

*Note: I highlighted actionables/reflection questions from the book, except I skipped many health/fitness actionables. **Please see the outline on the side to find the section you want!***

Intro:

"My goal is to learn things once and use them forever."

What would you do if you had to accomplish your 10 year goals in 6 months?

Commonalities across the 200 people he's interviewed:

- **80% have some sort of daily meditation / mindfulness.**
- **Many positive reviews about Sapiens, Poor Charlie's Almanac, Influence: Science and Practice, and Man's Search for Meaning.**
- Skipped stuff about diet for 45 year olds (N/A), sleeping aids (uninteresting), listening to single songs on repeat (uninteresting), "spec" work? (don't understand), "failure is not durable" (don't understand), turning weaknesses into strengths (vague).

Reading this book, **skip stuff but note what you skip.**

Intentions of the book

- Show success is possible with the right field tested beliefs. Ie. Learn from people who've achieved similar successes before.

"All the golden heros are walking flaws who have maximised one or two traits."

- "You don't succeed because you have no weaknesses. You succeed by finding your strengths and developing habits around them."

Healthy:

Siddhartha:

- **"I can think, I can wait, and I can fast."**
- Think about the metaphorical meaning. Thinking = judgement. Waiting = persistence. Fasting = endurance.

Lao Tzu:

- **"When I let go of what I am, I become what I may be."**

I skipped some quotes I didn't understand: "winning is sleeping better." / "It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society."

Amelia Boone:

- **"I'm not the strongest, I'm not the fastest, but I'm really good at suffering."**
- No one owes you anything

Dr. Rhonda Patrick

- Save your kids' baby teeths with cryogenic companies. They gave high concentration of stem cells. Could save you from issues like cancer.
- 30 min Sauna after workout increases growth hormones and endurance.

Christopher Sommer

- **When in doubt work on weaknesses you're most ashamed of.**
- **You're not responsible for the hand of cards you were dealt. You're responsible for maxing out what you were given.**
- Consistency > intensity.
- **"Dealing with the temporary frustration of not making progress is an integral part of the path towards excellence."**

In fact, it is essential and something that every single elite athlete has had to learn to deal with.

If the pursuit of excellence was easy, everyone would do it. In fact, **this impatience in dealing with frustration is the primary reason that most people fail to achieve their goals.** Unreasonable expectations timewise, resulting in unnecessary frustration, due to a perceived feeling of failure. **Achieving the extraordinary is not a linear process.**

The secret is to show up, do the work, and go home.

A blue collar work ethic married to indomitable will. It is literally that simple. Nothing interferes. Nothing can sway you from your purpose. Once the decision is made, simply refuse to budge. Refuse to compromise.

And accept that quality **long-term results require quality long-term focus.** No emotion. No drama. No beating yourself up over small bumps in the road. **Learn to enjoy and appreciate the process. This is especially important because**

you are going to spend far more time on the actual journey than with those all too brief moments of triumph at the end.

Certainly celebrate the moments of triumph when they occur. More importantly, learn from defeats when they happen. In fact, **if you are not encountering defeat on a fairly regular basis, you are not trying hard enough.** And absolutely refuse to accept less than your best.

Throw out a timeline. It will take what it takes.

If the commitment is to a longterm goal and not to a series of smaller intermediate goals, then only one decision needs to be made and adhered to. Clear, simple, straightforward. Much easier to maintain than having to make small decision after small decision to stay the course when dealing with each step along the way. This provides far

too many opportunities to inadvertently drift from your chosen goal. The single decision is one of the most powerful tools in the toolbox."

Look deeper into intermittent/purge fasting. It just makes sense. Dr. Dominic D'Agostino

- 5 day fast 2-3x a year

Joe de Sena

- My response to 'stop and smell the roses' is: "Who's maintaining the roses?"

Look into science behind Wim Hof breathing + cold exposure.

I'm skipping a lot of stuff about coaches' workout buddies and recommended workouts and stuff to do with health supplements. Don't want to have amazing strength - just enough. Skeptical of non natural supplements.

Jason Nemer Acroyoga - search up for back pain.

- **"Let go of what isn't working and really assess what is working and what you can be excited about."**
 - After he got his house and van stolen, but had a Buddhism book to read and a coconut to read.
 - **It's not that bad things don't happen to me. It's that I don't label a lot of things good/bad. Instead, I ask 'Can I evolve from this?' What do I want now?**
 - Recommends Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu / Stephen Mitchell and The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran

Peter Attia:

- If you're over 40 and don't smoke, there's a 70 to 80% chance you die from heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, cancer, or neurodegenerative disease.
- **I was skipping a lot of his stuff after keto diets (didn't like the idea of messing with diets). But then I read how his daughter was important to him and I connected more with him and reread.**
- Not all vitamins are necessary:
 - Multivitamins: too much of what you don't need, not enough of what you do.
 - Vitamin A and E. Don't need more than what we get through whole foods.
 - Vitamin K. Get it in leafy greens.
 - Vitamin C. Most ppl get enough in diets.
 - BUT magnesium is good. Helps kidneys.
 - He also recommends v. small doses of lithium (5mg - search for [NYT article](#))
- Book Recommendations:
 - 10% Happier by Dan Harris got him meditating CONSISTENTLY.
 - Surely You're Joking Mr. Feynman
 - Mistakes Were Made (But Not By Me) - cognitive dissonance.

- The best purchase he's made was \$20 to get a rickshaw with lights to ferry his 8 year old daughter around. The smile on her face was worth everything to him.
- **"Success is: do your kids remember you for being the best dad? Not the dad who gave them everything, but will they be able to tell you anything one day? Will they be able to call you any day, out of the blue? Are you the first person they want to ask for advice? And at the same time, can you hit it out of the park with whatever you decide to do in your career?"**

Dr. Justin Mager

- **We're not an object, we're a process.**

Calm is contagious - Pavel Tsatsouline

Skipping lots of exercise recommendations. Not looking to add new exercises. Old ones already enough.

Gabrielle Reece

- **Practice going first.** No matter what you're doing - discomfort challenge, saying hello at the checkout counter first, saying 'I love you' first.
- **'If you're on the team, you're lucky, and if you're on the best one, you're the luckiest.'**
- "We have a tendency sometimes to **sit on our talents and potential because we don't want to offend anyone or be singled out.**"

Laird Hamilton:

- **"A lonely place is an unmotivated place."** He's an athlete who believes in group exercise.

Skipping stuff about psychedelics. I don't believe in altering my state of consciousness.

Floyd Mayweather

- Before a big fight: **"Worrying about it now won't change a damn thing.** Whatever's going to happen is going to happen. Either I've done everything I can to be ready for this, or I haven't."
- **What do I continue to do that I don't do well? Improve it, eliminate it, or delegate it.**

Jane McGonigal

- "To develop foresight, you need to practice hindsight."
- Try 10 mins of Tetris to get rid of visual flashbacks. Ex: if you have negative thoughts stuck in your head before sleep.
- Unique Belief: She doesn't believe in publicly criticising almost anyone.

Alvin Toddler

- "When it comes to the future, it's far more important to be imaginative than right."

Adam Gazzaley:

- **Question to ask those you work with: "What do you think about that gets you excited?"**
- Carl Sagan's Cosmos inspired him to be a scientist.
- Advice to 30 y/o self - "I would say to have no fear. **I mean, you've got one chance here to do amazing things, and being afraid of being wrong or making mistakes or fumbling is just not how you do something of impact.**"
- **If your goal is to make fundamental breakthroughs then you can only work on the stuff that seems risky or foolhardy to others.**

Sleep tips

- Be AcroYoga base for someone. Pushes your hips into place after sitting a lot?
- [Chilipad](#) (some device to get the right temp while sleeping)
- 2 tspn apple cider vinegar, 1 tspn honey, stirred into 1 cup hot water. Or Yogi Soothing Caramel Bedtime tea. Or few drops of California poppy extract in warm water. Drink before bed.
- Visual overwriting (ex: 10 mins Tetris). Idea is to repl. The emails, todos, 'I should have said's in your head with something else.
- [Sleep masks](#) + [ear plugs](#). If earplugs bother you, use a [white noise machine](#).

Morning rituals

- Set low bar so you win the morning. Then, you can feel productive for rest of the day.
- "If you make your bed every morning, **you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride, and it will encourage you to do another task and another and another.** By the end of the day, that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed. **Making your bed will also reinforce the fact that little things in life matter.**" - General McRaven.
- **Read a few pages of stoicism.** Ex: Marcus Aurelius' meditations.
- **Meditate**
- **Exercise + cold shower**
- **Tea** (black tea, green tea, haldi, ginger, and 1 tspn coconut oil)
- **Reflection** (morning journal or 5-minute-journal).
 - **5-minute-journal:** 3 things you're grateful for, 3 things that would make today great, 3 daily affirmations. Then, at night - 3 amazing things that happened today, 3 ways I could have made the day better.
 - Morning journal: **goal is to get unnecessary thoughts out of your head and onto the page.** That way, you can think about them less for the rest of the day. Focus on writing about muddy thoughts, maddening thoughts, confusing thoughts, hazy worries, preoccupations, etc.

- “I’m just caging my monkey mind on paper so I can get on with my fucking day.”

“We do not rise to the level of our expectations. We fall to the level of our training.” — Archilochus

Mind Training

- 80% of his guests have a daily mindfulness / meditation routine.
- Lotsa men end up at Transcendental Meditation and lotsa women end up at Vipassana.
- Listen to Sam Harris / Tara Brach meditations.
- Try chanting meditations by repeating one two-syllable word for 10-20 mins.
- Try Chade-Meng Tan’s exercises.
- **Do one meditation routine at least 7 days in a row.** Hold yourself accountable w/ partners or via a service like Coach.me or Stickk.com
- **If you’re getting frustrated, your standards are too high or your sessions are too long.** 99% of meditation IS getting your attention back on something.
- “Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I’ll spend the first four sharpening the axe.” - Abraham Lincoln. “Whacking trees with a blunt axe is no way to go through life.” - Tim Ferriss

Chade-Meng Tan

- How to sustain your meditation practice?
 - **Get a meditation buddy** + talk at least 15 mins a week about how committed you’ve been + what’s happened in your life related to your meditation practice.
 - **End meeting with question: “How did this conversation go?”**
 - **Do less than you can.** Don’t push yourself to sit 5 mins max before you get bored. Just do 3-4 minutes more often. Then, it won’t feel like a chore.
 - Ex: **Just do one mindful breath a day and you’re good.**
- **Recommended meditations**
 - Just Note Gone - **notice something that you currently don’t feel/feel less, but were feeling before.** Ex: a pain, a sound, a breath, an emotion, a thought
 - Loving-Kindness (Metta) Meditation. **Wish for others to be happy for 10s.** Repeat once an hour. Especially if there are lotsa strangers around you (at school, work).

Neil Gaiman:

- Regarding the importance of being vulnerable: “The moment that you feel that, just possibly, you’re walking down the street naked, **exposing too much of your heart and your mind and what exists on the inside, showing too much of yourself. That’s the moment you may be starting to get it right.**”

Mental Health advice for people prone to neuroticism (moi :D)

- Though Tim Ferriss looks successful on the outside, he felt depressed for 3 months. He:

- Was too scared to see friends because they would have to leave and he was afraid of being alone
- Saw a therapist, convinced that he was doomed to lifelong pessimism
- Used “ ‘gentlemanly’ (ahem) websites to ‘relax’ ”
- Slept in 3 hours past his bedtime because he didn’t want to face the day
- Drank 8-10 cups of coffee per day, minimum
- But in the last 8 weeks of those 3 months, he:
 - Increased his passive income 20%
 - Bought his dream house
 - Meditated twice per day for 20 mins per session
 - Eliminated coffee from his life
 - Raised \$100K for charity
 - Raised \$250K for a startup
 - Signed a deal for his TV show
 - Added 20 lbs of muscle
 - Got closer to all his immediate family
- To make the transition, he had to give up on efficiency (doing things fast). And focus on efficacy (doing the right things).
 - **Wake up 1 hour before you have to be at a computer screen**
 - Make a cup of tea
 - Reflect. **Write down 3-5 things (no more) that make you the most anxious.**
 - **For each one, ask: “If this were the only thing I fixed today, would I be satisfied?”** Will moving this forward make the other tasks unimportant/easier to do later? What, if done, would make the rest easier/irrelevant?”
 - **Focus on ONE of them today for 2-3 hours STRAIGHT.**
- **“Being busy is a form of laziness— lazy thinking and indiscriminate action.”**
 - “Being busy is most often used as a guise for avoiding the few critically important but uncomfortable actions.”

Wealthy:

James Cameron

- “If you set your goals ridiculously high and it’s a failure, you will fail above everyone else’s success.”
 - *Why is this true?*

Colonel David Hackworth

- “If you find yourself in a fair fight, you didn’t plan your mission properly.”
 - *Seems like this comes from a position of privilege*

Chris Sacca:

- **“Which of those [challenges in your life] did you assign yourself, and which of those are you doing to please someone else?”**

- He says you're on 'offense' when working on your own challenges and 'defence' when working on others' challenges.
- **How to learn as much as possible in a startup?**
 - **"Go to all the meetings you can, even if you're not invited to them, and figure out how to be helpful."**
 - If people wonder why you're there, just start taking notes."
 - Chris just used to show up for meetings at the highest levels of Google (with the cofounders) and start taking notes :D
- "Tonight, I will be in my bed." - what he keeps repeating whenever he's going through a tough time.
- **He believes in asking 'dumb' questions to have a beginner's mind.** Also, he believes that having empathy is the key to entrepreneurship - otherwise, you can't solve others' problems.
- When he was 12, his father arranged for him to intern at a cool lobbying job in Washington DC for half the summer. And doing hard manual labour at a construction company for the other half of the summer. Taught him that there are cool opportunities out there and that he definitely didn't want to be doing the "real" jobs out there.
- "Never forget that underneath all the math and the MBA bullshit talk, we are all still emotionally driven human beings. **We want to attach ourselves to narratives. We don't act because of equations. We follow our beliefs."**
- "In the early days of your venture, if you find someone diving too deep into the numbers, that means they are struggling to find a reason to deeply care about you."
- **"Be your unapologetically weird self. I think authenticity is one of the most lacking things out there these days."**

Marc Andreessen:

- If you could have a billboard anywhere, what would it say? - "Raise Prices"
 - He says many companies fail over and over b/c they price the product so low, they can't pay marketing / sales people to sell it. Intuition that low prices = more customers doesn't work in practice.
- Unique beliefs of his
 - He doesn't believe in failures and pivots as much as they're being used. He thinks people fetishize failure instead of being determined to get over it.
 - **"My goal is not to fail fast. My goal is to succeed over the long run. They are not the same thing."**
 - **He also doesn't believe in revisiting past decisions or second guessing.** He just wants to go forward, no stopping, no slowing down.
 - **Strong views, loosely held** - as an investor or founder, you have to bet against the consensus. Most people don't have strong views that they think through themselves.
 - **What's something you believe that no one else will agree with you on?**
- One of his **tools for finding opportunities**; ask: **"What do the nerds do at nights and on the weekends?"**

- His **investment firm culture is disagree and commit** - any of the decision-makers can say yes to the deal without the others agreeing. But they get stress-tested. I.e. You create a 'red team' to gang up on the person and roast them :O
 - To make the battering even, Marc goes out of his way to challenge the most senior people, even if he thinks their ideas are good ideas.
 - I.e. Set the expectation of disagreement, but committing.
 - **Who's your 'red team' to stress test your beliefs?**
- **Don't overestimate the people on the pedestals.**
 - "Every billionaire suffers from the same problem. Nobody around them ever says, 'Hey, that stupid idea you just had is really stupid.'"
- **Study opposite methodologies**
 - ex: in investment, Marc Andreessen's early investment approach is the opposite of Warren Buffet's value investment approach. But he still studies the other approach.
 - "When [Buffet] makes a mistake, it's because something changes that he didn't expect. When we make a mistake, it's because something doesn't change that we thought would."
- **"To do original work: It's not necessary to know something nobody else knows. It is necessary to believe something few other people believe."**
 - Exception: Ex: Let's say a scientist is looking for better water filtration tech. And they synthesise a new wonder molecule. SO many other scientists believed it was possible. But the scientist's work is still original.

Steve Jobs: "Life can be much broader, once you discover one simple fact, and that is that

everything around you that you call 'life' was made up by people that were no smarter than you. And you can change it, you can influence it, you can build your own things that other people can use.

Once you learn that, you'll never be the same again."

Steve Martin: **"Be so good they can't ignore you."**

Peter Lynch:

- "Far more money has been lost by investors trying to anticipate corrections, than has been lost in corrections themselves."
- I don't understand this but I'm intrigued by it.

Arnold Schwarzenegger:

- "My confidence came from my vision... I am a big believer that **if you have a very clear vision of where you want to go, then the rest of it is much easier.** Because you always know why you are training 5 hours a day, you always know why you are pushing and going through the pain barrier, and why you have to eat more, and why you have to

struggle more, and why you have to be more disciplined... I felt that I could win it, and that was what I was there for. **I wasn't there to compete. I was there to win.**"

- How do you find a clear vision like that?
- My mind thinks of stoicism and daoism in response to that. If you expect that you'll win, you set yourself up for disappointment.
- See 29:00 [here](#) for example of how to do good guy, bad guy routine :D
- **Psychological warfare: ask the other person: "Do you have [X problem]? Because it looks like..." :D**
 - Ex: Before a fight, he would go to the competition: "Do you have a problem with your knee? It looked like you were having trouble squatting."
- **He offset the risk of an unstable acting career by investing in real estate.**
- **Your unique traits may stop you from competing in popular jobs. But whenever there's demand for those unique traits, you'll be better than anyone else.**
 - **In the meantime, stay patient + keep searching for that demand out there.**
 - Ex: Everyone told Arnold he couldn't act because the popular actors were all small, attractive males while he was a giant bodybuilder. He literally couldn't fit in those roles. But as soon as he got his big break (someone needed a giant bodybuilder role), he owned that niche since then.
- **When negotiating, make short term sacrifices on your end for long-term options that could be more useful than expected.**
 - Ex: Arnold Schwarzenegger was making a comedy movie that was expected to flop. So he agreed to just take 10% of profits and no salary. But he got lucky, so that movie made 10x more than expected. And he got rich :O
 - Ex: An author who got rights to all ebook sale profits in 2010.
 - Ex: George Lucas negotiated that he could have profits from any merchandise toys sold from Star Wars. Producers thought that would be nothing. He actually has sold 8B+ toys by now.
- He found transcendental meditation useful. It helped him separate out problems into smaller pieces, not view things as one big issue.
- Unique beliefs of his
 - He thinks Warren Buffett, Elon Musk, Nelson Mandela, and Muhammad Ali are all successful. But he also has a unique person: Emperor Cincinnatus of Rome. Cincinnatus voluntarily stepped into power when needed (going from a farmer to an Emperor). But then voluntarily gave up his power and went back to being a farmer when tough times were gone. He had to do this twice.

Negotiation saying: **"In negotiation, the person who cares the least wins."**

Derek Sivers

- Book recommendations: sivers.org/books. Recommends Charlie Munger + Awaken the Giant Within by Tony Robbins.
- His [podcast with Tim Ferriss](#) is highly recommended by some random Facebook user :D
- 'Directives' for life

- “Be expensive” (Marc Andreessen’s advice on products)
 - **“Expect disaster”**
 - **“The best plan is the one that lets you change your plans.”**
 - **“Own as little as possible”**
- **“The first answer to any question isn’t much fun because it’s just automatic.”** - RE: Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman
- **You can’t say whether someone is successful until you understand what they’re aiming for.** If Elon Musk was hoping to live a quiet life, but just couldn’t stop fiddling with cool things, then he’s been very unsuccessful!
- **Early in your career, just say yes to everything.** He went to play guitar at a pig show and it cost him more to get there than he made. But he did a good job, so the booking agent referred him to another gig.
 - **Once you have success, if it’s not a “Hell yes!”, it’s a “No”**
- **The standard pace is for chumps.** He was taking a four-year college course. He just bought the books for upper year classes, talked to the department heads to skip the courses, and took the final exams. He got done in two years.
- **“You can do everything you want. You just need foresight and patience.”**
 - Context: Many young people struggle to make decisions. They think if they choose X, they can’t do Y. But really, they can do one for a few years and then the other. It’s not a big deal.
 - It’s like a fable: a donkey is standing in front of a pile of hay and a bucket of water. It can’t decide whether to eat first or drink first. So it just keeps swinging its head back and forth and dies from both thirst AND hunger. But it should’ve just done one and then moved on to the other after.
- Unique belief of his
 - **You don’t need a fancy business model. Just ask the competitors what they do and replicate.** Ex: He went to a local record shop, asked their prices, and replicated that for his online record shop.
 - What would he put on a billboard?
 - **“It won’t make you happy” - billboard in front of every mall**
 - **Don’t chase diminishing marginal returns for most things.** Ex: don’t bike as fast as you can while trying to have fun. It’ll just save you two minutes.
 - He doesn’t believe in morning routines. Just gets immersed in one thing at a time.
 - **He believes you shouldn’t start a business unless people are asking him to**
 - **“Even when everything is going terribly, and I have no reason to be confident, I just decide to be.”**
- If you’re ‘too busy’ and you don’t want to be, then your life is out of your control. Get it back in your control. Many people can, they just choose not to.
- **Treat life as a series of little tests and experiments.**
 - Ex: Go move where you want for a few weeks.
- **He spent 4 hours on his \$100M+ online record store every six months.** Because he automated everything that could be automated.

- **The most successful email he ever wrote was just to be cute + funny after customers had their CD shipped :D**
 - Your CD has been gently taken from our CD Baby shelves with sterilized contamination-free gloves and placed onto a satin pillow. A team of 50 employees inspected your CD and polished it to make sure it was in the best possible condition before mailing.
 - Our packing specialist from Japan lit a candle and a hush fell over the crowd as he put your CD into the finest gold-lined box that money can buy.
 - We all had a wonderful celebration afterwards and the whole party marched down the street to the post office where the entire town of Portland waved “Bon Voyage!” to your package, on its way to you, in our private CD Baby jet on this day, Friday, June 6th.
 - I hope you had a wonderful time shopping at CD Baby. We sure did. Your picture is on our wall as “Customer of the Year.” We’re all exhausted but can’t wait for you to come back to CDBABY.COM!!

Alexis Ohanian:

- **He’s grateful to people who were mean to him because they made him determined to not be like them.**
 - Ex: Someone told him “you’re just a rounding error” in the early days of Reddit. So he quoted that and put it on his wall.
- **Challenge: spend 10 minutes to make a notification/message/email from your business a bit more human.**
- **“What are you doing that the world doesn’t realise is a big deal?”**
- His way of giving negative feedback: raise one eyebrow and let the silence do the work

Matt Mullenweg:

- “If you can write well, you can think well.”
- “If you’re ever bored in a conversation, the problem’s with you, not the other person.”
- **He never gets upset. Calm + logical under pressure.**
- **“Getting upset won’t help things.”**
- He sees lots of people in entrepreneurship **who don’t plan for success. They don’t ask: “If we do X today, what does that result in tomorrow? A year from now? 10 years from now?”** It’s like a dog chasing its tail. It doesn’t have a plan when it catches its tail.
- Recommends: [“The Tail End”](#) by Wait But Why
- **Recommends learning to type with Colemak or Dvorak instead of QWERTY**
 - Also recommends replacing email with p2theme.com
 - Calm.com for meditation
 - Momentum Chrome extension to help with focus
 - Wunderlust for todos
 - Slack > IMs
- **Set an embarrassingly small goal, and then that can become a habit.**
 - Ex: He committed to doing at least one pushup before bed.

- Their interview process = make the interview as close to the real work as possible. [Like an audition.](#)
- Recommends 'Words That Work' - book on how to write elegantly.
- His advice to his 20 year old-self would be to: **"Slow down. I think a lot of the mistakes of my youth were mistakes of ambition, not mistakes of sloth."**
 - Slow down = meditate, take time away from screens, focus on who you're talking to, etc.

Nicholas McCarthy: World's most successful one-handed pianist

- Best \$100 purchase = Neils Yard's aromatherapy diffuser. Geranium relaxes him but keeps him perked up enough to work.

Tony Robbins:

- Tim Ferris benefited a lot from reading Tony Robbins' Unlimited Power and Personal Power II. Tony Robbins recommends Man's Search for Meaning, The Fourth Turning by William Strauss, Mindset by Carol Dweck, and As a Man Thinketh by James Allen.
- **"What you know doesn't mean shit. What do you do consistently?"**
 - "If you let your learning lead to knowledge, you become a fool. If you let your learning lead to action, you become wealthy." - Jim Rohn
- Warren Buffet and Tony Robbins both had **the best \$100 of their life spent on courses** (public speaking course for Buffet at age 20 and motivation seminar for Robbins at age 17)
- **The questions you ask determine what you focus on. Ask good questions.**
 - Many people ask negative questions by default: "How could I not have gotten the job???"
- **"The reason you're suffering is you're focused on yourself."**
- **First, try to get in a healthy emotional/mental state.**
- **THEN, you can think the right thoughts. THEN, you can figure out your next steps.**
 - State → Story → Strategy
 - Lotsa resources in the health section on how to get in the right state. Ex: Sun exposure, metta meditation, exercise, tea/aromatherapy, etc.
 - Also, Tim Ferris notes how he's spent time journaling about 'problems' that just disappeared after he got more sleep, food, exercise, etc.
- Tony Robbins' morning routine
 - Cold water - even shower for 60s
 - Breath of fire yoga breathing exercise. Or walk around doing cycle of 4 short inhales w/ nose, 4 short exhales w/ mouth.
 - Then, he reflects for 3 mins on what he's grateful for, 3 mins on 'feeling the presence of God', 3 mins on what 3 things he'll make happen in the day.
- **All the most successful investors he's interviewed have an obsession with not losing money.** Ex: Richard Branson's first question to any business: **"What's the downside? And how do I protect against it?"** He actually negotiated a deal with Boeing that if Virgin Airlines failed, he could send back the planes.
 - **They're constantly looking for asymmetrical risks and rewards.**

- **How do I get no risk and huge rewards?**

- You'll be forced to think outside the box.
- **"They absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt, know they're going to be wrong... so they set up an asset allocation system to [counter against risk]".** Ex: Ray Dalio doesn't invest in stocks and bonds 50/50. Stocks are 3x more volatile than bonds, so that's more like 90/10 risk. He has a thoughtful system on how to diversify.
- And almost all of them were really passionate about giving. Ex: Paul Tudor Jones set up [Robin Hood Foundation](#)

Casey Neistat:

- Unique Beliefs of his
 - "I got all my understanding of how business and life works from studying the Second World War" - he's read a 600 page encyclopedia on WWII 3 times.
 - His favourite documentary is 'Little Dieter Needs to Fly' - it's about a prisoner of war in the Vietnam war. It shows him how bad life can REALLY get.
 - **Follow what angers you** - his first viral video was him highlighting a stupid traffic rule in NYC - you always have to stay within your bike line for safety reasons. So he made a [video](#) showing all the unsafe things in bike lanes preventing that.
 - **What's the most outrageous thing you can do?** He was tired of directing ads. So he took all the money Nike sent him to make an ad. And he used it to travel the world and recorded his experiences. Became one of Nike's most-watched [ads](#) ever.
 - *I could make a standup comedy routine about suicide and send it to all my former teachers to share in their classes*
 - *I could go running around in public naked.*
 - *I could make a public vlog everyday about whether I masturbated or not.*
 - *I could actually smash up others' cars when I go on my runs.*
 - When he thinks of the world 'successful,' he thinks of his grandmother. She started tap dancing at age 6 and loved it. So she continued it until age 92. She did it till the day before she died. And the day she died, they had to tell her 100 students that she couldn't come to class.
 - **Success isn't about how much time you spend doing what you love. It's about how little time you spend doing what you hate.**
- "If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead and rotten, **either write things worth reading, or do things worth writing.**" - Benjamin Franklin
- It's hard to become smarter, more powerful, more beautiful, more elegant. But it's pretty easy to become harder and harder working. And it's easier than ever to become more educated.

Morgan Spurlock:

- **"Once you get fancy, fancy gets broken."** - originally advice for people buying tools
- **"Story trumps cinematography"** - originally advice for movie production
- "I got to cheer for me before anyone else can cheer for me" - Kanye West

- **“Hope is not a strategy. Luck is not a factor. Fear is not an option.”** - James Cameron
- **“Don’t be afraid to show your scars”**
 - - advice a friend of Morgan’s gave him.
- His most recommended book is ‘The Living Gita - A Commentary for Modern Readers’
- Recommended Documentaries
 - The Fog of War
 - Brother’s Keeper
 - Hoop Dreams
 - Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room
 - Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief

Reid Hoffman

- He played a lot of war strategy board games and read Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu when he was young. Helped strategic thinking.
- Unique beliefs of his
 - **Respond to insults with: “I’m perfectly willing to accept that.”**
 - **“Solve the easiest, simplest, most valuable problem.”** - why he likes software > hardware. Do this by asking yourself: “Which 20% of the work I do produces 80% of the results? Which parts of this work are easiest for me to do?”
 - **Write down problems for your brain to solve overnight before you sleep.**
 - And then analyse the problems again as soon as you wake up.
 - **For personal judgement, define an acceptable error rate + how quickly you want decisions to be made.** Ex: You’re okay with 10% error rate if you make most decisions for your business within 2 hours.
 - If you can’t meet acceptable error rate, then fire yourself + hire others to make better decisions :D
 - **The best employees don’t just follow the plan you hand them. They suggest modifications of their own.**
 - Make decisions for one reason. Not a mix of reasons. Ex: go on a business trip if X, not X + Y + Z. He says it helps him not feel like he wasted his time.

Peter Thiel

- He’s good at examining questions / reframing questions before answering. See this podcast + [listener questions](#).
 - Ex: “What do you think is the future of education?” → **he rephrases** to: “What do you think is the future of learning?” because education seemed too vague. Then, **he broke it down into subquestions**: “What are we learning? Why are we learning it? ...”
- Unique beliefs of his
 - **You don’t have to wait. Ask yourself: “Why can’t I do my 10 year goals in 6 months?”** What he realised after college + law school + working in law/banking.
 - Sometimes you won’t get an answer. But the question is worth asking.

- Failure is overrated b/c businesses fail for more than one reason so it's hard to pinpoint what went wrong
- You don't want to be the nth company of any trend. **Work on unique problems that aren't being solved elsewhere.**
- He thinks it's odd that a society takes all its most talented people and puts them at the same college studying a few prestigious courses.
- He thinks competition makes you expend too much energy on one goal. He asks himself:
 - **"How do I become less competitive to become more successful?"**
 - **"Tell me something that's true that very few people agree with you on."**
 - Ask yourself: **"What problem do I face every day that nobody has solved yet?"**
- He has 7 pretty thoughtful questions for all startup founders to ask themselves in Zero to One

Seth Godin

- **"Trust and attention—these are the scarce items in a post-scarcity world."**
- **"We can't out-obedience the competition."**
 - **Teach people to lead and teach people to solve interesting problems.** There are plenty of other places on Earth where people can be obedient and work harder than us for less money than us. So we can't out-obedience the competition. We have to out-lead or out-solve the competition.
- The more you commit to others, the more your mission becomes the mission of others. If you say yes to everyone, you end up having no mission of yours left.
- Any money you have on top of what you need is just for telling stories. Make sure your money tells a story you're happy with.
- **Once you get enough bad ideas, some good ones have to show up.**
- When you live in the developed world, you're lucky. You can choose what to keep track of.
- **Don't keep track of the wrong things (ex: how many times you've been rejected, how many times it didn't work, how many times you've been let down).**
 - You know they're the wrong things to keep track of by asking: "Is keeping track of them making us better?"
 - *Is this true? Why?*
 - **Keep track of the times you took a risk, the times you brightened someone's day.**
 - Redefine yourself as someone who can make an impact on the world.
 - **You get to decide which narrative to tell about how your life is going.**
- **If your cards aren't working, move to another table with different cards.**
 - You're not responsible for the cards you're dealt, but you're responsible for trying something else.
 - Ex: trying a career you didn't think you'd like. Ex: trying to find new friends after you lost your old ones.

- **Find an industry where you don't have to push your business uphill.** Pushing uphill = student trying to allocate money in finance. Or toy designer trying to sell individual designs to large conglomerate toy companies. Pushing downhill = pitch new book ideas to publishers.
- Marketing tip: **show your idea to ten people who already trust you and like you. If they don't tell anyone else, it's not good enough.**
 - I don't think it makes sense to tell people who already like you - RE: Mom Test
- **"What's the smallest possible project that is worth my time? What is the smallest group of people I could make a difference for?"**
 - Though it feels risky, it's most achievable. And if you fail at even that, then you know you're not cut out for the job.
- **Cooking tips :D Taste the food as you go. Salt + olive oil are secret weapons.**
- Unique beliefs of his
 - **"Almost everything is made, not born, and that makes people uncomfortable because it puts them on the hook."**
- Recommended books
 - Goals: Setting and Achieving Them on Schedule, How to Stay Motivated, and Secrets of Closing the Sale by Zig Ziglar. "Zig is your grandfather and my grandfather. He's Tony Robbins' grandfather. None of us would be here if it weren't for Zig"
 - Pema Chodron - meditation books **for when you're stressed**
 - The War of Art and The Art of Possibility **for when you're stuck**
 - Just Kids - if you want to cry a little
- What would he tell his 30-year-old self?
 - "I wouldn't tell my 30-year-old self anything. Because if I hadn't had those bumps, I wouldn't be me, and I'm glad to be me."
- **Final words of advice: "Send someone a thank-you note tomorrow."**

James Altucher:

- Built 17 failed companies, 3 that made tens of millions
- His specialty in writing about his pain points that anyone can relate to. And not skipping the darkness in the middle of the tunnel before he reaches the light.
- **No idea is so big that you can't take the first step.**
- **Even for seemingly impossible ideas, just write down the first step you need to take to approach them.**
 - Better yet, do it for an entire list of ideas!
 - Ex: Richard Branson wanted to start an airline. But he only owned a magazine business. Seems bold. But he just started with the first step - call Boeing to find a plane to lease.
- **If you can't get 10 good ideas, get 20 ideas.**
- He comes up with 10 ideas daily. Not business ideas, but just any prompt. He wants it to be fun for himself so he can keep doing it.
- **You CAN say no without needing an explanation.**
- Unique thoughts

- “Forget purpose. It’s okay to be happy without one. The quest for a single purpose has ruined many lives.”

A ‘real-world’ MBA

- MBA = curriculum + network.
- Even the best of the best Stanford MBAs didn’t have good curriculum in 2007 when Tim Ferris considered doing one. And he would spend \$120K doing it.
- So, he decided to spend \$120K on angel investments and expect to never see the money again. Just like a ‘tuition fee’. This worked because
 - He had access to insider info from his network
 - He had \$120K he was comfortable losing - **be careful about saying how much you’re comfortable losing. You always overestimate it.** He recommends you go to a casino and gamble away the % that you’re willing to lose, just to see what that feels like.
 - \$120K was <10-15% of his liquid assets
 - And he had started successful businesses in the past
- **Over time, he developed his own rules for where to invest**
 - The business must have 1 or 2 technical cofounder(s)
 - He must be eager to use the product himself
 - The business must sell to consumers or SMBs - b/c he could add value via his own network then.
 - ...
- **Make rules that make it hard for you to make bad, damaging decisions**
- Skipping lots of stuff on how to do angel investing well. I don’t have the money
- But it doesn’t just have to be a MBA
 - Ex: MA in creative writing - negotiate Mondays off at your job for a 10-20% pay cut. Use that time to join a writers’ group + start writing a novel, screenplay, blog, whatever.
 - **You just have to commit with financial reason to action instead of theory.**

Scott Adams - he’s a successful comic artist

- **“Losers have goals. Winners have systems.”**
 - Systems are made up of habits.
 - Habits guide your goal choices.
 - Choose goals where you gain value despite failure.
 - That means you gain transferable value.
 - Ex: transferable skills/relationships.
- **Pursue transferable skills/relationships over short-term goals.**
 - Even though it’s hard to answer: “WHY are you pursuing those skills?”
 - Ex: He started a blog. 2xed his workload. Gave him 5% increase in payment. Not worth it?
 - But then, NYT / Washington Post found out about his blogs and asked him to write guest pieces. B/c he had done lotsa testing on his blog (ex: about writing

- voice, topic), he wrote popular guest pieces. But didn't make much money. Not worth it?
- But then, book publishers noticed his guest pieces and invited him to write a book. Still, authors don't get much of the money. Not worth it?
 - But then, he got lots of speaking gigs from the fame of the book. Made lotsa money. Though he didn't know this was what he would use his transferable writing skills for, the transferable writing skills paid off.
 - Naval Ravikant credits Scott's blog post ["The Day You Become a Better Writer"](#) for improving his writing
 - **Prune unnecessary words.**
 - **Write short sentences.**
 - **The first sentence needs to make the reader curious.** Rewrite it 12 times if need be.
 - Humorous things are naughty, clever, cute, bizarre, mean, and/or recognisable.
 - **Write down positive affirmations about yourself achieving a goal 15x a day.**
 - It's not that some magic happens, but it trains yourself to focus on the goal in a constructive way. Just like you hear your name in a crowd of noise, you can start noticing opportunities to pursue your goal that you might otherwise have missed.
 - I don't understand something he's saying about a smart negotiation technique Donald Trump uses to evade tough questions. It seems like he responds to a Republican criticism by bringing up X common enemy? That distracts from the criticism?
 - **Diversify who/what you rely on and you'll have less stress of being let down**
 - Ex: You don't worry about one boss firing you if you're a freelancer with 10 clients. Ex: You don't worry about losing one friend if you have 10. Ex: You don't worry about one stock going down if you have a portfolio.
 - Also, your skills. **Be among the top 25% of people at lots of skills. It's really hard to be the best at any one of them.**
 - I dismissed him, though, when he said a good way to do this was to get an unusual combination of university degrees. I guess I'm biased against university degrees.

Shaun White:

- Before a big olympic event, he'll tell himself: "At the end of the day, **who cares? What's the big deal? I'm here, I'm going to try my best**, and I'm going to go home."
- **Set a serious goal and a stupid + funny goal.** Ex: Win the olympics + win as many sponsorship sneakers as possible.
- Recommends Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

Tim Ferris recommends the 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing by Al Ries. Specifically: "The Law of the Category"

- **Find a new category you can be the first in.**
 - Ex: Amelia Earhart was the third person to fly solo across the Atlantic. But she wouldn't be remembered for being the *third*. Instead, she would be remembered as the *first* woman to fly solo across the Atlantic.
- He also gives a lot of stories about companies in different industries. But I feel skeptical about those stories. Seems like high potential for survivorship bias.
- **"Everyone is interested in what's new. Few people are interested in what's better."**

Chase Jarvis

- Upon reading he was a photographer, I was getting ready to skip this section. #bias
- **If you want to put yourself at the upper leagues, start by charging a high pricepoint.** Though keep in mind you may have to wait a long time to train your skills to that premium level.
 - Ex: His first photography gig, he charged \$2K/day. What professionals get. But he had to spend years training how to do photography.
 - Ex: Tim Ferris made \$1M/year on his podcast advertising by waiting 9 months until each episode got 100K+ downloads. If he'd started earlier, he would've spent 30-50% of his time on logistics of much smaller deals.
 - **"If someone ever says 'yes' that quickly, you didn't ask for enough."**
- **Amplify your strengths rather than fix your weaknesses**
 - *Why is this good?*
- **"How do you zig when everyone else is zagging?" Be different, not just better.**
 - For him, he got lots of celebrity friends and then took photos of them while they were playing Playstation at his house. And he shared all his photography tips 10 years before it was cool to do that.
- "A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects." - Robert Heinlein
 - *Is this beneficial or egotistical?*

Dan Carlin

- **"Don't be afraid to do something you're not qualified to do."**
- Folk saying: **Professionals built the Titanic. Amateurs built the arc.**
- Just **copyright your flaws**. Ex: He's a radio host who always spoke too loud. But he copyrighted that. He would intro himself as: "I'm Dan Carlin, the host who speaks so loud I..." Now, it's a unique + celebrated thing about him.
- When he was in his 20s, it saddened him that he didn't like his work. He would work all day and not like the news stories he made. He wondered: "When am I going to start liking this???"
 - But in retrospect, he would tell himself: **"It's all going to work out in the end."**

Ramit Sethi

- Tim Ferris paraphrasing: **"If you understand principles you can create tactics. If you are dependent on perishable tactics, you will always be at a disadvantage."**
- Most gifted books = The Age of Propaganda + Robert Collier Letterbook + Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got.
- Writing advice: Put content > growth when starting out. Ex: Focus on getting just 1K true fans of your blog.
 - Also recommends guest posting. And putting 98% of your content free, 2% at ultra premium price (10-100x competition)
 - Tim Ferris on why this works: **If you want to increase your income 10x, not 10% - you have to rely on unexpected opportunities. Those come easiest via having a strong network.**
- Tim + Ramit love making checklists. For themselves + business processes. Allows everyone to know what's going on instead of relying on one employee who leaves.
- Tim Ferris: "Success need not be complicated."
 - **Just focus on making 1K people extremely, extremely happy."**
- They need to be true fans. True fan = someone who'll buy anything you produce.

Mike del Ponte: Raised \$100K in 10 days on Kickstarter

- Try and figure out where similar Kickstarter projects got referrals. In the old days, you could've done this with link shortener tracking.
 - These days, you can do it by **searching for images of the Kickstarter project across the web**. Download the image and search in Google for all the places that image is used. You'll see referral sources.
 - One referral source leads to the next - search for <https://www.similarsites.com/>
- Replicate getting coverage from those referral sources. Ex: Blogs, Twitter, etc.
- **Under 1% of writers will respond to endorsed content requests. You need warm intros.** Try to use your LinkedIn mutual connections.
- **Prep all this before you actually launch. Schedule send outreach as soon as you launch.**
 - P.S. Cold-emailing tip - use [TextExpander](#). You can type a snippet and it auto expands into a saved email.
- More tiny tips [here](#).

Alex Blumberg: The Giant Pool of Money - Planet Money

- **Ask dumb questions.**
- **Prompts to get others to tell stories**
 - "Tell me about a time when . . ."
 - "Tell me about the day [or moment or time] when . . ."
 - "Tell me the story of . . . [how you came to major in X, how you met so-and-so, etc.]"
 - "Tell me about the day you realized . . ."
 - "What were the steps that got you to...?"

- "Describe the conversation when . . .
- **Followups for interesting tidbits**
 - "How did that make you feel?"
 - "What do you make of that?"
 - "Explain that a bit more"
 - "What did you learn from that?"
- **General questions:**
 - "If you could describe the debate in your head about X decision, what would it be?"
 - "If the old you could meet the new you, what would the new you say?"
 - "You seem very confident now. Was that always the case?"

Ed Catmull

- Co-founder of Pixar. Author of Creativity Inc. Best business book ever? - Forbes
- **"We all start with suck."**
 - The first versions of their films "have no resemblance" to the final product.
- Steve Jobs made a lot of strategic decisions about when Pixar should go public and how it could negotiate good deals with Disney. Just an interesting note.
- Recommends history lectures from The Great Courses. King Henry VIII, Tudors, and Stuarts. Also the children's book: One Monster After Another. Also, Vipassana meditation.
- "What artists do is they learn to see" - learning physics helped him make art properly

Stephen Hawking:

- **"When you complain, nobody wants to help you."**
 - *What is complaining? Saying negative stuff when:*
 - *You're not willing/able to do anything about it.*
 - *It's a minor thing.*
 - *You aren't interested in the other person's perspective about it.*

Tracy Dinunzio: entrepreneur

- **"If you spend your time focusing on the things that are wrong, you don't become a source of growth for people, you become a source of destruction for people."**
 - Her spine didn't work for years and she was always in the hospital and couldn't walk. At first, she complained. But then, she put herself on a 'complaining diet'. Started to limit the amounts of complaints she could say and think.
- **Pick the right audience to suck in front of.** Ex: 10 Investors whose money you don't want. Remember: you only need 1 break, so get good in preparing for it.

Phil Libin: co-founder of Evernote

- Doesn't think of people as 'successful' b/c **lotsa hardworking + intelligent people that haven't gotten lucky yet.**
- Most recommended documentary = The Gatekeepers (about Israeli security)

- He uses a rule of thumb: **EVERYthing at a company breaks every time you grow in size by multiples of 3 and 10.** 3 employees, 10 employees, 30 employees, 100 employees. From payroll to comms to accounting and beyond.

"How are you complicit in creating the conditions you don't want?" - Jerry Colonna

Chris Young: Experimental Chef

- What would he put on a billboard? **"It all worked out anyway."** In front of his high school (high school wasn't good for him).
- **"The interesting jobs are the ones that you make up."**
 - **"Don't worry about what your job is going to be. Do things that you're interested in, and if you do them well, you're going to find a way to temper them into some good business opportunity."**
- **"What interesting thing are you working on? Why is that interesting to you? What's surprising about that? Is anyone else thinking about this?" - Heston Blumenthal. Ask EVERYONE**
- Recommends ["Valve: Handbook for New Employees"](#) - only HR doc you'll ever want to read.
- Ask ppl w/ big ego: **"I totally understand you can't do X. Is there any other good [competitor of theirs] that could do X?"**
- **Set a culture where people know the standard and will sooner get help, try something new, or retry than to be substandard and hope no one notices.**
 - Before getting mad at someone for being substandard, ask yourself:
 - **"What context did they have? Am I being unfair on them because I have more information than they do?"**

Daymond John

- "You can make up your own opinions, but you cannot make up your own facts. Sales cure all."
- "My parents always taught me that my day job would not make me rich. It would be my homework."
- **The best investment he made was taking a boring job as a courier boy in downtown NYC. He got a lot of perspective from all the people he met.**
- Folk saying: "Money is a great servant but a horrible master."
- Most gifted books: Think and Grow Rich. Who Moved My Cheese? Blue Ocean Strategy. Invisible Selling Machine. The Richest Man in Babylon. Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World

Noah Kagan: entrepreneur

- **For wantrapreneurs / people not failing regularly,**

- **Go ask for 10% off your next purchase.**
- **Improve tools at the 'top of the funnel'**
 - Top of the funnel = they affect everything downstream. Ex: Slow wifi slows down everything else you do on a computer.
- **Schedule personal time on your calendar. Otherwise, it feels like a work meeting is a 'real' priority, but time for you to 'just learn' isn't.**
- Recommends 'Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!'. Also 'Who' by Geoff Smart, Randy Street for startup hiring advice. And 'The Gary Halbert Letter' / 'The Boron Letters' / 'Ogilvy on Advertising' for copywriting. Recommends mini blenders (nutri bullet) :D

Kaskade: DJ

- **To get his first gig, he just asked to play at some club owner's slowest night**
- Put the big stones in the bucket first. (THEN, fill up spaces with sand / gravel.) Analogy of which priorities in life to balance first.
- **Every time he left the house, his father would say: "Remember who you are."**

Luis von Ahn: CEO of Duolingo, creator of CAPTCHA

- **"Frustration is a matter of expectation."**
- His mentor always **kept telling him: "I don't understand."** Forced him to re-explain so many times, he realised **he didn't understand.**
- He always benefited from starting startups outside Silicon Valley. Easier to retain talent because there are fewer alternatives for workers. Same thing for Shopify, HQ: Ottawa

Ryan Holiday:

- He strongly advocates for people to follow if they want to lead. Something called the 'canvas strategy'.
- **It's very common that young, non-powerful people feel angry at society. They feel like unappreciated geniuses** just interning their way up the hierarchy.
 - But **reality for people starting out is: you're not as good as you think you are.** You have an attitude towards teams that doesn't scale. And most of what you learned in the books is out of date or wrong.
 - **Everyone from Michelangelo to Leonardo da Vinci to Benjamin Franklin started as a lowly apprentice.** And back in their days, they actually did just have to grovel and pine and perform manual service favours in exchange for patronage from rich elite.
 - Your job as someone starting out is to:
 - **Find the canvases other people can paint on (look for opportunities for others).**
 - **Clear the path for the people above you and you will make a path for yourself. Attach yourself to people and organisations who're already successful.**
 - Side benefit = also reduces ego.

- **It's not about who gets credit from the work. It's about who gains the skills derived from the work.**
 - One of the world's most successful NFL coaches (Belichick) started out as a 'busboy'. He would go back and rewatch tapes (most boring part of job). And if he got big insights, senior coaches would get credit. But he learned how to watch tapes better than anyone.
 - Belichick also believed in **questioning / advising seniors in private + self-effacingly** (making yourself seem modest + inconspicuous). That's how you can be a rising star without threatening or alienating anyone.
 - Franklin used to publish anonymous newspaper reports, but his brother would put them in his newspaper. Brother got all the credit. But Franklin learned how to write in ways that people loved.
- **Be the least important person in the room and use it as an opportunity to learn.**
- **For every person you meet, think of some way to help them.**
 - **Something you could do for them. And look at it in a way that entirely benefited them and not you?**
 - You'd learn to solve diverse problems.
 - You'd get a great reputation
 - You'd have lotsa relationships
 - You'd be able to call in lots of favours.
 - Trade short-term ego boost for long-term rewards.
- But it's getting over your ego that's the hard part. You can't do this if you feel entitled / have jealousy / have anger / etc.
- **Ways to help others** = coming up with ideas for them, introduce people to each other, find what no one wants to do and do it, find ways to optimise the system, produce more than others.

Neil Strauss: writer

- **You don't make big successes from accepting the norms of your time.**
- Recommends 'Life is Elsewhere'. Book about the question: 'Are you going to live up to your potential? Or are you just going to give in to the peer pressure of the moment?'
- **When writing, put in a placeholder and research it later.** Turn off the Internet so you can't research it now!.
- **Edit for yourself, then your fans, then your haters.** First edit, figure out what you'd like. Second edit, figure out what your fans would like. Third edit, figure out what critics would attack.
 - **Eminem does a good job of bringing up impersonations of critics in his songs :D You dispel arguments by bringing up your flaws first.**
- **To get over writer's block, set smaller goals.** If you write one sentence, you succeed. But you probably will write more than one sentence if you start.
- **Be vulnerable first.**
 - Ex: if you're interviewing someone, tell them personal stories about your worries in an interview. Ex: Ask for advice, but don't wait for the response :D Ex: **"You're**

really good at X and it's a struggle of mine. I want to respect your time and get to the meeting, of course, but I'd love to ask about it some other day!"

- Also, interview-specific tips: *tell them you're trying to make them look good, ask them what would make for an ideal episode on release day, anything they'd prefer not to talk about.*

I'm skipping investing tips and interview giving tips. I'm not at that stage.

Mike Shinoda: Musician at Linkin Park

- **Before collaborating with someone, ask yourself: "What are their incentives and the timelines of their incentives? How do they measure 'success'? Are we aligned?"**
- **Don't waste your attention on short-term gimmicks if your goal is to have long-term success.**
 - Ex: Linkin Park was always told: "Put on a cowboy hat for this show, put on a lab coat for this show, put on..."

"Be the silence that listens."—Tara Brach

"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!'"—Hunter S. Thompson

Justin Boreta: Musician

- **Don't force it.**
 - [Trying to force a square peg into the round hole] very rarely has the intended results, whether it's something creative, or in life in general..."
- **"Inspiration is for amateurs—the rest of us just show up and get to work.** And the belief that things will grow out of the activity itself and that you will—through work—bump into other possibilities and kick open other doors that you would never have dreamt of if you were just sitting around looking for a great 'art idea.'"
- **Advice to his 20-year-old self: "Chill out. Calm down.'** I feel like myself and other people I know that are in their early- to mid-20s get really wound up about things having to be a certain way.
- **"It doesn't matter as much as you think it does."**
- History podcast recommendation: Radiolab's "In the Dust of This Planet". And Max Richter's [From Sleep](#) before sleeping.

Scott Belsky: VC / entrepreneur

- His unique beliefs
 - **You should mess up every once in a while.** "The danger of maps, capable assistants, and planning is that you may end up living your life as planned. If you

do, your potential cannot possibly exceed your expectations.” Also, you lose a source of creativity / perspective.

- **“Sometimes you need to stop doing things you love in order to nurture the one thing that matters most”.**
 - For him, his business had too many business lines to focus on all at once early on. He had to give up on products with thousands of happy customers.
- **It’s bad to look for patterns in business.** You’re liable to overgeneralise. And by definition, the most successful investments / startups don’t fit into the norm.
- **“The dirty little secret is that every success was almost a failure.”**
- **“I assumed my strengths would always be with me regardless of where I applied them. I was wrong. Truth is, your environment matters.”**
 - Is this true? How can I test it?
- **“Young creative minds don’t need more ideas, they need to take more responsibility with the ideas they’ve already got.”**
- **“When 99% of people doubt you, you’re either gravely wrong or about to make history.”**

Rolf Potts: traveller + Henry David Thoreau: traveller

- Tim Ferris after reading his book: **“Travel isn’t just for changing what’s outside, it’s for reinventing what’s inside.”**
 - “The more we associate money with life, the more we convince ourselves that we’re too poor to buy our freedom.” - Tim Ferris on why buying an ‘all-inclusive one-week vacation package’ is a bad idea. Leads to short-term getaways without long-term change.
- **“We end up spending (as Thoreau put it) ‘the best part of one’s life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it.’ “**
 - I don’t see why travelling is necessarily an answer to better spend the best part of your life. But this is a problem. What is the right way to spend the best part of your life?
- **“Given an unlimited amount of choices, we make none.”** - Tim Ferris
- Tim Ferris advises to **not travel based on others’ money**. He says the ‘travel experiences have no personal reference - no connection to the rest of their lives.’

Larry Page:

- **“Are you working on something that can change the world? Yes or no?”**

Peter Diamandis:

- **“They day before something is truly a breakthrough, it’s a crazy idea... where inside of your companies are you trying crazy ideas?”**
 - I think this is also applicable to life in general.
 - **“Where in your life are you trying crazy ideas?”**
- Tim Ferris describing Peter Diamandis: “Every time you meet [him, he leaves] you shaking your head and (productively) asking: ‘What the **** am I doing with my life?!’ “

- When he was starting the XPRIZE, he had no money. He spent a year raising \$500K in \$20K/\$30K checks. And then he just announced that there would be a \$10M prize + spent the whole \$500K on marketing that announcement.
 - He thought the announcement would be great marketing. But he talked to 150 CEOs for the next 5 years and everyone turned him down. So many 3 AM nights where he wanted to give up.
 - In the end, one family he met agreed to pay \$10M.
- Recommends [Stone Soup](#) - children's book that's 'the best MBA degree you can read'
 - Basically, some travellers come to a town where no one's willing to share food.
 - Everyone's selfish + lies to avoid giving up something.
 - What the travellers did was to declare they had exciting stone soup! Something new that no one had ever heard of.
 - Travellers said they would make it tonight. People came to watch.
 - Travellers put stones in water. Then said: "Apart from some _____, it's perfect!"
 - Then, the villagers would go fetch _____ to add to the soup.
 - Repeated until they got all the ingredients needed to make soup. And then everyone shared the soup together.
- What he says to feel better after a startup failure:
 - **"Why do I believe this is important? Look at how far I've taken it."**
- How to find your purpose / mission in life. He says it should be your #1 priority
 - Do Tony Robbins' Date with Destiny Program
 - And read *Start with Why* by Simon Sinek
 - **"What did you want to do when you were a child, before anybody told you what you were supposed to do?"**
 - **"If [rich person] gave you \$1 billion to improve the world, how would you spend it?"**
 - **"Where can you put yourself in an environment that exposes you to new ideas, problems, and people that you can't stop thinking about?"**
 - **How can you disrupt yourself? Get young, creative people to ideate for you.**
 - His advice is meant for companies. I wonder if it applies to people still?
- His unique beliefs
 - **"If you can't win, change the rules."**
 - **"If you can't change the rules, ignore them."**
 - This makes sense to me in a creativity context. 20 ideas > 10 good ideas
 - I also thought of how I didn't have assets to prioritise investments in CCUS. But I could create my own assets digitally to 'demo' what potential returns would've been like.
 - **"You get what you incentivize."**
 - **"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it."** - Why is this true?
 - "When given a choice... take both." - I don't understand. Why is this good?
 - "When forced to compromise, ask for more." - Why is this good?
 - I'm skipping a bunch that I don't understand the meaning of.

- Her unique beliefs
 - **“I like to make promises that I’m not sure I can keep and then figure out how to keep them.”** - this doesn’t align with my value of reliability. But it does make a point; if I say to myself: “I have to be reliable 100% of the time, no exceptions.” - then I limit my growth b/c I won’t take on large commitments. If I say: “I have to be reliable on things I’ve previously been reliable on and always be trying a new reliability commitment that I haven’t before” - then I won’t be reliable 100% of the time, but I’ll grow.
 - **When you look at successful people, it feels like they’ve ‘arrived’ and you haven’t - but really, you never arrive.** You always keep going + you always have bad days.
 - **“It doesn’t get any easier... the challenges are bigger with bigger things.”**

B.J. Novak: Creator of The Office

- **“But I’m making good money / so much money” = a warning sign that you’re making the wrong decision.**
- **Give the money to charity and you’ll get to work with people well above your level.**
Ex: Invite a celebrity to your event, saying proceeds go to charity.
- **“You can’t make each night a referendum on whether to continue or not.” - Tim Ferris. Make a series of commitments that force you to improve.**
- **‘The kid who knows he’s cute isn’t cute’ - Tim Ferris.** This is why you shouldn’t overpitch. Just be authentic and impress.
- They have 2 - 3 weeks where the writers of The Office just say: ‘What if [dumb idea]?’
No penalties allowed. RE: If you can’t find 10 good ideas, find 20 ideas.
- Unique beliefs
 - Spends hours every morning just working himself into a good mood through coffee, reading, walks, etc. He says **it’s worth it to get in a good mood before you do work, even if it takes you longer to get started.**
 - **“Take as long as you want if you’re talented. You’ll get their attention again if you have a reason to.”**
 - Nobody wanders around for three years wondering, “Where’s Will Smith in a movie? I haven’t seen Will Smith in a movie.”
- Recommends these debate podcasts: ‘Intelligence Squared’ and ‘The Great Debates’.
Also the book: [‘The Oxford Book of Aphorisms’](#) - the best one-liners in history

How to say ‘no’:

- **“Are you doing what you’re uniquely capable of? Can you be replaced?”**
 - If answer to first is no and answer to second is yes, that’s not a great long-term strategy.
 - Tim Ferris on why he stopped investing, even though he was making \$\$\$\$: “I was tired of being interchangeable, no matter how lucrative the game.”
- “Once you reach a decent level of professional success, lack of opportunity won’t kill you. It’s drowning in ‘kinda cool’ commitments that will sink the ship.”

- Read “Maker’s Schedule vs. Manager’s Schedule” by Paul Graham. Basically, **the more creative your work, the more uninterrupted time you need.**
- **Which excessive blessings in your life have become a curse?**
 - Ex: Too many invites to conferences, too many investments in startups, too many volunteers to manage, etc.
- **Define what you’re chasing so you know when to stop**
 - - tip for investing, happiness, success.
- **“All of my biggest wins have come from leveraging strengths instead of fixing weaknesses.”**
 - **“Don’t push a boulder uphill just because you can.” - Tim Ferris**
- **“Where in your life are you good at moderation? Where are you all or nothing?”**
 - In the areas you go all in, you typically have an ‘all or nothing’ avoidance level. Ex: You can avoid alcohol if you have none, but if you have even a little, you’ll end up drinking another and another and another.
- What does it mean to say ‘the obstacle is the way’ ? Not that you should ignore problems or accept them as they are. But that you should analyse your problems and figure out what needs to change.
- **Write down the 20% of activities causing 80% of your negative emotions. What is the worst thing that could happen if you stopped doing them?**

Greg McKeown: “Saying ‘no’ often requires trading popularity for respect.”

- Is this true? My default assumption is saying ‘no’ requires trading popularity for indifference. Maybe resentment.

Mark Twain: **“I am an old man and I have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.”**

Seneca: **“He who suffers before it is necessary suffers more than is necessary.”**

Wise:

BJ Miller: Palliative Care Physician

- The societal pressures that take up our time aren’t natural order. They’re usually things that are created by other humans to be a certain way.
- **“Don’t believe everything that you think.”**
 - Reminds me especially of mental health. You don’t want to go along with unhelpful thoughts.
- **Stargazing = therapy**
 - “Just mulling the bare-naked facts of the cosmos is enough to thrill me, awe me, freak me out, and kind of put all my neurotic anxieties in their proper place.”
- **The delight of some things is the very fact they go away.**
 - Ex: If you had 5-star meal every day, you wouldn’t enjoy it. But if you had it rarely, you’d be pleased by it.

- Ex: If you had a snow crystal land on your finger up close and you could keep its perfect shape forever, you would lose interest in it. You'd throw it away in some box with your 'childhood things'. But because it melts away, it leaves you excited after every snowfall.
- Enjoyable things you can do without human interaction
 - **Listen to Beethoven**
 - **Bake and smell cookies**
 - **Read picture book of Mark Rothko paintings**
 - **Stare into space (night sky)**

Maria Popova: founder of brainpickings.org

- Skipping a bunch of stuff about how to say no to too many requests.
- "Those who work much, do not work hard." - Henry David Thoreau
 - Is this true?
- **"We wear our ability to get by on very little sleep as a kind of badge of honor that symbolizes work ethic or toughness... but really, it's a total profound failure of priorities and self respect."**
- Recommend: [On the Shortness of Life - Seneca](#)
- **"If you don't have the patience to read something, don't have the hubris to comment on it."**
- Book reading tip: create shortcodes for types of value and note the page that things came from. Ex: "BP 4 = beautiful phrase on page 4"
- Her unique beliefs
 - "The second you start doing it for an audience, you've lost the long game because **creating something that is rewarding and sustainable over the long run requires, most of all, keeping yourself excited about it**"
 - **"It always, always shows in the work when you resent it."** - I wonder what examples she was thinking of?
 - **"You discover your 'dream' (or sense of purpose) in the very act of walking the path,** which is guided by equal parts choice and chance."
 - "The culture of news is a culture without nuance."
 - She believes every politician should read The Republic by Plato :D
- Recommended Brain Pickings articles
 - [The Shortness of Life: Seneca on Busyness](#)
 - [How to Find Your Purpose](#)
 - [9 Learnings from 9 Years of Brain Pickings](#)
 - Anything about Alan Watts

Jocko Willink: former navy seal

- "Discipline equals freedom" - translation: to get things that unlock freedom (health, wealth, etc.), you need discipline.
- Franz Kafka: "Better to have and not need than to need and not have." (Ie. **Have a backup**)

- For perspective on what bad looks like, read Primo Levi's books. Also recommends: Restrepo, About Face, Blood Meridian
- Being tough is a decision. If you have to make hard choices, it's in your power. Whether you're skipping dessert or pushing forward in a battle.
- **Don't ask unless you need. When you ask rarely, you get immediately.**
- **The lower your requirements, the more of an advantage you have.** Ex: Some navy seals need protein powder or else they're grumpy. Others have trained to get by on whatever food they find or go hungry.
- Most important traits of good commander = humble, coachable, open to new ideas.
 - **Ask: "What did I do wrong?", nod your head, and start taking notes.**
- You can't read others if you're thinking about your own ego or emotions.
- **After any bad thing, just say 'Good' and find the opportunity in the bad thing.** Not as a 'being positive will solve your issues' but as a 'what can I make of this moving forward?'

Sebastian Junger:

- Navy seals don't get more stressed knowing they'll be attacked. B/c then they can start preparing. Waiting + uncertainty is worse than conflict.
- "That sense of 'us' buffers psychological demons" - his thoughts on how crime, suicides, mental health issues go down after natural disasters / terrorist attacks.
- Skipping bunch of writing tips. They seem like matters of personal taste (ex: solution to writer's block = more research)
- A really hard problem in life is **finding the balance between having the courage to explore and having the wisdom to commit to what's worth holding on for.**

Skipped warning about privacy threats. I don't have much to be stolen.

Samy Kamkar: Whitehat hacker

- Privacy tips
 - Cover your webcams (camera + phone)
 - Use Bitlocker, 'full drive encryption', and/or Veracrypt to encrypt your data. Easiest → hardest
 - Use 'You'll Never Take me Alive' - just make sure not to disconnect your laptop from power while it's locked.
 - Encrypt data on your phone with a PIN.
 - Use LastPass or KeePass.
 - NetLimiter or Wireshark for detecting when your computer is connecting to the Internet.
 - Don't plug USBs you don't trust into your computer
 - Tor > VPNs
 - Disable EXIF data for images taken on phone
 - Use Tor for privacy. But it doesn't do great in performance/plugins.
- Tools for hackers

- Wireshark, Charles (web debugging proxy), NighHawk, arpy, dsniff, Kali Linux, intrusion, sniffing, and man-in-the-middleing.

General Stanley McChrystal + his assistant, Chris Fussell:

- What does this mean? “The purpose of life is a life of purpose” - Robert Byrne
- Eats one big meal per day
- **Ask people: “How would you disrupt my plan or how would you beat my plan?”**
- **“What will the people who don’t hold you in the highest regard say about you?”**
 - You see how they think others see them.
 - You see how aware they are of their weaknesses.
- Chris: **Three people you should always watch: a senior to mimic, a peer better than you, and someone who did what you used to do better than you.**
- To create toughness: push beyond limits, do it in groups where others share the discomfort, overcome fears.
- **When you start managing enough people, you can only optimise the people, not the tasks.**
 - He had to realise this when he was 35-40, because he finally started commanding battalions of hundreds.
- Chris + Stanley recommend ‘Gates of Fire’ / ‘Once an Eagle’ / ‘The Battle of Algiers’ to learn about what war is like.

Shay Carl: Youtuber

- “You can tell the true character of a man by how his dog and kids react to him”
 - Wish he explained with an example :/
- **Just do the cliché things.** Context: he lost weight by just eating more vegetables.
- **“What would your future self tell you?”**
- **“Work will work when nothing else will work”**
 - I can definitely spot exceptions to this. Ex: Just taking action on the wrong priorities instead of stopping to think about what you should act on. Ex: Making the situation worse when you should’ve kept your hands off it (see: investing).
- **He says you should record videos where you smile + sit up straight + ‘act’ like you’re happy. It actually makes you happy. Also,**
- **Just laugh more, even when there’s no reason to.**
- **He says you should remind yourself about the shortness of life by thinking of death.** Ex: **visit graveyards, funerals, hospice care, read stoicism, etc.** Doesn’t say why.

William MacAskill: Founder of Effective Altruism, youngest tenured philosophy professor ever

- “You can’t make a lousy charity good by having a low overhead.” → ie. **it doesn’t matter if you budget well when you’re working on the wrong problem/solution.**
- Recommends: ‘Practical Ethics’, ‘Animal Liberation’, ‘Reasons and Persons’, ‘Mindfulness’ by Mark Williams for meditation, **‘Power of Persuasion’ by Robert Levine - much more in-depth than other books on persuasion.**

- His unique beliefs
 - **'Follow your passion is terrible advice.'**
 - **Job satisfaction is more about the job than about you'**
 - - he says the biggest predictor of job satisfaction is mentally engaging work; jobs that have variety, give you feedback, give you autonomy, contribute to the world, and leverage your skills.
 - Advice to 20-year-old-self: **"You have 80,000 working hours in the course of your life. It's incredibly important to work out how best to spend them, and what you're doing at the moment—20-year-old Will—is just kind of drifting and thinking.** [You're] not spending very much time thinking about this kind of macro optimization."
 - He says it's reasonable to spend 5% of your life (2 years) figuring out what to do in the other 95%.

The 'Dickens Process' by Charles Dickens

- **Ask yourself what your beliefs cost you. In the past, present, AND future.**
 - Reasoning is that if you identify the downside in the past, present, and future - you don't have any hope for miracles left (ex: it was bad in the past, but it's fine now. Or it's bad right now, but it'll be fine in the future). So you're forced to address the problematic beliefs.
- "What has each belief cost you/the people you care for in the past? What have you lost because of it?"
- "What is each belief costing you/the people you care for in the present?"
- "What will each belief cost you/the people you care for in 1, 3, 5, and 10 years?"
- After figuring out the problematic beliefs, get 2-3 replacement beliefs.

Kevin Costner: Film-maker

- "I usually know when **I'm on to something when I'm a little bit afraid of it.** I go 'Wow, I could mess this up.' "

Sam Harris:

Unique beliefs

- "It's actually very easy to give advice. It's very hard to follow the advice that you know is good... **if someone came to me with my list of problems, I would be able to sort that person out very easily."**
 - Is the first part true? In my experience, it's been pretty hard to understand people well enough to give them advice.
 - The second part, I've experienced. If you look at your problems from a 3rd party perspective, you know exactly what to say somehow.
- He **believes that 'self-transcendence' is an emotion that feels like unconditional love.** And that many mystics like Buddha were referring to that when they described self-transcendence.
- His **definition of mindfulness: paying attention to sensations and thoughts without being lost and without pushing away the negative and embracing the positive.**

- Current reality for people: “We’re so deeply conditioned to be **lost in thought** and to have this conversation with ourselves **from the moment we wake up to the moment we fall asleep**. It’s just **chatter in the mind**, and it’s so captivating that we’re **not even aware of it**. We are essentially **in a dream state**, and it’s through this **veil of thought** that we go about our day and perceive our environment.”
- He really **believes that long meditation retreats are needed to experience benefits of meditation**. For him, 10 uninterrupted days > an hour a day.
- He **believes in psychedelics because they guarantee a transformational mental perception. Vs. meditation, where it's not guaranteed.**
- His morning routine is 'a picture of controlled chaos'. The only consistent part is meditating for 10-30 minutes.
- Skipping some stuff about artificial intelligence risks. Doesn't interest me. He even says - **if you don't have children, you don't care enough about the future to appreciate AI's risks :D**
- Dzogchen meditation: you look at the sky.

Caroline Paul:

Unique beliefs

- **"Secrets are a buffer to intimacy"**. She used to think 'my [conservative] dad doesn't need to know I'm lesbian.' Then, she told him anyways and it was fine.
- Put more colours into meals and put more love into meals.
- **"My fear of failure was way greater than my fear of [danger]."** - she was a firefighter, but just wanted to make sure she didn't let people down.
 - She says **you can just observe all your emotions and prioritise them in the order that's useful**. Ex: She illegally climbed Golden Gates Bridge at midnight. Was feeling fear, but she did it in a mostly safe way, unless there was a strong gust of wind. So she prioritized exhilaration, fun emotions over fear. And she visualises each emotion as a brick she's putting in a stack.
- Recommends 'The Things They Carried'. Says it's 'beautiful'

Fear:

- **Define exactly what you're scared of in vivid detail and it'll become less scary.**
 - “Would it be the end of your life? What would be the permanent impact, on a scale of 1 to 10? How likely is that to actually happen?”
 - “What could you do to repair the damage? How could you get things back under control?”
 - “What are the temporary/permanent benefits under probable scenarios? Have less intelligent people pulled it off before?”
 - “If you were fired from your job today, what would you do to get things back under financial control?”

- “What are you putting off out of fear? Usually **what we most fear doing is what we most need to do**”
- “What is it costing you - financially, emotionally, physically - to postpone action? How would you feel if you looked back 10 years later doing what you know will not fulfill you?”
- “What are you waiting for?”
- “Many a false step was made by standing still.” - proverb
- Tim Ferris: Risks aren’t that scary once you take them.
- **“Most people will choose unhappiness over uncertainty.”**

Kevin Kelly:

- “Sit, sit. Walk, walk. Don’t wobble [between the two].” - Zen Mantra. Meaning: **Do one thing at a time with your full attention.**
 - *How do you do the ‘full attention’ part?*
- **Get a countdown clock of the number of days you have left to live.**
 - Based on where you were born + when. He says it helps him focus on present priorities.
- He says **everyone should build their own house / their own shelter.** Doesn’t say why.
- **Write down your idea.** You’ll often realise that you don’t understand it as well as you thought.
- How to come up with contrarian ideas that are likely to be true?
- **Make a list of what everyone thinks is true / will be true. And ask, “What if that weren’t true?”**
- **Can you go travel when you’re young and have no money and make it work?**
- **“Productive is for your middle ages. When you’re young... you want to measure [actions] in terms of extreme performance... extreme satisfaction.”**
- **Work on the ideas that you can’t give away to others and you can’t kill.**
 - Those are the ones you’re uniquely suited for.
- **For him, success is making your own spot** vs. copying roles from others’ movies. Ex: “I want to be the next Elon Musk.”
- **Can you learn to get by on a backpack, a sleeping bag, and some oatmeal?**

Seneca: “a man’s peace of mind does not depend upon Fortune; for, even when angry, she grants enough for our needs.”

- Context: He says to practice living in poverty for 3-4 days at a time.
 - Tim Ferris says you can do this for 3-14 days. By **sleeping in a sleeping bag, wearing cheap shirts and a single pair of jeans, living with strangers via couchsurfing.com, eating only instant oatmeal or rice and beans, drinking only water, cooking only with a Kelly Kettle, fasting, using the Internet only at library.**
 - Tim Ferris: **“Suffer a little regularly and you will often cease to suffer.”**

Whitney Cummings: Comedian

- “If something offends you, look inwards... that’s a sign there’s something there.”

- Before a standup comedy routine: "My work isn't done tonight. My work was done 3 months ago and I just have to show up."
- I skipped past her random book recommendations without an explanation, though I didn't do that for some famous people prior - #bias, #thinkingWithPrestige
- **She says to say "I love you" in your head before you meet anyone.** She says it makes the conversation go a lot better.
- **Bad decisions make good stories - folk saying.**
 - Any bad decision you have is an asset - you have a story to tell later.
- Her unique beliefs
 - **The material is 10% of it, getting comfortable on stage is the other 90%.**
 - To find new standup material, ask yourself what irritates you.
 - How she defines love: "being willing to die for someone who you yourself want to kill."
 - Equine therapy - you have to get a horse to go from one side of a corral to another without reins. You can't use any of the standard forms of communication you usually use.
- Under-rated standup comedians
 - Sebastian Maniscalco
 - Jerrod Carmichael
 - Natasha Leggero
 - Tig Notaro
 - Chris D'Elia
 - Neil Brennan

Bryan Callen: Comic

- **"Happiness is wanting what you have."**
- Unique Beliefs
 - Humour starts with hard questions:
 - **What I'm afraid of,**
 - **what I'm ashamed of,**
 - **who I'm pretending to be,**
 - **who I really am,**
 - **where I am versus where I thought I'd be.**
 - **"The difference between the people you admire and everybody else [is that the former are] the people who read."**
 - **"if you are searching for status, and if you are doing things because there's an audience for it" you're doing the wrong thing.**
 - "I think you do things because they are just things you have to do, or because it's a calling, or because you're idealistic enough to think that you can make a difference in the world."
 - *I don't understand the last two.*
 - **"I think you should try to slay dragons. I don't care how big the opponent is.** We read about and admire the people who did things that were basically considered to be impossible. That's what makes the world a better place to live."

- Recommends Nietzsche (intellectual stimulation), Fountainhead + Atlas Shrugged (bold role model characters for the young), Power of Myth + Hero with a Thousand Faces (teaches compassion + gratitude), 4 Hour Body + Art of Learning (read more than any other books)
- **“There is great security in insecurity” - Joseph Campbell**
 - *Why is that?*

Alain de Botton: Practical philosopher

- Unique Beliefs
 - **When people seem like they’re mean, it’s because they’re anxious.**
 - *Why is this?*
 - **Ask a checklist of questions to figure out why someone is behaving badly: ‘Have they eaten? Have they slept? Are they stressed? Did someone have conflict with them? ...’**
 - **“The more you know what you really want, and where you’re really going, the more what everybody else is doing starts to diminish”**
 - *How to do this?*
 - **Don’t expect others to understand you.** Often, you don’t understand yourself.
- Recommended Philosophers for practical living: Epicurus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Plato, Michel de Montaigne, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Bertrand Russell. Recommends these books, but doesn’t say why: The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera, Essays of Michel de Montaigne.
 - And up documentary series about people growing up.

Tim Kreider

- **People who choose to add more to their schedule say they’re busy. People who have no choice but to add more say they’re tired.**
 - Ex: Businessperson who started yoga vs. person working three min wage jobs.
- Even kids are busy these days. Didn’t use to be like that.
- Tim Ferris: **“Yes, I know we’re all very busy, but what, exactly, is getting done?”**
- **Don’t be busy. Fight to make sure you get to not busy.**
- **What if you just didn’t have Internet?**
 - Tim Ferris drives to the library to check the Internet?
- **You can always earn more money. But you can’t earn more time.**

Cal Fussman - journalist

- Tim Ferris recommends listening to his [podcasts](#) with Cal. Cal’s good at telling stories
- He always found grandmas to sit next to on buses/trains and asked them: **“How do you make the perfect Goulash?”** Didn’t have any money to stay at hotels, so needed them to invite him over to dinner :D
- Interview tip: **“Aim for the heart, not the head.”** Not sure what he means. But the example he gives seems to say

- **'ask personal, vulnerable questions'**
 - - ex: instead of asking Gorbachev about nukes, he asked: "What's the best lesson your father taught you?"
 - **"What are some of the choices you've made that made you who you are?"**
 - **"Don't panic. Let the silence do the work [after you've asked the question]"**
 - **"We all know the feeling of wanting to do something so well and so badly that we try too hard and can't do it at all."** - hook from a piece he wrote via memory after he lost a box of research. **The best stuff, you already remember.**
 - Recommends 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' to learn how to write a great book. And if he could give books to every graduate, he'd give 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' by Dale Carnegie
 - What would he put on a billboard? "LISTEN"

Skipping a short story from a chef whose restaurant burned down. Key idea = it pays off to completely start afresh.

Rick Rubin - music producer

- Highly recommends back and forth ice baths and sauna sessions. And sun exposure in the morning, naked if possible.
- "The best art divides the audience" (because it pushes the boundary of what most people would like).
- His unique beliefs
 - **Be less hard on yourself. It won't lower your performance after you've achieved X amount of success.**
 - I don't believe this personally since I can't define X.
 - Also, HOW to be less hard on yourself?
 - **Learn from the best, not your competition.** Ex - don't make music by doing better than what's on the radio. Do it by listening to the top 100 songs of all time and remixing those.
- Also repeats advice from earlier about making small goals. Ex - just write one word of a song.

Tim Ferris likes repeat playing music AND movies on mute while working to stay focused...?
Seems like the opposite of focused to me :D

Jack Dorsey: Entrepreneur

- Skipping most recommended books without explanation.
- Unique Beliefs
 - What to put on giant billboard? "Breathe"
 - Quote to live by: "I know nothing"
 - Worst advice in entrepreneurship: "Fail fast"
 - **"We're born with everything we'll ever need."**
 - Is this true? He doesn't give any other context.
 - Walks for 1.25 hours to work every day

Paulo Coelho: Writer

- Skipping vague philosophical quotes w/o context. And tips for people writing a novel.
- Unique beliefs
 - After he procrastinates for 3-4 hours, he gets motivated to work nonstop for 10 hours. Then he can't sleep at night because he has too many ideas in his head and **has a notepad by the bedside so he can write down ideas to get them out of his head.**

Cheryl Strayed: Writer

- Recommends these **writing prompts to get rid of creative blocks**
 - Write about a time when you realized you were mistaken.
 - Write about a lesson you learned the hard way.
 - Write about a time you were inappropriately dressed for the occasion.
 - Write about something you lost that you'll never get back.
 - Write about a time when you knew you'd done the right thing.
 - Write about something you don't remember.
 - Write about your darkest teacher.
 - Write about a memory of a physical injury.
 - Write about when you knew it was over.
 - Write about being loved.
 - Write about what you were really thinking.
 - Write about how you found your way back.
 - Write about the kindness of strangers.
 - Write about why you could not do it.
 - Write about why you did.

Ed Cooke: Memory Expert

- You don't need in-person advice. **Just ask yourself: "What would _____ say?"**
 - *A problem I'm currently having is that I feel empty most of the time.*
 - *What would the Dalai Lama say? "Serve others and you will be happy."*
 - *What would Kevin Hart say? "Hey man, at least you don't have a racoon coming up to your house in the middle of the night, standing up, grabbing his ****, pointing at you, going 'bang bang', and running off."*
 - *What would John F. Kennedy say? "Never have we ever known so much \ yet understood so little. \ How can a great man be forged \ but with a great forge to face?"*
- **Visualisation to detach yourself from pain: think of the Earth from the stars' perspective. Then imagine zooming in to yourself thinking, "Oh, this tiny little character is temporarily worried about X."**
- Recommends Goethe's 'Maxims and Reflections' - has lots of wise aphorisms. And 'Touching The Rock' by John Hull - about a person who could formerly see appreciating blindness. Skipping other recommendations without explanation.

Amanda Palmer: Musician

- She used to be a living statue as a job. She'd stand still on a box. People would give money. She would give them a flower and look at them in return. She saw it as a two-way exchange (she gets money and they get someone to acknowledge them). She got comfortable asking for stuff. Later, she stopped selling music and just asked people to donate, let her couchsurf, bring her food, etc. And she's been a lot more successful ever since.
- **How to handle conflict? "Say less"**
- Recommends 'Dropping Ashes on the Buddha' for people who are lost, depressed, or directionless.

Eric Weinstein

- Unique Beliefs
 - "General fame is overrated. You want to be famous to 2,000 to 3,000 people you handpick." - doesn't say why specifically, but says general fame has more liabilities than benefits.
 - **To take on incumbents - "What is it that they can't afford to say or think?"**
 - He thinks that people don't come to consensus unless something is absolutely clear ($2 + 2 = 4$) or they are being threatened to agree. He says you should be wary of consensus as a result.
 - Recommends you **do creative work at 3 AM**. No one else can disturb you. And you **say a mantra of prewritten curse words for 10 seconds before you start working**. Gives you aggressive energy.
 - "Even though I wanted to do science rather than technology, **it's better to be in an expanding world and not quite in exactly the right field, than to be in a contracting world** where peoples' worst behavior comes out."
 - Is this true? How do I know?
 - "What I would really like is **for those of you who have been told that you're learning disabled**, or you're not good at math, or that you're terrible at music, or something like that, to **seek out unconventional ways of proving that wrong**. Believe not only in yourselves, but that there are [ways, tools, methods] powerful enough to make things that look very difficult much easier than you ever imagined."
- Recommends 'The Emperor of Scent' and 'Heraclitean Fire' - two books about contrarian scientists to learn about what it's like to go against the norm.
- Has interesting examples of the first person to try X idea and being so good, it becomes the norm.
 - Ex: Robert Plath added wheels to luggage for the first time. Ex: Hiroji Satoh added foam to ping pong paddles to mask the sound of the ball. Ex: Dick Fosbury did higher high jump than anyone by going backwards.

Seth Rogen & Evan Goldberg

- Recommend 'The Art of Dramatic Writing' by Lajos Egri to add more emotion to writing.

- Say you need to **have blind faith in yourself no matter what**. Ex: they got rejected for 10 years on a big movie idea.

Dealing with Haters

- **“It doesn’t matter how many people don’t get it. What matters is how many people do.”** Is this true? How do I know?
- **“10% of people will find a way to take anything personally. Expect it** and treat it as math.” Is this true? How do I know?
 - And expect that 1% of the population is completely crazy.
- Tim Ferris: Ignore 90% of criticisms from the public, promote 8% of criticism (to show you’re open-minded).
- **“You can’t reason someone out of something they didn’t reason themselves into.”**
- **“Trying to get everyone to like you is a sign of mediocrity.**
- You’ll avoid the tough decisions, and you’ll avoid confronting the people who need to be confronted.”—Colin Powell
- **Deliberately seek out ridicule about tiny things.** Ex: Wearing a tie incorrectly. It’ll teach you to not be bothered by things that don’t matter.

Margaret Cho: Actress, Comedian, Mathematician, etc.

- She deals with hecklers by asking them to elaborate. :D Just asks them more open-ended questions.

Andrew Zimmern: Famous chef

- **‘Episode one is how you’re going to have to be...’** - so set a good, sustainable first impression.
 - **“it is so much less work just to be yourself.”**
 - *But I’ve grown a lot in life from adjusting my beliefs and habits over time.*
- Most basic spices for most recipes - chilis, onions, lemon.
- **When you’re looking for recipes from others, choose the one with the most details.** Shows you they’ve done the work.
 - *Not just in the context of cooking
- Best investments he made were becoming sober and selling off his restaurant shares so he could be a 40-year-old intern in media companies that taught him how to enter TV biz. (‘rebooting his career’)

Rainn Wilson: Actor

- **“Cynicism is a disease that robs people of the gift of life.”**
 - *How do I become less cynical? *Edit: [notes](#) I later took*
- He says to ‘dream bigger’ with a story about how hard acting is. Bit vague on *how* to.
- **“I’m in my head a lot, and it kind of sucks... So there are certain tools that I have to use to get by. I’ve learned in my life that there are certain things I have to do to just be out of my head and get to normal.”**
 - For him, what works is meditation, exercise, nature, tennis, and acting.

- On being yourself - his first Broadway show, he was really bad and awkward. But then he decided, **"This is just who I am... awkward. So I'm going to be like that!" And then he got roles being weird, awkward characters :D**

Naval Ravikant:

- His background was as a poor immigrant wishing he could have the experiences others around him have.
- Unique beliefs
 - "If you want to be successful, surround yourself with people who are more successful than you are, but if you want to be happy, surround yourself with people who are less successful than you are."
 - *Why is it binary?*
 - **"The most important trick to be happy is to realize that happiness is a choice that you make and a skill that you develop."**
 - It sounds like **he values honesty/seeking truth above all else**. Has interesting stories about why.
 - **He told everyone at his work that he would start a company until the peer pressure got to him and forced him to.**
 - **"Tell your friends that you're a happy person. Then you'll be forced to conform to it."**
 - **"Desire is a contract you make with yourself to be unhappy until you get what you want."**
 - - so choose what you want carefully.
- "The first rule of handling conflict is
- **don't hang around people who are constantly engaging in conflict."**
 - Because it's not sustainable to have conflict all the time.
- "You always have three options. **You can change it, you can accept it, or you can leave it.** What is not a good option is to sit around wishing you would change it but not changing it, wishing you would leave it but not leaving it, and not accepting it."
- He has several quotes he lives by. I'm just writing some that stand out to me:
 - "Be present above all else"
 - **"Anger is a hot coal you hold in your hand while waiting to throw it at someone else."**- Buddhist proverb
 - **"Praise specifically, criticise generally."** - Warren Buffet
 - **"Always ask, 'Why am I having this thought?' "**
 - **"All greatness comes from suffering."**
 - "Love is given, not received."
 - "Every moment has to be complete within itself."
 - **What you work on > who you work with > how hard you work.**
 - "We waste our time with short-term thinking and busy work. Warren Buffet spends a year deciding and a day acting. The act lasts decades."
 - "There is **no excuse for spending most of your life in misery. You've only got 70 years out of the 50 billion** or however long the universe is going to be around."

- "Nothing that we do lasts. Eventually you will fade, your works will fade, your children will fade, your thoughts will fade, this planet will fade, the sun will fade."

Glenn Beck: Self-help coach + radio/podcast host

- Unique Beliefs:
 - "I had grown up in a world where everything was manufactured, everything was written, timed, produced perfectly. What I realized that day was
 - **people are starving for something authentic."**
 - He randomly told a caller his life story and all his mistakes on the radio and it skyrocketed his career.
 - **"Be willing to fail or succeed on who you really are.** Don't ever try to be anything else." - why is this good? What if you change who you are while growing?
 - **Tell others they're good enough and that they belong.**
 - Everyone struggles with insecurity. Ex: A Yale professor said to Glenn: 'You listen to me for a second, would you? **You realize you belong here, right? You're okay to be here.'**
- Quotes important to him:
 - "The righteous didn't suddenly become righteous. **They just refused to go over the cliff with everybody else.**" - an Auschwitz survivor who was sent there at age 16 for giving a Jewish person a bowl of soup.
 - "Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear."—Thomas Jefferson. Why is this true?

Tara Brach: Psychologist + meditation teacher

- A really good question: **"What am I unwilling to feel?"**
- Maria Popova and Tim Ferris were both impacted by **Tara's book 'Radical Acceptance'** as one of the great reads of their lives.
 - One lesson from the book: Instead of trying to swat away an emotion, **you say: "[Emotion], I see you." to accept it.**
 - **"The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.** Be grateful for whoever comes, because **each has been sent as a guide** from beyond." —Rumi
 - "[Through spiritual practice], we are learning to make friends with ourselves, our life, at the most profound level possible." - Pema Chödrön

Sam Kass: Chef, history major, baseball player

- Cooking tip: "Never serve anything you wouldn't want to eat." - *why is this good?*
 - Also, just add more acid :D (another extra lemon).

- **When things get busy, don't work faster. Step back and plan how to work more efficiently.**
 - Ex: When you get a bunch of orders as a cook, don't rush through each one. Group them and cook the same dishes all at once.
- "A lot of people [say], 'Find your passion.' I think **passion comes from a combination of being open and curious**, and of really **going all-in when you find something that you're interested in.**" - when he started cooking, he wasn't *passionate* about it. But he got passionate when he later combined it with niches (sustainability, health, policy, etc.)

Edward Norton: Actor, investor, environmental activist

- A boss gave him a great tip when he was young: 'Hey! **You want to be taken seriously? Then take things seriously. Do the work, you know? Don't coast, you know?**'
- Skipping movie recommendations without explanation

Richard Betts: Chef

- Initially, I was going to skip this profile when I saw he was 'just a wine expert'.
- He tattooed 'be nice' on himself because he thought the reminder was that important.
- He skipped culinary school. A chef told him: "**You can ask me for a job now and I'll say: 'Great, start peeling potatoes.' Or you can ask me for a job after culinary school and I'll say: 'Great, start peeling potatoes.'**"
 - *Is this always true?*
- He got to learn from a highly-sought after master chef because **he was willing to move to see the chef but others weren't.**
- "**If you work for the awards, you don't do good work.** But if you do good work, the awards will come." - advice of a boss of his.
 - *Why is this true?*
- His advice to his 25-year-old-self
 - "Don't be so fucking shy."
 - "**You've got to love yourself before you can love others.** Without it, nothing productive is going to happen"
 - *Why is this true?*
 - Regrets that he has: "I wish you had been more forward. **I wish you had asked for X instead of being so subtle and implying it.**"

Mike Birbiglia: Standup Comic, Actor

- I don't understand this: "Only emotion endures." - Ezra Pound on writing.
- He likes pitching people jokes over the phone. In person, others are too forced to laugh out of politeness.
- "I try to write before my inhibitions take hold of me." - he **writes material at 7 AM before his brain has a chance to overthink or writes as if no one was reading in a private journal** (then publishes it anyways :D).
- When he's procrastinating, he writes a note for himself to read in the morning: "Mike!!! You have a meeting with your brain at 7 AM doing ____."

- He'd put up a billboard in Times Square saying: "None of these companies care about you."
- Skipping recommendations for people with sleep disorders, vague places to get notes?
- **Ask people questions they're not expecting.** Then, they stop and think and actually notice you. Ex: He talked to Obama and asked for parenting advice.
- "It's not about being good, it's about being great. **A lot of people are good**, and a lot of people are smart, and a lot of people are clever. But **not a lot of people give you their soul when they perform.**"

The Jar of Awesome:

- **Every time something exciting happens, write it down and put it in a jar.**
 - Goal is to be factual, but selective [in the evidence] :D
- If you can't find anything to put in, put in, "I didn't die today!!!"

Malcolm Gladwell: Author kind of like Yuval Noah Harari.

- Search up 'in medias res' for tips on how to write something without starting at the beginning. Ex: A book chapter, a report.
- **Keep asking till you understand. 'I don't understand. Explain that to me.' / 'I don't understand how that works' / 'I don't understand, sir. What is going on?'**
- Applauds Niall Ferguson's public speaking skills in a birthday toast?
- Has a lot of strong opinions on college on his podcast, 'Revisionist History'

Stephen Dubner: Freakonomics Radio Host

- Recommends 'Levels of the Game' - a book about a single tennis match that 'may be the high point of American sports journalism.'
 - Not skipping a children's book recommendation without justification because I like Children's books :D Recommends The Empty Pot by Demi
 - Summary: The emperor of China gives everyone boiled seeds to grow flowers with. But boiled seeds don't grow. Everyone else shows up with big beautiful flowers to impress the emperor anyways. One boy shows up honestly with an empty pot. So the emperor makes the boy his heir.
- Quote he lives by:
- **'Enough is as good as a feast.'**
- Worst advice he hears: 'Write what you know' - "Why would I want to write about what little I know? Don't I want to use writing to learn more?"
- **Advice to his younger self: "Don't be scared.** There are a lot of things I did not do, a lot of experiences I never tried, a lot of people I never met or hung out with because I was, in some form, intimidated or scared."
- **Spotlight effect: assuming everybody cares about you. But in reality, no one cares what you do.**

Josh Waitzkin: Chess Prodigy, martial arts expert.

- He has lots of beliefs he doesn't explain, which is why I don't highlight them (literally).

- He has no social media, never did an interview except with Tim Ferris, and almost always avoids calls/meetings.
- **When learning, he focuses on the end and works backwards. And focuses on the micro details and works to the macro. And lateral/out-of-the-box solutions.**
 - Ex: He'll start learning what to do in chess at the 'endgame' (you only have a king and pawn against another king).
 - And in that simple environment, he'll try to learn bigger principles. Ex: with just the pawn and king, he'll analyse how to get in positions where any move the other person makes leaves them worse off.
- **He openly shares his tips in detail because he believes that if others play his game, they'll be worse at it than him.** And Tim Ferris adds that even the people who end up being better are probably not going to be in direct competition with you in real life (not just very constrained environments like chess). And maybe they'll even help you :-)
- **He believes the last things you do in a day should be high quality so that you internalise that for the next day.** I don't know if that's how the brain works, but I suppose there's no harm in doing more high quality work :D
- **He believes you should put peak performance and min performance right next to each other.** Ex: Take a nap before the championship fight. Meditate after you work out. Says the recovery allows you to output more right after.
- "I believe that **when you're not cultivating quality, you're essentially cultivating sloppiness.**" (because there are far more tiny things you choose to do well/not well than there are big things)
- **He believes great thinkers need some eccentric/different trait in their thoughts.**
- **The fastest growing people pick the hardest challenges even when practicing.** Context: In martial arts, people do sparring practices. Some people pick hard opponents to spar with even when they're on their fifth round and tired.
- **He believes our language is important in training gratitude for bad times instead of whining.** Ex: With his son, he won't say: "It's bad weather. We can't go out." or "It's good weather. Let's go out." He instead goes out to play with his son regardless of weather. And his son now says: "It's such a beautiful rainy day."

Deloading:

- In exercise, deloading = **go easier for a week. To prepare for a harder next week.**
- Tim Ferris does this beyond exercise. Ex: Recording podcasts, emailing, writing blogs, accounting intensely for a period then going easier.
- He says **his biggest, most innovative ideas come when he has the break time to think.** He builds in this time by **journaling for an hour every morning, doing creative work every Wednesday, going without laptop and most apps on Saturday.**
 - And a few times per year, he does a 'mini-retirement'
 - He says you have to defend these times *more* strongly than work commitments. They can improve your work, but not vice versa.
- **"Create slack, as no one will give it to you"**

Brené Brown: Psychologist + Author who studies vulnerability

- Vague and inspirational :D
 - She says being afraid and brave can coexist.
 - “Lean into discomfort, because these seemingly impossible problems... are not going to be solved in a comfortable way.”
 - “[The one] who is willing to be the most uncomfortable is not only the bravest, but rises the fastest.”
 - “There is no effort without error and shortcoming.” - Theodore Roosevelt (a quote that helped her put her work/ideas out in public).
 - **“When I had the opportunity, did I choose courage over comfort?”**
 - Tim Ferris recommends asking yourself this in every end of day reflection
- **If you’re not feeling uncomfortable, you weren’t vulnerable enough.**
- **You need to be vulnerable [first] to build trust.**
- Whenever she’s public speaking, she requires audience lights to be on. She won’t speak unless she can see the audience’s face b/c it becomes about performance > connection.
- Her advice to her younger self: “It’s okay to be scared.”

Jason Silva: TV host

- He made a great investment in getting two videos professionally edited. Got a lot of views on Vimeo and he was then invited to make a video on TED. And then National Geographic saw his work and invited him to host a TV show.
- Over time, ‘flow state’ has become a more important goal for him in his work.
- Unique beliefs
 - He believes being jaded/cynical is like being dead because nothing impresses you anymore.
- Recommends Youtube channel Nerdwriter (like short version of Hardcore History)
- His advice to his younger self is to not be afraid (turned out that a lot of his fears were wasted energy).

Jon Favreau: Actor/Director

- A quote he likes that I don’t understand: “Don’t go for funny. Go for the truth, and you’ll hit funny along the way.”
- **‘Always tell the truth. It’s the easiest thing to remember.’** - Glengarry Glen Ross
- He **recommends cooking with people as a bonding experience.**
- For writers, recommends The Writer’s Journey and The Power of Myth to understand story structure.

17 reflection questions that changed Tim Ferris’ life:

- Some of these are already listed above, so I didn’t repeat them.
- **“What if I did the opposite for 48 hours?”**
 - His first sales job, everyone cold called/emailed 9 AM - 5 PM. So, he instead called early mornings / late evenings so only the bosses would pick up.
 - Everyone ended cold emails with: ‘I look forward to your reply’. He instead wrote: “I totally understand if you’re too busy to reply, and thank you for reading this far”
 - Everyone pitched. He only asked questions.

- **“What do I spend a silly amount of money on? Can I make that for myself?”**
 - He spent 15% of his yearly income on sports supplements :O So he started his first company, a supplements store.
- **“What would I do/have/be if I had \$10M?”**
 - Saw this question above from Peter Diamandis - but in this case, Tim Ferris wants you to reflect on what you want for yourself.
- **“What’s your target monthly income?”** (how much you’d need to earn per month to have all the things you want).
 - Tim Ferris says it’s lower than you think.
- **“If I could only work 2 hours/week, what would I do?”**
- **“What if I let others make decisions up to ___ cost?”**
 - Ex: For his business, he authorised all random customer service requests. Took 40-60 hours per week. So, he told his employees to ‘make a decision themselves if it involved less than \$100. And note what they did to review at the end of the week’. Over time, the threshold became \$500, then \$1K. And reviews went from weekly to monthly to quarterly to never. And he then spent <2 hours.
 - **“To get huge, good things done, you need to be okay with letting the small, bad things happen.”**
 - **“People’s IQs seem to double as soon as you give them responsibility and indicate that you trust them.”**
- **“What’s the least crowded channel?”**
 - He asked authors where to avoid marketing and where to double down on to promote their books. They told him to connect with bloggers. But he knew bloggers would have tons of emails / calls. So instead, he went to the CES conference and got drunk with bloggers at a lounge :D
- **“What if I couldn’t pitch my product directly?”**
 - Instead of pitching his book, he wrote blog posts about people in his book that had transformed their lives.
- **“Do I need to make it back the way I lost it?”**
 - When he bought a house at a bad price, he was focused on making up the money he lost by renting the house. But renting brought tons of headaches. So, he sold the house at a \$150K loss, but quickly made back the money elsewhere.
- **“What if I could only subtract/simplify to solve problems?”**
 - Ex: A company he invested in boosted conversions on their website by 20% by removing 70% of clickable parts on their website and keeping only essential ones
- **“What should I put on my not to do list?”**
- **“What can I put in place to let me go off grid with no phone or email for 4-8 weeks?”**
- **“Are you hunting antelope or field mice?”** - Newt Gingrich
 - Newt Gingrich always focused on winning seats in the House of Representatives for the Republican party. Everything else was noise to let slide. He compares it to lions hunting antelopes vs. field mice. The **calories they get from field mice aren’t enough to survive, even if it feels good to win an easy hunt.**

- **“What would this look like if it were easy?”**
 - - to simplify things
- “How can I throw money at this problem? How can I ‘waste’ money to improve the quality of my life?” - for successful people with less time than money.

“Slow is smooth. Smooth is fast.” - Navy SEAL principle

Jamie Foxx

- “You better start having some fun. **We’re gonna be gone in a minute and you’re gonna look back and say, ‘Shit, I should have been laughing, and now I’m dead.’** “
 - Why is this true?
- Skipped workout tips
- **When you’re afraid, ask yourself what the consequences are if you just do it anyways.**
- Skipped lots of life stories. Couldn’t figure out what to take away from them.

Bryan Johnson:

- **"What can you do that will be remembered in 200 to 400 years?"**
- How he did sales: "If you give me 3 minutes of your time, I will give you \$100 if you don't say 'yes' to using my service." And in his pitch, he just explained: 'Here are the industry providers, here's what they do, here's what we do, **we do the same thing, but we have great transparency, honesty, and customer service.**' Became company's #1 sales rep.
- He gave kids freedom to go on ATVs for 5 mins to do whatever and then come back and explain which risks they took and how they stayed safe.
- **"Life is not waiting for the storm to pass, it's learning how to dance in the rain."**
- - adapted from Vivian Greene
- Habits limit ourselves to what was possible before. Ex: A tiger named Mohini was rescued from a very small cage after 5-10 years. But when they released her, she went to a corner and paced about in an area just like her former cage for the rest of her life.
 - Tara Brach: "Perhaps, the greatest tragedy in our lives is that freedom is possible, yet we can pass our years in the same old patterns."
- **"What past limitations - real or perceived - are you still carrying on as baggage?" - Tim Ferris**

Brian Koppelman: Film Director

- Tim Ferris recommends Brian Koppelman's *The Moment Podcast* (Episode with John Hamburg) for learning how to do screenwriting.
- Recommends *The Morning Pages* by Julia Cameron in *The Artist's Way*. You sit down and write 3 pages and the pen has to keep moving no matter what. Said it's brought a lot of creativity to his life.
- Skipped recommendations without justification.

Tips for avoiding suicide:

- Dial a suicide prevention hotline
- Remember: "This too shall pass"
- **Killing yourself will spiritually kill people around you. That part is guaranteed.**
- Maybe all the religious people are right and you won't be any better afterwards
- Promise to someone you'd never break a promise to you that you won't commit suicide
 - If you don't care about yourself, make it about other people.
- He recommends all the health tips / meditation tips / journaling tips he had earlier.
- **If you can't make yourself happy, do something to make others happy.**

Robert Rodriguez: Film director

- **Ask what assets you have and just make a ____ out of that.** Ex: He made his first film for \$7K by thinking, "My friend owns a ranch. That'll be where I do scene 1. My cousin owns a bar. That'll be scene 2. My brother has a turtle. We'll put the turtle in the movie...". The camera had awful sound, so he had to record sound separately and edit it in :D
- He wasn't expecting the \$7K film to go anywhere. He even recorded it in Spanish because he thought no one would see it and he was just learning. **If he thought the film could win awards (it did), he'd have spent lots more \$ than for a learning project.**
- **"There's a freedom [in] limitations."**
- **"How can I turn it into a positive and get something much better than if I had all the time and money in the world?"**
- Later on, when he had more money, he still just **kept imperfections** in his films. Ex: One time, they set too much stuff on fire for a scene and other scene sets ended up burnt and charred. But he just kept using the others and said it was more realistic.
- **"If everyone's trying to get through that one little door, you're in the wrong place."**
 - He recommends you **chase bigger goals with less competition.** Ex: He didn't like showing his films at film festivals. Tens of thousands of competitors to beat. And he didn't like getting a slot in a TV network. Hundreds of competitors to beat. So he just bought some old TV network to show his films amidst dozens of competitors.
- **He believes you can turn any failure into the leadup to success if you 'look at the ashes long enough to find a lesson'** - ex: he did this random improv film where 4 directors are involved and they put in random prompts like it has to be New Years. And the film flopped. But the actors he hired reminded him of spies. That's how he got the idea to make the whole Spy Kids franchise.
- **Make ____ early and send it to the competitors. They won't get your version out of their head** and will try to copy it with limited success. At least, that's what happens to him. He always makes his own movie posters and trailers and the distributors he works with try to do that too. But they can never get theirs as nice as his early version.
- **He makes notes of every day at midnight and stores them by date and then goes back over them with his family.** He says it really helps him appreciate small details (ex: camping with his kids).

- **He believes in training creativity > all else and then trust + bias towards action end up finishing his projects for him.**
 - Ex: He trains creativity in all sorts of arts. Not just improv film making challenges (see above), but invites art/music teachers to teach actors between shoots.
 - He's interviewed successful painters and musicians. After any amazing painting/performance, he asks them 'How did you know what to do?' And they say: "I don't know what I just did. I was making it up along the way." And Robert Rodriguez says that you're more creative that way, so **you should see it as good when you're just putting parts together with no end product in mind**
 - **Even if you don't know what to do, just start.**
 - "You don't have to know. You just have to keep moving forward."
 - Similar to above, there's benefit to not filtering creative ideas either. The creator of Back to the Future wanted to cut out some of the most famous scenes and thought Forrest Gump was the worst movie he ever made. Good thing he didn't cut those scenes / movies :O
- Recommends 'Start With Why' by Simon Sinek so you can learn to frame your solution as what others want, not what you want.
- His son failed a driving test and was upset. He said: **"You never have to be upset about anything. Everything is for a purpose."** And said that it was better that his son fail a driving test with a teacher than in front of a cop after he hurt someone on the road.

Sekou Andrews: Poet

"You must be willing to be a butterfly so badly, you're willing to give up being a caterpillar."

List of good short questions

- **What are quotes you live by?**
- **What would you put on a billboard?**
- **What do you believe that others think is crazy?**
- **What have you changed your mind on recently?**
- What are your favourite documentaries?
- What are some books you've recommended to many people?
- What are your morning rituals?
- **What purchases of <\$100 have most impacted your life over the last 6 months?**
- What are your obsessions on the weekends?
- What would you speak about on a TED talk outside your main expertise?
- **What's the most worthwhile investment you've made? It could be an investment of time, money, anything.**
- What's the worst advice you see being given in your world?
- **How has an apparent failure set you up for later success?**
- What's something weird that happens to you on a regular basis?

He has a list of the most recommended books at the end.