLINE. DISCIPLINE GIVES US FREEDOM.

Freedom, as Eisenhower famously said, is actually only the “opportunity for self-discipline.”

We must keep ourselves in check or risk ruin. Or imbalance. Or dysfunction. Or dependency.

A driver without control will go fast ... but they will inevitably crash.

A Spartan king was once asked what the Spartans got from their “spartan” habits. “Freedom is what we reap from this way of life,” he told him.

Discipline is not a punishment, it’s a way to avoid punishment.

Self-discipline is the only way. It’s the moderating influence against the impulse of all other things.

(3) YES YOU CAN BUT SHOULD YOU?

We must master ourselves unless we’d prefer to be mastered by someone or something else.

We can say that each of us has a higher and lower self, and that these two selves are in a constant battle with each other. The can versus the should.

Self-discipline is giving everything you have ... and knowing what to hold back.

Those who live the fast or the easy life miss something too—they fail to fully realize their own potential.

(4) YOU HAVE MORE RESPONSIBILITY WHEN YOU ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL

The obligation of a champion is to act like a champion ... while working as hard as somebody with something to prove.

(5) IF YOU REALLY LOVE WHAT YOU DO, WHERE IS YOUR STREAK?

You say you love what you do. Where's your proof? What kind of streak do you have to show for it?

Feel the joy of being able to do what you love.

Edison lived in his laboratory and never missed a day—like Gehrig, even when he was sick, when he was tired, or when visited by tragedy or disaster.

When you show up, you can get lucky.

Bruce Springsteen, one of the hardest-working musicians in the business, still notes that it's called "playing" for a reason.

(6) WE LOOK SHARP TO STAY SHARP, TO BE SHARP... BECAUSE WE ARE SHARP

Nobody does their best in their bathrobe ... which is why we ought to take a shower and get ready in the morning, even if we're not going to leave the house. Shine your shoes ... until you are the one glowing.

(7) WE HAVE TO BE OUR OWN MANAGER, OUR OWN MASTER

We owe it to ourselves, to our goals, to the game, to keep going. To keep pushing. To stay pure. To be tough.

On an ordinary afternoon in 1949—the same year Eisenhower quit smoking—the physicist Richard Feynman was going about his business when he felt the pull to have a drink. Not an intense craving by any means, but it was a disconcerting desire for alcohol, completely divorced from the pleasure one earns as a reward for hard work. On the spot, Feynman gave up drinking right then and there. Nothing, he felt, should have that kind of power over him.

It's not the sex or the likes or the drink. It's the need. And it's this need that is the source of suffering.

Whether it's Amy Winehouse destroyed by drugs or Tiger Woods undone by his mistresses, the world grieves the many talented hosts destroyed by the parasite within them, the one that needed to be fed and fed and fed but was never full.

A weak mind must be constantly entertained and stimulated.

(8) WHEN WE DESIRE MORE THAN WE NEED, WE MAKE OURSELVES VULNERABLE.

When we overextend ourselves, when we chase, we are not self-sufficient. This is why Cato declined expensive gifts, why he did his political work for no pay, why he traveled with few servants and kept things simple.

No one who is a slave to their urges or to sloth, no one without strength or a good schedule, can create a great life. Certainly they will be too consumed with themselves to be of much good for anyone else. Discipline is how we free ourselves.

Seek yourself, not distraction. Be happy, not hedonistic. Let the mind rule, not the body.

(9) WIN THE MORNING, WIN THE DAY

You think you're not a morning person? Nobody is a morning person.

There's a reason CEOs hit the gym early—they still have willpower then.

There's a reason people read and think in the morning—they know they might not get time later.

The best way to master the morning is to have mastered it the night before. Early to bed. Early to rise.

(10) THE STRENUOUS LIFE IS THE BEST LIFE

The strenuous life, he would call it, a life of action, activity, but most of all, of exercise. Walking. Rowing. Boxing. Wrestling. Hiking. Hunting. Horseback riding. Football. Roosevelt did it all.

If you're not a person who hustles, who are you? Where does that leave the people counting on you?

If you do it right, it's also torture not to do it. The sled dog gets anxious if it doesn't get to wear its harness. The horse wants to go out and trot. The bee dies if cut off from the hive. When you find what you're meant to do, you do it.

Instead of wanting things to be easy, you should be prepared for them to be hard. Because they will be!

We must be very suspicious of anyone who tells us they can make our pain disappear without real work.

Think about it: Most people don't even show up. Of the people who do, most don't really push themselves. So to show up and be disciplined about daily improvement? You are the rarest of the rare.

And if improvement sounds difficult, how about just making fewer mistakes?

(11) TO LAST, YOU ALSO NEED TO REST

To last, to be great, you have to understand how to rest. Not just rest, but relax, too, have fun too. (After all, what kind of success is it if you can never lay it down?)

(12) YOUR BODY IS IS A HIGH-END RACE CAR

We are an apex predator, a freakishly elite product of millions of years of evolution. How will you choose to spend this bounty? By letting your assets atrophy?

A healthy diet, and not abusing drugs or drink, does much of the heavy lifting. You are a high-end race car. Fuel accordingly.

You must be active. Get your daily win. Because as you're building muscle, you're also building willpower. More important, you're building this willpower and strength while most people are not.

Those who think that they can live a high spiritual life whose bodies are filled with idleness and luxuries are mistaken. TOLSTOY

The fact is, the body keeps score. The decisions we make today and always are being recorded, daily, silently and not so silently, in who we are, what we look like, how we feel.

The neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett has explained it in terms of a body budget: Our brain regulates our body, but if we are physically bankrupt, the brain cannot possibly do its job.

(13) THERE IS NO GREATNESS WITHOUT PRACTICE

We don't rise to the occasion, we fall to the level of our training.

It won't be easy, but in that burden is also freedom and confidence. The pleasure of the flow state. The rhythm of second nature.

That's what the greats do, they don't just show up, they do more than practice, they do the work.

(14) THE MORE A MAN IS, THE LESS HE WANTS

Michelangelo, the artist, didn't live as austere as Cato but he avoided the gifts dangled by his wealthy patrons. He didn't want to owe anyone. Real wealth, he understood, was autonomy.

"The more a man is," the editor Maxwell Perkins had inscribed on his mantel, "the less he wants."

When you strip away the unnecessary and the excessive, what's left is you. What's left is what's important.

The less you desire, the richer you are, the freer you are, the more powerful you are. It's that simple.

(15) CONSISTENCY IS A SUPERPOWER

You don't have to always be amazing. You do always have to show up. What matters is sticking around for the next at bat.

We're fit to tackle the big problems only if we do the little things right first.

"Practice over a long time turns into second nature."

(16) MODERATION IN ALL THINGS

While easier than grinding poverty, navigating abundance is its own challenge. To manage it, the Queen had to live by a code, a sense of duty. "I, like Queen Victoria," she said, "have always been a believer in that old maxim 'moderation in all things.'"

Anyone or anything that offers you an escape should be viewed with caution and anything that promises euphoria liable to give you real pain.

Allowing himself everything he wanted turned quite quickly into a daily nightmare.

(17) THE FLIP SIDE OF PRIVILEGE IS DUTY

The idea that you don't get to do everything you want, that some things are nonnegotiable, that the flip side of privilege is duty, and that power must be complemented by restraint—not everyone gets that.

(18) EMBRACE CHANGE

No one lasts very long if they are afraid of change, and few are able to change if they are afraid of feedback or making mistakes.

(19) GREATNESS IS NOT JUST WHAT ONE DOES, BUT ALSO WHAT ONE REFUSES TO DO

It is impossible to be committed to anything—professionally or personally—without the discipline to say no to all those other superfluous things.

Everything we say yes to means saying no to something else.

Every no can also be a yes, a yes to what really matters. To rebuff one opportunity means to cultivate another.

“I must decline,” he said, “for secret reasons.”

No one can achieve their main thing without the discipline to make it the main thing.

(20) IN A WORLD OF DISTRACTION, FOCUSING IS A SUPERPOWER

Keeping the main thing the main thing is not enough. Once the plate is cleared, you must be able to put your whole mind into that main thing. It has to get all of you.

Jony Ive, the top designer at Apple would explain that “focus is not this thing you aspire to ... or something you do on Monday. It’s something you do every minute.”

(21) TREAT WINNING AND LOSING AS A CHANCE TO GET RIGHT BACK AT IT

The great home run hitter Sadaharu Oh used to say that for an athlete, losing just meant the opportunity come back tomorrow and try to do better. The same was true for winning too.

(22) SOMEONE ELSE’S LACK OF SELF CONTROL IS NOT A JUSTIFICATION FOR ABANDONING OUR OWN

Remember always: As wrong as they are, as annoying as it is, it takes two for a real conflict to happen. As the Stoics said, when we are offended, when we fight, we are complicit. We have chosen to engage. We have traded self-control for self-indulgence. We’ve allowed our cooler head to turn hot—even though we know hot heads rarely make good decisions.

You can get angry ... the important thing is not to do anything out of anger. And for [anger] we can plug in so many other emotions we feel passionately in the moment.

(23) DON’T BE A SLAVE TO PASSION

John Wooden tried to keep the passion on his team to a minimum. He found it to be an unsustainable and dangerous fuel. “I wanted them bristling with intensity, finely focused, and in

control of themselves,” he said. “When these attitudes are combined with talent and good teaching, you may find yourself leading a team competing and prevailing at the highest levels. This will not occur if you are a slave to passion.”

Of all the bad habits to quit, passion is the hardest one. Because it happens in bursts. Because it's such powerful and combustible fuel. Because before we even recognize we're in the sway of it, the damage is done. We can have passion, but no one can afford to be a slave to it.

(24) POWERFUL PEOPLE IMPRESS AND INTIMIDATE BY SAYING LESS

Speaking of her late husband, Mr. Rogers, Joanne Rogers remarked that “If you make him out to be a saint, people might not know how hard he worked.”

(25) THIS IS ALL YOU NEED TO BE HAPPY

We don't need accomplishments to feel good or to be good enough. What do we need? The truth: not much! Some food and water. Work that we can challenge ourselves with. A calm mind in the midst of adversity. Sleep. A solid routine. A cause we are committed to. Something we're getting better at. Everything else is extra.

“Supplement [courage] with self-control,” Cicero wrote, “and then every ingredient for the happy life is yours. For you will have courage as your defense against distress and fear, and self-control to liberate you from sensuality and keep you free of immoderate cravings.”

Self-discipline is pointless without courage, and, of course, the defining characteristic of courage is self-discipline—steeling yourself for what must be done.

(26) MONEY IS JUST A TOOL TO ENABLE YOU TO STICK TO THE MAIN THING

When your choices turn you into someone who has to worry about money, then you are not rich ... no matter how much you make.

Money isn't good or bad. It is a tool.

“Fuck-you money” is a chimera. You never get it. Nobody does. Poor people have poor-people problems and rich people have rich-people problems because people always have problems. You're always going to be subject to the necessity of self-discipline. Or at least, you'll never be immune from the consequence of ignoring it.

All you really need is enough money to be comfortable enough to politely say, “No, thanks. I'd rather not.” To never have to do anything for a buck that's contrary to your values. To be able to stick with your main thing.

(27) KEEP SHIFTING THE GOAL POST

Is it a little discouraging that we never seem to “arrive”? That our standards rise just out of reach of our abilities? Absolutely not! We move the goalposts so the game doesn’t get boring and, more important, so it never ends.

Ultimately, this brings us more pleasure and more satisfaction. We reach heights we’d never have been able to see otherwise.

The second we stop trying to get better is the moment we start gradually getting worse.

(28) TIME IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE THING IN THE WORLD

It doesn’t make sense to try to do everything yourself. You have to delegate. You have to find people who are good at things and empower them to help you. You have to be strong enough to hand over the keys, to relinquish control, to develop a system—an organization—that is bigger than just us. This will not be cheap, and it would be ignorant and arrogant to insist otherwise, but the value is virtually incalculable, because it affords you the most expensive thing in the world: time.

(29) GIVE YOUR BEST TO DO YOUR “MAIN THING”

Keeping the main thing the main thing is impossible if you’re not capable of saying no or pushing back when others put too much on your plate.

If you’re not giving your best, why are you doing it at all?

We work hard, we think hard, we hold hard to high standards. If we do this consistently, we will be happy and productive. And in those rare instances when we fail, which we will, we will be all right. Not only because we’ll know, in our hearts, that we did our best, but because we have the strength and character to endure setbacks on our journey.

(30) DON’T TRY TO CHANGE OTHERS

It’s called self-discipline for a reason. While we hold ourselves to the highest standards—and hope that our good behavior is contagious—we cannot expect everyone else to be like us. It’s not fair, nor is it possible.

Tolerant with others, strict with yourself.

The only person you get to be truly hard on is you. Because their life is not in your control. Because you’ll burn yourself out if you can’t get to a place where you live and let live.

Credit them for trying. Credit them for context. Forgive. Forget. Help them get better, if they’re open to the help.

Let them have their fun. Let them live and work as they please. You've got enough to worry about when it comes to your own destiny. It's not on you to try to change everyone else.

Be a strong, inspiring example and let that be enough ... and even then try to be empathetic.

One of Lincoln's secretaries would marvel at the way the president "never asked perfection of anyone, he did not even insist, for others, upon the high standards he set for himself."

It's not our place to judge. It is our place to cheer them on and accept them.

(31) BEING THE "BOSS" IS A JOB. BEING A GREAT LEADER IS SOMETHING YOU EARN.

What great leaders do: They make people better.

As it is written in the Bhagavad Gita, "The path that a great man follows becomes a guide to the world."

The leader shows up first and leaves last. The leader works hardest. The leader puts others before themselves. The leader takes the hit. Everything else is just semantics and titles.

(32) WITH SUCCESS COMES MORE RESPONSIBILITY

Success does not free you from self-control, as we have said. It does not free you from hard work or consequences either. Now you will have to help others carry their loads too. And you will do this gladly, because when you accepted the rewards you also accepted the responsibility.

It'd be wonderful if power or success exempted us ... from everything time-consuming, pedestrian, inconvenient, difficult. In practice, it obligates us to those things even more. It demands more of us. That's just how it shakes out.

Too many leaders, Plutarch laments, think that the "greatest benefit in governing is the freedom from being governed themselves." Nah, you're the one who has to follow the rules to the letter. You're the one who has to show you really mean it. The more you've done, the higher the standard you must hold yourself to. The more you have, the more selfless you must be. Not for the sake of optics, but because it is the right thing to do. Because that's what you signed up for when you took the responsibility.

(33) ASKING FOR HELP ISN'T GIVING UP, IT IS REFUSING TO GIVE UP

As the artist Charlie Mackesy wrote beautifully, "Asking for help is not giving up, it is refusing to give up."

(34) ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

The college basketball coach Shaka Smart, upon moving from coaching at Texas to Marquette, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was asked if he was a cold-weather or warm-weather guy. "I'm a dress- for- the- weather guy," he said.

We must learn how to be flexible, to roll with the punches or the weather or the realities of the moment.



Harsh Batra
Founder



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