



THINK BETTER THOUGHTS

100 NEGATIVE ASSUMPTIONS
THAT HINDER YOUR POTENTIAL
(AND HOW TO ELIMINATE THEM)

THIBAUT MEURISSE

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INTRODUCTION

“ If you will not imagine yourself as other than what you are, then you remain as you are.

— NEVILLE GODDARD, *THE POWER OF AWARENESS*.

In many cases, the thing that prevents you from getting what you want in life is the story you tell yourself. The problem is that, if you're like most people, you are probably unaware of what that story is. You may notice you aren't achieving the results you desire. You may even have a vague idea of why, but you probably haven't identified all the disempowering thoughts that make up your story.

In this book, we'll explore one hundred disempowering thoughts that may prevent you from designing the life you desire. We'll discuss exactly what these thoughts are, how they stand between you and your goals, and what you can do to overcome them.

I've divided these disempowering thoughts into several main categories I call "Meta-assumptions". These are deeply ingrained beliefs that underpin many of the disempowering thoughts you may fall prey to. These meta-assumptions are:

#1—I am not enough. This is the idea that you are inadequate in some way.

#2—I don't have enough. This is the belief that you lack resources, time, money, et cetera, and that there isn't enough for everybody.

#3—I'm powerless. This is the belief that who you are and what you do don't matter.

#4—I'm a slave to my emotions. This is when you over-identify with your emotions and let them define you.

#5—I'm better than others. This is when you see yourself as superior to other people.

#6—Others are better than me. This is when you perceive yourself as inferior to other people.

#7—I'm self-aware. This is the belief you know yourself well when, in fact, you ignore many things about yourself.

#8—Success is outside of my control. This is the idea that success is somewhat inaccessible for you because you lack resources, talent, money, et cetera.

All these meta-assumptions influence you in more ways than you imagine. This is why it's important for you to acknowledge them and replace them with more empowering assumptions.

UNDERSTANDING ASSUMPTIONS

Before we discuss each assumption in detail, let's take a moment to define what assumptions are.

Assumptions are the beliefs we hold to be true about ourselves or about the world around us—whether they are true or not. In turn, what we believe dictates our actions and determines our results in various areas of life.

One of the main reasons we fail to design the life we desire is that we hold onto many disempowering assumptions that are either inaccurate or ineffective. The set of assumptions we hold onto constitutes our “model of reality”, that is, how we perceive the reality around us.

Do you understand now why being aware of our assumptions is so important?

As soon as we believe something is impossible, we exclude it from our model of reality, which prevents us from achieving it. However, in truth, many so-called impossible things aren't impossible at all. They may be impossible to us *right now* because we currently lack the proper skills, mindset, or strategies, but they may well be within our reach at some point in the future.

Our assumptions cover all areas of our lives, including relationships, money, time, politics, economics, the world as a whole, and of course, ourselves. For example, perhaps you believe that you're not smart enough, that money is evil, or that you can't learn the skills needed to attain your goals. Whatever the case may be, I can guarantee that, at this very moment, you hold onto many negative assumptions that are working against you.

As you read this book, I invite you to go through each assumption and ask yourself how it applies to your situation. The aim of this book is to help you replace your negative assumptions with more positive ones so that you can build a better life. Therefore, make sure you are honest with yourself.

Also, if you identify other negative assumptions that may hold you back, take note of them. Perhaps even jot them down in a journal. The more negative assumptions you challenge, the better.

Remember, often you aren't stuck because of the physical world around you, you're stuck because of the limited mental world which you inhabit. If you can build a better model of reality, the reality around you will improve beyond all expectation.

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META-ASSUMPTION #1—I'M NOT ENOUGH

A major assumption that dominates our thoughts is the assumption that we're "not enough". Many of us experience this assumption—some more often and more profoundly than others—yet we refuse to acknowledge its existence. Our desire to compare ourselves to our neighbors and to be loved leads us to feel inadequate once we realize we can't live up to the perfect image we've created of ourselves in our minds.

In truth, there will always be people who are smarter, wiser, richer or better looking than we are. But does it make us not "good enough"? Can the essence of who we are ever be not good enough? Or is it just that we live our lives while operating under the wrong assumptions?

In this section, we'll explore common assumptions you may hold that lead you to feel inadequate. By acknowledging them, you'll be able to better accept who you are. Does this mean you'll never feel as though you aren't good enough ever again?

Probably not.

But it can definitely help you feel better in your own skin. And that's good enough, isn't it?

Now, let's see what those assumptions are, shall we?

1. There is something wrong with me

Many people go through life with the unpleasant or even crippling feeling that something is wrong with them. They assume that they have issues nobody will ever understand, and this prevents them from being fully loved or accepted.

In reality, we all have "problems" we're unable to solve. We all have past "mistakes" which we cannot erase and behaviors we are ashamed of or feel guilty about. However, these past issues are what makes us human. We don't have to let our so-called problems prevent us from being happy and moving toward our dreams.

In truth, because we must live with ourselves 24/7, we lack perspective. As a result, we tend to make our problems a bigger deal than they are. If others could see what we worry about most of the time, they probably wouldn't understand why we were being so hard on ourselves. They would feel an instant need to comfort us and tell us that we're doing okay.

The point is, if you feel as though something is wrong with you, you're not alone. Having flaws doesn't mean there is something wrong with you. Perhaps the only thing wrong is that you *believe* something is wrong with you. Remember, feeling guilty, ashamed or inadequate will only make things worse by creating unnecessary suffering in your life. Instead, practice being more self-compassionate. This will allow you to accept yourself as you are. It will also allow you to solve problems that can be solved.

Nothing is fundamentally wrong with you. In fact, you're just being human.

Now, close your eyes for a moment and imagine that there is absolutely nothing wrong with you. You are complete right here, right now. How does this make you feel?

New empowering belief:
Nothing is wrong with me. I'm fine the way I am.

* * *

2. I'm the only one who feels this way

Have you ever felt alone, having nobody to talk to about your problems?

Each of us is unique, yet in our uniqueness we have more in common with others than we realize. Whatever issue(s) you have in your life right now, you are certainly not alone. There are probably thousands, if not millions, of people who are going through or have gone through the same thing as you. The pain you feel isn't unique to you. It is being felt or has been felt by countless people across the world.

You are not alone.

Therefore, take a moment to acknowledge that many people are in the same boat as you. One effective way to become more self-compassionate is to realize that suffering is human. We all suffer. You become self-compassionate when you acknowledge that you're sharing the burden of suffering with others.

You are not the only one who feels the way you feel. You don't have to carry all the weight of suffering on your shoulders. You can spread the load and carry it with many people across the world. As you do so, the burden will become a little lighter.

The way you feel now is okay. Accept the way you feel. Be compassionate toward yourself and you will soon feel better.

Try the following actions:

- Think of something painful in your life.
- Then imagine that there are thousands of people who share the same burden as you (or a similar one).
- Now, feel a sense of solidarity and a mutual compassion among all of you.

New empowering belief:

I am not alone. Many people have faced the same things that I have faced.

* * *

3. I'm a fraud

Have you ever felt like a fraud? Do you dread that one day, people will finally realize you are an imposter?

If so, don't worry. This is a common occurrence.

You're not the best one to judge your own work. And it's not your responsibility to decide whether you are a fraud or whether you are legitimate. Too often, we are our own worst enemy. Feeling inadequate, we refuse to pursue our dreams, we don't take a shot at our ideal job or we fail to ask for what we want. And on those occasions when we *do* take action to move toward our dreams, we cannot help but feel as though we don't deserve it, that we're faking it, that the dreams are not really meant for us.

However, who are you to judge what you do or do not deserve?

The truth is, it's not your responsibility to decide whether you are qualified for a job or worthy of a potential partner. It's your future employer or potential partner's responsibility to do so. Your only responsibility is to give it a shot. It is to do what you must do, and to do so *even if* you experience feelings of inadequacy.

By refusing to give it a shot, you:

- Rob the world of an opportunity to judge you (both negatively *and* positively),
- Prevent a potential romantic partner from saying yes, and you
- Steal an employer's opportunity to offer you your dream job.

And, more importantly, you prevent yourself from discovering who you really are and what you're truly capable of becoming.

You might well be a fraud, but the only way to ever know this for certain is to present yourself to the world. It might be uncomfortable, but the world is not asking you to feel comfortable, it's asking you to put yourself out there.

Now, complete the following exercise:

- Write down one specific example in your life where you feel like an imposter.
- Realize this feeling is a positive thing as it shows you really care and want to be good at what you do.
- Then, resolve to do what you must do, regardless of the way you feel. Give others an opportunity to judge you on your actual performance.

New empowering belief:
I do what I need to do and let others judge me.

* * *

4. I'm not the type of person who can do X

Have you ever said, "I could never do that" or "It's just not who I am"?

The belief that we aren't the type of person who could do X, Y or Z often prevents us from growing and achieving our dreams. Yes, there are things that will come easily to you, and there are other things that will be much harder to achieve. But it doesn't mean that you shouldn't challenge yourself. It doesn't mean you can't grow.

Simply said, there are two types of people. Those with a *fixed* mindset and those with a *growth* mindset.

People with a *fixed* mindset buy into the idea that their intelligence is fixed or immovable. As a result, instead of trying to learn new things and improve, they stagnate. Whenever they struggle to do something, they give up. After all, they just aren't smart enough, right? Conversely, individuals with a *growth* mindset adopt the belief that they can always learn, grow and improve. These individuals understand that with the right attitude and enough effort, they can acquire almost any skill they desire. It doesn't matter where they are today. What matters most is where they are heading.

Which of these types are you?

Yes, you may not be the type of person who can do X, Y or Z (yet), but you can become that person over time.

One of the most empowering beliefs you can ever adopt is the belief that if someone else has achieved the thing you wish to achieve, so can you. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether you feel that something is possible or impossible for you *right now*, you can still go on to achieve it later. For instance, you may currently believe that you could never learn a foreign language, appear on TV or deliver a speech in front of a large audience. If so, know that this is simply not true.

There is almost nothing that you cannot do with enough practice and with the proper attitude. The key question isn't whether you are the type of person who could do it, but what your *reason* for doing it is. When something is important to you, you can and will find a solution. Otherwise, you will find an excuse.

Now:

- Come up with two or three things you'd like to do but believe aren't for you.
- Then, visualize yourself doing these things. Bring a sense of inevitability and unwavering confidence to your mindset. Say to yourself, if others can do it, you can too.
- Repeat this process as often as needed.

New empowering belief:

If someone else can do it, I can most likely do it too.

* * *

5. Not everybody can do...

Do you agree with the following statements?

- Not everybody can be a millionaire.
- Not everybody can have a job they love.
- Not everybody can be happy.

Indeed, it's probably true that not everybody can become a millionaire, find a job they love or live a happy life. But the question I have for you is this, "Does this way of thinking benefit you or is it hurting you?"

The problem is that not everybody usually means "you" too. While apparently reasonable, such statements are a sign that you hold disempowering beliefs. Such disempowering beliefs will prevent you from achieving many of your goals. This is why I invite you to replace the phrase "not everybody can" with the phrase "many people could". And this includes you.

- Not everybody can be a millionaire —> **many people could** become a millionaire
- Not everybody can have a job they love —> **many people could have a job they love**
- Not everybody can be happy —> **many people could** be happy

Compassion vs. selfishness

During your journey toward fulfilling your potential, you'll have to answer the following question:

How can I allow myself to have what I want, when I know that not everybody can (or will)?

How can you allow yourself to become wealthy, design a fulfilling career and have (almost) everything you want in life? After all, not everybody can. Many people are in far worse situations than you are. Although this is a difficult issue, I like to reframe the situation as follows:

I'm not helping anybody by being broke, unhappy or unhealthy.

The point is, not everybody can have what they want in life, but *you* can. Thinking in such a way requires some mental gymnastics though. You must be able to see yourself as worthy enough to obtain the things you want. Meanwhile, you must accept that most people, though as worthy as you, will not obtain what they want. In a sense, you must feel somewhat superior to others while at the same time seeing yourself as no better than they are. It's a strange situation, but this is how you achieve things most people never will. Are you up for it?

New empowering belief:
I'm willing to achieve things most people are unwilling to.

* * *

6. I have nothing of value to offer to the world

Many people go through life believing that they have little to offer to the world. They think that what they do doesn't matter. Whereas it is true that you alone cannot change the world, does this mean that what you do doesn't matter?

As human beings, we produce causes and effects all day long. By the way we think, feel and act, we influence the world around us. We impact upon our family, friends, colleagues and anyone else we interact with. While it's impossible to truly grasp exactly how our behavior impacts upon our environment, it inevitably does.

Think about it this way. Have you ever changed the course of your actions upon receiving a word of encouragement from someone? Have you ever changed a decision after

talking to someone? If so, you understand that we affect each other all the time and in so many different ways.

When you believe you aren't worthy, you tend to act accordingly. As a result, you hide your talents, ignore your dreams, escape your responsibilities and fail to allow your personality to shine. By doing so, you're not only depriving yourself of a deeper feeling of aliveness and purpose, but you're also doing the world a disservice.

You have a lot to offer to the world. The person you are and what you do really matters. When you realize this, you will start to act from a completely different place, and you may impact more people than you could ever have imagined.

Remember, what you believe tends to become your reality. When you truly believe that you have a lot to offer the world, you will start to act accordingly.

You produce causes and effects all the time. So, make sure the effect you're having on your environment is the result of the belief that *you* matter. To do so:

- Stop letting yourself off the hook and decide that you *do* matter.
- Start acting accordingly. Take actions that create better, more powerful effects on the world around you.

New empowering belief:

I am worthy and have a great deal to offer to the world.

* * *

7. Something outside of me will make me happy

Many people spend most of their life looking for happiness outside of them. They try to make more money, buy bigger houses or acquire more material possessions. However, these people fail to understand that there is nothing outside of them that can ever bring them the deeper sense of fulfillment they're looking for.

There is nothing wrong with having a nice car, a warm house or a certain level of material comfort. The problem arises when we believe these things can make us happy. When we look for something external to fulfill us, the race never stops. There is always something else to acquire.

When you look for something external to bring you joy, you focus on the wrong things, giving external circumstances the power to dictate your happiness.

Truth is, a large part of your happiness will come from the way you think and feel, not from what you acquire or even what happens to you. According to Sonya Lyubomirsky, author of *The How of Happiness*, fifty percent of our happiness is determined by genetics, forty percent by internal factors and only ten percent by external factors. These external factors include such things as whether we're single or married, rich or poor and similar social influences. The only way to boost your happiness significantly is to improve the way you think and feel, which entails doing things such as:

- Changing your perspective on things that cause you suffering,
- Practicing gratitude daily,
- Identifying your core values and living by them, and
- Pursuing meaningful goals.

The point is that your interaction with the external world can give you feedback regarding who you are and what matters to you—but it's not there to fulfill you. Finding happiness is an inside job that requires you to upgrade the way you think and act authentically.

Try the following:

- For the next fourteen days, practice daily gratitude by writing in your journal three things you're grateful for.
- Identify or recommit to your top two to three core values.

New empowering belief:
Happiness comes from within.

* * *

8. I need to add something to who I already am

If you're reading this book, the chances are you want to improve some aspect of yourself. Perhaps you want to become more disciplined, make more money, find the right partner or feel happier. To do this, you tend to look for external resources to help you.

The issue is that you are probably trying to add something to who you already are in order to finally be good enough, smart enough or attractive enough. This comes from the assumption that you're lacking something and that you must find something outside of you to fill the gap. I do not believe this is the right way to see things.

Here is a question for you:

Do you really need to add more to who you already are?

We often say that perfection is when there is nothing more to remove. I believe the same principle applies to humans. The goal is not to add a little confidence here and a grain of determination there, hoping to be good enough. The answer is not to add layers and layers of superficial changes on top of each other.

Rather than adding to who you already are, you need to remove all the fears that prevent you from expressing your true self. In other words, instead of trying to overcome self-imposed limitations, you must let go of these limitations in the first place. This starts by changing your assumptions. For example:

- Instead of looking for gimmicks to boost your confidence, assume that you are confident already. Recognize that there is a part of you that is naturally confident and act accordingly.
- Instead of trying to become more attractive, assume that you are already attractive. Then, act from that place of natural attractiveness.
- Instead of doubting yourself, assume that you are already smart enough to figure things out and act accordingly.

The bottom line is this: stop looking for an ideal future where you'll finally feel good enough. Understand that the necessary conditions to build the future you want are already within you. Then, act accordingly. You'll be surprised by how profoundly this can change your life.

Instead of trying to add something to yourself:

- Assume that you have no limitations. Visualize yourself as being an infinite field of possibilities.

- Then, think of what it means to express yourself within this field of possibilities. What do you really want to do?

New empowering belief:
I need to let go of fears that prevent me from expressing myself.

* * *

9. I should be hard on myself

Many of us fear that if we aren't harsh with ourselves, we'll never get anything done. But is this accurate?

In truth, self-criticism is counterproductive. It keeps you in fear and restricts your chances of future success. A better alternative is to practice self-compassion.

What is self-compassion?

Put simply, self-compassion is the recognition that you're always doing what you can based on who you are and what you know *right now*. This recognition leads you to be kinder to yourself, rather than blaming yourself for perceived failures or apparent limitations.

Being more self-compassionate will not make us complacent. This way of thinking results from a lack of self-trust and a misunderstanding of our true nature. In reality, we are natural goal achievers. Under the right circumstances, we are eager to develop ourselves and will sometimes work harder than we could have imagined. In other words, we don't need to live in constant fear of being punished to complete our tasks.

Therefore, whenever you feel the urge to beat yourself up, replace your negative, self-limiting inner dialog and talk to yourself in a more encouraging way. Then, see what happens. For instance, whenever you notice your inner voice talking to yourself in a disrespectful way, reformulate the self-talk using more encouraging words. Don't say, "I'm so stupid! Why did I do that?" Instead, say, "I made a mistake, but it's okay. Everybody makes mistakes. I'll be more careful next time."

Don't punish yourself. Congratulate yourself for all the things you're doing well each day. Do this and you'll see that you will not only get more done but feel better about yourself.

To stop being so hard on yourself, practice the following exercises:

- Practice listening to your self-talk during the day.
- Whenever you notice you're being mean to yourself, reformulate your internal dialog so that it's gentler and more encouraging.

New empowering belief:
I always show compassion toward myself.

* * *

10. I shouldn't ask for what I want

You probably hold the assumption that you shouldn't ask for what you want. After all, when you were a kid, you wanted all kinds of things but were told again and again:

"No, don't do that."

"You can't have this."

“Put that down.”

As a result, by the time you reached your teenage years, you had internalized the message that it's not okay to ask for what you want. Test it yourself. Do you ever ask for what you want right now in your life? Do you tell your spouse, your kids, your colleagues or your friends what you want?

When you fail to ask, you tell your subconscious you don't really matter and that your preferences and desires are unimportant. As you do this, you diminish yourself, which erodes your self-esteem. Asking for what you want is a healthy sign that you value yourself. It demonstrates that you hold your space in this world, and that you are not afraid to assert yourself. Below are some examples of simple requests you might wish to make:

- Are you cold? Ask if you can raise the room temperature.
- Do you want to change seats on the bus/airplane/train? Ask the staff.
- Loved the dessert? Ask for more.
- Are you looking for a specific item in a store? Ask an employee where you can find it.

These small requests may seem unimportant, but they aren't. If you are unable to ask for the simplest things, how will you muster the courage to ask for the bigger things that really matter to you?

Once you become accustomed to asking for small things, go one step further and ask for more than you believe you can receive. As you do so, you'll realize how much you've been limiting yourself by not asking.

To conclude, asking is a way to open yourself up to new opportunities. It allows you to expand rather than shrink into yourself and, as such, asking is an act of self-respect and self-love.

Now, write down the top three things you would like to ask people but haven't yet dared to. Then, ask yourself, "What if I could ask for these things?"

New empowering belief:

I give myself permission to ask for what I want.

* * *

11. I haven't suffered enough to deserve it

Sometimes, the thing that prevents us from realizing our dreams is the weird idea that we haven't got enough problems or haven't "suffered" enough to be worthy of our goals or to be "legit". For instance, in the self-help industry, many success stories come from people who went from rags to riches, or overcame challenging situations such as life-threatening diseases, addictions or abuse.

When I started writing articles about self-help, one of the many excuses my mind would come up with is that I didn't have a compelling enough story. I didn't survive a terrible accident, nor was I broke or homeless. I didn't suffer childhood abuse. I had no severe addictions. Of course, I had (and still have) problems, but they weren't exceptional.

But what I discovered is that, regardless of our conditions, whether they are favorable or seemingly insurmountable, our mind will *always* come up with excuse after excuse to prevent us from leaving our comfort zone and reaching our goals.

If our circumstances are less than ideal, we'll tell ourselves, "Who am I to believe I deserve it? I'm not smart enough. I don't have the right education. I don't know the right people." And if we feel somewhat privileged, our mind will say, "Who am I to believe I deserve it? People who are less privileged or suffer more need it more than me."

The bottom line is this. Your mind will *never ever* run out of excuses to stop you from going after what you really want. However, if you genuinely want to achieve the bigger things in life, you must ignore your mind's excuses and move forward regardless.

Remember, nobody has ever done anything exceptional by listening to their negative self-talk. Therefore, don't bother arguing with your mind. You'll lose every time. Instead, do what you have to do and over time, your mind will become quieter and more supportive.

You do have enough problems, the biggest probably being ...

...your mind.

New empowering beliefs:

*I allow myself to go after what I want regardless of any
excuses my mind may throw up.*

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META-ASSUMPTION #2—I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH

Most of us spend our lives being afraid of not having enough. We feel as though we lack time or money. Or we believe we haven't been offered enough opportunities or the right opportunities.

Now, scarcity certainly exists—with time being the scarcest of all our resources. However, when we convince ourselves that we don't have enough—while not knowing how to get “more”—it creates frustration. In this section, we're going to challenge your assumptions about money, time and some of the other things that lead you to feel a sense of lack. By challenging these assumptions, you will upgrade your thinking and familiarize yourself with abundance. This, in turn, will help you act in ways that can generate more abundance in your life.

Let's get started.

Assumptions about money

12. Money is unimportant

Money is a little like oxygen. When we have an abundance of it, we never think of it. When we lack money, it becomes the only thing we can focus on.

Let's be honest. Many of us spend quite a lot of time and energy thinking about money. Perhaps we're worried we won't have enough to pay the bills or to retire. Perhaps we wish we could have more money to travel the world. Or perhaps we just want to stop stressing over money.

Here is a great question to help you find out how important money is to you:

If I had enough money to never have to work again, would I still go to work tomorrow?

If the answer is "no", it means that a lack of money is preventing you from living your ideal life. Lacking money is stopping you from doing more important or more meaningful things with your time. And, in that regard, money (or the lack thereof) does matter to you.

The point is, for most of us, money *is* important. We just don't like to acknowledge it. Because once we do, we'll have to do something about it—or feel bad about ourselves if we don't. Both situations are uncomfortable and need to be avoided.

If you want to make more money, you need to acknowledge that money does play an important part in your life. Sure, many things may be more important to you such as your family, relationships, health, or time but seeing money as important isn't the same as making it the be-all and end-all of existence.

Answer the following question:

- If I had enough money to never have to work again, would I still stay at my current job?
- Then, ask yourself, "If I accept that money is important to me, what specific things will I do differently?"

New empowering belief:
Money is an important part of my life.

* * *

13. Money is more important than time

Money is important, but there is something even more important: your time.

Many people live their lives under the untold—and often unconscious—assumption that money is more important than time. As a result, they disrespect their time but obsess over making more money.

In truth, your time will always be far more valuable than any amount of money you can make. This is because time is one of the scarcest resources on earth. If you try hard enough, you can always find ways to make more money, but you can never make more time. Each second that passes is lost—forever. Just imagine how much an old and dying billionaire would be willing to pay to live an extra month or an extra year.

The more you value your time, the more potential there is to make money. When you truly respect your time, you'll find that in the mid- to long-term you can not only make more money but also accomplish far more (and have a far greater impact than you imagine).

Therefore, if you want to make more money, cherish your time. Use it well to attain worthy goals.

For instance:

- Make sure you work on highly effective tasks rather than merely being busy.

- Spend time creating a solid plan of action to help you reach your major goals and to avoid becoming overly distracted and jumping from one goal to the next.
- Try to make progress toward worthy goals each day.

It's almost impossible not to earn more money when you value your time.

So, what would you do differently if you treated your time as far more important than money?

New empowering belief:
I value my time and make the most of it.

* * *

14. Making money is tough

Many people believe that becoming wealthy is out of their reach. They don't believe they have the right background, the appropriate education or the necessary skills. As a result, they don't even attempt to create wealth for themselves and their family.

In reality, making money has more to do with understanding what money is and how it works. Sure, some people do start with a considerable advantage. But, fortunately, new technologies such as the internet have equalized the "game". Nowadays, anybody with an internet connection can access most of the knowledge in the world for free. Anyone can upgrade their skills and learn whatever they need to reach their goals.

Put simply, the key to making money is to provide valuable products or services—and develop the necessary skills to

do so at a profit and at a large enough scale. This entails being patient, perseverant and willing to improve your skills over the years. Remember this. Whenever you offer a product or service, at the other end of the transaction there is always someone parting with their hard-earned money. Therefore, you must continually think of ways to offer more value to your customers, clients or the marketplace as a whole. The more valuable you become, the more money you'll likely make over time.

Additionally, to create more wealth, strive to improve your relationship with money. For instance:

- **Identify all the negative thoughts you hold about money.** The healthier your relationship with money is, the easiest it will be to generate more of it.
- **Direct your thoughts toward making more money.** Instead of penny-pinching or focusing on lack, focus on making more money. Think of all the possible ways you could increase your income. Look for opportunities all around you. Make the most of your creativity to bring value to others.
- **Learn to value yourself more.** Believe that you have something valuable to offer to others. Value your work. Take pride in the products or services you are creating. Remember that who you are and what you do matters (See also 6. *I have nothing of value to offer to the world*).

To sum up, rather than telling yourself that making money is hard, tell yourself it's possible—and in the long term, almost inevitable. Then, remove all your disempowering thoughts about money and strive to become better so that you can provide valuable products or services to people.

If you believed making money was easy, what would you do differently?

New empowering belief:
With the right strategy, making money is easier than I think.

* * *

15. I must be dishonest to make money

Can you become wealthy while maintaining your integrity, or do you need to sell your soul to the devil? That is what I wondered for years. The only way to find the answer was to attempt to make money myself.

Truth is, you do not need to betray your values to create wealth. You can make plenty of money without having to lie to or cheat anybody. If your fear of betraying your values has been preventing you from building wealth, let that fear go. Then, allow yourself to create wealth by providing value to people in a way that resonates with you. Find out how much money you can generate while staying true to yourself. You might be pleasantly surprised. Again, the key is to focus most of your time on creating valuable products or services that people really want.

See making money as the inevitable result of becoming more valuable to the marketplace. Associate money with the value you can bring to the world. By doing so, you will stop seeing wealth creation as something negative, and you will come to see it as something positive. In other words, you'll want to make as much money as possible knowing it is a sign that you are delivering good value and improving the world.

Sometimes, you will have to choose between making more money and sticking to your values. People around you may even encourage you to use morally questionable tactics or strategies. You do not have to listen to them. In the short term, maintaining your integrity may cost you money, but in the long term, it will be beneficial. Not to mention that it will provide you with the peace of mind and the pride that comes from knowing you are doing the right thing.

You do *not* need to be dishonest to make money—but you do need to bring more value to the marketplace. So, go ahead and start creating exciting products or services that your customers will love.

How could you generate more money in ways that align with your personal values and goals?

New empowering belief:

The more I help people, the more money I can make.

* * *

16. I can't make money doing what I love

I remember a conversation I had with my supervisor years ago. During our discussion, he advised me to earn my paychecks and make the most of my free time. According to him, the fact I didn't like my job wasn't an issue since most people dislike their jobs. For a moment, I thought he might be correct. Maybe that's what life was about. Maybe I should resign myself to staying at an unfulfilling job just to pay the bills. And I almost did.

But something didn't seem right to me. So, I went my own way.

What about you? Where will you be a few years from now if you buy into the idea that you must choose between making money and having a fulfilling job?

When you refuse to question your assumptions, you fall for the path of least resistance. As a result, you will fail to design an exciting life and live up to your potential.

Here is the truth: you *can* make money doing what you love. People no smarter than you have done it before. Now, I'm not saying it will be easy. But remember this. On average, people spend around 75,000 hours of their lives at work. Isn't it worth dedicating enough time and effort into building a meaningful career?

What you believe often becomes your reality. You can either:

- Believe you can't make money doing what you love,
- Or decide you'll do whatever it takes to design a rewarding career you enjoy.

To start, identify what you're good at and/or what you enjoy doing. If you're unsure, keep looking. Start leaning towards what you love or what interests you. Take small actions each day in that direction and, over time, the path will become clearer.

Now, imagine you were guaranteed to succeed in your attempt to make money doing something you enjoy. What would that thing be?

New empowering belief:

Identifying what I love is the best way to make more money in the long term.

* * *

17. There isn't enough for everybody

Many people see the money “game” as a zero-sum contest. That is, they believe that for them to win, others must lose. It's not surprising then, that some of these individuals are reluctant to grab a bigger piece of the pie—they don't want others to starve.

In reality, provided you're not engaging in false advertising or outright scams, you can't take more than you give. Think of it this way. The reason we trade between each other is that both parties win from the transaction. If I sell you a product and you agree to buy it, it means you see more value in it than it costs you. Similarly, it means it costs me less to make than the price I sell it for. As a result, we both win. You receive more value than you paid for, and I make a profit by selling it to you.

Following the same logic, the key question to ask yourself is this: “How can I offer more value to people at a profit?”

The point is, when you bring real value to the world, you do not take from it, instead you expand the total amount of wealth available by offering more value than you're taking (e.g., by selling a valuable product or service at a profit).

And the only way to offer real value to the world is to:

1. Acquire new skills or knowledge that the world needs, or
2. use your skills and competences to meet a need in the market.

Of course, there are loopholes. Although it is questionable whether certain people or corporations provide actual

value to the world, it does not invalidate the fact that developing valuable skills and offering great products and the services people need is the best way toward wealth creation.

The bottom line is, rather than worrying that you may be stealing other people's pieces of the pie, understand that your goal is to grow the pie by leveraging your creativity and resourcefulness to provide as much value to the world as possible. No get-rich quick schemes or gimmicks here. There is only hard work and a strong commitment to serve others.

It is when you refuse to develop yourself that you're doing a disservice to the world, not when you grow your skills and sell products or services for a profit.

So, how can you deliver more value to people at a profit while maximizing your strengths and talents?

New empowering belief:

By using my creativity and resourcefulness, I can have more than I will ever need.

* * *

18. If I work hard, I'll make more money

If working hard was the recipe to making more money, all the factory workers around the world would be millionaires. Unfortunately, this is not how the world works.

Making money has more to do with following key principles than with working hard *per se*. Once you understand how money works, you can design your career to maximize your earning potential and build wealth. Now, let me introduce

some key principles when it comes to generating wealth. We will look at each of them briefly.

A. Leverage. Some people earn 1,000 times more than the average person. Why is that? Is it because they work 1,000 times harder? Of course not. We all have twenty-four hours in a day, and we have only so much energy available. High earners use leverage to create more wealth. That is, they find ways to multiply their income. There are different kinds of leverage, the most common being technology, (other people's) money and other people's time.

1. Technology. Technology saves us time and enables us to do more with less. It makes us feel as though we have more hours during the day, and having more hours means that we can earn more money. The internet is probably the best example. Personally, I use the internet to sell books, send automated emails and gain visibility on social media.

2. (Other people's) money. Money makes money, whether it is our own or someone else's. For instance, we can raise money using kick-starter programs, receive funding from venture capitalists or get a loan from the bank or acquaintances. We can then use that money to grow our business and (hopefully) make more money. Or we can invest our own money into company stocks, real estate or other investments with the aim of growing it long term.

3. Time. Time is money—but our time is limited. This is why company owners hire employees to fulfill the demand for their products or make their vision come true. To become wealthy, we must buy other people's time in exchange for their experience. Not in an exploitative way, but merely because it's the smartest, most logical thing to do. I could spend years learning Spanish until I become competent enough to translate my books, or I could hire a

Spanish translator who already has the necessary skills. Which option do you think is a better use of my time?

B. Scalability. Would you rather get paid once for your work or get paid many, many times for years? Scalability is what makes leverage even more effective. A book is a great example. It only needs to be written once. Then, it can be sold to thousands, even millions, of people. In my case, I leverage technology (the internet), audiobook narrators, translators, publishing houses and so on, to scale my products. In short, to scale up, you must find ways to grow your wealth without having to sell your time. You could do this by creating digital products, hiring people or creating systems and processes to use time and again.

C. Market fit. If nobody wants to buy what you have to offer, you'll never make any money. Remember that behind every sale there is a person or entity. Now why would they part with their hard-earned money and give it to you? You need to give them a compelling reason to do so. Therefore, if you wish to make more money, you must offer to people products or services they're willing to pay for.

These are key principles when it comes to making money. The point is, working hard isn't enough. Whenever possible, you must use leverage and scale while striving to develop the high-paying skills the market needs.

Now, answer the following questions:

- What does “working smarter” mean to you?
- What specific things could you do to ensure that your work is scalable and more impactful?

New empowering belief:

If I work hard and smart, I'll make more money.

* * *

19. Money is the root of all evil

Many people have a love-hate relationship with money. Then, they wonder why they are unable to make more of it. In truth, money is neither good nor bad. It is merely a tool we can use to accomplish a variety of goals. Perhaps a more empowering way to think of money is as an extension of yourself. As you acquire more skills and monetize them in a way that adds value, you create more room to express yourself. In other words, money gives you more options, whether it is to give more to charities, grow your business or buy a house in which you can truly feel at home.

In itself, money is *not* the root of all evil, but an excessive attachment to money might be. When your only goal is to accumulate more of it in an attempt to boost your ego, gain power or be loved, you risk separating yourself further from other people.

Making money may also reveal some of your vices. Therefore, the accumulation of wealth should be done in conjunction with personal development. Even better, the way you make, spend and invest money should be aligned with your values and vision. Money then becomes an extension of your true self and enables you to contribute to the world in a more meaningful way.

Remember, money isn't the root of all evil, it is an incredible tool that enables you to express yourself and share more about who you are and what you truly value. The more money you make, the more you can give to the world.

Here is a simple exercise: write down ten reasons money is a wonderful tool for you to express yourself.

New empowering belief:
Money is an incredible tool that enables me to express myself and give more to the world.

* * *

20. Being poor is noble

You may believe that being poor is noble and feel good as a result. However, being poor doesn't qualify you as being a good or noble person. After all, it's the default position. It requires no effort, doesn't it? That's not to say there is anything wrong with being poor, though. There is just nothing fundamentally noble about it.

A major problem is that struggling financially doesn't help anybody. On the contrary, poverty drastically limits your ability to serve others. It is challenging to help others when you're struggling yourself and have little or no access to resources, such as money. You may already be helping many people and that's wonderful but imagine how many more you could help when you have extra resources. Perhaps you could serve ten times or even a hundred times more people. Wouldn't that be better for everybody?

You might think, "But what about Mother Theresa? Wasn't she poor?" The major difference between Mother Theresa and most people struggling financially is that she was poor by choice not by default. In fact, she was a fantastic fundraiser and raised millions of dollars for the poor, which is one of the main reasons she was able to have such a massive impact on the world. If she wanted to, she could probably have been rich.

One thing to understand is that, by serving a lot of people, you often end up attracting money and support. This could

be through donations, the creation of products or services or via company/government sponsorship.

What about you? Are you where you are financially by choice or by default? In reality, you would probably like to earn more money, right? There's nothing wrong with that (provided you acquire it honestly). Again, money is neutral and whether you have plenty or not enough, it doesn't say anything about you.

Loving money for the sake of it can become an issue, but channeling money to help the world the same way Mother Theresa did isn't. Remember, money is simply a vehicle you can use to express yourself.

Now, take a moment to write down all the beliefs you hold about money.

New empowering belief:

The more money I have, the more people I can help.

* * *

21. I need to save more money

In the financial education sphere, there are a lot of discussions around saving money. The more money you save, the more security and options you have. You can use savings as a cushion when you lose your job or when something unexpected happens to you. In this regard, saving is essential.

However, it is also true that too many people are overly obsessed with saving money. For instance, proponents of early retirement save as much money as possible each month and invest with the goal of retiring in their forties. I do like this idea and, to a certain extent, apply it myself.

So, what's the problem with saving more money?

The main problem is that it leads people to penny-pinch, which keeps them in a scarcity mindset. Their main assumption fosters the idea that money is scarce and that as much of it as possible should be saved. The result is that instead of seeking to expand by acquiring new skills and sharing more of themselves with the world, they shrink, making themselves smaller than they are. And by focusing on saving more, they shut down many opportunities for personal and financial growth.

Yet another major issue is that we can only save so much out of our salary each month. People with a high salary can easily save a big chunk of what they earn. However, for most people, saving a significant enough chunk of their wage requires enormous sacrifice. Therefore, I believe people should spend most of their time and energy focusing on boosting their earning abilities, whether this is by winning a promotion or by working on a side hustle.

Let me give you a concrete example. Someone who earns \$4,000 a month will struggle to save 50% of their income. But what if, by focusing their time and energy on earning more, they increase their income to \$6,000 a month. Now, they can save \$3,000 (50%) and still have \$3,000 to spend on their expenses. That way, they can both save more *and* spend more.

The bottom line is this. Saving is important but it's much more effective when done in conjunction with increasing your earnings. You can only save so much with an average salary, but there is no limit to how much money you can make. So, strive to save more, but spend most of your time and effort on making more.

Now, try the following exercise:

Write down as many ways you could be making more money as you can.

New empowering belief:
I continually increase my earning potential.

More assumptions reflecting scarcity.

22. I can't have it all

You can't have it all, or can you?

Life is quite unpredictable. Being successful in all areas of your life simultaneously isn't easy, and it is not completely within your control. But does that mean you should assume you can't have it all?

Remember, what you believe influences your behavior and determines the results you achieve. Therefore, if you hold onto the belief that you can't have it all, you most certainly won't.

For instance, many people believe they must choose between making money and pursuing a career they enjoy. However, this is not necessarily the case. Some people make good money doing what they love. Other people believe they must choose between their personal and professional life. Again, this isn't always the case.

What about you? How does the assumption, "I can't have it all" manifest in your life? What do you feel you must choose between? And is it true?

The first step to "having it all" is to give yourself permission. It is to realize that everything is possible—and to act accordingly in your daily life.

Now, it doesn't mean you'll strike the perfect balance or that you should divide your time and energy equally

between each area of your life. In truth, the idea of a balanced life is a myth. However, what you *can* do is work on each area of your life strategically, one after the other, to ensure that in the mid- to long-term, you'll "have it all" or close to it.

The bottom line is this. Your assumption that you can't have it all takes a toll on you. It prevents you from designing your ideal life—and you may not even be aware of it. Break free of that spell. Ignore people telling you that you "can't have it all", that you must make trade-offs. Ignore the people who say you should be happy with what you have. Instead, accept the concept that you may have it all in the not-so-distant future. There is no guarantee, but the possibility is there.

Whenever you need to make a choice between two or more things, ask yourself, how can I have both?

New empowering belief:
It's okay for me to have what I want.

* * *

23. I should be busy all the time

Being busy isn't a badge of honor that you must wear to impress others. Neither is it a sign that you're doing important work that society needs.

As I heard somewhere, busyness is laziness in action. Everyone can be busy, but not everyone can think strategically and ensure that their actions move the needle significantly in the right direction. This is why some people may be working all the time while producing little, while others may work fewer hours while having a massive impact on the world around them.

In short, there is no direct correlation between how many hours you work and how productive you are. On the contrary, being busy creates several issues that can actually lower your productivity.

Issue #1: busyness leads to ineffective work. When you are full of energy, your thinking is sharp, and you can focus on doing important work. However, when you work longer hours, at some point your energy level drops, your thinking becomes fuzzy and you start working for the sake of it rather than because the task is essential. In other words, you mindlessly execute, whether or not the task is necessary.

Issue #2: busyness leads to inefficient work. When your energy level drops, you work less efficiently. That is, an activity that would take you only an hour to complete in the morning, may take you two or three hours in the evening. And the quality of the work you produce may even be lower.

The point is, being busy isn't something to boast about. If anything, you should strive to get as much done in as little time as possible. You should aim to produce more while working less. As you adopt this new way of thinking, you will grow to despise being busy, and you will begin to evaluate yourself based on how effective you are, rather than how many hours you work.

You'll also discover that, by having more time, you'll be thinking much more clearly and, as a result, you'll make better decisions both in your career and in other areas of your life.

Therefore, pride yourself on how effective you are, rather than on how long you work. Nobody cares about how long you work. They only care about the quality of your work.

Take a pen and a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left side, write down what you consider to be “busy” work. On the right side, write down what you think is “effective” work. Now, try to work out how you could do more effective work and less busy work

New empowering belief:
I pride myself on how effective I am.

* * *

24. Productivity is about managing time

You cannot manage time. You can only manage what you do as time passes. Therefore, rather than focusing on using your time more effectively, strive to schedule the right activities. What matters is the process you set daily to move you toward your goals. When you shift from trying to manage time, to managing what you have actual control over (your activities), you begin to feel more present, and your productivity will increase as a result.

You can only ever focus on one thing at a time—the task in front of you. When this task is well-defined, the result is heightened productivity. When it isn’t, the result is busyness. So, do the following:

- Identify the key activities you must focus on to achieve your goals.
- Break them down into manageable tasks.
- Schedule them and focus on completing one after the other in order of importance.

For instance, let’s say you want to write a book. If so, block time to write each day. By writing 500 words a day, in three

months you'll have a 45,000-word book (that is, 180 pages or so).

The bottom line is, focus on what you can control (your activities), not on what you can't control (time). This mindset shift will empower you and enable you to become much more productive. Time will pass anyway. The question is, "What will you do within the time you are granted on earth?"

Implement the following habit:

Prioritize your activities each day and work on them one after the other.

New empowering belief:

I manage my activities effectively every day.

* * *

25. I don't have enough time to do X, Y or Z

"I don't have enough time" is the excuse people use to avoid questioning their life choices and their current behavior. Time passes regardless of what you do. The question then isn't whether you have enough of it, but what activities you want to focus on within the time you have been given.

In essence, whenever you say you don't have enough time to do something, what you're saying is that this specific task isn't important to you. That is, you haven't made it a priority.

Time is limited, while the specific activity you can choose to focus on at any given moment is unlimited. Therefore, what defines a good use of your time is how *relevant* your

activities are. It's about setting your priorities straight. In other words, if something is truly important to you, you'll usually find time for it, and if you don't, it's either because it's not that important or because you haven't found a compelling enough reason to do it.

If you have time to watch TV or play with your phone for a couple of hours each day, you probably have time to learn French, take on a new, exciting hobby or work on a side business.

From now on, stop using the expression, "I don't have time." Replace it with, "It's not a priority to me right now." This simple shift alone will lead you to rethink your priorities and reorganize your time to focus more on what truly matters to you.

The point is, life is all about trade-offs. You might not have time to do everything, but you usually have enough time to do the things that truly matter to you.

To conclude:

- Avoid using the expression, "I don't have time." Replace it with, "It's not a priority to me right now."
- Resolve to make the time for whatever is important to you.
- Repeat to yourself, "I make the time for whatever I'm committed to."

New empowering belief:
I make the time for what's important to me.

* * *

26. I'm afraid of missing out on things

Whether consciously or not, many people are afraid of missing out. The fear of missing out comes from a scarcity mindset. It's based on the assumption we are only given a limited number of opportunities. Therefore, we shouldn't let any of them slip through our fingers.

When you experience the fear of missing out, you feel that you miss the boat, that it's too late, or that the same opportunity will never present itself again.

For instance:

- Your boyfriend/girlfriend broke up with you and you feel as though you'll never find such a wonderful partner ever again.
- You failed to land your dream job and you believe you'll never find a similar opportunity in the industry you love.
- You're frustrated because you couldn't attend an amazing event you've been dreaming of attending for ages.

When you fall for the fear of missing out, you live in the lie of scarcity. You believe opportunities are scarce. On the other hand, once you understand that opportunities are not only everywhere but that you have the power to create them yourself, you escape the trance of scarcity. That is, you:

- Develop the ability to turn challenges, insignificant events or random encounters into opportunities, and you
- Try to create new opportunities by taking more action in line with your goals.

The bottom line is that the fear of missing out is largely an illusion. To break free from it, understand that opportunities exist everywhere. Right now, there are dozens of opportunities you haven't yet tapped into—and more are coming your way. So, take a step back and ask yourself what opportunities you may have overlooked.

Now, for each area of your life, try to come up with new opportunities that you hadn't thought about before. Think of specific ways you could improve in each of them.

New empowering belief:
Opportunities lie everywhere around me.

* * *

27. I must compete with others

The only person you must compete with is your yesterday's self. When you keep improving every day, you inevitably become a better version of yourself. Paradoxically, this is what allows you to outperform others.

Don't compete with others, collaborate with them.

When you continuously compare yourself with others, you live in fear, feel inadequate and begin to doubt yourself. Your focus is on what you're lacking and, not surprisingly, that's what you experience. All you see is people who are smarter, better or wiser than you. You compare your personal journey with someone else's journey. Instead of accepting your situation and walking your own path, you try to walk someone else's path. Instead of starting where you are with what you have, you assume you should be somewhere else. As a result, you experience frustration and jealousy.

On the other hand, when you accept your current position and focus on creating win-win situations with everyone you meet, you develop a solid network of people willing to support you. As your network grows, your influence grows. You or some of your collaborators will inevitably reach a high level of success. This will give you all access to more resources. As your network grows, more and more opportunities will come your way. In short, you're no longer living in scarcity. Rather, you're helping others succeed whenever you can, knowing that it will come back to you in some way in the future.

To sum up, compete with yourself to become the best you can be. Meanwhile, keep adding value to people around you to build your circle of influence over time. The more you help people, the more people will be willing to help you.

Write down two to three ways you could collaborate with other people instead of seeing them as competitors.

New empowering belief:
I happily collaborate with others.

* * *

28. I give so that I will receive

How often do you give while expecting something in return?

When they give, many people expect some kind of reciprocity—whether they explicitly say so or not. Some even use the principle of reciprocity to manipulate others. They know that if they help someone in some minor way first, their future request is more likely to be accepted.

However, should you expect people to reciprocate whenever you give? I would argue that it isn't the best, most freeing way to behave. Instead, what would happen if you chose to give unconditionally?

Usually, giving is done between two people. It's like an implicit pact we make. I'm helping you now, and you'll help me later. Conversely, when you embrace unconditional giving, you help others without expecting anything in return. You genuinely do not expect people to reciprocate, nor do you use giving as a way to manipulate others. The only thing you expect (or choose to believe) is that, if you keep giving, it will come back to you. In that situation, your pact isn't between you and someone else, but between you and the entire world.

Another benefit of unconditional giving is that it helps you detach yourself from the urge of reciprocating. You know you're helping people whenever you can. And because you're doing your part without expecting any rewards, you find it easier not to reciprocate when you deem it inappropriate. You stop letting others abuse your kindness and set healthier boundaries. In other words, you operate under the assumption that giving is to be unconditional. As such, you also expect others to give without there being any hidden agendas.

The point is, true giving cannot be done with the expectation of getting something back in return, whether immediately or in the future. This is not giving, it's manipulating. Start observing what happens in your mind when you give or receive. Is there a motive behind the act or is it offered without any strings attached?

To conclude, give unconditionally whenever you can and fight the urge of reciprocating when it doesn't feel right. Stop perceiving giving as a contract between two parties.

Instead, see it as the contract between you and the universe. Give more and see what happens.

New empowering belief:

*I give unconditionally, trusting it will come back to me
many times over.*

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META-ASSUMPTION #3—I'M POWERLESS

Many of us navigate through life with the sense that we are powerless. We feel as if none of our actions matter. But are we really that helpless? Do we really have no power to shape our lives or influence our environment?

In reality, we all influence our environment to varying degrees. Our actions have consequences, for some people mostly negative, for others mostly positive. And the more we realize it, the more empowered we will feel to act the right way and live meaningful lives.

If you feel powerless, review the following assumptions and work on replacing your disempowering assumptions with more empowering ones that will give you energy and purpose. Life is too short to feel helpless, right?

29. My past dictates my future

We live in a world of cause and effect. Our past is an accumulation of causes and circumstances that created effects that led us to where we are today. Now, there are many things we cannot control in our environment, but when we change the way we think, feel and act each day, we will inevitably end up creating a better and more exciting future.

Your past does not dictate your future, but the actions you take today does. It's always what you do in the present moment that shapes your future. The more you change what you do—and the longer you do so—the more power you have to change your future.

Here are some great questions to ask yourself:

“If I keep doing what I've done this week or this year, where will I likely end up a year from now? Five years from now? Ten years from now? Will I be where I want to be financially, emotionally, physically or spiritually?”

If not, you're going to have to take different actions. It is said that every day, we make around 30,000 decisions. Living in the past means that most of your daily decisions will be the same today as they were yesterday. You will keep the same habits and worry about the same things and, as a result, you will remain stuck in the same place.

Fortunately, there is no rule saying you must be the same today as you were yesterday. At any time, you can decide to adopt new empowering habits and make different decisions that will change your life. And you are usually only a few habits away from improving your life significantly.

Remember, your past does not dictate your future. What you choose to do *now* does.

If you were to adopt new habits or thoughts today, which ones would move you closer toward your ideal future?

New empowering belief:
What I do every day dictates my future.

* * *

30. My environment dictates my future

People often blame their environment for their lack of success. If only they could be given more opportunities. If only they could find the right mentor, coach or teacher. If only they could attend a better school or live in a more favorable neighborhood. Then, everything would become easier.

Yes, your environment is one of the most important factors when it comes to improving yourself and growing to your full potential, but it doesn't mean you're doomed if your environment isn't ideal.

Do you really plan to give up on yourself and your goals just because your current environment is suboptimal? Are you going to spend your entire life being bitter at people who had more opportunities than you?

You can, but it won't take you anywhere.

Your environment influences your future, but it does *not* dictate it. Your thoughts shape your future. What you keep thinking about every day orients your actions which, in turn, heavily influences where you will end up in the coming years. If you keep focusing on ways to improve yourself, whether by building self-discipline, polishing your communication skills or developing your leadership skills, you will become better. This is especially true in today's age where we are one click away from all the knowledge in the world.

As you change the way you think, your environment will inevitably change. Perhaps you'll meet more interesting people. Perhaps you'll move to a different place. Perhaps you'll encounter new and exciting opportunities along the way.

To conclude, where you are now is not necessarily where you will be in the future. You're not stuck forever in your current environment. You're merely stuck in your current way of thinking. Change the way you think. Read more. Study more. Adopt more empowering beliefs. As you do so, your environment will change.

Remember, if you change, everything will change for you sooner or later.

What could you do specifically to create a more optimal mental and/or physical environment?

New empowering belief:

My thoughts dictate my future. As I change, so will my environment.

* * *

31. I'm a victim

You cannot be both a victim and the captain of your own destiny. When you see yourself as a victim, you rule out an entire world of options you could take to improve your life.

Victimhood is a dangerous virus that can hold you back for years. Now, refusing to be a victim doesn't mean that life will be fair to you. You may be suffering from discrimination, or you may have noble intentions but find yourself in an unsupportive environment.

However, this is not the same as being a victim. Acting as a victim means that you see yourself as powerless. This is a state of mind that has little to do with your actual situation. Some people born in wealthy countries have countless opportunities, yet they see themselves as victims. Others with objectively far fewer opportunities choose to see

themselves as being responsible for their own destiny, doing whatever they can to shape their life.

No matter how stuck you may feel, you always have more options than you believe. You just need to look for them. Remember, opportunities are everywhere, but to perceive them, you must break free from the spell of victimhood. You must refuse to be a victim and release the perverse sense of comfort that often comes with it. Indeed, when you think of yourself as a “victim”, you don’t have to do anything to change your situation. In fact, you convince yourself that you can’t do anything to improve your lot in life. On the other hand, when you choose to take complete responsibility, you become the one who is going to have to do something about it.

If not you, who else?

Take full responsibility for your life. No one else can.

Reflect on the following questions:

- In what ways are you playing the victim in your life?
- Now, if you were to take absolute responsibility for your life, what would you do differently?

New empowering belief:
I am responsible for my life.

* * *

32. I need to adapt to the world

You have two choices:

1. You can let the world decide how your life is going to be, or

2. You can decide how your life is going to be and let the world adapt accordingly.

We often talk about concepts such as “society”, “the world” or “the government” as though they were immutable external entities. In reality, they are all made up of people, and people change all the time. This is why the idea that the world around you is constraining you and preventing you from succeeding is an illusion. Yes, many obstacles may stand in your way, but there are many things you can do to overcome them.

Now, I’m not saying you’re going to change the world. However, I am saying that, when you decide exactly what you want and commit to it wholeheartedly, the world will make room for you. Perhaps people will rally to your cause. Perhaps the resources you need to reach your goals will appear. Or perhaps you’ll find inner resources you would never have expected.

The point is, when you believe you have no power to influence the world, you’ll never even try to do so. Conversely, when you believe you can bend the world a little bit by deciding to go after what you want and clearly communicate your desire to the world, you’ll discover that the world is more malleable than you had previously imagined.

Therefore, rather than adapting to the world, decide who you want to be and what you want to accomplish, then execute ruthlessly while letting the world adapt accordingly.

Now, answer the following question:

If I lived in a malleable world where every obstacle can be overcome, what goals or vision would I pursue?

New empowering belief:
*I think and interact with the world in accordance with the
life I wish to create.*

* * *

33. Someone will save me

Are you waiting for someone to help you escape your current situation? Do you look for the magic pill that will finally help you achieve the results you are after?

If so, stop.

Many people hope that something outside of them will ride to the rescue. They hope to find the magic solution that will enable them to lose weight, attract the right partner or land their dream job. However, as they do so, they only give power away to external circumstances or people.

It's like people hoping to win the lottery or to get lucky in some way. As soon as you rely on external factors for your life to improve, you give your power away. Instead of acting to change yourself from within, you merely hope for your environment to change. Unfortunately, such behavior will never enable you to attain the results you desire.

Here is the bad news. Nobody is going to save you, and there is no magic pill out there.

But here is the good news. You have everything within you to save yourself. You can change your thoughts and alter the way you perceive yourself and the world. You have the power to learn whatever is required to achieve your goals. You don't have to wait to be saved. You can certainly ask for help, but it's up to you to do the work needed to improve your life. Nobody can exercise for you. Nobody can eat healthily for you. Nobody can do the inner work for you.

If things are to change, you must change. And as you do so, everything will change for you.

Let go of the idea that there is a magic pill to fix your life. Then, reclaim your own power to solve your own issues.

New empowering belief:
Nobody will save me; therefore I'm saving myself.

* * *

34. The world is against me

You can choose to believe that the world is against you, or you can embrace the belief that the world is conspiring to help you succeed.

Moving forward, which belief do you think will serve you better?

When you adopt the belief that the world is conspiring to help you, you will begin to see things differently. Now, every obstacle you face becomes a lesson to be learned. Every setback becomes an opportunity to clarify your “why” and strengthen it. Every criticism becomes useful feedback you can use to improve, and every mental challenge becomes an opportunity to develop more self-compassion and self-love.

In truth, most people want you to succeed.

- Your customers want you to do great work so they can benefit from your products or services.
- Your family and friends want you to be happy so that they enjoy being around you.
- The audience listening to your speech wants you to perform well so that they can benefit from your

knowledge or insight.

Whenever you doubt yourself, remember that people around you want you to succeed. They aren't your enemy; they are your biggest supporters. The world isn't against you. The world will merely give you what you need so that you can develop, learn your lessons and become the person you were meant to be. Therefore, don't despair when things aren't going your way. Instead, realize that everything and everybody is conspiring to *help you succeed*.

Imagine that the entire world is conspiring to help you. What lessons is it trying to teach you? What messages is it sending you right now?

New empowering belief:

I think and behave as though the universe is on my side.

* * *

35. Complaining is normal

Complaining is a disease of the mind. It destroys our inner peace while failing to help us solve our problems or achieve our goals. We only have a couple of ways to react to what happens to us. We can:

- Accept the situation, or
- Do something about it.

Yet, most people go for the third option: they do nothing but complain.

They complain about the weather, politics, the economy, their job or their life situation. Now, for most people

complaining is a natural thing. But does it have to be?

Complaining is mostly a habit. There is no rule that says you must complain. Remember, you can only hold one thought at a time. When you complain about a situation, you put yourself in a disempowering state of mind that often prevents you from doing something to change it.

So why do people complain? I believe they complain because:

- **They don't know any better.** They learned from people around them that complaining is natural.
- **They believe it serves them in some way.** Complaining gives them the impression that they're doing something positive. However, complaining doesn't make problems go away, only taking the appropriate action can help.
- **They believe complaining is necessary before they can act.** "If I'm not upset, how can I possibly act?" This is how many people think. However, there is no direct association between our level of complaining and our level of activity. Otherwise, people complaining the most would be the most proactive toward solving their problems.

To sum up, complaining won't improve your life but acting toward the resolution of your issues will. Stop complaining. Instead, do something about the thing that's upsetting you. And, if you can't, simply accept the situation. Everything else is a waste of energy.

Do the following exercise:

- Make a list of current issues in your life.

- For each issue, write down whether you have control over it.
- For things you have control over, determine what you could do about it.

New empowering belief:

I live a complaint-free life and react to situations constructively.

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META ASSUMPTION #4—I'M A SLAVE TO MY EMOTIONS

Emotions come and go, yet we often give them more power than they actually have. The underlying assumption is usually that our emotions are part of who we are. But is that correct?

In reality, emotions come and go and, as such, they cannot define us. In this section we will discuss some disempowering assumptions that prevent you from managing your emotions effectively.

36. My emotions define me

Throughout our lives, we experience a wide variety of emotions whether negative (sadness, resentment, guilt, et cetera) or positive (excitement, joy, peace of mind, et cetera).

The problem isn't so much in the nature of the emotions we feel, but in our tendency to be overly attached to them. It becomes an issue when they become strong emotions that we tie our sense of identity to instead of being fleeting feelings that we quickly release.

For instance, imagine your supervisor points out a mistake you made in your report. Simply telling yourself to be more careful next time is probably enough. However, in this

instance, many people dwell on the situation and beat themselves up about it. They interpret it as a sign that they are inadequate. By identifying with the feeling of inadequacy that arises, they strengthen it. Over time, it may become part of who they are.

In that specific example, people let emotions define them. They fail to realize one of the most important things when it comes to emotional management:

We're *not* our emotions.

Feelings are transient. It's only when we obsess over a particular feeling that it becomes a powerful emotion that affects our mood and shapes our identity.

Also, emotions don't exist outside us. They aren't a virus we can catch. Our feelings result from our interpretation of what's happening to us.

- Our supervisor yells at us and we feel down,
- Our back hurts and we let it affect our mood, or
- We make a mistake and beat ourselves up about it.

Put simply, emotions do not have the power to define you unless you allow them to. Emotions come and will eventually go. The more you can be present in the moment and observe how you feel without judgment, the faster the emotions will disappear—and the less power they will have to define you.

For a moment, try to connect with the part within you that is beyond emotions. Simply observe your emotions.

New empowering belief:

*I'm beyond my emotions. My emotions dissipate but I
always remain.*

* * *

37. I shouldn't feel sad, resentful or angry

Learning how to manage our emotions isn't about numbing ourselves. On the contrary, it is about noticing whenever an emotion arises so that we can observe it with detachment rather than falling under its spell.

You have felt sad in the past, and you'll probably feel the same way in the future. Consequently, there is no point in trying to suppress your feelings, and there is certainly no point beating yourself up when you feel sad. It will only make your situation worse.

So, what should you do?

Accept your emotions. Allow them to exist but strive to observe them rather than let them control you. Of course, this is easier said than done. It won't always be possible, but with practice, you'll become better at it.

Then, monitor your self-talk. When you're feeling sad, resentful or angry, you're likely talking to yourself in a way that fuels these emotions. Instead, you should talk to yourself in a more compassionate way. For instance, you could say some of the following things:

- It's okay. I don't have to feel good all the time.
- I cannot expect to be happy all the time.
- It's okay to feel the way I feel now. I will feel better soon.

When you beat yourself up, you make things worse, but when you accept the way you feel, you give your emotions room to exist just for a moment. By being okay with feeling

sad, you will suffer less, and you can release negative emotions more quickly.

The bottom line is, by accepting your feelings (while avoiding identifying yourself by them), you allow them to dissipate more quickly.

Start noticing whenever you feel sad. Observe how it feels in your body and remind yourself that it's okay to feel that way.

New empowering belief:
It's okay to feel sad or depressed.

* * *

38. I must feel like it before doing something

Many people wait for motivation to arrive before acting. Doing something you enjoy is certainly important, but it's unrealistic to expect yourself to feel motivated all the time.

Believing that you must feel like it before acting is called "emotional reasoning". It's easy to prove how flawed this line of thinking is. For instance, let's look at concepts such as discipline or courage. If we had to feel motivated before doing anything, there wouldn't be any need for discipline or courage. The point of discipline is to train ourselves to do things we don't feel like doing. And the definition of courage is to do something that we're scared of (and don't feel like doing either).

In truth, motivation often comes from action. This is why, rather than hoping to be inspired before acting, we're often better off acting so as to build more and more motivation. You might have noticed that the more active you are, the more motivation and energy you seem to have. Conversely,

if you ever felt sad or depressed, you understand how hard it can be to motivate yourself to do anything, including simple tasks.

Therefore, instead of hoping to feel inspired, work on building momentum by creating routines that enable you to tackle your tasks right away. Start by completing one small task each day. The key is to build momentum over time. The more you act consistently, the more motivation you will generate.

Remember: action generates motivation, not the other way around.

- Think of one task you've been putting off for a while.
- Write down the smallest possible action you could take regarding that task.
- Now, take that action.

Practice acting first, and the motivation will develop.

New empowering belief:
I act first and let motivation come later.

* * *

39. It's normal to be offended

Many of us become offended more than we probably should, but have you ever wondered what causes you to feel that way in the first place?

Put simply, there are three main reasons you become defensive.

1. There is some truth in what you were told.

2. You believe there is part of truth in what you were told.
3. A core belief you hold has been attacked.

1. There is some truth in what you were told

Someone said something that is true about you, and it hurts. For instance, they may accuse you of procrastinating on a certain project. Your inability to accept that truth is the reason you become defensive. When that topic is brought up, it triggers emotional reactions such as anger, denial or self-criticism.

2. You believe there is part of truth in what you were told

You were told something you believe to be true, and you feel hurt. In this case, the criticisms you received may be unfounded, yet you still feel hurt. Why is that? It's because what you were told confirms the disempowering beliefs you hold about yourself. For instance, let's say you believe you aren't good enough. This belief pushes you to work harder than anybody else. Now, how would you feel if someone accused you of being lazy? You would feel offended, wouldn't you? But that wouldn't be because you're lazy, but because of your belief that you should work harder.

3. One of your core beliefs has been attacked

Someone directly or indirectly attacks one of your core beliefs, and you feel the need to defend yourself. This could be a religious belief, a political belief or a more general belief about the world or yourself. The more attached you are to this belief, the stronger your emotional reaction will be to the attack. An extreme example would be someone ready to kill anybody who dares to criticize their religion.

When you become defensive, remember to ask yourself the following questions:

- What am I trying to protect here?
- Can I let go of that belief?
- What would I be without that belief?

New empowering belief:

I gently let go of the beliefs that lead me to feel offended.

* * *

40. I'm stuck

Have you ever felt stuck? Have you ever felt unmotivated to do anything?

We all feel stuck from time to time, and it's not necessarily an issue. If anything, it's a great opportunity to rethink our lives and gain some clarity regarding what we really want to do.

Feeling stuck usually happens when we are in a disempowering emotional state. Feeling bad or unmotivated, we are less creative, less resourceful and have less energy to do something that could get us unstuck. And remember, the less we do, the less motivation we tend to have.

The point is, feeling stuck is just that: a feeling. In the real world, we can never really be stuck. To release this feeling, we need to shift our perspective and change our emotional state. To do this we can:

- **Spot as many opportunities for change or growth as possible.** When we feel stuck, we tend to

block ourselves off from the countless opportunities that lie all around us. Remember, at any time, we can choose to take different actions that will inevitably change our future. When we're stuck, we tend to forget about that.

- **Challenge ourselves.** When we stop challenging ourselves and stop exploring beyond our comfort zone, we begin to stagnate. We have less energy and feel less motivated. Consider being stuck as an invitation to reactivate the part of us that craves a challenge. Challenges will revitalize us.
- **Act, move, do stuff.** To unstick ourselves, we need to get the ball rolling. Through action, we will improve our emotional state and feel better. And as our emotional state changes, we will begin to notice all the opportunities and challenges waiting for us.

To sum up, there are always things you can do to overcome the feeling of being stuck. Realize that there are plenty of opportunities around you and start acting. Take on new challenges that will make you come alive.

New empowering belief:

When I feel stuck, I take a step back and look around for opportunities.

* * *

41. I'm responsible for how other people feel

How we feel is largely the result of what's happening to us. In itself, an external event is neutral and has no power to upset us. For this reason, it's not rare to see two people facing the same situation and reacting completely differently.

For example, one person may be angry at a rude waiter. They may carry that anger throughout the day. On the other hand, another person in the same situation may simply shrug it off, thinking that the waiter may be going through a rough time.

The bottom line is this. People continuously interpret events. They dramatize situations, exaggerate threats, take things personally or assume people have a grudge against them.

Sure, you want to avoid upsetting people on purpose, but no matter what you do, people will judge you and your actions based on their own vision of the world. Susceptible people will often be offended, and angry people will find ways to get upset.

Ultimately, you cannot be responsible for how others feel. In the same way you cannot eat healthy food, do push-ups or sleep for them. You cannot manage their emotional state for them. They must do the job for themselves.

This matters because many of us limit ourselves and abandon our dreams when we fear how people may feel about our behavior and our decisions.

- We're afraid that if we pursue a certain career, our parents may be disappointed,
- We're scared of saying no to various invitations because we don't want to upset people, or
- We dread giving others honest feedback lest people take it too personally.

In truth, both in our interests and the interests of others, it is sometimes necessary to remind ourselves we are not responsible for other people's feelings. Therefore, accept that people have to do the inner work required to better

manage their emotions. Let go of your desire to please others or to avoid conflicts at all costs. Be aware when your actions have the potential to upset others and weigh the pros and cons. Hurting others just for the sake of it is definitely not the way to go.

Reflect on the following question:

“What specific things would I do differently if I stop trying to be responsible for how others feel?”

New empowering belief:
I am responsible for how I feel and what I do.

* * *

42. I’m not a courageous person

Do you see yourself as courageous?

Many people hold onto misconceptions about courage. They believe that they must become fearless. They believe that the people they look up to never experience fear, that they’re superhuman. As a result, when they look at themselves in the mirror, they feel small by comparison. They have so many fears. How can they possibly become courageous?

However, this is not how courage works.

Being courageous isn’t about being fearless. It’s actually the opposite, because where there is no fear, there is no courage. The very definition of courage is the ability to act *in spite* of the fear, not in the absence of it. Think about it this way. If you had no fear, how hard would it be to act toward your goals or perform an act of bravery? It would be easy. Therefore, it wouldn’t be an act of bravery at all.

The lesson is this. Everybody can be courageous because everybody experiences fear, and can, under certain conditions, act despite it. It means that you do not need to wait for your fears to dissipate. Instead, you need to stay with your fears. You need to become accustomed to the feeling of being afraid but act anyway.

In fact, in many cases, the only way to work through the fear is by doing the things you're afraid of. You'll often realize afterward that it wasn't that bad after all. You will discover that your fears, for the most part, were unjustified.

Fear will never go away, but you can accept how it feels in your body and act anyway. That's what courage is all about.

- Remember a time in your life when you felt courageous. What did you do exactly? How did you feel afterward?
- Now, realize that if you acted courageously before, you can act in a similar way in the future.

New empowering belief:
I befriend fear and act despite it.

* * *

43. Pain is bad

When we choose to see pain and suffering as negative, we make our suffering even more unbearable. In truth, there are always more lessons to be learned from failures, setbacks and mental/physical pain than from successes and happy times.

Our pain and suffering can act as an incredibly powerful catalyst for change. One reason you get stuck in what I call

“no man’s land”—that is, in a place where you are neither unhappy nor happy—is that you do not have enough pain to drive you to change your current situation. For instance:

- Your job might be boring, but not soul-crushing enough for you to do something about it.
- Your relationships might be unfulfilling, but not unsatisfying enough for you to drive any change.
- Your health might not be optimal, but it is not poor enough to encourage you to make drastic changes.

On the other hand, intense pain and/or dissatisfaction will give you a kick in the butt. It will require you to find resources within yourself that you didn’t even know existed. It will inspire you to do whatever it takes to change so that you can escape from your current situation. And there is probably nothing more powerful than an intense feeling of “enough is enough” to create change.

The bottom line is this. You can see pain as a bad thing and let it crush you, or you can perceive it as the necessary fuel for change.

Many of the greatest human beings on earth were once faced with incredible challenges. In the process of overcoming these challenges, they discovered unexpected strength and went on to accomplish extraordinary deeds. Consequently, strive to reframe your pain in the most empowering way possible. Look for invaluable lessons to learn. You are far more resilient than you think.

Think of a painful situation or event you faced in the past. Then, ask yourself:

- What lessons can I extract from this painful situation/event?

- If this situation was the greatest gift I ever received, what would that gift be?
- What untapped power is this situation asking me to awaken?

New empowering belief:
I try to learn lessons from my pain and suffering.

* * *

44. I must control what people say about me

In an ideal world, people would understand your intentions and think highly of you, but the reality is often different.

In the real world, people observe your behavior, make assumptions and judge you. Their judgment is based on a limited amount of information and largely reflects how *they* perceive the world. Because we all have different life experiences, values and beliefs, it's not surprising that the way we see others is subjective. Additionally, we are poor at deciphering body language and guessing people's intentions.

The point is, the way people see you will always reflect the way they perceive the world. If you try to correct the way they picture you, you will most likely appear weak. Instead, strive to behave in a way that most accurately aligns with your values and beliefs. Then, let the world judge you.

In other words, do not try to control what people say about you. Control the only thing you can control: your words and actions. If you are afraid of other people's judgment, you'll never be able to express yourself. You'll tone down your personality, downplay your strengths and live the life others want you to live rather than the life you were meant to live.

New empowering belief:
*I allow people to see me through the prism of their values
and beliefs.*

* * *

45. I must avoid rejection

Are you afraid of rejection?

Don't worry. You're far from the only one. In fact, our fear of being rejected is largely the result of our biology. In the past, being rejected from our tribe severely hampered our ability to survive (and reproduce). Unfortunately, our brain hasn't had enough time to evolve and adjust to today's reality. Nowadays, rejection is rarely a matter of life or death. Facing countless rejections, whether in our personal or in our professional life, is largely inconsequential. Sure, it can hurt our feelings (and our egos), but it is unlikely to have any major impact on our physical survival.

In fact, rejection can be good. A more empowering way to perceive rejection is as a highly effective selection process. Instead of trying to please everyone, we can "force" rejection by communicating clearly what we desire through our words or actions.

For instance:

- In dating, we can be crystal clear regarding our expectations rather than staying vague in the hope of keeping a bigger "pool" of potential mates. Yes, doing so will increase the number of rejections we receive, but it will also save a lot of time and effort, and will increase our odds of attracting the right person for us.

- In business, we can communicate clearly who our ideal customer is and actively avoid attracting the wrong type of prospects. In the short term, we will reduce the size of our market and may even lose sales, but in the long term we will probably benefit from it via higher retention, effective word of mouth and/or a better conversion rate.
- In general, we can keep trying and use each failure as feedback to orient our decisions. This is why the faster we fail, the better it often is. It enables us to gather more useful feedback, learn faster and identify our values and our strengths.

Yes, rejection is certainly painful, but it is often necessary. When you welcome rejection and use it as a powerful selection process, you will reach your goals quicker. In the process, you'll discover that rejection is good. Each rejection provides you with invaluable feedback and moves you closer to your goals.

Therefore, change your mindset around rejection. Ask yourself how you can reject everything/everyone that isn't a great match quickly and effectively so that you can focus more of your time and energy on finding the perfect match.

New empowering belief:

I embrace rejection and use it to select the best matches for me.

* * *

46. I should avoid taking risks

In life, you miss every shot you don't take.

When it comes to achieving any of our goals, we want the odds to be on our side. And the best way to increase our chances of success is to take more shots.

Unfortunately, many people are afraid of taking risks. They live in a fantasy world, believing that not taking risks is the wisest thing to do. But this couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, there is no such thing as not taking risks. Every time we do something, there is risk involved. When you decide to travel overseas, you expose yourself to the risk that your plane crashes, that you get robbed or that you become sick when eating local food. Of course, the odds are small, but traveling is riskier than staying at home doing nothing.

The point is every action you take exists on a continuum where risk is more or less present. In the long term, risk avoidance is costly.

- Staying at a job you hate for years comes at the cost of being unhappy and frustrated, which will not only make your professional life unpleasant but also have negative ripple effects on other areas of your life.
- Refusing to challenge yourself because of fear of failure/judgment, will prevent you from acquiring new skills and growing as a person. As a result, it will severely hamper your potential and impact on your life satisfaction.
- Not investing your money because it's "too risky" will lead you to lose purchasing power every year due to inflation, which will jeopardize your ability to retire comfortably or early.

Now, does that mean you need to take insane risks to improve your life? Of course not.

The key is to take calculated risks repeatedly. Think of it as placing small bets on yourself. When you keep taking small actions toward your goals, over the long term, it's impossible not to find yourself in a better place than you would otherwise be.

That's the power of taking risks. Taking risks is *not* risky. When done properly, it's actually the less risky thing you can do. For instance, risk taking might entail:

- Taking a shot at a side business while staying at your current job and building savings.
- Organizing an event on a topic that fascinates you, knowing you'll learn something even if nobody shows up.
- Leaving your current job to venture on a new business when you know you can go back to your previous job (or find a similar job easily) if things don't work out.

Taking calculated risks has a compounding effect over time. When you repeatedly try new things, you:

- Discover what you like and don't like, and this will help you tremendously in the future, and
- Acquire more skills and knowledge, and do so at a faster pace than the average person.

Not taking risks is risky. Take more risks or you will pay the consequences in the long term.

So, what calculated risks are you avoiding taking right now? And how could it improve your life for the better if you give them a shot?

New empowering belief:

I take calculated risks that move me closer to the life I desire.

* * *

47. I owe people an interaction

Nowadays, with so many communication tools available, we are constantly bombarded with new messages we feel obliged to respond to. There is no off switch. Even the line between our work and personal life has become blurred.

I'm often surprised to see how many people feel the need to respond to any emails, phone calls or requests they received. For instance, they're willing to interrupt important work or precious time with their family to answer a random phone call. In essence, they're saying to the world that they're available 24/7. They are also saying their time isn't really all that valuable.

But does it have to be that way? Do you really have to answer all your phone calls or emails, or open the door to anyone who knocks?

Personally, I'm often unreachable. I do not believe that I owe other people every interaction. In the same way, I do not believe that anyone owes me every interaction. This is because I do not see any reason to believe that I'm such an important person that others should interact with me whenever I require it. Their time and energy are the most valuable assets they have. Therefore, I expect them to protect their time and energy, and to use them wisely. And I try to do the same with my own scarce resources.

The lesson here is not that you should ignore everybody else, but that you should respect yourself and your time more. It's rare that a phone call, email or request cannot

wait. Remember, time is one of the most important assets you have. When you're doing important work or spending time with people you care about, be unreachable to everyone else. Enjoy the present moment and give your undivided attention to the task at hand or the people you're with. Everything else can wait.

As you practice respecting your time, you'll discover that you'll feel better and will accomplish far more. Therefore, being somewhat unreachable isn't a selfish act. It will benefit both you and everybody around you.

What will you do specifically to become a little more unreachable? Think of specific situations and how you would react to each of them.

New empowering belief:

I decide how to spend my time wisely and meaningfully.

* * *

48. I should conform and listen to what people tell me

Being afraid of rejection by our peers, we often choose to conform. However, as we do so, little by little we forget who we are and what we really want.

Behaving the same way as everybody else is reassuring, but no one can decide for you how your life should unfold. No advice that you'll ever hear will provide you with all the answers to your questions. There will be times when you'll have to decide for yourself. Sure, listen to what others tell you, but don't blindly follow their advice. Don't do things because they sound right on paper. Avoid conforming or doing what's expected of you—or you will never uncover your true gift and purpose.

Instead, practice listening to yourself. Start by making small decisions that feel right to *you*. Take small steps in the direction that appears the right one to you regardless of what others may think. Spend time by yourself in silence. If you're interacting too much with the external world, you won't be able to hear your own voice. External influences will become more powerful than your inner voice and you will end up conforming.

Everybody is unique. No matter how many people you ask advice of, how many seminars you attend or how many coaches you hire, nobody will ever be able to tell you what you should do with your life. Therefore, stop looking for answers outside yourself. Trust yourself and your own judgment. Do more of what feels right to you. You might not know how to do that yet, but with practice, it will make more and more sense over time.

Try to do the following:

- Listen to your intuition and make small decisions that feel right to *you*.
- Spend more time alone without any distractions to reconnect with yourself (an afternoon, a weekend, or longer).

New empowering belief:
I decide what's best for me at any time.

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META ASSUMPTION #5—I'M BETTER THAN OTHERS

On some occasions, we see ourselves better than others. That's why most drivers think they are better than average and most teachers think they're more qualified than their peers.

Now, being confident is wonderful. However, when we overestimate our skills, it can lead to a variety of issues that prevent us from reaching our goals. For instance, we may feel entitled, be ungrateful, commit major mistakes or fail to learn from our failures. In this section, we will discuss common assumptions many people hold onto that may lead them to feel superior to others, and I will offer better alternatives.

49. I already know that

"I already know that."

How often have you said this to yourself or to others?

I've seldom seen success stories starting with these words. This is because these four words are a symptom of a much bigger issue: a misunderstanding of how success works and a lack of taking effective action to reach one's goal.

Whenever you say words such as, “I already know that,” “There is nothing new here,” or “I’ve heard it before,” you assume that you know more than you actually do. The problem is that there is an enormous gap between what you *think* you know and what you truly know at a deep level.

Put simply, we can differentiate between the following three levels of knowledge:

- **Knowing.** Is when you have an intellectual understanding of something. For example, you may know how to lose weight, build muscle or grow your business. However, since you haven’t taken any concrete action, it has little value.
- **Doing.** Is when you actively practice a skill or implement a strategy. For instance, it may be dieting to lose weight or cold calling prospects to grow your business. At this point, your knowledge isn’t merely intellectual, it’s acted upon.
- **Living.** Is when you’ve done something so many times that it has become part of you. You embody it. At this point, knowledge has become inner wisdom. For instance, it’s mastering a karate kick because you practiced it thousands of times. It’s being fluent in a language because you studied it for years.

Many people fail to reach their goals because they stay at the “knowing” level. They never delve deep enough to become true masters. As a result, they don’t acquire the wisdom needed to reach their goals. Whenever you catch yourself thinking, “I already know that,” ask yourself, “Do I? Really?” Chances are that you don’t. Otherwise, you would already have achieved the results you’re after.

The point is, unless you embody something, you don't know it. If you fail to obtain results, you must have missed something. Go back to the fundamentals and make sure you practice them until you turn intellectual knowledge into actual experience and then, into deep wisdom.

if you don't "live it", you don't "know it".

- Find examples in your life for each level (knowing, doing, living).
- Now, think of the practical results you obtain for each of these things (losing weight, building a successful business, developing good relationships, et cetera.)

New empowering belief:

I apply what I learn until I reach the results I desire.

* * *

50. I'm entitled to a great life

Many people believe they deserve the best. They believe they should have a great career, amazing friendships, deeply rewarding relationships and more money than they can spend.

They deserve it. You deserve it. And I deserve it, right?

Well, in an ideal world, everybody would be granted all their wishes and have the life they want, but that's simply not how reality works. Truth is, many kind, generous and hardworking people live incredibly challenging lives. Meanwhile, many people who aren't that nice and who don't work particularly hard have far more than they "deserve".

So, stop believing you're entitled to a great life. Nobody owes you anything. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying you're not worthy of all the wonderful things you want in your life, I'm simply saying you shouldn't expect them to fall into your lap just because you "deserve" them.

Instead, practice being grateful for all the things you do have—even the smallest things. It might be that you have a roof over your head and food every day. Or it might be that you were born in a wealthy country. Regardless of your situation, you have dozens of things to be grateful for right now.

Remember, you're not *entitled* to a nice house, an amazing partner or a fulfilling career. If you work on yourself and let go of your limitations, you are likely to become "lucky" and obtain quite a few of the things you want. However, the world doesn't owe you these things nor do you necessarily "deserve" them.

I happen to make a good living from writing books. However, when people say that I deserve it, I'm not convinced. Part of me wants to agree with them, but part of me also knows that there are probably many people around the world who deserve success as much or even more than I do. So, I'm very thankful for my current situation. I worked hard at it and did everything I could. Luckily, the universe has responded positively.

- Take a moment to appreciate all the wonderful things you have going on for you right now.
- Realize that you're not *entitled* to these things and that they could be taken away from you at any time.
- Appreciate them even more.

New empowering belief:

I appreciate everything I have, and I look forward to receiving more.

* * *

51. I'm better than other people

We like to think that we're better than others. For instance:

- 90% of American drivers think they are better than average, and
- 90% of college professors think they are above average teachers.

What about you? Do you think you are a better person than the average?

Being confident in our abilities is important. However, let's not forget that we often do a poor job at judging our own skills. TV shows like *America's Got Talent* illustrate this very well. Every year unskilled singers, dancers and performers convince themselves that they're going to win. Their obvious lack of self-awareness is shocking.

Now, you may think this only happens to people who aren't that smart, but you're better than that, right? Unfortunately, that might not be the case. Smart people have the surprising ability to persuade themselves that they are on the verge of achieving great things while their current skills, actions or mindset tell a completely different story.

Personally, in my early days as a writer, I was somewhat delusional. I thought my articles would be read by millions of people. When I realized that what I was doing wasn't working, I had to accept the truth and adjust my methods

accordingly. Whatever your goals happen to be, you may also need to make serious adjustments.

To sum up, challenge your beliefs that say you are better than others. Try to look at the harsh truth—even if you do not like what you find. This is the best way to genuinely improve and reach your most ambitious goals.

- In which area(s) of your life are you lying to yourself, believing you're better than you actually are?
- In what ways are you thinking of yourself as better than others? And how might it be working against you?

New empowering belief:

I remain humble, always ready to learn and improve.

* * *

52. I'm self-made

As human beings, we like to take full credit for our successes and blame others for our failures. If I'm successful, it is thanks to my hard work. If I fail, it's clearly down to others, right?

The idea that we can ever be self-made is an illusion, though. For instance, if I hadn't been born at the right time, I would probably never have become a successful writer. Many stars had to align to make my success possible (e.g., the creation of the internet, the existence of Amazon, the combined work of thousands of people).

A big part of where we are today is the result of countless factors, historical events and technological innovations that happened way before we were even born. Whether we

realize it or not, we constantly rely on the help of others to reach our goals, either directly when we ask someone for help, or indirectly when the society we live in creates the necessary conditions to help us realize our goals.

You may believe you owe your success only to yourself, but this is not the case. Even if you never asked anyone for help, you have still benefited from technological, economic and political advances that enable you to move toward your goals.

Now, what are the lessons here?

1. We should appreciate all the opportunities we are given thanks to the hard work of countless people who we'll never meet.
2. We should remain humble and avoid taking more credit than we deserve.
3. Finally, since we can never be entirely self-made, we should let go of our pride and ask people for help when needed. This will increase our chance of success.

You aren't self-made, so you might as well embrace that fact to the fullest. Stay humble, and let others support you in your quest for a better, more fulfilling life.

Now, complete the following exercises:

- Think of all the conditions that were necessary for you to be where you are today.
- Spend a moment to thank all the people, things and circumstances that helped you in your journey.
- Knowing nobody is self-made, think of who you could ask for help to reach your goals.

New empowering belief:
I'm thankful for the countless people who help me succeed.

* * *

53. I'm right, others are wrong

One fascinating aspect of being human is that we all think we're right.

People who actively seek to be proven wrong so that they can understand reality better are incredibly rare. Most people look for confirmation that their vision of the world is accurate. These individuals want to be comforted in their choice, since this is more pleasant and requires less mental effort.

However, logically speaking, it's impossible for everyone to be right. What does it say about your current religious or political beliefs, or beliefs about life in general?

That they're most likely inaccurate.

Yes, our beliefs are most likely inaccurate, if not completely erroneous. This is the only conclusion possible—unless you believe that you're smarter than most people (which many of us do).

Holding onto erroneous beliefs is an inherent part of being human. We naturally form beliefs based on the environment we are in and the information we're exposed to. As we do so, we construct our own vision of the world, which enables us to navigate through it somewhat effectively. Along the way, we almost inevitably pick up mistaken beliefs.

So, what should you do, knowing that you are likely wrong?

You should probably become more open-minded and more curious about the world around you. By questioning your beliefs—both your minor assumptions and your core beliefs—you will give yourself opportunities to refine your thought process and understand the world more deeply.

The whole point of this book is to help you question your assumptions and replace them with more empowering ones where you see fit. It is to make you realize that you may not be as right as you thought. The better your assumptions are, the more likely you are to achieve your goals in various areas of your life.

Rather than thinking that you're right and others are wrong, ask yourself the following question: "How might I be wrong here?"

New empowering belief:

I'm open to being wrong and willing to change my mind.

* * *

54. Things should come quickly and easily to me

The point of any goal isn't in achieving it per se, but in who we become in the process leading to its achievement. In this regard, exciting goals have the amazing ability to turn us into more than we could have imagined. Working toward worthy goals builds our character. The multiple failures along the way humble us. The skills we develop reveal and enhance our talents. And the challenges we overcome uncover the depth of our resourcefulness.

Therefore, striving to get anything we want without having to work for it is missing the whole point. Meaningful goals *should* take time and effort—and often much more than we'd like them to. Making effort toward achieving lofty

goals is how we communicate to the universe that we have skin in the game, and that we truly want it.

Therefore, if you feel as though you are struggling to reach your goals, don't despair. Instead, understand that this is part of the process. See your struggles as a rite of passage. The world is testing you. Rise to the challenge.

The bottom line is, stop expecting things to come quickly and easily. Don't beat yourself up because things take more time than you planned (which is usually the case). Instead, select worthy goals you're willing to commit to. Then, remember that the key is who you become in the process of reaching these goals. So, enjoy the journey, fall in love with the process and make grit and determination your best allies.

New empowering belief:

I accept that anything of true value takes time and effort.

* * *

55. I know what others want better than they know themselves

We are terrible at reading people's minds. Our inability to make accurate assumptions regarding what people think or want is the main reason that conflicts occur. Consequently, if you believe you know what people want and think you should tell them how they should behave, think again.

In truth, people all act in a way that makes sense *to them*. You may not understand why they act the way they do, but how could you? What seems illogical from your point of view can be logical to someone else's. And if you were to know their train of thought, you may well agree.

Bear in mind that we all have different upbringings, personalities and aspirations. You don't want the same things others want. So, when you find yourself judging others or when you feel like telling them how they should live their lives, stop for a moment and reconsider your interpretation of the situation.

The best way to have a shot at knowing what people want is to become a keen observer and ask them directly.

So, what's the lesson here?

It is that:

- Before making assumptions about people, you should gather more information regarding what they want, and
- Instead of judging them, you should strive to put yourself in their shoes and realize that they probably know what they want better than you do.

You likely don't know what people want. Realize this and behave accordingly.

New empowering belief:

I don't know what others want, so I ask them when needed.

* * *

56. People need to hear my advice

Most people don't want to be given advice—unless they explicitly ask for it. Yet, how often do we attempt to tell people what they should do and how they should live their lives? How quick are we to assume we know what they should do?

What people want the most is usually to be heard. One of my friends told me how annoyed she was when one of her friends tried to coach her without her request or approval. She felt somewhat violated. Guess what? They've never met since.

Giving advice to others is, in some way, akin to entering their private lives without their consent. And remember what we said previously: you often don't know what's best for others since you can never see the full picture. In essence, when you seek to give advice to others, you're conveying the message that you know better than them what they should be doing. If they trust you and ask for your opinion, you may give it, but if they don't ask for your help, you should focus more on listening and empathizing.

Also, realize that most advice is useless since people do not act when told what to do, they act when they feel motivated to, which happens for various reasons. Before they can act, they might need to remove mental blocks, reframe the issue or carry out inner work.

To conclude, refrain from giving advice. Instead, become a better listener. Finally, if you think you *can* offer invaluable advice, ask for permission before doing so.

New empowering belief:

I listen patiently to others and ask for permission before giving advice.

* * *

57. But you don't understand me

It's easy to think that we are special and that no one else can ever feel the way we do. When you catch yourself thinking people can't understand you, remember that

countless people face the same problems and feel almost exactly the way you feel.

In other words, you're not alone. If you're suffering, you are part of a large group of people who feel the same way you do. You may not know them, and you might never meet them, but they do exist. When you realize you're not alone in your suffering, you can begin to express more compassion both toward yourself and toward others.

Also, when you believe people cannot understand you, you become a victim. You convince yourself you have bigger issues than other people, that you're suffering more deeply. It becomes a way for you to feel special. It becomes an excuse not to move forward with your goal, which makes you feel stuck and powerless.

Therefore, understand that many people feel the same way you do and be more self-compassionate. Remember, you're always doing the best you can based on what you know *at the time*. If you knew any better, you would have acted differently.

See also the section, *9. I should be hard on myself*.

New empowering belief:

Many people have been through what I've been before. I'm not alone.

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META ASSUMPTION #6— OTHERS ARE BETTER THAN ME

Strangely enough, sometimes we seem to believe that we are better than the average person. Yet, on other occasions, we see ourselves as less competent than others. This leads us to abandon our dreams, downplay our talents or feel inadequate.

In this section, we will explore common assumptions that may lead you to underperform and squander your potential. In many cases, you are as competent as anyone else. As I like to remind myself, if someone else can do something, I probably can too.

58. People don't like me

Often, what you believe to be true, isn't. The problem is that your beliefs can become self-fulfilling prophecies. For instance, if you are convinced one of your colleagues doesn't like you, you may be somewhat cold toward them. As a result, your colleague may end up not liking you (anymore).

Some people fall into this trap more often than others. Perhaps it's because they lack confidence and self-love. Not loving themselves enough, they merely project onto others

their own thoughts, “If I don’t like myself, how can others like me?”

Therefore, if you find yourself imagining that nobody around you likes you, notice it and realize that your judgment is probably flawed. Instead, act more confidently. Act as if you are liked. Stop assuming the worst and start assuming the best. As you do so, you will probably find that people become more friendly toward you.

New empowering belief:
People probably like me more than I imagine.

* * *

59. Others are smarter than me

When you continually feel that others are smarter than you, you limit your potential and end up achieving less than you’re capable of. In fact, you may love telling others how smart they are, wishing you would be as smart. However, in most cases, what you’re actually saying is something along these lines:

“I wish I had the motivation needed to spend so much time and effort to be as good as you—but I don’t.”

Or:

“I’m going to label you as smart so that I feel better about myself rather than acknowledging the fact that I’m unwilling to do the work required to excel at it myself.”

Now, let’s be honest. Some people *are* smarter than others. I seriously doubt many people can do what Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla, has done. First, he has an extraordinary ability to focus on his goals. He’s also able to work

extremely long hours every day, which he has done for decades. Finally, he can endure a high level of stress and mental pain. Not to mention, he is very bright.

But that doesn't mean you're not smart. As the psychologist, Carol Dweck, has shown in her book, *Mindset*, one key factor to reaching higher levels of success is to develop a growth mindset. People with a growth mindset understand that with the right attitude and the willingness to improve, they can learn almost anything they desire and, eventually, become quite good at it. As a result, they're willing to work hard and for a sustained period, and they can endure many so-called "failures along the way.

The point is, while you may not turn into Elon Musk just by having a growth mindset and working hard, you can improve significantly. Therefore, there is no reason for you to accept your current perceived mental limitations.

Instead of saying others are "so smart" and letting yourself off the hook, ask yourself what you really want to learn, then practice relentlessly until you excel at it. It's not that you're not good enough, it's that you're not good enough *yet*.

To sum up:

- Stop seeing successful people as smarter than you.
- Commit to discovering your own strengths and purpose.
- Develop a growth mindset and decide to learn anything and everything required to achieve your goals.

New empowering belief:

I am capable and, with enough time and effort, I can learn almost anything I want.

* * *

60. I don't have any talent

Whether you need talent or not to succeed in life is debatable. Something more important to focus on is identifying what you're passionate about. When you truly enjoy what you do, you won't be able to stop doing it. As a result, you will naturally develop more determination than most people, while improving as time passes.

Many people fail to understand how grit (determination) works. While you can develop more grit with practice and with the right attitude, in truth, grit is often nothing more than the inevitable outcome of engaging in activities that matter to you. Determination happens when giving up is not an option. And the reason is often that you just love what you do so much.

When I started writing, I was unsuccessful for years. Few people read my articles, and my books only sold a few copies. A "normal" person would have given up. In fact, I did feel like giving up many times—but I couldn't. I couldn't see myself doing anything other than writing. So, I kept at it until I eventually became a full-time author.

The lesson is this. Hard work toward something we care about may be what leads us to become "talented". Being naturally good might help, but in the end, no amount of natural talent can make up for the thousands of hours of practice needed to excel at something.

Consequently, find something that genuinely interests you, then work hard at it. This is probably the best way to become talented. Do this and a few years from now, people will be telling you how smart you are and how they wish they could be like you.

New empowering belief:
I have many interests that I can turn into “talent” with hard work.

* * *

61. I can lose confidence

The idea that you have or lack confidence is mostly an illusion. In truth, the ability to believe in yourself can never be taken away from you. It can only be forgotten.

Our brain is designed to believe and act in a way that helps us achieve our goals. In other words, belief isn't outside us. Belief lies within each of us. We cannot lose it or find it. There is no on and off switch. It might be hidden behind clouds of negativity or self-doubt, but it's still there. It's *always* there. This is the reason human beings are so powerful. Even after years of depression, failure or hardship, we can still utilize our ability to believe we can reach extraordinary goals—and most importantly—find happiness.

When you declare that you don't believe in yourself, you are actually saying that you haven't yet grasped this inherent ability to believe. Regardless of how you may feel right now, understand that you are *always* able to believe in yourself. It may not seem this way right now, but it will at some point. No number of failures can ever destroy the essence of who you are and make you unable to believe.

The bottom line is that belief is an inherent part of who you are. So never give up on yourself. Instead, reconnect with your innate ability to believe in yourself.

Now, take a moment to remind yourself that you can never lose your ability to believe in yourself, regardless of your

past failures.

New empowering belief:
I can believe in myself no matter what.

* * *

62. I should have everything figured out

If you don't have everything figured out yet, don't worry. Nobody has. One of the most important factors when it comes to achieving success is clarity. The more clarity you have, the easier it becomes to develop a specific plan and identify what you need to do to reach your goal.

However, clarity doesn't happen overnight. Developing clarity is a process that requires work. To unleash the power of clarity, you need to act. Yes, action leads to clarity. The more we do, the more we can figure out what we like and don't like, what works and what doesn't work, and so on.

Therefore, if you feel stuck right now, don't stay inactive. Don't spend all your day thinking about what you want to do or should do. Thinking alone is unlikely to provide the level of clarity you're looking for or the level of clarity you need. Instead, act. Start something new. Meet people. Begin a side project. Start the ball rolling even if it's rolling in the wrong direction. Over time, you'll be able to gain motivation and identify the right path for you.

To sum up, stop trying to reach a point when you have everything figured out. This doesn't exist. It's only a concept in your mind. It's like believing that one day you'll be happy or successful. Like happiness and success, clarity isn't a static point to reach, it is an ongoing process that requires regular adjustments.

- **Happiness:** You might be happy right now, but if you stop doing those activities that make you happy, if you forget to set new and exciting goals, or if you avoid embracing new challenges, you won't stay happy for long.
- **Success:** You might feel successful today, but if you don't stay at the top of your game, you might not be successful tomorrow.
- **Clarity:** You might feel as though you're on the right track now, but if you don't assess your actions on a regular basis, you'll probably lose your sense of clarity over time.

No. You shouldn't have everything figured out. It is normal to question your decisions on a regular basis. And if you feel lost from time to time, don't beat yourself up over it. Instead, take concrete action that will help you gain more clarity.

How could you gain more clarity regarding your current and future goals? Think of a few specific things you could start doing now.

New empowering belief:

I maintain clarity over time through regular introspection.

* * *

63. I'm too old to do X, Y or Z

Some people keep learning and challenging themselves in various ways into their seventies or even eighties. They never stop learning. They never stop making the most of their exceptional brains. Meanwhile, others at age forty, already behave as if it were too late for them to pursue their dreams.

One of your biggest fears as you grow older should be losing your desire to learn and take on new and exciting challenges. An even bigger fear should be to believe that you are too old to reach for your dreams.

Yes, you could have learned a foreign language, traveled overseas or started a new hobby long ago. But, in most cases, you can start doing any of these things right now. As the ancient Chinese proverb goes, the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, the second best time is today. Below are some examples of people who didn't use age as an excuse. I hope you'll find their stories inspiring.

- Fauna Singh ran a marathon at over 100 years old.
- Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses didn't start painting until she was 76. In 2006, one of her paintings sold for \$1.2 million.
- Nola Ochs, Model Richardson, and Leo Plass earned their college degrees at 95, 90, and 99, respectively. Nola started writing her first book, *Nola Remembers*, when she was 100.
- Helen Klein began running when she was 50. She wound up running more than 60 marathons and 140 ultra-marathons.
- Julia Child wrote her first cookbook at 50 and went on to become a celebrity chef.
- Colonel Sanders was 62 when he franchised Kentucky Fried Chicken in 1952.

So, what have you always wanted to do? Why not give it a shot today? It might be challenging at first. It might feel awkward. You might even make a fool of yourself. But do you *really* plan on giving up on some of your dreams or are you going to keep them alive?

Remember, if you still feel the desire to do something after all these years of denying yourself that pleasure, it's likely for a reason.

New empowering belief:
I'm never too old to learn new things and pursue my dreams.

* * *

64. It's too late

Another excuse people often use is, "It's too late for me." For instance, you may feel that it is too late to build an online business, change your career or move to a different country. But this is not a good way to think about things.

Here is a better way to frame it:

How excited am I to start an online business, change my career or move to a foreign country?

Thinking, "It's too late," or "I'm too old to do X, Y or Z," doesn't help you in any way. What matters most is how passionate you are about doing something. If you *really, really* want to do something, you'll find a way. If not, you'll find an excuse.

First, be honest with yourself. Then, if you really want to do something, don't tell yourself it's too late, but ask yourself *how* you're going to do it. Look around for people who have done similar things before. Brainstorm ideas. Create a simple plan of action. Then, get going.

Remember, what you believe tends to become your reality. As soon as you think it's too late, you'll remove that goal

from your field of possibility, and you won't take the action required to reach it.

So, be careful with what you choose to believe. If other people in your situation have done it before, why can't *you*?

Answer the following questions:

- If you knew it wasn't too late, what would you do, starting today?
- Who has achieved a similar goal at around the same age as you? Look for examples online.

New empowering belief:

All I need to do is start now, where I am, with what I have.

* * *

65. My beliefs need to be true

As we grow up and strive to understand the world, we cannot help but make assumptions based on our experiences. These assumptions form the basis of our model of reality. They are a way for us to map out the reality we live in.

Some people work hard to ensure their assumptions are fairly accurate, while others let their environment dictate what they believe. But whatever may be the case, we cannot align our beliefs with the actual truth (if there is such a thing as "truth"). That's the bad news. The good news is that our beliefs don't necessarily need to be true. They merely need to empower us and help us design a better life.

For instance, we may choose to believe the world is a terrible place and that everyone is out to get us. Or we may

believe the world is conspiring to help us become better, happier and more successful. Neither of these beliefs is likely accurate (or only partially). However, one is much more empowering than the other, right?

In conclusion, instead of adopting only “true” beliefs—which is impossible—strive to adopt empowering beliefs that are in line with the life you want to create.

For instance:

- See challenges as opportunities to grow rather than reasons to complain or give up.
- Perceive people as having mostly good intentions rather than as evil manipulators.
- Believe that who you are and what you do matters, rather than see yourself as insignificant.

Beliefs are like clothes—you can change them almost at will. Choose to wear nice clothes that allow you to feel comfortable in your own skin. This will make your life more pleasant.

Now, think of two or three new and empowering beliefs that would have the biggest positive impact on your life if you were to adopt them today. I encourage you to write them down.

New empowering belief:

*I adopt empowering beliefs that help me reach my goals
and design the life I want.*

* * *

66. I have a lot of problems

Everybody has problems, and there is no way for you to know what kind of hardships other people are living through. They may be fighting internal battles you know nothing about.

Remember, life isn't a competition in which the person with the most problems wins. There is no pride or comfort to be earned in perceiving yourself as more miserable than your neighbor. It may feel good, and it may provide you with nice excuses not to live your life to its fullest, but in the long run, it risks leaving you with nothing more than regrets and resentment.

Also, don't forget that problems are incredible opportunities for growth. We often learn far more from problems, setbacks and failures than from our successes.

I understand you may have a lot of problems, but this is just the nature of life itself. Focus on what you can control and solve the problems within your reach. For the rest, let go. Trying to solve issues that are outside your control will only make you miserable.

Answer the following questions:

- How can you turn your current problems into opportunities for growth?
- If you had to reframe your issues and give them a more empowering meaning, what would it be? What are these issues trying to tell you?

New empowering belief:
My problems are opportunities for growth.

* * *

67. I didn't have the right education

The most important skill you can ever build is the ability to learn effectively. In a world where the economy is changing faster and faster due to technological advances, learning is your ultimate safety net. You can lose your job and your money, but nobody can ever take away your knowledge, your capabilities, or your desire to learn.

Perhaps you barely received any formal education at all. If so, it's a fact. Now, the question is, what are you going to do about it? Will you stay where you are for the rest of your life, or will you grow and move from where you are to where you want to be?

Fortunately, there is no limit to the knowledge you can acquire. While in the past knowledge was hard to access and reserved for the elite, nowadays, anyone with access to the internet (or to a library) can acquire any knowledge in any field.

Therefore, never stop educating yourself. The less formal education you received, the more you should pursue self-education. Remember, nobody can stop you from learning anything you desire. Nobody can prevent you from borrowing books from the library, taking online courses or watching educational videos.

Study as if your life depended on it. Go deeper with whatever piques your interest. Strive to become the most knowledgeable person in the world at one or two things you enjoy, and doors will open. You may not have received the right formal education, but you can have a better self-education than 99% of the population. Complete the following exercises:

- List the skills you need to acquire to reach your goals.
- Create a specific plan to acquire these skills.

New empowering belief:

I can learn anything I need, to reach any goal I have.

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META-ASSUMPTION #7—I'M SELF-AWARE

We tend to believe that we are more conscious than we actually are. However, in reality, we have many blind spots. We entertain negative thoughts we aren't aware of, fall for dozens of cognitive biases and perceive ourselves to be more rational and logical than we are. In this section, we will go over some assumptions that will make you realize how little you know about yourself.

68. I don't care about X, Y or Z

Some people say they couldn't care less about what others think of them. However, this is rarely, if ever, the case. In truth, humans are social creatures with a biological urge to belong and sometimes an obsession to be loved.

Whether we admit it or not, we *do* care about what people think of us. We care about how we look, and we're careful not to be excessively blunt to avoid offending people and having them hate us.

Yet, we often try to convince ourselves that we don't care. For instance, imagine that your boss has treated you poorly. You may think along these lines: "There is nothing my boss can say to me that will ever affect me." But on your way home, you might find yourself replaying the scene over and

over in your head. In this case, can you say you really don't care?

An easy way to know whether you care about something is simply to observe how much time you spend thinking about it and how strong your negative emotions are while you do so. If you keep replaying the scene in your head for days or weeks, you probably care a great deal.

Now, why does it matter?

Because admitting you care can help increase your self-awareness, which in turn, will enable you to communicate your feelings better to others rather than building resentment or anger.

For example, instead of pretending you don't care how your boss treats you, if possible, tell them how you feel. Or when your partner crosses your boundaries, tell them how you feel instead of ruminating about it in silence.

The point is, you do care about a lot of stuff. As you become aware of what you won't tolerate, you can begin to set clear boundaries which will avoid building resentment over time.

To sum up:

- Notice whenever you ruminate over something.
- Accept the fact that you *do* care about it.
- Whenever you can, set clear boundaries and/or tell people how you feel to avoid building resentment.

New empowering belief:

I notice when something bothers me and act to improve the situation.

* * *

69. People observe all my gestures

You live with yourself 24/7. Therefore, from your point of view, you're the most important person in the world. And nobody can blame you for thinking that way.

Don't believe me?

When you have a toothache, what do you think of the most?

1. The pain it causes and how bad you want it to go away, or
2. The 25,000 people who die from starvation each day.

Whether we like it or not, we are the center of our attention. We cannot help but see things from our own perspective. The natural consequence of this is that we overestimate how often people think of us. In other words, we believe the world revolves around us.

We continually project our thoughts onto others. We assume people around us think of us much more than they do. However, it's easy to prove they don't. Simply ask yourself how much time you spend thinking about others. Not that much, right? You're so busy worrying about your own issues that you have little energy left to think about other people's cares or woes. Well, it's exactly the same for others!

The key lesson here is that you don't have to worry too much about what people think of you—because, in the main, they're simply not thinking of you at all.

As the saying goes, "When you're twenty, you care what everyone thinks about you. When you're forty, you stop caring what everyone thinks about you. When you're sixty, you realize no one was ever thinking about you in the first place."

So, stop worrying so much about what others may think of you. Put yourself out there. Start doing the things you've always wanted to do. Life is too short to waste time living in fear of being judged.

Now, complete the following exercises:

- Make a list of all the people you encountered today (waiters, people commuting to work, store staff, et cetera).
- Ask yourself how often you thought about them during the day.
- Now, try to imagine how much these people thought about you.

New empowering belief:

I do the things I want to do without worrying about what people think.

* * *

70. I know myself

As Aristotle pointed out, the only thing we know is that we know nothing. Perhaps this also applies to the knowledge we have about ourselves. Unfortunately, we can't "just be ourselves" as we're often told. Finding out who we truly are and living our life according to our core values requires work.

Truth is, you're not as self-aware as you think. The first step to building more self-awareness is to be humble enough to recognize that you know less about yourself than you realize. For instance, you may be overlooking your biggest strengths. You may offend people without even

being aware of it. Or you may be thinking the same negative thoughts over and over without noticing it.

Below are some examples of what it means to be more self-aware:

- Knowing precisely what your strengths and weaknesses are.
- Noticing how you feel and understanding what makes you feel that way.
- Knowing your core values and assessing whether you're living your life accordingly.

Generally speaking, the more self-aware you are, the more appropriate actions you will take in your day-to-day life and the better results you will obtain. Thus, accept you don't know yourself as well as you think. Then, look for ways to boost your self-awareness. Doing so will make you happier and more successful.

Do one thing to learn more about yourself. For example:

- Take the [MBTI test](#) or the [big five personality test](#).
- Email your friends to ask them what they consider to be your strengths and weaknesses.
- Spend time identifying your top three core values and reflect on ways to live by them in your day-to-day life.

New empowering belief:

I'm aware of my blind spots and strive to overcome them.

* * *

71. I'm aware of my thoughts

We have thousands of thoughts each day. And most of them are the same today as they were yesterday, last week, last month or even last year. Yet, despite that fact, we likely remain unaware of what these thoughts are.

The more aware you become of your inner voice, the more you'll begin to understand what your thoughts are—and the better you'll be able to replace disempowering thoughts with empowering ones.

For instance, you may unknowingly think that:

- You're not good enough or attractive enough to find a suitable partner,
- You're not smart enough to learn a foreign language, or
- You cannot ask your friends or family for help.

Furthermore, your negative thoughts may prevent you from:

- Asking the server to bring more water (because you don't want to disturb them),
- Complimenting someone on their clothes (because it seems uncomfortable), or
- Asking a friend for help (because you don't want to appear weak).

These are just a few examples among hundreds of disempowering thoughts that might cross your mind each day. If you paid more attention to your internal dialog, you'd be shocked at what's going on inside your head.

Your thoughts lead you to live inside your own bubble without even realizing it. They define your field of possibilities. While you may believe you're free to make any

choice you want, in reality, your choices are confined within the realm of your current mental world.

When you become aware of your thoughts, you can begin to change them to expand your mental world and increase your field of possibilities.

New empowering beliefs:
I pay attention to my thoughts and replace negative thoughts with more empowering ones.

* * *

72. I can read people's minds

We cannot help but make assumptions all day long. It's just how our mind works. It tries to make sense of reality by putting various data together and drawing conclusions.

The problem is that our conclusions are often inaccurate. What we do is akin to reading people's minds. We attribute inaccurate intentions to people, misinterpret their body language or project our own set of beliefs onto others.

For instance, when someone is cold or offhand toward us, we may assume they don't like us, when they may have recently lost someone close to them. Conversely, when someone smiles at us, we may believe they like us while they're just being polite. There are countless ways to misinterpret situations and misread a person's body language.

What shall we do then?

There are two main ways to avoid misreading situations:

1. Wherever possible, avoid making assumptions.

2. Take practical action to prove or disprove your assumptions.

1. Avoiding making assumptions

We don't have to try reading people's minds all the time. We can make initial assumptions, but we should avoid taking them too seriously. Most importantly, we shouldn't jump to any conclusions or act as though our assumptions are accurate. For instance, if you behave as if someone doesn't like you, your assumption may soon become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

2. Taking practical actions to prove or disprove your assumptions

The best way to prove or disprove your assumptions and to clear any misunderstanding is simply to ask people. Of course, this may not always be easy or even possible, but whenever you can, it's probably the most effective way to confirm or reject your original assumption.

A final piece of advice: if you do read people's minds, give them the benefit of the doubt. Assume they have good intentions and avoid jumping to erroneous conclusions. This will make your life easier and may avoid many problems down the road.

New empowering belief:
I avoid making assumptions about people.

* * *

73. I can escape or ignore my problems

Facing our problems is difficult.

This is why most of us would rather do anything else but solve our problems. We try to hide them by drinking alcohol, overworking, playing video games or blaming others. In short, we do anything that distracts us and prevents us from confronting our deepest fears.

But we can never really escape our problems, we can only overcome them.

It's not until we take practical action toward solving them that we begin to feel better and more alive. Now, solving our problems doesn't mean we have to be perfect. In fact, this feeling that we're never good enough is another problem we're creating. No. Solving our problems means looking at our issues realistically. By building deeper self-understanding we can learn to accept parts of ourselves, and by doing this, we can overcome many of our problems. For the other challenges, we must take responsibility and act in a way that moves us toward their resolution.

Facing our problems means moving forward. It requires that we face our fears. When we move toward our fears and act despite them, we begin to feel more alive. Conversely, when we run away from our problems, fear is constant. We make ourselves smaller. We shrink rather than expand. By refusing to face our fears, we leave our true potential unexplored.

Therefore, realize there is no escape. The only way out is through. Move forward and you'll unlock your potential and free the energy needed to express yourself more fully.

Answer the following questions:

- What problems are you avoiding right now?
- What could you do to expand yourself and move forward instead of shrinking and living in fear?

New empowering belief:
I face my problems, knowing there is no escape.

* * *

74. I need to change the world

Many of us aspire to impact the world in a positive way—and that’s wonderful. However, such feelings, no matter how intense they may be, aren’t enough. In reality, the world is complex. Before you can hope to change it in any meaningful way, you must grasp how the world works. This requires understanding some of the following things as deeply as possible:

- **Psychology:** human behavior is quite predictable. We share more traits than we think. For instance, fear, greed, love and anger are inherent parts of the human experience. Understanding psychology starts by understanding your own inner mindset. The more self-aware you are, the better understanding you’ll have of people in general.
- **Biology:** our actions are largely dictated by our biological “urges” to survive and reproduce. The more you understand how this mechanism works, the better you’ll understand human behavior.
- **History:** History sheds light on common human behavior and offers us a glimpse of key human traits that never seem to change. A solid understanding of history enables us to avoid making the same mistakes over and over, and shows us what may be realistic ways to change society for the better.
- **Economics:** Put simply, the role of economics is to figure out how to allocate scarce resources in our society. It is based on the construct that resources

are limited and that trade-offs are inevitable as we seek to allocate them. It means there is no free lunch. Free money or to-good-to-be-true measures are an illusion. In short, economic actions have consequences and must be evaluated in that regard.

- **Politics:** The role of politics is to identify effective and sustainable ways to live together peacefully. It involves understanding economics, history, psychology, and so on.

As you understand yourself better—why you do what you do, why you feel the way you feel, and so on—and you understand the world around you, your actions will be better aligned with reality and have more impact.

So, if you want to have a bigger positive impact on the world, you know what you must do.

New empowering belief:

I strive to understand myself and the world better.

* * *

75. I'll enjoy my life once I retire

We are always waiting for something to happen in the future to make us happy. One of these things is retirement. One day, we'll retire and be able to lie on the beach, drinking cocktails all day long. Sounds awesome, right?

The problem here is that we are relying on external things for our happiness. And, in this particular case, we are delaying our happiness. Now, there is a lot of value in delayed gratification. However, when it goes too far, we aren't living anymore, we're simply existing.

Another issue is that many people hugely overestimate how amazing their post-retirement life is going to be. They project their younger self into the future while forgetting that:

- There is no guarantee they will still be around in ten, twenty or thirty years,
- They might not be as healthy as they hope to be, and
- After they retire, they might quickly become bored or realize they have no purpose and no exciting goals.

The point is, don't postpone living. Don't hope to have the perfect life *in the future*. Don't idealize retirement. Instead, do the things you want to do *today*. Take small steps but get going. How do you envision your retirement? What exciting activities could you start doing today? How could you design a life from which you don't need a vacation? These are important questions to ask yourself.

Here is a good way to think about it: don't retire *from* something, retire *into* something. For instance, don't retire from a soul-crushing career, but retire into an exciting one.

Now, spend some time to complete the following exercises:

- Think of things you'd like to do once you're retired.
- Now, create a plan so that you can start doing some of these things right away.

New empowering belief:
I choose to be happy now.

* * *

76. I must always act rationally

Nobody acts perfectly rationally all the time. Before being rational beings, we are emotional ones. We act when we feel motivated to do so. It may be because of fear or excitement, but it's seldom because it is the most rational thing to do.

For instance, rationally speaking, it makes sense to eat healthily, exercise regularly and go to bed early. But most people don't do any of these things. We feel compelled to act only when we can find reasons that touch us at an emotional level.

When making decisions, often the most important thing isn't how rational these decisions are, but how good we feel about them. For instance, you may be offered a much more lucrative job, but it doesn't mean you should take it. Perhaps you're not interested in it. Perhaps the job is in an industry you don't want to be part of for ethical reasons (e.g., the tobacco industry). Or perhaps the opportunity looks great, but something about it seems off.

The bottom line is, instead of trying to be perfectly rational, connect with your deeper values, your unique personality or your authentic vision. Never let anyone decide for you what you should be doing. Listen to people, but always make the final decisions based on how they feel to you.

When you act from a deeper place that feels more aligned with your values and goals, you'll find that you'll often make wiser decisions. Now, this is not always easy. So, start with simple decisions that bear little consequences. Then, entrust yourself with bigger decisions over time.

Complete the following exercises:

- Come up with one example of a “rational” decision you took in the past that didn’t work out for you.
- Think of goals or projects you feel good about right now. Do they align with your deeper values? If so, consider moving in that direction one step at a time.

New empowering belief:

I listen to my emotions and do what feels right to me.

* * *

77. I’ll believe it when I see it

The human brain has extraordinary capabilities. One of them is the ability to imagine something and materialize it in the real world. In fact, as far as we know, we are the only living being on earth that possesses the power of imagination. We can use our thoughts to project ourselves into the future, see what we desire it to be like and come back to the present to make it a reality.

Unfortunately, many people fail to use the power of imagination. When they look into the future, rather than envisioning positive changes they could make, they envision the worst. Instead of actively deciding what they want their future to be like, they merely hope things will work out for the better.

If you are serious about achieving your most ambitious goals, you *must* believe in your ability to do so. Everything starts with a thought. When this thought becomes your focal point, you will feel compelled to act until you close the gap between where you are and where you want to be. This is why it’s so important for you to believe something is possible before you can actually see it in real life.

Now, there is nothing magical here. You won't manifest your desired life without making the effort, but everything begins with the belief that you can. Therefore, keep believing that you can land your dream job, design an exciting life, learn foreign languages or travel around the world. Strengthen your belief over time. Make it your primary focus. Keep visualizing what you desire to see in the future, and over time, you'll discover that when you believe in something strongly enough, you'll often end up seeing it.

Believe it...

...and you will see it.

Complete the following exercises:

- For a moment, let go of any limitations.
- Now, think of one goal that really excites you.
- In the coming weeks, keep visualizing how it would feel when you achieve that goal.
- When you feel like it, take any action that moves you closer to achieving that goal.

New empowering belief:
I believe it, therefore I will see it.

* * *

78. Dwelling on the past is normal

How much energy do you waste dwelling on the past?

In truth, there is only ever the present moment. What we do is use our thoughts in the now to revisit our memories or to project ourselves into the future. When we dwell on the past, we try to do the impossible: we try to change

something that has already happened. We waste our precious energy and make ourselves feel bad in the process.

Nowadays, dwelling on the past has become so natural that we believe it's normal. It's the same as complaining. It doesn't help us in any way, but we can't help but do it.

So, what can you do about it?

The past doesn't exist, only your imperfect memories of it do. Your ability to use your thoughts to revisit your past should not be used to make yourself miserable, it should be used to:

- Learn invaluable lessons to help you make better decisions,
- Remember fond memories, and
- Acknowledge all your successes and accomplishments.

When you use your past to blame your present self, you make improper use of your thoughts. Your thoughts are your servant, not your master. Instead of using them to dwell on the past, use them to learn from it.

Now, complete the following exercise:

- Look at a past "failure".
- Identify what lessons you learned/could learn from it.
- Remember one of your fondest memories and see how it makes you feel.
- Take a sheet of paper and write down as many of your past accomplishments as possible. Aim for at least thirty.

New empowering belief:
I let go of the bad habit of dwelling on the past.

* * *

79. Worrying about the future is helpful

Successful people are excited about the future. They envision all the great things they're going to accomplish and plan accordingly. On the other hand, unsuccessful people tend to worry about the future. When they project their thoughts into the future, they focus on everything that could go wrong. As a result, they become discouraged and feel unmotivated to act.

Don't get me wrong. Trying to predict issues we may face in the future is important. It enables us to take specific actions in the present to mitigate risks. However, this is not the same as worrying. Once you have identified potential obstacles or threats and created a plan, you should worry as little as possible about the future.

In other words, the power of imagination can be used to:

1. Revisit the past and learn invaluable lessons, and
2. Project ourselves into the future to create a plan that will enable us to take the right actions in the present.

Unfortunately, we were never taught how to use our imagination. We worry about the future mostly through habit. Before we realize it, much of our energy and focus goes into unnecessary worries which we can do absolutely nothing about.

Worrying about the future doesn't serve you well. Decide what you want to do, then look at what you can do to move

closer to your goals. As for all the things outside your control? Forget about them.

Complete the following exercise:

- Write down five things you're worrying about regarding your future.
- Now, separate the things you have control over from the things you don't.
- Finally, for things you can control, write down what you could do about them.

New empowering belief:

I focus on what I want, not on what I don't want.

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META ASSUMPTION #8— SUCCESS IS HARD AND OUTSIDE MY CONTROL

Many of us behave as though most of our biggest goals are impossible to achieve. We believe that what we truly want is out of our reach, and we would need a lot of luck to get there. Unsurprisingly, we feel little motivation to do whatever is in our power to make our dreams come true.

Now, while it is true there is no guarantee you'll reach your goals, in many cases, those are not completely outside of your control. In fact, there are many actions you can take or habits you can implement to increase your chances of success. The more effective and targeted action you take, the more likely you are to reach your long-term goals.

In this section, I would like to target the main assumptions that prevent many people from reaching their goals—or at least, prevent them from massively increasing their chances of doing so.

80. Success is an outcome

In some cases, success appears to be an event that happens overnight. However, this is merely an illusion.

Many people who want to be successful operate under the assumption that if only they could find the right trick or technique, they would succeed. This is why they keep

jumping from one get-rich-quick scheme to the next, or they look for the magic pill that will enable them to lose weight without really trying.

Unfortunately, success doesn't work this way. Success doesn't appear out of nowhere—it is a process. If you look closely enough, you'll find out that behind every so-called overnight success there are many years of hard work in the background.

Successful people focus on the process. They understand that their best shot at becoming and staying successful is to create an effective plan of action, put in place a solid process, and stick to it. Instead of relying on luck, they believe in consistency and strive to make daily progress toward their goals.

Understanding that success is a process is fundamental. It forces us to identify the best strategy and to focus consistently on key actions that matter the most.

For instance:

- Successful writers never know whether their books will be a success. As a result, they don't hope for a big event to happen (i.e., their book being a big hit). Instead, they keep writing week after week, month after month, year after year.
- Language students don't expect to wake up one day and speak fluently. Instead, they keep practicing daily until they become fluent.
- Excellent public speakers don't hope to perform well. Instead, they rehearse their speeches tirelessly and keep delivering speeches until organizers are willing to pay them handsomely for their presentations.

So, if you really want to be successful at anything, you must focus on the process. This is the best way to reach your goals.

Try the following:

- Think of one major goal you want to achieve in the coming years.
- Identify the best process to put in place to increase your chances of achieving that goal.

New empowering belief:

I set the right process and make daily progress toward my goals.

* * *

81. I'm either a success or a failure

Have you ever told yourself that you were a “failure”?

Many people call themselves “failures” whenever they face a setback. Each setback is merely a reminder of what they already (think they) know: they’re either not good enough or not talented enough.

However, “failure” is largely misunderstood. Failure is not the opposite of success. Both failure and success belong to the same process. As you embark on the journey toward your goal, you’ll face multiple setbacks. You can choose to see them as “failures” like many people do, or you can see them for what they truly are—feedback from reality.

Indeed, so-called failures are merely a signal that your expectations were unrealistic, which isn’t surprising since you’re trying to figure things out along the way. Successful people perceive failure differently. They understand that

the key to success is to stick to the process and learn from each of their so-called failures. With such a positive mindset they're almost guaranteed to achieve success at some point in the future. In short, they don't distinguish failures from successes. They see them as belonging to the same process people call "success".

When I started my writing journey, I felt like a failure for years—until one day I realized I was making a living from my writing. The question is, at which point was I successful? Where is the line between failure and success? There isn't one. Because success is a process, not an event.

To conclude, avoid beating yourself up when things don't go as planned. Keep going. Over a long enough period, most failures or setbacks do not matter. Nobody will remember your failures—not even you. But you will remember your accomplishments.

New empowering belief:
I embrace "failures" on my way toward success.

* * *

82. I need luck to be successful

The problem with relying on luck isn't that luck doesn't play a role, but that by hoping to get lucky you give your power away to other people or circumstances.

Truth is, when you follow a specific daily process for long enough, you're quite likely to get "lucky" and eventually reach your goals (although you may encounter many setbacks along the way).

Rather than hoping to strike it lucky, take absolute responsibility for your goals. Resolve to do whatever is in

your power to move from point A, where you are, to point B, where you want to be. Minimize the element of luck by:

- **Analyzing the best ways to reach your goal.** This might entail interviewing people, doing extensive research, reading countless books, and so on.
- **Taking as much action as you can to move you toward your goal.** People seldom fail because they took *too much* action. Therefore, do more. Be as proactive as you can to progress toward your goal.
- **Learning from your mistakes.** Use failures and setbacks as learning opportunities. Keep improving relentlessly. Be flexible. Swallow your pride when necessary.
- **Keeping going.** Consistency over the long term is key. Build grit and remember that you can always improve (this is a growth mindset).

Luck is often the result of an unwavering commitment sustained long enough for you to attain the results you aspire to. I certainly hope you'll get "lucky" and reach your goals faster than expected—but you might not. So, assume that luck doesn't exist and do everything in your power to attain your goals without it.

What can you do to create your own luck and increase the likelihood you will design the life you want in the next three to five years?

New empowering belief:
I create my own luck.

* * *

83. I'm not ready yet

Are you waiting to be ready before going after what you want?

Well, I'm afraid it's never going to happen.

Feeling ready is a myth. Truth is, if you feel perfectly ready to pursue a project, goal, or dream, it means you've been waiting for too long. The reason you can never feel ready is that you're afraid. And the reason you're afraid is that you are attempting something new—you are leaving your comfort zone.

Now, the question is, how can you expect not to feel unprepared or scared when doing something new?

You can't.

This is precisely why you'll never be ready to pursue any meaningful goals. To grow and uncover a glimpse of your true potential, you have no choice but to dive into the unknown. This is how the process of growth works.

When you live on the edge and continually challenge yourself, you will expand your comfort zone. What seemed impossible yesterday will come easy tomorrow. And you'll surprise yourself repeatedly.

Not feeling ready is great. It means that you're onto something. You're about to face new challenges and discover new talents you didn't even know you had.

The point is you can stay in your comfort zone most of your life, or you can move beyond it consistently. You'll discover that one of these options will make you feel more alive than the other.

Consider the following questions:

- What thing(s) are you procrastinating on because you tell yourself that you aren't ready?
- How could you lower the bar so that you start acting now (i.e., breaking down your goals, hiring a coach, finding an accountability partner)?

New empowering belief:

Ready or not, I do what I must do to reach my goals.

* * *

84. I should set realistic goals

“Realistic” is a word that means something different to each one of us. For this reason, you cannot count on others to tell you what is and isn't a realistic goal for you.

When someone tells you something is unrealistic, they impose their own model of reality onto you, and they limit your field of possibility. In other words, they see the world in a certain way, they have a narrow idea of what is possible based on their own experiences and set of beliefs, and they project that on you.

But you *cannot* let others tell you what is or isn't realistic—they simply don't know you and don't understand your level of passion or commitment. Avoid paying too much attention to what people think you can or cannot do.

Personally, I had a vision that I would impact millions of people with my writing. I doubt many people believed in me or thought it was a “realistic” vision. But for me, it sounded right. I saw it as challenging but not unrealistic.

Sadly, too often people set “realistic” goals that others will approve of. By doing so, they lose the excitement that results from going after what they really want. They also

miss the most important point of setting goals, which is challenging themselves to become the person they aspire to be.

The lesson is, don't set "realistic" goals, set *exciting goals that make you come alive*. Then, break them down into realistic milestones.

Remember, there are no unrealistic goals, only unrealistic timelines.

So, what do you really, really want? What goal inspires you and makes you feel alive?

New empowering belief:
I set exciting goals that inspire me to grow.

* * *

85. Success is about what I get

The point of a compelling vision is to start the process that enables you to become a better person. What matters most is the journey you must go through to attain your goals. While the destination is nice, it won't give you the sense of fulfillment you hope for. Once you've reached your goal, you'll soon feel restless and dissatisfied. So, you'll set another goal so that you can enjoy the journey one more time.

For this reason, having a vision or an overall theme for your life is useful. A vision is a journey that never ends. You reach milestones (goals along the way), and you might even rest for a while, but you are still on your journey.

Therefore, when setting goals, think in the long term. Reflect on the skills you'd like to acquire or the character

traits you'd like to embody. For instance, what type of parent, son/daughter, brother/sister, colleague or citizen would you like to become?

Remember, success isn't about achieving any specific goal, it is about enjoying the journey that leads to you becoming someone you can be proud of. Don't be so eager to acquire material possessions or so-called success. Instead, set meaningful goals and learn to smell the roses along the journey that leads you to reach them.

Think of what kind of person you want to become. Now, what goals could you set to entice you to become that person?

New empowering belief:

I become the person who attracts the reality I wish to see.

* * *

86. To be successful, I need a mentor

During your quest toward "success", your mind will try to sabotage your efforts in many ways. Trust me, you'll never run out of excuses when it comes to finding ways to procrastinate.

You're too young or too old. You aren't smart enough. You don't know how. You're not well-connected enough. There is too much competition. Your environment isn't supportive enough. You don't have enough time. I could go on and on.

Yet another excuse is, "To be successful, I need a mentor."

Having a mentor can be extremely invaluable, for sure, but in most cases, not having a mentor isn't the reason you're failing to reach your goals.

Here is one example of how to access great mentors that you can work with right now:

Books.

Some of the most amazing people on earth have written books in which they detail their thinking process, their strategies and their tactics as well as share their wisdom. For a few bucks, you can soak up the knowledge of Nobel prize winners, iconic entrepreneurs, or historical figures. You can have Albert Einstein, Steve Jobs or Abraham Lincoln mentor you from the comfort of your living room. How cool is that!

And nobody can ever prevent you from soaking up all the knowledge you desire. Consequently, make sure you're absorbing as much wisdom as you can from these incredible mentors.

The point is, don't wait to find a mentor before getting started. This is just another excuse. Whatever you're trying to achieve, begin today, on your own. You might find that your willingness to do the work increases your odds of finding a mentor. You must help yourself first and show your commitment to the world before anyone else will be willing to dedicate their time and effort to help you.

Do the work consistently and the right mentor might appear. And if they don't, you'll still be fine.

New empowering belief:

I have everything I need within myself to be successful.

* * *

87. I lack resources

Many people give up on their dreams because they believe they lack the resources needed to reach their goals. They believe they lack knowledge, education, money, time, connections, creativity, and so on. But is that so?

Some people are fortunate enough to have access to more resources than others. Perhaps they have money. Perhaps they belong to the elite. Or perhaps they are naturally gifted.

However, one key principle in life is that we must start from where we are with what we have. A lack of resources isn't a deal-breaker that will stop you from moving forward with your goals forever—but a lack of *resourcefulness* certainly is. Resourcefulness is the only tool you need to help you attract all the resources you require to reach your goals.

Among other things, resourcefulness means:

- Unshakeable grit,
- Unwavering self-confidence,
- The ability to learn quickly and effectively,
- The burning desire to make changes in your life,
- A compelling vision that drives you and inspires others,
- Powerful self-discipline,
- Extreme consistency,
- The skill to solve complex problems, and so on.

In truth, lack of resources is seldom the problem. You do not lack resources; you lack the ability to attract any resource you need because of:

- A lack of clarity,
- Untrained self-discipline,

- Chronic procrastination,
- Poor self-confidence,
- A weak understanding of your strengths, or
- A lack of compelling reasons.

If you develop the character traits and skills required to attract the resources you need to move forward, you will discover that you possess both more resourcefulness and more resources than you imagined.

New empowering belief:

I'm resourceful enough to attract any resources I need.

* * *

88. I'll be successful once...

How often have you told yourself that you'll be happy or successful once you achieve a specific goal? Perhaps, it's making a certain sum of money. Perhaps it is getting married, or perhaps it's landing your dream job.

The problem with this way of thinking is that it presupposes that success lies outside of you. It presupposes that certain events or conditions must be met before you can allow yourself to feel successful. You need to make a little more money, get down to 10% body fat or buy an exotic car.

Again, this isn't how success works. Success is a state of mind and an inner feeling rather than something to be achieved in the external world. You do not have to wait thirty years to feel successful. You are successful right now when you behave in a way that helps you move toward worthy goals. You are successful when you are:

- Making progress toward a side business you're excited about,
- Spending quality time with your spouse or kids, or
- Eating healthy food.

When embodied every day, this attitude of success manifests into external events. Your side business may become profitable enough for you to quit your boring day job. The time you spend with your family may strengthen your relationships with your spouse and kids. And eating healthy food may enable you to live longer and in better health.

To conclude, you're not successful once you achieve goals in the future, you're successful today when you act in a way that leads to future successes.

Take a moment to answer the following questions:

- If I keep doing what I'm doing today or this week, will I end up where I aspire to be in one year, five years, or ten years?
- If not, what do I have to stop/start doing?

New empowering belief:
I focus on being successful today.

* * *

89. Thinking can replace doing

Many people like to visualize their goals or share them with friends. It makes them feel good and gives them the illusion they're traveling along on the right path. However, none of these activities can make up for a lack of action.

Visualizing your goals can help, but you cannot *think* your way to success. At some point, you must ensure your expectations match reality. This entails taking concrete action and confronting yourself with the real world.

People fail because of a *lack* of action, seldom because of an *excess* of it. If you're struggling to reach your goals, take more action. Doing so will enable you to receive more feedback from reality, which will help you:

- Identify what works and what doesn't,
- Adjust your course of action, and
- Learn and improve faster.

The bottom line is, doing is how you show the world you're serious. Start inverting your thinking-to-action ratio. Spend most of your time acting and stop thinking or reading so much. You probably don't need any more intellectual knowledge. What you do need is to turn that knowledge into action through practice, then to transform action into wisdom through experience.

So, how can you think less and do more? What specific actions could you take?

New empowering belief:

I strive to do more and create new opportunities in the process.

(See also 48. *I already know that*)

* * *

90. I should be happy with what I have

On the one hand, we're told we should be happy with what we have, but on the other hand, we're told we should pursue our dreams.

So, what shall we do?

There are no right answers. It all depends on you and what you feel like doing. Perhaps all you want to do is spend time with your family and friends, and take it easy. Or perhaps you are drawn toward highly ambitious goals.

My only piece of advice is this: be honest with yourself. It's okay to be ambitious, and it doesn't mean you cannot appreciate all the things you already have going for you. Appreciate what you have but be open to receiving more. Don't limit yourself just because you were told you should be content with what you have. Don't abandon your dreams because others tell you what you should or shouldn't do. Instead, decide what you want to do, commit to it and let the world change and adapt as you make progress toward your vision.

To sum up, embrace your ambitions, clarify your vision and learn the necessary skills. Then, start moving toward your goals one step at a time.

Reflect on the following questions:

- How ambitious are you? Really?
- If you were to embrace your ambitions wholeheartedly and unapologetically, what would you start doing differently?

New empowering belief:

I embrace my ambition and go after what I want.

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OTHER ASSUMPTIONS

In this final section, I'd like to go over a few more assumptions that I encourage you to challenge. Remember, no matter how many empowering assumptions you hold, there are still many disempowering ones lurking in the background.

Because what we believe impacts on the decisions we make and the results we achieve, it is worth challenging our assumptions on an ongoing basis.

91. I must work forty hours a week for forty-plus years

It's generally assumed we must work forty hours per week for up to forty years before we can finally retire. But does this have to be the case for you?

As a rule of thumb, realize that you can never have an extraordinary life by thinking ordinary thoughts. If you believe you must work forty hours a week for forty years, it will become your reality. But what if you want to retire ten years early? Work only twenty-five hours a week? Take a sabbatical every five years? People have done this before you, so why not you?

Of course, it may take years of planning and tons of hard work, but it's precisely because it requires a lot of preparation that you need to set specific long-term goals. These goals will then dictate all the decisions you make every day.

For instance, if you wish to retire ten years early, you need to change your behavior, which entails saving and investing more money, which in turn may require spending less and/or starting a side hustle.

The point is, rather than assuming you must work the same way others do, decide exactly what you want your career to be like. Be specific and make sure your goals inspire you. The more reasons you have to reach your goals, the better.

To live like the top 1%, you must do what the remaining 99% aren't willing to do. Consequently, stop thinking the same way everybody else does. Decide what you want, create a sound plan and execute it diligently. This is how you'll design a career and life that you genuinely enjoy.

Now, answer the following questions:

- What would your ideal career look like exactly? Be honest and ambitious. Write it down.
- What plan could you put in place to start moving toward that ideal career?

New empowering belief:
I design the career that suits me best.

* * *

92. I must fulfill my potential

As human beings we face a major dilemma:

We have almost unlimited potential but a very limited amount of time and energy to fulfill it.

Knowing that we will never be able to fulfill our potential completely, what are we supposed to do?

The key question to ask yourself is:

What's the best way for me to use the precious time and energy I have available?

The answer is complex, but one suggestion would be to identify your biggest strengths or talents and use them to make a meaningful contribution to the world. Going one step further, it is to identify where the following things might overlap:

- What you're good at,
- What you enjoy doing the most,
- What the world needs from you, and
- What people are willing to pay you for.

You will have discovered the sweet spot when you are able to use your strengths in an enjoyable way while meeting people's needs in exchange for a monetary reward. Sure, you will not have fully explored your full potential, but you'll have made a significant contribution to the world and you will live a meaningful life.

Therefore, spend more time looking into what you really enjoy doing and what you are good at. If necessary, ask the people around you. They might know better than you what your strengths are. Then, strive to leverage your strengths in a meaningful way.

New empowering belief:

I identify my strengths and goals, and keep growing.

* * *

93. Self-discipline sucks

Many people aspire for more freedom. They wish they could do whatever they want, whenever they want, wherever they want and with whomever they want. This is certainly a wonderful goal to strive for.

However, paradoxically, we can only attain such freedom by cultivating more self-discipline. In other words, self-discipline is what frees us. Think of it this way. If you have no control over your thoughts, emotions and behavior, how much freedom do you really have?

Without self-control, you may become overweight, get into debt or underperform at work. That is, you're unlikely to end up in a situation where you can do whatever you want whenever you want. If anything, you'll become a slave to money, food or various addictions.

In truth, if you fail to discipline yourself, someone else will do it for you, and it probably won't be pleasant. This is why you want to take control instead. So, see self-discipline as something positive and empowering. With enough self-discipline, you can achieve almost anything you want, whether it be maintaining a healthy body, becoming wealthy, retiring early or traveling around the world.

Remember, if you do what's easy, your life will become difficult. But if you do what's tough, your life will become easy.

Complete the following exercises:

- Write down all the things you could accomplish if you had more discipline.

- Now, what difficult things could you start doing right now to make your life easier?

New empowering belief:
Self-discipline leads to freedom.

* * *

94. Life is hard

How many times have you heard that life is hard? Perhaps, you're the one repeating this mantra to yourself and to the people around you.

But is it true?

It may or may not be. But if you keep telling yourself it is, you'll end up spending a lot of your time and energy looking for ways to confirm that belief.

Instead, what if you ask yourself the following questions:

How am I making life harder than it needs to be?

Alternatively:

If I believed life was easy, what would I do differently?

When you start questioning the premise that life is hard, you'll find out that there are many things you can do differently to make your life easier and more enjoyable.

Truth is, most of the suffering we experience has nothing to do with the reality out there. It's all about the way we perceive events happening to us or around us. In fact, from reality's point of view, there is no problem and there is no suffering. There are only things happening.

Our role is to:

- Become better at accepting events outside of our control, and
- Interpret them in an empowering way that serves us rather than hinders us.

What about you? How are you making your life harder than it needs to be?

Strive to make your life easier over time, not harder. It starts by challenging the assumption that life needs to be hard.

Now, complete the exercise below:

- List three things you do or ways you behave that make your life harder than it needs to be.
- Select one thing you could do to make your life a little easier.

New empowering belief:
I act in ways that make my life easier.

* * *

95. I would give more if I received more

Many people tell themselves that they would give more time, money or effort if only they were compensated accordingly beforehand.

This is a little like saying you would buy a lottery ticket if you were guaranteed to win. However, in life, there are no guarantees. You must do the work first and believe that it will lead you to receive more.

Here is another way to think about it. You cannot outgrow your current mental or physical environment by acting in a

way that matches this environment. For instance, it's unlikely you'll be promoted at work if you do the minimum asked of you. When you do, you send a message that you're exactly where you should be—so you'll stay there. It's only when your actions and your behavior consistently match the new environment in which you aspire to be that you'll eventually and inevitably outgrow your environment.

Now, there is usually a time lag between the moment you upgrade your thinking and the moment it manifests in the world. But know that, over a long enough period, you are unlikely to remain stuck where you are when you think and act consistently as though you were already in your new environment.

So, let go of the idea that if you received more, you would give more. Exert more effort than is required of you in your career. Give more love and attention to people around you. Donate more money. The more you give, the more fully you express your personality, and the more will come back to you as a result.

Give more and, soon enough, you'll receive more.

If you knew that by giving more, you'd receive more, in which areas of your life would you give more of your time or money, or exert more effort?

New empowering belief:
By giving more, I receive more.

* * *

96. I need to overcome my weaknesses

Should you build on your strengths or work on overcoming your weaknesses?

Well, in theory, you could do both, but if you truly want to make an impact, it's often far more powerful to identify your strengths and focus on improving them.

Now, there is certainly value in overcoming some of your weaknesses, especially if they:

- Negatively affect your sense of self-esteem, and
- Act as a bottleneck that prevents you from expressing yourself and impacting the world the way you want to.

However, dedicating too many resources to improving your weaknesses can become an issue. Think about it this way. How are you going to compete with other people who are great at what they do if you aren't that great at what you do? You may think that you'll catch up through hard work.

Maybe.

Remember, people who are passionate about what they do and are good at it will keep improving relentlessly. They will work harder than most people, and they will probably never give up (because they love doing what they do). As a result, they will outcompete you.

If you desire to become world-class, it's often more effective to identify your strengths and sharpen your skills than to improve your weaknesses.

Therefore, discover what you excel at and enjoy doing. Then, look for ways to monetize it. This is often the most effective way to become a true master. Meanwhile, improve on the weaknesses that act as bottlenecks.

New empowering belief:
I focus on my strengths.

* * *

97. I've reached a plateau and can't improve anymore

While you may believe you can't get better at your job or further develop your current skills, this is seldom, if ever, the case. Hitting a plateau is natural, but you must remember that you can always improve. By using the power of repetition, you can internalize movements, tasks and ways of thinking. Repetition allows you to transfer skills to your subconscious, making you feel as though you have superpowers—and you do. Take driving, for instance. The first time you took the wheel you were probably scared and unsure if you would ever be able to drive. Years later, driving has become effortless. You have internalized the process of driving so well that you can now drive while talking to your friends or listening to music.

Have you ever wondered why world-class athletes are so obsessed with nailing the fundamentals? This is because they must be able to execute key movements perfectly even when under intense pressure. Therefore, they practice the same movements repeatedly. Basketball players repeat the same shots thousands of times. Tennis players practice their serve for hours on end. Golfers rehearse their swings over and over.

The bottom line is this. If you reached a plateau, it's likely because you haven't fully integrated the concepts of self-reflection, constant improvement and repetition. To progress at anything, you must:

- Isolate the key skills and tasks needed to improve your performance, and
- Master them by designing specific exercises you can practice consistently.

Remember, to become exceptional at what you do, repetition is key.

Now, identify an area in which you feel stuck or fail to get the results you want. Ask yourself, what you can do to get unstuck?

New empowering belief:
Everything is learnable, and I can always improve.

* * *

98. I need to find my purpose

Purpose is the fuel that enables us to live a happy and fulfilling life. People with a purpose live longer and are eager to get out of bed each morning. They are excited to learn, grow and fulfill their potential. On the other hand, people without a purpose lack motivation and feel unfulfilled. For them, life seems devoid of meaning.

But how do we know what our purpose is or should be?

This isn't an easy question to answer. Some people believe that our purpose was given to us at birth, and our job is merely to uncover it. Others believe that life is inherently meaningless and that it's our responsibility to take the necessary action to make it meaningful.

I do not know which is true. However, what I can suggest is that, if you've been trying to find your purpose for years and haven't yet found it, perhaps it's time you start creating it. To create your purpose, you must find ways to give meaning to your life and act accordingly. Ask yourself the following questions:

What major issues did I overcome in the past?

Perhaps you suffered from abuse, struggled with alcohol or drugs or were painfully shy. If so, look at each of these issues one by one. Do you feel a strong desire to help others overcome similar issues?

What's your life journey and where is it directing you?

Spend time looking at your own life story from an objective point of view.

- What major goals have you accomplished and why?
- When were your happiest moments and why? What were you doing?
- If someone looked at your life story, what next move would seem to them the most logical? And how do you feel about that move?

What meaning could you give to your life?

Assuming that life has no meaning per se, what meaning(s) could you give to your life? Brainstorm several ways you could make your life more meaningful.

Remember, when you believe you need to find your purpose, you're often passively waiting for things to work out for the best. Alternatively, when you decide that you can create your own purpose, you take your life in your own hands.

So, what's the most meaningful way for you to live your life?

New empowering belief:

I create my purpose and bring meaning to my life.

* * *

99. Asking for help is a sign of weakness

Do you believe you need to figure out things on your own, or are you willing to ask for help when needed?

Truth is, many people are unwilling to ask for help for fear of looking stupid or being judged. They wrongly assume that smart people can figure out everything by themselves and that they should, too. For this reason, they refrain from asking for help. More specifically, there are a few reasons why you may be reluctant to ask others for help. These include:

- Pride,
- The fear of bothering people, or
- The belief that you should figure things out for yourself.

Pride

Are you afraid of letting others know how much you are struggling? Do you fear losing face? If this is the case, realize that allowing yourself to be vulnerable will often let you create deeper and more intimate connections with the people around you.

Fear of bothering people

Perhaps, you do not like to bother people with your problems. You may feel bad because they're busy, or you may think you're not important enough to take up other people's time. If so, this may be a sign that you don't value yourself highly enough. Start noticing these situations and challenge yourself to "bother" others a little more than usual.

The belief that you should figure things out for yourself

Perhaps you believe you should figure things out all by yourself. This can be a good thing as it stimulates your creativity and develops your resourcefulness—a key element to achieving a higher level of success. However, there are also times when you are far better off asking for support. You can't afford the luxury of reinventing the wheel every time you attempt something new.

By not asking for help, you risk feeling isolated and powerless. Almost inevitably, some people out there will have the answer to your question. Why not find them and ask for their support? This might be the smartest and most mature thing you can do.

Complete the following exercises:

- Think of examples in your life where you refused to ask for help.
- What do you think is the reason for that?
- Now, think of one or two ways you could ask for help.

New empowering belief:
I'm strong enough to ask for help.

* * *

100. I'm not a leader

Do you see yourself as a leader, or do you feel as though you're more of a follower? Or perhaps you perceive yourself as a lone wolf?

Many people's definition of leadership is incomplete or even erroneous. They believe they can't be leaders because they're too quiet, lack confidence or have little charisma.

However, in truth, being a leader isn't about being the loudest and most confident person in the room. It isn't about being incredibly charismatic. Yes, it may be part of it, but first and foremost, being a leader is about having control over your thoughts and actions while having a compelling vision to move toward.

In other words, leaders lead themselves first. Leaders are disciplined enough to get things done and overcome procrastination. Leaders are courageous enough to stay true to their values and move toward their vision no matter what. As a result, they become a source of inspiration for the people around them, whether they are their children, spouses, colleagues, friends or the members of their community. It means that everybody can be a leader. For instance, you are leader when you:

- Do your best to have a positive influence on your kids,
- Support your friends during tough times, or
- Help your colleagues at work.

The point is, you are a leader because you can take control of your thoughts, live by your core values and move toward your vision. And as you do, you'll inevitably inspire many of the people who cross your path.

You are a leader. So, start acting accordingly. Behave as though you mean business. Stay true to your values even when nobody is looking and keep moving toward your vision with unwavering confidence and absolute determination.

See also *93. Self-discipline sucks* and *6. I have nothing of value to offer to the world.*

CONCLUSION

Our life is largely shaped by many of the assumptions we hold onto. When our assumptions are empowering, we tend to make better decisions, which leads to better results. Conversely, when our assumptions are negative, we limit ourselves, and we die slowly inside, never living the life we know is possible for us.

I hope that, by reading this book, you have identified most of the negative assumptions that limit you and have started replacing them with more empowering ones that serve you. The truth is, you're often only a couple of assumptions away from drastically improving your life.

Now, adopting better assumptions doesn't mean that everything will be easy. You'll still have to do the work, stay consistent, and deal with setbacks and apparent failures. But it will definitely help you spot more opportunities and act on them with more determination and more confidence than ever before.

Remember, what you think about yourself often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Keep upgrading your thinking and your life will improve accordingly.

What do you think?

I hope you benefit from this book. I would be very grateful if you could take a moment to leave an honest review on Amazon.

Thanks again for your support!

Thibaut

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MASTER YOUR EMOTIONS (PREVIEW)

“ The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of Hell, a hell of Heaven.

— JOHN MILTON, POET.

We all experience a wide range of emotions throughout our lives. I had to admit, while writing this book, I experienced highs and lows myself. At first, I was filled with excitement and thrilled at the idea of providing people with a guide to help them understand their emotions. I imagined how readers' lives would improve as they learned to control their emotions. My motivation was high and I couldn't help but imagine how great the book would be.

Or so I thought.

After the initial excitement, the time came to sit down to write the actual book, and that's when the excitement wore off pretty quickly. Suddenly ideas that looked great in my mind felt dull. My writing seemed boring, and I felt as though I had nothing substantive or valuable to contribute.

Sitting at my desk and writing became more challenging each day. I started losing confidence. Who was I to write a

book about emotions if I couldn't even master my own emotions? How ironic! I considered giving up. There are already plenty of books on the topic, so why add one more?

At the same time, I realized this book was a perfect opportunity to work on my emotional issues. And who doesn't suffer from negative emotions from time to time? We all have highs and lows, don't we? The key is what we *do* with our lows. Are we using our emotions to grow and learn or are we beating ourselves up over them?

So, let's talk about *your* emotions now. Let me start by asking you this:

How do you feel right now?

Knowing how you feel is the first step toward taking control of your emotions. You may have spent so much time internalizing you've lost touch with your feelings. Perhaps you answered as follows: "I feel this book could be useful," or "I really feel I could learn something from this book."

However, none of these answers reflect on how you feel. You don't 'feel like this,' or 'feel like that,' you simply 'feel.' You don't 'feel like' this book could be useful, you 'think' this book could be useful, and that generates an emotion which makes you 'feel' excited about reading it. Feelings manifest as physical sensations in your body, not as an idea in your mind. Perhaps, the reason the word 'feel' is so often overused or misused is because we don't want to talk about our emotions.

So, how do you feel now?

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Why is it important to talk about emotions?

How you feel determines the quality of your life. Your emotions can make your life miserable or truly magical. That's why they are among the most essential things on which to focus. Your emotions color all your experiences. When you feel good, everything seems, feels, or tastes better. You also think better thoughts. Your energy levels are higher and possibilities seem limitless. Conversely, when you feel depressed, everything seems dull. You have little energy and you become unmotivated. You feel stuck in a place (mentally and physically) you don't want to be, and the future looks gloomy.

Your emotions can also act as a powerful guide. They can tell you something is wrong and allow you to make changes in your life. As such, they may be among the most powerful personal growth tools you have.

Sadly, neither your teachers nor your parents taught you how emotions work or how to control them. I find it ironic that just about anything comes with a how-to manual, while your mind doesn't. You've never received an instruction manual to teach you how your mind works and how to use it to better manage your emotions, have you? I haven't. In fact, until now, I doubt one even existed.

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What you'll learn in this book

This book is the how-to manual your parents should have given you at birth. It's the instruction manual you should have received at school. In it, I'll share everything you need to know about emotions so you can overcome your fears and limitations and become the type of person you want to be.

More specifically, this book will help you:

- Understand what emotions are and how they impact your life
- Understand how emotions form and how you can use them for your personal growth
- Identify negative emotions that control your life and learn to overcome them
- Change your story to take better control over your life and create a more compelling future,
- Reprogram your mind to experience more positive emotions.
- Deal with negative emotions and condition your mind to create more positive ones
- Gain all the tools you need to start recognizing and controlling your emotions

Here is a more detailed summary of what you'll learn in this book:

In **Part I**, we'll discuss what emotions are. You'll learn why your brain is wired to focus on negativity and what you can do to counter this effect. You'll also discover how your beliefs impinge upon your emotions. Finally, you'll learn how negative emotions work and why they are so tricky.

In **Part II**, we'll go over the things that directly impact your emotions. You'll understand the roles your body, your thoughts, your words, or your sleep, play in your life and how you can use them to change your emotions.

In **Part III**, you'll learn how emotions form and how to condition your mind to experience more positive emotions.

And finally, in **Part IV**, we'll discuss how to use your emotions as a tool for personal growth. You'll learn why you experience emotions such as fear or depression and how they work.

Let's get started.

To start mastering your emotions today go to

mybook.to/Master_Emotions

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I. What emotions are

Have you ever wondered what emotions are and what purpose they serve?

In this section, we'll discuss how your survival mechanism affects your emotions. Then, we'll explain what the 'ego' is and how it impacts your emotions. Finally, we'll discover the mechanism behind emotions and learn why it can be so hard to deal with negative ones.

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Why people have a bias towards negativity

Your brain is designed for survival, which explains why you're able to read this book at this very moment. When you think about it, the probability of you being born was extremely low. For this miracle to happen, all the generations before you had to survive long enough to procreate. In their quest for survival and procreation, they must have faced death hundreds or perhaps thousands of times.

Fortunately, unlike your ancestors, you're (probably) not facing death every day. In fact, in many parts of the world, life has never been safer. Yet, your survival mechanism hasn't changed much. Your brain still scans your environment looking for potential threats.

In many ways, some parts of your brain have become obsolete. While you may not be seconds away from being eaten by a predator, your brain still gives significantly more weight to adverse events than to positive ones.

Fear of rejection is one example of a bias toward negativity. In the past, being rejected by your tribe would reduce your chances of survival significantly. Therefore, you learned to look for any sign of rejection, and this became hardwired in your brain.

Nowadays, being rejected often carries little or no consequence to your long-term survival. You can be hated by the entire world and still have a job, a roof and plenty of food on the table, yet, your brain remains programmed to perceive rejection as a threat to your survival.

This hardwiring is why rejection can be so painful. While you know most rejections are no big deal, you nevertheless

feel the emotional pain. If you listen to your mind, you may even create a whole drama around it. You may believe you aren't worthy of love and dwell on a rejection for days or weeks. Worse still, you may become depressed as a result of this rejection.

One single criticism can often outweigh hundreds of positive ones. That's why, an author with fifty 5-star reviews, is likely to feel terrible when they receive a single 1-star review. While the author understands the 1-star review isn't a threat to her survival, her authorial brain doesn't. It likely interprets the negative review as a threat to her ego which triggers an emotional reaction.

The fear of rejection can also lead you to over-dramatize events. If your boss criticized you at work, your brain might see the criticism as a threat and you now think, "What if my boss fires me? What if I can't find a job quickly enough and my wife leaves me? What about my kids? What if I can't see them again?"

While you are fortunate to have such a useful survival mechanism, it is also your responsibility to separate real threats from imaginary ones. If you don't, you'll experience unnecessary pain and worry that will negatively impact the quality of your life. To overcome this bias towards negativity, you must reprogram your mind. One of a human being's greatest powers is our ability to use our thoughts to shape our reality and interpret events in a more empowering way. This book will teach you how to do this.

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Why your brain's job isn't to make you happy

Your brain's primary responsibility is not to make you happy, but to ensure your survival. Thus, if you want to be happy, you must actively take control of your emotions rather than hoping you'll be happy because it's your natural state. In the following section, we'll discuss what happiness is and how it works.

How dopamine can mess with your happiness

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that, among other functions, plays a significant role in rewarding certain behaviors. When dopamine releases into specific areas of your brain—the pleasure centers—you get an intense sense of wellbeing similar to a high. This sense of wellbeing is what happens during exercise, when you gamble, have sex, or eat great food.

One of the roles of dopamine is to ensure you look for food so you don't die of starvation, and you search for a mate so you can reproduce. Without dopamine, our species would likely be extinct by now. It's a pretty good thing, right?

Well, yes and no. In today's world, this reward system is, in many cases, obsolete. In the past, dopamine directly linked to our survival, now, it can be stimulated artificially. A great example of this effect is social media, which uses psychology to suck as much time as possible out of your life. Have you noticed all these notifications that pop up regularly? They're used to trigger a release of dopamine so you stay connected, and the longer you stay connected, the more money the services make. Watching pornography or gambling also leads to a release of dopamine which can make these activities highly addictive.

Fortunately, we don't need to act each time our brain releases dopamine. For instance, we don't need to continuously check our Facebook newsfeeds just because it gives us a pleasurable shot of dopamine.

Today's society is selling a version of happiness that can make us *unhappy*. We've become addicted to dopamine mainly because of marketers who have found effective ways to exploit our brains. We receive multiple shots of dopamine throughout the day and we love it. But is that the same thing as happiness?

Worse than that, dopamine can create real addictions with severe consequences on our health. Research conducted at Tulane University showed that, when permitted to self-stimulate their pleasure center, participants did it an average of forty times per minute. They chose the stimulation of their pleasure center over food, even refusing to eat when hungry!

Korean, Lee Seung Seop is an extreme case of this syndrome. In 2005, Mr Seop died after playing a video game for fifty-eight hours straight with very little food or water, and no sleep. The subsequent investigation concluded the cause of death was heart failure induced by exhaustion and dehydration. He was only twenty-eight years old.

To take control of your emotions, you must understand the role dopamine plays and how it affects your happiness. Are you addicted to your phone? Are you glued to your TV? Or maybe you spend too much time playing video games. Most of us are addicted to something. For some people it's obvious, but for others, it's more subtle. For instance, you could be addicted to thinking. To better control your emotions, you must recognize and shed the light on your addictions as they can rob you of your happiness.

The 'one day I will' myth

Do you believe that one day you will achieve your dream and finally be happy? It is unlikely to happen. You may (and I hope you will) achieve your goal, but you won't live 'happily ever after.' This thinking is just another trick your mind plays on you.

Your mind quickly acclimates to new situations, which is probably the result of evolution and our need to adapt continually to survive and reproduce. This acclimatization is also probably why the new car or house you want will only make you happy for a while. Once the initial excitement wears off, you'll move on to crave the next exciting thing. This phenomenon is known as 'hedonic adaptation.'

How hedonic adaptation works

Let me share an interesting study that will likely change the way you see happiness. This study, which was conducted in 1978 on lottery winners and paraplegics, was incredibly eye-opening for me. The investigation evaluated how winning the lottery or becoming a paraplegic influence happiness:

The study found that one year after the event, both groups were just as happy as they were beforehand. Yes, just as happy (or unhappy). You can find more about it by watching Dan Gilbert's TED Talk, *The Surprising Science of Happiness*.

Perhaps you believe that you'll be happy once you've 'made it.' But, as the above study on happiness shows, this is simply not true. No matter what happens to you, your mind works by reverting to your predetermined level of happiness once you've adapted to the new event.

Does that mean you can't be happier than you are right now? No. What it means is that, in the long run, external events have minimal impact on your level of happiness.

In fact, according to Sonja Lyubomirsky, author of *The How of Happiness*, fifty percent of our happiness is determined by genetics, forty percent by internal factors, and only ten percent by external factors. These external factors include such things as whether we're single or married, rich or poor, and similar social influences.

The influence of external factors is probably way less than you thought. The bottom line is this: Your attitude towards life influences your happiness, not what happens to you.

By now, you understand how your survival mechanism negatively impacts your emotions and prevents you from experiencing more joy and happiness in your life. In the next section, we'll learn about the ego.

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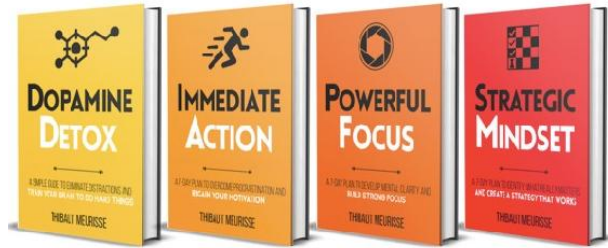
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