

The  
FANTASTIC  
LIFE®

*The best of*  
LIFEies®

*2014-2020*

*How to Get It,  
Live It and Pass It On®*

R. Craig Coppola

# *The best of* **LIFEies**<sup>®</sup> *2014-2020*

*Years before I sent my first LIFEies, I was sending positive and motivational thoughts/ideas and articles to my kids. It began as a quick habit — I would see something I found valuable and add some comments before sending it off. When *The Fantastic Life*<sup>®</sup> was published, we wanted to engage the readers on a weekly basis. So we created LIFEies. Each week for the past seven years I have found an article of interest, a quote, or video I found helpful in my life, then highlighted the key takeaways, and added my own comments.*

*The growth of readers and the feedback has been astonishing. I thought I would take the top 20 LIFEies, the ones with the highest open rates and most engagement, and send them out in a free eBook.*

*I hope you enjoy. Remember, never stop growing, learning and getting better.*

*Craig*





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September 29, 2014

*Learning to deal with failure is a great lesson in life. As you all know, I have been a 100% commission salesman all my career. Before that I played professional baseball. Both of these inherently have a ton of failure as part of the profession. I have had thousands of failures. We teach failing forward as a skill. I know failure. I also know that through failure, I have learned success. I have learned how to win.*

*Fail forward. Focus on the process, not the result. Be Great..*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #12: Get A Win:** This rule helps bring your focus in on what you can accomplish, what you can do instead of what you *can't*. We learn these things by failing, but once you find those strengths, really apply them and find way to utilize them every chance you get.

# How to Succeed by Failing Forward – turning Stumbling Blocks to Stepping Stones.

By Michael Josephson

April 22, 2013

Source: [www.whatwillmatter.com](http://www.whatwillmatter.com)

The best way to teach our children to succeed is to teach them to fail.

After all, if getting everything you want on the first try is success, and everything else is failure, we all fail much more often than we succeed.

People who learn how to grow from unsuccessful efforts succeed more often and at higher levels because they become wiser and tougher.

Two great American inventors, Thomas Edison and Charles Kettering mastered the art of building success on a foundation of what others might call failure.

Edison liked to say he “failed his way to success,” noting that every time he tried something that didn’t work he moved closer to what did. “Now I know one more thing that doesn’t work,” he would say.

The lesser known Kettering (head of research for General Motors from 1920-1947) talked about “failing forward,”\* calling every wrong attempt a “practice shot.”



The strength of both men was that their creativity and confidence was undiminished by setbacks and unsuccessful efforts. They accepted that trial and error is an essential strategy for breakthrough innovation and simply rejected the notion of failure. Thomas Watson,

the founder of IBM, cautioned his leaders from being so careful that they never failed. He went so far as to say, “The way to succeed is to double your failure rate.”

Of course, failure is never desirable, but it is inevitable and, with a proper attitude, can be quite useful.

The only way to avoid failure is to avoid the risks and challenges and that probably is a case of real failure. The great hockey player Wayne Gretzky used to say, “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”

Whatever your goal, whether it’s to get something, do something, or improve yourself as a person or professional, the secret of success is learning to transform unsuccessful experiences from stumbling blocks to stepping stones.

Three qualities can turn adversity into advantage: a positive perspective, reflection, and perseverance.

First, learn from the inventors. Don’t allow yourself to think of any failure as final, and never allow unsuccessful efforts to discourage you or cause you to give up. Remember, failure is an event, not a person. Even failing repeatedly can’t defeat you unless you start thinking of yourself as a failure. The way you think about your experiences shapes the experience in ways that either stimulate or stymie further efforts.

Second, don’t waste the experience. Unsuccessful efforts are wasted and debilitating only if you don’t learn from them. Reflect on your actions, attitudes and the results to discover the lesson within the experience and use that knowledge to guide future efforts.

Third, persevere. Try and try again. Just be smarter each time.

And finally, learn to enjoy the process. Simply being absorbed in the pursuit of any change that will improve your life or the lives of others is a blessing.



# Questions You Wish You Had Asked Your Parents

*I thought the below WSJ article on questions we want to ask our parents was thoughtful. Why not, RIGHT NOW, ask any and all questions of our parents we might have? I have lost both my parents, so I sent this to my kids and said—now is the time, ask away.*

*If you are good with your parents, congratulations. Now how about your spouse? Best friend? Partner? Sibling?*

*Here are three great questions to start with (there is more at the end of the article):*

- *Are you proud of me?*
- *How was your relationship with your parents?*
- *What is your best memory of childhood? Why?*

*I am always looking to make lemonade. Here is a small way to do that right now.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #1: Know Your Story:** The people in your life play a huge role in shaping your story. Your friends and family have a great influence over your life, so why not take the time to get to know their stories, and learn how and where you connect?

# The Questions You Wish You Had Asked Your Parents

By Clare Ansberry

March 1, 2020

Source: **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

*Adult children often wait until it's too late to truly understand their parents. Now, that's starting to change; I wish I knew.*

For years, Sarah Smith wanted to know more about her mom's relationship with her own mother. "I'd like to know why my mother felt unloved," says Ms. Smith, a stay-at-home mom in Dallas. "And what was said that made her feel insecure and less confident."

Ms. Smith, 45, didn't press. Now, she's unlikely to ever know. Her 74-year-old mother has early-onset Alzheimer's and lives in a memory care unit.

As significant as parents are in life, their adult children often don't know what shaped them and what they were like before they became mom and dad. They may be curious about their parents' background and choices, but don't think to ask questions or know how to begin. They are busy with raising their families and jobs or live hundreds of miles away. Other topics—children, school, work—can seem more pressing.

Parents themselves aren't always forthcoming, telling only the happy stories and filtering out painful ones. Some don't think their lives are all that interesting.

Yet today, for some people, that is starting to change. There's a growing interest in understanding our parents' lives. Part of it is generational: Younger people are more transparent and used to telling the story of their own lives, often online for many to see, and expect it from others.

"I think younger people find it difficult to understand parents and



grandparents who haven't documented in the way they are doing," says Rutger Bruining, 41, CEO of StoryTerrace, a company that helps people create their own biography books. "Kids want an answer to everything."



*Rebecca Bearden, who loved riding horses, poses during her freshman year in college for the Rangerettes Forever Calendar. Although admired for her leadership and generosity, she lacked confidence for reasons her daughter still doesn't understand and may never find out. PHOTO: BEARDEN AND SMITH FAMILY*

A growing interest in ancestry and the rise in home DNA kits leaves people wanting to know more of their family stories, while greater awareness of dementia makes capturing them soon all the more urgent.

New technology makes it easier, too. StoryCorps, a nonprofit oral history project, has a free app that provides suggested questions, and directions on recording, saving and sharing a conversation with a family member. There are many journaling apps, too.

About a third of Americans admire what their parents have achieved but don't know how they did it, according to a recent survey of 990 adults by StoryTerrace, which pairs ghostwriters with people who want to document their lives in a book. One in five don't know anything

about their parents before they became parents, and 45% learn more about their parents from discovering photos and family possessions than direct conversations with them, according to the survey, which was conducted in November.

Yet relationships with parents, regardless of how complicated, are the ones a person takes through life, says David Isay, who founded StoryCorps. It has recorded 600,000 interviews between family members or friends and archived them in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

Nearly everyone, he says, talks about their parents. “Someone might be 100 years old and the first thing they talk about is their parents,” he says. “It’s a reminder of the primacy of that relationship.” Mr. Isay interviewed his own dad and listened to the recording hours after his father died and found it comforting.

Dan Ryan was 24 when his dad died of cancer. His mom died of

a heart attack two years later. **“I always thought there would be more time,”** says Mr. Ryan, a 60-year-old executive coach for CEOs based in Franklin, Tenn. **He never got around to asking them about their childhood or courtship, his mother’s life on an Illinois farm, and his dad’s time as a Marine in Iwo Jima.**



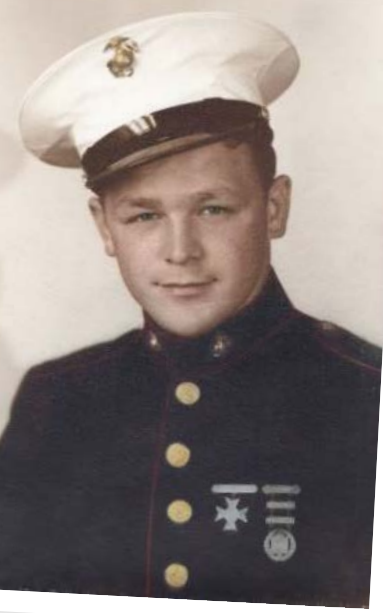
*Dan Ryan and his family gather to celebrate the 87th birthday of his father-in-law Lamon Lovett. PHOTO: DIANNE L. ROUSSEAU/ DIANNE LISETTE PHOTOGRAPHY*

“I’m sure he saw death on a daily basis and at a young age,” says Mr. Ryan, but his dad, Robert, never talked about it. Mr.

Ryan remembers visiting the cemetery with him on Memorial Day and putting flags on veterans’ graves. “I can only guess at what was going through his mind. I wish I knew.”



*Dan Ryan at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1977, with his mom, Helen, and dad, Robert. He was inducted in 1977, but stayed only a month. Both his parents died when he was in his 20s. PHOTO: DAN RYAN*



*Dan Ryan's father, Robert, who was known as Dewey, enlisted in the Marines and served in Iwo Jima. PHOTO: DAN RYAN*

One undiscussed incident lingers with him. After high school, Mr. Ryan entered the U.S. Naval Academy, which he suspects made his father tremendously proud. A homesick Mr. Ryan remembers calling home and telling his dad he wanted to leave the academy. A month later, he did. His father never tried to talk him out of it. After his father died four years later, Mr. Ryan's mother, Helen, told him that his father was disappointed in Mr. Ryan's decision.

"I have always wondered why he didn't say so when I called those many times to say I wanted to leave," he says. "I suspect he didn't want to intervene and that I was adult enough to make my own decision."

Knowing what he missed with his own parents, a few years ago he interviewed his in-laws and taped their conversation on his phone. **"None of us think about how many more days we have."** His mother-in-law died 11 months ago.

Ms. Smith, in Dallas, regrets that her mother's Alzheimer's has dimmed the chances to learn more about her past.

Her mother, Rebecca Bearden, was selective about the stories she told. "She only wanted to communicate things she wanted me to hear," says Ms. Smith. That, along with the dementia, left Ms. Smith with questions that can't be answered. Why, for example, did her mother, who was admired by others for her leadership and generosity, lack confidence? "I could compliment her all day and she would say it wasn't true," says Ms. Smith.

At one point, her mother said that she never felt fully loved by her own mother. When Ms. Smith asked her to explain why, her mother

dropped it and so did Sarah, sensing her mother's reluctance. "I think she was trying to protect me. She knew how much I loved my grandmother." Her mother, she says, did grow closer to her own mother late in life.

Ms. Smith has three children and wishes she had answers for their sake. "I want to know what not to say to my children," she says.



*Sarah Smith and her mother, Rebecca Bearden, on Easter Sunday in 1988. Ms. Smith wrote a book about her mother's dementia, which has dimmed her mother's ability to answer questions about her past. PHOTO: BEARDEN AND SMITH FAMILY*

**Her mom's dementia gives her a greater appreciation of the importance and urgency of transparency and storytelling.** She wrote a book about caregiving, "Broken Beauty: Piecing Together Lives Shattered by Early-Onset Alzheimer's," and now journals daily. "It's so easy for us to grab the phone and take notes, and journal. I do that now and it's my hope our kids will go back and look at things I've written."

Some parents feel compelled to answer unasked questions to explain themselves and why they were the parents they were. Elizabeth Jacobson, 42, knew her mother was overly protective. She remembers being dropped off at college, forgetting her coat and her mother making the four-hour round trip drive back the next day with it. "I thought, 'I don't know any parent who would do that,'" says Ms. Jacobson, who lives in Tacoma, Wash.

She never really thought about it or asked why. "I thought, 'This is just mom,'" she says.

A few years later, when she was in her mid-20s and married, she

visited her parents. While there, she says her mother, Pat Wilson, revealed to her for the first time that she had been married before, had a son, and that her ex-husband had taken him when he was 3 to see Santa and never returned. She hired a private detective and after years of looking, Ms. Wilson gave up her search and tried to get on with her life.

It was the early 1970s, before the internet made tracking people down easier.

Ms. Jacobson was blown away. “I sobbed the whole way home,” she says. **“There was so much to take in. Everything started to make sense. Why mom was so sad all the time and why she was so protective.”** Ms. Jacobson wishes her mother had told her earlier. “I think of all those years she must have stuffed down those feelings,” she says.



*Elizabeth Jacobson, left, her daughter, Naomi, and her mother, Pat Wilson, on her mother's 70th birthday. Ms. Jacobson didn't learn about her mother's first marriage or that she had a half-brother until she was in her 20s.*  
PHOTO: ROBERT WILSON

Her mother and her son ultimately reunited in 2016, when his then-wife tracked Ms. Wilson down through ancestry.com and Facebook. After the reunion, Ms. Wilson decided to write a book called “Beauty for Ashes,” and hired a StoryTerrace ghostwriter, to help her. It would have been too hard, she says, to write on her own.

“I wanted to explain myself. It was such a huge part of my life and affected my parenting,” says Ms. Wilson, 73.

Ms. Jacobson plans on sharing the story with her own 10-year-old daughter, when her daughter is older. “I want to make sure she knows what happened,” she says. “We need to tell our stories.”

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PARENTS**

Many people want to know more about their parents, but aren't sure what to ask or how to start the conversation. StoryCorps suggests some prompts below.

- *Do you remember what was going through your head when you first saw me?*
- *How did you choose my name?*
- *What was I like as a baby? As a young child?*
- *Do you remember any of the songs you used to sing to me? Can you sing them now?*
- *What were my siblings like?*
- *What were the hardest moments you had when I was growing up?*
- *If you could do everything again, would you raise me differently?*
- *What advice would you give me about raising my own kids?*
- *What are your dreams for me?*
- *How did you meet mom/dad?*
- *Are you proud of me?*
- *What were your parents like?*
- *How was your relationship with your parents?*
- *How would you describe yourself as a child? Were you happy?*
- *What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?*



# Life's Hard Spots

*I wanted to send a LIFEies for those who are going through a rough patch (who isn't?). The book Unbroken is about Louis Zamperini, an Olympic runner and WWII survivor. I am sending three quotes from the book and there are a ton more below in the article.*

- *“It’s important to be hardened to life.” All of us will get to experience hardship, some more than others. We need to get stronger, physically, and mentally, every day. What are you doing now in your life to harden yourself?*
- *“Rather than give in, I made myself a promise: no matter what lay ahead, I’d never think about dying, only about living... I adapted myself to my fate instead of resisting it. Rescue would be nice, but survival was most important.” Resilience is earned. We need to live life to develop it. We need to commit to living our Fantastic Life and then go make it happen. Commitment is nothing without action.*
- *“All I want to tell young people is that you’re not going to be anything in life unless you learn to commit to a goal.” We need purpose and vision. Living a Fantastic Life and knowing that your future is actually preparing you for the tough times ahead.*

*Let’s all get up, go to work, and make the next 5 minutes great. Then do it again. Then again.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #18: Do Nothing in Moderation:** Pursuing the Fantastic Life will take you through some dark and rough spots. If you aren’t committed 100% to chase your goals, you will not make it through the hard patches. Don’t live in moderation — give your goals everything you’ve got.

# 4 Lessons in Manliness from Louis Zamperini

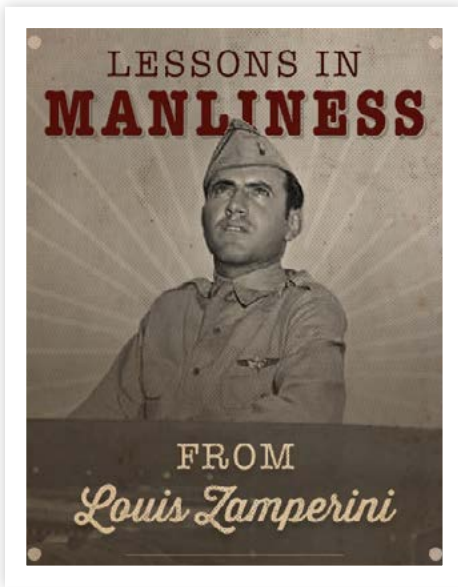
By Brett & Kate McKay

June 26, 2014

Source:



*As the conversation about contemplation flourishes, answers to basic questions about the practice are still hard to pin down. Here is your practical guide to the meditation landscape.*



Sometimes stories are so slender that to become movies, Hollywood has to generously pad and exaggerate the scanty details.

In the case of the current effort to bring the life of Louis Zamperini to the silver screen, the challenge for filmmakers is quite the opposite — managing to fit all the unbelievable details into only 3 hours of running time.

As a boy, Zamperini was a troublemaker who seemed destined to become a bum or a criminal.

At age 15, he found running and turned his life around. He set high school cross-country records, won a scholarship to run track for USC, became a two-time NCAA champion miler, and represented the United States in the 5,000 meters at the 1936 Olympics.

When WWII broke out, Zamperini joined the Army Air Forces,



and was deployed to the Pacific as a bombardier on a B-24 Liberator bomber. While flying a rescue mission in search of a downed plane, his bomber crashed into the ocean. 8 of the 11 men aboard were killed.

Louie and two of his crewmates (pilot Russell Allen “Phil” Phillips and Francis “Mac” McNamara) were stranded on a pair of small life rafts. Constantly circled by sharks, with no food and minimal supplies, the men survived for 47 days and drifted 2,000 miles before being rescued/captured by the Japanese.

Being picked up hardly brought an end to Louie’s journey of survival. Having been declared dead stateside, he spent the next two years imprisoned in a series of interrogation and POW camps, where he was starved, diseased, and beaten almost daily by a sadistic guard nicknamed the Bird.

At the end of the war, Louie struggled with alcoholism, anger, and nightmares before finding faith and forgiveness.

Just as it will be impossible for filmmakers to capture the entirety of Louis Zamperini’s amazing life story, I cannot hope to summarize all the incredible lessons that can be learned from it. But here are just a few that will make you a better man.

## 1. Energy Needs an Outlet



Louis Zamperini was born in Olean, New York, on January 26, 1917. The second of four children, it was clear from the get-go that he would be the hardest for his parents to handle. Even as a toddler he was a bundle of energy that was impossible to corral or constrain.

Young Louie liked action and he liked attention, but the kind he got as a boy wasn’t the variety he hoped for. When the Zamperini family

moved to Torrance, California, Louie's peers mocked his Italian accent, and hit, kicked, and threw stones at him in an effort to get him to curse in his parents' native language — an outburst which would double them over with laughter. He informed his father of his troubles, who then made Louie a set of weights from lead-filled cans welded to a pipe, set up a punching bag, and taught Louie how to box and fight back. After six months of training, Louis set out to even the score. He pummeled his schoolyard bullies, and won a formidable reputation that deterred future attacks.

Louie's success emboldened him, and shrunk the already short fuse of his temper. He hit a teacher, threw tomatoes at a police officer, and accosted anyone who crossed him the wrong way. He formed a gang of fellow toughs that engaged in hijinks both comical and criminal; they rung church bells in the middle of the night, grabbed pies from a bakery, and pinched liquor from bootleggers (Louie said they made the best victims, since they couldn't incriminate themselves by reporting the theft!). Louis loved seeing his escapades written up in the papers.

As a young teenager, Louie only became more surly and wild. He isolated himself from his family and his classmates. But despite his tough façade, inside he felt miserable. He wanted to be better and not cause his parents so many headaches and heartaches, but he continued to feel like “the proverbial square peg who couldn't fit into the round hole...or appreciate what he had.”

Luckily, Louie's older brother Pete had a plan. Pete had seen how quickly Louie could run away from the scenes of his crimes, and figured that speed could be put to better use. He understood that Louie craved recognition, and decided to help him get it in a more constructive way. To that end, he pushed his brother into joining the high school track team. At first Louie balked, and his first race was a disaster; he came in dead last. But Pete incessantly dogged him to enter another meet, and this time the results improved; Louie placed third, and more importantly, experienced a taste of the thrill of competition and the sweet sound of his name being shouted by a crowd of spectators.

At first Louie still fought against wholly giving himself over to becoming an athlete. His training regimen was spotty and he continued to drink and smoke. But after a short and unromantic stint as a train-hopping hobo, and the realization that he didn't want to spend his adult life as a bum, he was ready to tell Pete: "You win. I'm going all out to be a runner." As Louie later recalled, "It was the first wise decision of my life."

As the fledging runner trained, improved, and started to win, his neighbors and classmates started to treat him much differently. He began to catch "a whiff of respect: Louis Zamperini, the wop hoodlum from nowhere, had made a success of himself."

Louie would always have a temper, and a penchant for rebellion, but here began his training in how to harness it for worthy ends. He kept his fire and fight, but made them his servant instead of his master. It was a power that would serve him well in the many challenges to come.

## **2. Toughness Is the Ultimate Preparation for Any Exigency**

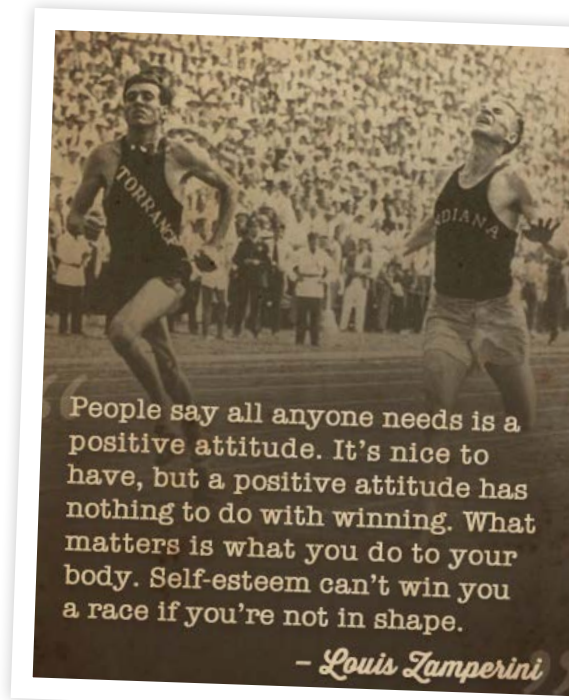
The transformation from local hellraiser to dedicated athlete wasn't easy. As Louie later recalled, "I still wanted to do almost everything my way." On his training runs, Pete would follow behind his whining brother on a bike, hitting him with a stick to prod him along. Louie gradually began "to accept the physical pain of training" and Pete had to employ the switch less and less often. He gave up smoking and drinking and even ice cream sundaes, and he did it because he didn't want to let his brother down. But Pete understood that Louie needed to want it for himself. "You've got to develop self-discipline," Pete told his brother. "I can't always be around." Louie took the advice to heart and worked to develop his own commitment to running:

"I knew however much I struggled against it, that running was the right course to follow. To stay on the straight and narrow I made a secret pact with myself to train every day for a year, no matter what the weather. If I missed working out at school, or the track was muddy, I'd put on my running shoes at night and trot around my block five or six times, about a mile and a half. That winter we had

two sandstorms and I had to tie a wet handkerchief across my face and mouth just to go out. I also kept boxing, to develop my chest muscles. In the end I was probably even more disciplined than Pete wanted me to be.”

As part of Louie’s self-created training regimen, he started to literally run everywhere. Instead of hitchhiking to the beach as he once had, he would run the four miles there, run 2 more miles along the beach, and then run the 4 miles back home. When his mother asked him to run to the store to pick up something for her, that’s exactly what he did. On weekends, he’d “head for the mountains and run around lakes, chase deer, jump over rattlesnakes and fallen trees and streams.”

Louie also strengthened his lungs by practicing how long he could hold his breath at the bottom of the local pool. He’d sit holding on to the drain grate until his friends feared he would drown and would jump in to save him. And he researched the workouts of his fellow runners, and then doubled them for himself. “When I started to beat them,” Louie later remembered, “I knew the simple secret: hard work.”



Louie continued to challenge his body and strengthen his willpower when he became a collegiate runner. His coach at USC forbid his athletes from running uphill, including stairs, believing it was bad for the heart. But Louie had spent plenty of time scaling hills on his solo runs, and knew how good it was for his body and his ability to embrace pain. So he did his own stair workouts outside official

practice:

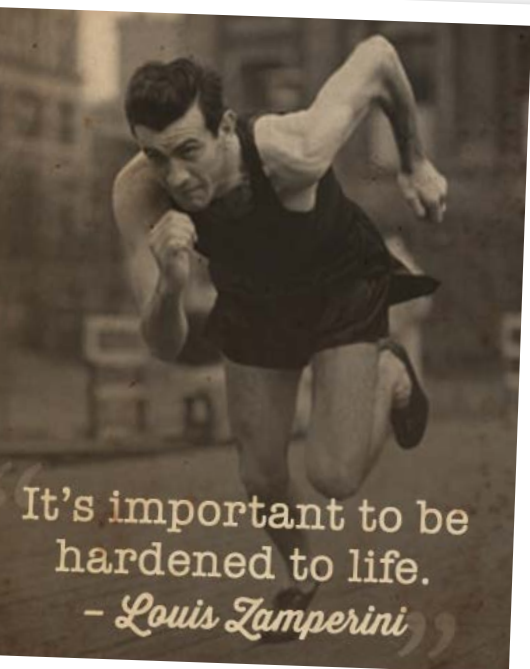
“Every evening I’d climb the Coliseum fence and do the ‘agony run.’ At the top my legs seared with fire, then I’d walk across a row, go down again, and up another staircase. I did that after each normal workout. Here’s why. People say all anyone needs is a positive attitude. It’s nice to have, but a positive attitude has nothing to do with winning. I often had a defeatist attitude before a race. What matters is what you do to your body. Self-esteem can’t win you a race if you’re not in shape.”

Louie’s studied cultivation of toughness put him in good stead for his mile-long races. He was famous for his ability to dig deep and dial up a ferocious kick on the last lap. At the start of his running career, he had often complained to Pete about the pain and exhaustion inherent in that final, minute-long push to the finish line. His brother had then given him a piece of advice that always stuck with Louie: “Isn’t one minute of pain worth a lifetime of glory?”

That was the question running through Louie’s mind during the final for the 5,000 meters at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. He fell behind the lead runners and stayed there for most of the race. But as he moved into the last lap, he remembered Pete’s advice: “When I felt done-in was the time to exert myself.” Louie kicked it into high gear, and turned in a scorching lap time of 56 seconds, enough for 8th place and to become the first American to hit the tape. His last lap was so memorable, even the Führer himself asked to meet with him after the race to shake Louie’s hand.

Louie demonstrated his toughness in a different way during a NCAA meet in 1938. A group of runners had conspired to sabotage him by roughing him up mid-race. As the competitors raced around the track and jostled for position, the runners blocked Louie in, and the one directly in front of him reached back with his foot and raked his shoes’ razor-sharp spikes across Louie’s shin, creating three gashes a quarter-inch deep and an inch and a half long. When the aggressor did it a second time, the wounds widened and blood began to run down Louie’s leg. He tried to escape the box, but the runner on his flanks threw an elbow into his ribs, causing a hairline fracture. Even

with the wind knocked out of him, and his socks filling with blood, Louie remained undaunted. He finally managed to sprint free and cross the finish line ahead of the pack. His would-be saboteurs' plans had been foiled; not only had Louie won, but he had broken the national collegiate record.



All of these episodes of toughness trained and toughness won might have been just a footnote in yet another athlete's story, except for how they singularly prepared him for a much more trying contest to come: Louie vs. Death.

When Zamperini emerged from the wreckage of his bomber and pulled himself into a life raft in the middle of the ocean, it was his confidence in his body, his self-discipline, and his ability to withstand pain in the pursuit of a goal that enabled him to maintain

his composure. He remembers his initial thoughts as he assessed the dire situation:

“Look, no one wants to crash, but we had. I knew the way to handle it was to take a deep breath, relax, and keep a cool head. Survival was a challenge, and the way to meet it was to be prepared. I'd trained myself to make it. I was in top physical condition.”

The response of Mac, one of Louie's two raft mates, could not have been more different; he started wailing about how they were all going to die. While a slap across the face from Louie snapped him out of it, Mac's panic continued to grow within. When Louie woke up the first morning after the crash, he found all the chocolate bars – the

men's only form of subsistence – had been gobbled up by Mac while he and Phil had been sleeping. The unthinkingly selfish act was a harbinger of what was to come – Louie and Phil would remain calm, hopeful, and mentally strong, while Mac would slip into an anxious, paralyzing malaise.

What accounts for the difference in the men's responses to the same crisis? In *Unbroken*, the bestselling account of Louie's life, author Laura Hillenbrand calls it a "mystery" and muses that perhaps genetics played a factor. Some people are surely born more optimistic than others, but Louie had his own, more frank theory on the matter:

"Mac never took proper care of himself. On the base he skipped our physical-fitness program. He chain-smoked. Drank. Spent his nights in Honolulu doing who knew what. He also missed meals. We had pretty good food in the dining room, but he'd come in, eat whatever was sweet, and leave. You couldn't make him listen. Several cups of coffee and three pieces of pie? No problem. Mac had developed a sweet tooth long before he met our chocolate. I should have known I couldn't trust him..."

Everybody in the service gets the same combat training. We go to the front line with the same equipment. When the chips are down, some will panic and run and get court-martialed. Why? Because we're not all brought up the same. I was raised to face any challenge. If a guy's raised with short pants and pampering, sure, he goes through the same training, but in combat he can't face it. He hasn't been hardened to life.

It's important to be hardened to life.

Today kids cut their teeth on video games. I'd rather play real games. This generation may be ready to handle robotic equipment and fly planes with computers, but are they ready to withstand the inevitable counterattack? Are they emotionally stable? Are they callous enough to accept hardship? Can they face defeat without falling apart?"

In the initial aftermath of the crash as Louie bandaged Phil's head wound, he said softly, "Boy, Zamp, I'm glad it was you." When the chips are down, isn't that something every man would like to hear?

### 3. Always Have a Purpose and a Vision for the Future

Another big difference between how Louie and Mac approached their dilemma was that Zamperini focused on the future, and on keeping himself busy with tasks, even small ones, that helped get him closer to it. Though he himself experienced a moment of anxiety as he surveyed how few supplies they had at their disposal, “rather than give in, I made myself a promise: no matter what lay ahead, I’d never think about dying, only about living... I adapted myself to my fate instead of resisting it. Rescue would be nice, but survival was most important.” If in his youth, Louie’s fight and resourcefulness had gotten him into trouble, now they were his ace in the hole for beating back death and coming out of the crucible alive.

Louie inventoried what they’d need to survive: “food, water, and a sharp mind.” As to the first two requirements, he set to work testing out various fishing methods with their limited equipment, catching birds that landed on the raft, and turning canvas cases into rain catching devices. He was a shipwrecked MacGyver and his persistent ingenuity was so inspiring, we’ve dedicated a separate post to detailing it. The small successes he had with his experiments fueled his confidence; it became a positive cycle, in which the more he and Phil tried to survive, the more hopeful they became about their chances, and the more strength they developed to stick it out. In contrast, Mac remained passive, and this became a cycle as well; the more he withdrew, the more listless and dejected he became.

Beyond the procurement of food and water, Louie made mental exercise a top priority. He had read the story of what had happened to another pilot and his men who were adrift at sea for 34 days. After several weeks, many of those castaways had gone to pieces, seeing hallucinations and babbling to themselves. As Hillenbrand writes, this knowledge made Louie “determined that no matter what happened to their bodies, their minds would stay under their control.”

Louie thought back to a college class he had taken in which the professor compared the mind to a muscle that would atrophy through disuse. So he decided that he and his fellow castaways



would give their brains daily workouts. The raft became a “nonstop quiz show” with Louie and Phil constantly trading questions back and forth. They talked about their families, the dates they’d been on, their college days, and what they wanted to do when (never if) they got home. Each response would bring a follow-up question from the other (no conversational narcissism here!). Louie would describe his mother’s delicious Italian dishes in detail, and the phantom meals would temporarily fill the men’s bellies. As Hillenbrand writes, “For Louie and Phil, the conversations were healing, pulling them out of their suffering and setting the future before them as a concrete thing. As they imagined themselves back in the world again, they willed a happy ending onto their ordeal and made it their expectation. With these talks, they created something to live for.”

Mac, on the other hand, rarely participated in the discussions, and slipped further away. As Louie put it, he “lost his vision of the future.” On the 33rd day of their odyssey, though he had gotten as much food and water as his raftmates, Mac passed away.

Louie carried his field-tested conviction in the importance of active purpose throughout the rest of his brutal journey towards home. When the Japanese rescued/captured Louie from his raft, they first placed him in a tiny, sweltering, maggot-filled cell on the island of Kwajalein. Here guards regularly kicked and punched him for fun, and poked sticks through the bars of his cage, treating him like zoo animal. To take his mind off his de-humanizing circumstances, Louie spent his time memorizing the names of the 9 Marines that had been inscribed on the wall of his pen — men who had once shared his cell before being executed. If he was freed, he wanted to be able to pass along the list to Allied intelligence. “It was my small way of keeping hope alive,” Louie said.

When he was later transferred to a series of interrogation and POW camps, Louie put his energy into fueling an information network between the prisoners. He kept a tiny diary made of rice paste, even though he knew its discovery would bring a severe beating, and he daringly stole newspapers from guards when they weren’t looking. News of Allied progress was crucial in buoying the spirits of the men. He also took part in the camp’s well-organized ring of thievery

– stealing food, supplies, and tobacco to distribute to the prisoners.

Even in darkest moments of camp life, when he was beaten daily and lay sick in his bunk with dysentery and scorching fevers, Louie held to the prospect of being rescued and refused to give up. In his mind he envisioned embracing his family again, competing in another Olympics, living his life.

When his camp was finally liberated, and he found himself aboard a train on the first leg of his long journey home, some of the men around him “grumbled about years of miserable treatment or complained that we should have been liberated from Camp 4-B sooner.” But Louie didn’t join in and continued to uphold the philosophy that had gotten him through those brutal, de-humanizing years: “I’d made up my mind to stay focused on the future, not the past.”

#### 4. A Man Keeps His Promises

When Louie was captured by the Japanese, and imprisoned on Kwajalein, he wondered why he wasn’t executed like the other Marines who had once shared his cell. As his internment progressed, he found out.

One day, he was taken from his prison camp to a radio station that broadcast Japanese propaganda programs. His hosts treated him kindly and showed him around the premises. There was a cafeteria with hot, heaping portions of American-style food, and clean hotel-style beds with sheets and pillows. Louie could stay here, the men told him, and never have to return to camp, never have to see the Bird again, if he would simply do a little broadcast for them. The message they wanted him to read wasn’t overtly traitorous, it just expressed his astonishment that the US government had declared



him dead, and hurt his family with the news, when he really was alive and well. But as Hillenbrand explains, Louie knew its purpose was to “embarrass America and undermine American soldiers’ faith in the government.” He realized he had been kept alive because his prominence as an Olympic runner would make him a more effective propaganda tool. And he understood that once he read one message for them, they’d ask him to read increasingly critical ones, and there would be no way out. Though refusal meant returning to a wooden slab infested with bed bugs, starvation rations, and the endless beatings of a mad man, Louie declined the offer. The Japanese broadcasters pressed, warned he’d be punished, and still he refused. Acceptance was not even an option for Louie: “I’d taken an oath as an officer.”

Living up to another promise would prove more difficult. While floating on their life raft, Louie and his crewmates once went 6 days without water. The men felt on the doorstep of death, and Louie prayed fervently to God, pledging that he would dedicate his life to him if only it would rain. The next day brought a downpour. Two more times they prayed, and two more times the rains came. **Throughout his later captivity, Louie would repeat his promise, praying, “Lord, bring me back safely from the war and I’ll seek you and serve you.”**

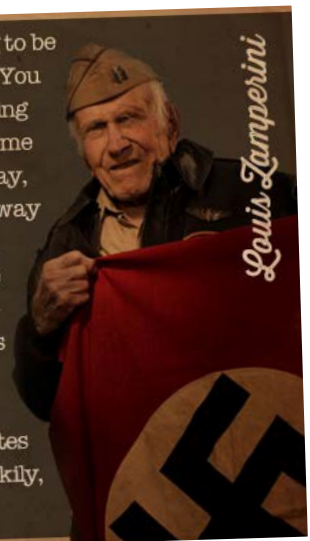
**When Louie was finally freed from his torments and sent back home, his vow was forgotten amongst numerous homecoming parties and let-it-all-hang-out celebrations. “Ignoring the future and the past,” he would later remember, “I drank and danced and gorged myself, and forgot to thank anyone, including God, for my being alive...I completely dismissed my promises because no one could remind me of them except myself.”**

While the revelry took his mind off his harrowing experiences for a time, inside the scars and trauma of war festered. Louie’s fun-loving drinking turned into alcoholism, he struggled to find steady employment, and he was terrorized in his dreams by the Bird. His post-war marriage disintegrated, and his wife wanted a divorce. Bereft of the kind of active purpose that had once carried him through his most trying of challenges, he centered all his energy on a fantasy of revenge – on finding the Bird and killing him.

In a last ditch effort to save their marriage, his wife begged Louie to come with her to a Billy Graham revival meeting. Louie balked; he had no need for religion in his life. She persisted, and Louie reluctantly tagged along. Graham's preaching made him feel condemned, angry, and defensive; he bolted home halfway through.

His wife managed to convince him to attend another meeting, and though he again felt like running away, this time the memory he had tried so long to forget burst upon his mind: he saw himself in the life raft, parched, desperate, dying, the heavens opening, and the cool rain drops falling on his skin. **Louie fell to his knees and asked God "to forgive me for not having kept the promises I'd made during the war, and for my sinful life. I made no excuses."** After the meeting, Louie felt filled with forgiveness not only for himself, but for his former captors and tormentors. He poured all of his alcohol into the sink, and experienced a joyful, "enveloping calm." The Bird never again came to him in his dreams. **And he spent the rest of his life doing exactly what he had promised – offering inspiration to those adrift in their own ocean of struggles.**

All I want to tell young people is that you're not going to be anything in life unless you learn to commit to a goal. You have to reach deep within yourself to see if you are willing to make the sacrifices. Your dreams won't always come true, but you'll never know if you don't try. Either way, you will always discover so much of value along the way because you'll always run into problems—or as I call them, challenges. The first great challenge of my life was when, as a kid, I made the transition from a dissipated teenager to a dedicated athlete. Another was staying alive for forty-seven days after my plane crashed, then surviving prison camp. The best way to meet any challenge is to be prepared for it. All athletes want to win, but in a raft, in a war, you must win. Luckily, and wisely, I was prepared—and I did win.





# Resilient People

*In his book, Resilience, Eric Greitens says resilience does not mean you bounce back from the hard experience. Instead, resilient people find healthy ways to integrate hard experiences into their lives. All this adversity and energy spent redirecting your efforts and focus drains your reserves. One key part of being resilient is to learn how to replenish your reserves, grow stronger and become bulletproof. Below is a fine article on how resilient people are different from normal people and five ways to replenish your reserves.*

## *Resilient people:*

- *Build and fortify their physical health by eating well, sleeping enough, AND planning for relaxation. As you all know, I now track the amount of sleep I am getting ([read that LIFEies here](#)). I have added tracking food this year too.*
- *Engage in mindfulness which allows them to control their emotions. Slow your moments down. Breathe. I have written on this topic a number of times ([read here](#)).*
- *Have purpose and utilize it as a driving force throughout tough times in their lives. Purpose (Rule #1- Know your story) and Clarity (Rule #2 – Be clear on what you want). If you have not read my book, maybe now is the time to get it, read it and start the path to your Fantastic Life ([get it here](#)).*
- *Balance and positively thrive off of relationships in their lives. Make sure all your relationships are healthy.*
- *Belong to a team and use the challenges and adversity that happens daily to propel themselves forward. The teams you belong to (work, family, friends, hobbies, interests) are crucial to bringing you energy. Hang out with people who bring their own batteries and don't drain yours.*

*Easy to write, hard to execute. However, this is what The Fantastic Life means. We are all a work in progress. Keep Growing.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #1: Know Your Story:** Are you resilient or do you suffer when hard times hit? Building resilience into your life starts with having a clear idea of who you are. This knowledge will allow you to grow stronger.

# 5 Things Resilient People Do Differently

By Eva Selhub

November 14, 2017

Source:  mindbodygreen



Contrary to what many people think, resilience has nothing to do with avoiding stress, hardship, or failures in life. Instead, it's about knowing that you'll be met with adversity and that when it happens, you'll be prepared to take it on, learn from it, and become stronger as a result. In other words, **resilience is the ability to bounce back**

**easily and thrive in the face of life's many inevitable challenges.**

It's true that some people are naturally more resilient than others. These folks see challenges as opportunities, are able to maintain a positive outlook, and find meaning in the struggle. For others, resilience is learned and takes continuous work.

When you're truly resilient, adversity doesn't get you down physically, emotionally, or psychologically (not for long, at least). And the most resilient people have an inner trust that they have the resources to handle anything. Here are five things resilient people do differently:

## **1. They build physical vitality and vigor.**

If you aren't physically fit, your ability to handle challenges, think clearly, stay positive, and ultimately bounce back from adversity and illness diminishes. Improving physical vitality requires that you

begin to perceive everything in your life as fuel that enables your body to thrive. To become more resilient, fuel your body with:

- Physical exercise that is versatile, challenging, and includes mobility and flexibility, aerobic activity, and weight training.
- Eight hours of restful sleep each night.
- Time for relaxation for the mind and body.
- Healthy nutrition that is void of inflammatory foods and includes plenty of vegetables, some fruits, nuts, seeds, proteins, and healthy grains and fats.

## **2. They achieve mental and emotional clarity and equilibrium.**

Your thoughts and emotions—positive and negative—also serve as fuel for your body and mind. Under duress, positive beliefs, confidence, and the ability to think clearly falter. This is because fear takes over, along with a cascade of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. Studies show that resilient individuals, on the other hand, not only maintain positive emotions, but they use them to bounce back from negative experiences, as they remain confident, optimistic, and open in the face of change. The path toward improving this pillar of resilience includes:

- **A mindfulness practice that teaches you to hone your sense of awareness, be in the present moment, turn down negative chatter, relax, and stay open.**
- **Learning to use negative emotions as signals and opportunities for growth and change, thus controlling them instead of letting them control you.**
- **A practice like journaling or self-observation. This will help you release your thoughts and learn to observe them objectively to develop keener reasoning abilities and clarity.**

## **3. They cultivate spiritual awareness and purpose.**

**Another characteristic found among resilient people is that they tend to possess a sense of meaning and purpose in life, and that this**

spiritual outlook enables them to better deal with trauma. Being more spiritual doesn't necessarily mean being more religious, the term spirituality is associated with the profound belief that you belong to something greater. This sense of belonging and meaning confers better behaviors, healthier choices, and a more positive mental attitude for most. You can awaken and harness this pillar of resilience by doing the following:

- Connecting to your religious belief system through prayer or meditation.
- Practicing mindfulness in nature, aligning with the greatness and beauty of the earth daily.
- Joining a spiritual community.
- Volunteering for an organization that has a greater purpose of helping others.
- Working toward understanding your own higher purpose.

#### 4. They strive for relationship balance.

Studies show that social support and loving relationships are essential for maintaining physical and psychological health. When under stress, socialization and trust become more difficult as oxytocin (the bonding hormone) levels drop and stress hormones rise. Nurturing relationships, staying open, and communicating well—even under duress—are traits that enable you to adapt to difficult times. Ways to cultivate this pillar of resilience include:

- Assessing how balanced your relationships are, the role you play in any success or failure in this area, and which relationships serve you and don't.
- Learning to become attuned to the wants and needs of your heart and your past stories that propel your behaviors and choices that invariably hurt your relationships so that you can effect positive change.
- Practicing open and mindful listening and communication.



- Enhancing practices of compassion, gratitude, and seeing value in others.

## 5. They make themselves part of a team.

Cultivating networks of support, knowing you're part of a community that relies on you, and understanding your value will help you find purpose in even the most difficult times. You have an influence on people around you, and the larger your role, the greater your influence. This means that when you're distressed, negative, lacking social grace, or sick, it will affect your family, co-workers, peers, and even people on the street, giving you a sense of accountability and responsibility to more than just yourself. Improving this pillar of resilience—whether you are a boss, CEO, principal, or parent— involves doing the following:

- Working through blocks and negative mindsets that keep you isolated or alienated from others.
- Practicing finding value in the virtues and efforts of the people around you.
- Staying aware of the influence you have on others based on your state of mind, emotions, and attitude.
- Controlling your stress response to be clearheaded, authentic, and insightful in the face of change and inspiring others to do the same.

No two individuals are alike, which means the process of achieving optimal resilience will differ for everyone. The key for everyone, though, is to become fit in every way possible: physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.



# Prune The Bullshit

*A broker I mentor sent me the article below that mirrors what I say in some of my Fantastic Life talks. In my talk, I use a quote from McKenzie Barney of [comforthetheory.com](http://comforthetheory.com), “How I spend my time is how I spend my life.”*

*And the corollary, “You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough” from Mae West.*

*Below, Paul Graham talks about life being too short and therefore we need to “Prune the Bullshit.” I love that. Our lives are meant to be spent doing more and more of what we love and less of what we don’t (Thank you, Dan Sullivan). Lately, I have been telling my kids when they are watching a show—”Why are you living someone else’s life?” Let’s go live our own. Turn off the TV, put your social media away, go for a hike or walk. Call someone you have not talked to in a while, get rid of that project at work that has been dragging you down. Cut off a “friend” that sucks the life out of you.....*

*Take some time this week and prune some BS out of your life.*

*P.S. I was recently on the 7 Rules Podcast with Nick Raithe. We discussed my 7 Rules for Real Estate Investing. Great podcast to focus you on the important issues when investing in Commercial Real Estate. [Click here to listen.](#)*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #18: Do Nothing in Moderation:** Why live in moderation? Why stay content in a mediocre life? You have too little time on this earth to do anything halfway.

# Life is Short

By Paul Graham

January, 2016

Source: [www.paulgraham.com](http://www.paulgraham.com)

Life is short, as everyone knows. When I was a kid I used to wonder about this. Is life actually short, or are we really complaining about its finiteness? Would we be just as likely to feel life was short if we lived 10 times as long?

Since there didn't seem any way to answer this question, I stopped wondering about it. Then I had kids. That gave me a way to answer the question, and the answer is that life actually is short.

Having kids showed me how to convert a continuous quantity, time, into discrete quantities. You only get 52 weekends with your 2 year old. If Christmas-as-magic lasts from say ages 3 to 10, you only get to watch your child experience it 8 times. And while it's impossible to say what is a lot or a little of a continuous quantity like time, 8 is not a lot of something. If you had a handful of 8 peanuts, or a shelf of 8 books to choose from, the quantity would definitely seem limited, no matter what your lifespan was.

Ok, so life actually is short. Does it make any difference to know that?

It has for me. It means arguments of the form "Life is too short for x" have great force. It's not just a figure of speech to say that life is too short for something. It's not just a synonym for annoying. If you find yourself thinking that life is too short for something, you should try to eliminate it if you can.

When I ask myself what I've found life is too short for, the word that pops into my head is "bullshit." I realize that answer is somewhat tautological. It's almost the definition of bullshit that it's the stuff that life is too short for. And yet bullshit does have a distinctive character. There's something fake about it. It's the junk food of experience. [1]

If you ask yourself what you spend your time on that's bullshit, you probably already know the answer. Unnecessary meetings, pointless disputes, bureaucracy, posturing, dealing with other people's mistakes, traffic jams, addictive but unrewarding pastimes.

**There are two ways this kind of thing gets into your life: it's either forced on you or it tricks you.** To some extent you have to put up with the bullshit forced on you by circumstances. You need to make money, and making money consists mostly of errands. Indeed, the law of supply and demand insures that: the more rewarding some kind of work is, the cheaper people will do it. It may be that less bullshit is forced on you than you think, though. There has always been a stream of people who opt out of the default grind and go live somewhere where opportunities are fewer in the conventional sense, but life feels more authentic. This could become more common.

You can do it on a smaller scale without moving. The amount of time you have to spend on bullshit varies between employers. Most large organizations (and many small ones) are steeped in it. But if you consciously prioritize bullshit avoidance over other factors like money and prestige, you can probably find employers that will waste less of your time.

If you're a freelancer or a small company, you can do this at the level of individual customers. If you fire or avoid toxic customers, you can decrease the amount of bullshit in your life by more than you decrease your income.

**But while some amount of bullshit is inevitably forced on you, the bullshit that sneaks into your life by tricking you is no one's fault but your own. And yet the bullshit you choose may be harder to eliminate than the bullshit that's forced on you.** Things that lure you into wasting your time on them have to be really good at tricking you. An example that will be familiar to a lot of people is arguing online. When someone contradicts you, they're in a sense attacking you. Sometimes pretty overtly. Your instinct when attacked is to defend yourself. But like a lot of instincts, this one wasn't designed for the world we now live in. Counterintuitive as it feels, it's better most of the time not to defend yourself. Otherwise these people are

literally taking your life. [2]

Arguing online is only incidentally addictive. There are more dangerous things than that. As I've written before, one byproduct of technical progress is that things we like tend to become more addictive. Which means we will increasingly have to make a conscious effort to avoid addictions—to stand outside ourselves and ask “is this how I want to be spending my time?”

**As well as avoiding bullshit one should actively seek out things that matter. But different things matter to different people, and most have to learn what matters to them.** A few are lucky and realize early on that they love math or taking care of animals or writing, and then figure out a way to spend a lot of time doing it. But most people start out with a life that's a mix of things that matter and things that don't, and only gradually learn to distinguish between them.

For the young especially, much of this confusion is induced by the artificial situations they find themselves in. In middle school and high school, what the other kids think of you seems the most important thing in the world. But when you ask adults what they got wrong at that age, nearly all say they cared too much what other kids thought of them.

One heuristic for distinguishing stuff that matters is to ask yourself whether you'll care about it in the future. Fake stuff that matters usually has a sharp peak of seeming to matter. That's how it tricks you. The area under the curve is small, but its shape jabs into your consciousness like a pin.

**The things that matter aren't necessarily the ones people would call “important.” Having coffee with a friend matters. You won't feel later like that was a waste of time.**

One great thing about having small children is that they make you spend time on things that matter: them. They grab your sleeve as you're staring at your phone and say “will you play with me?” And odds are that is in fact the bullshit-minimizing option.

If life is short, we should expect its shortness to take us by surprise.

And that is just what tends to happen. You take things for granted, and then they're gone. You think you can always write that book, or climb that mountain, or whatever, and then you realize the window has closed. The saddest windows close when other people die. Their lives are short too. After my mother died, I wished I'd spent more time with her. I lived as if she'd always be there. And in her typical quiet way she encouraged that illusion. But an illusion it was. I think a lot of people make the same mistake I did.

The usual way to avoid being taken by surprise by something is to be consciously aware of it. Back when life was more precarious, people used to be aware of death to a degree that would now seem a bit morbid. I'm not sure why, but it doesn't seem the right answer to be constantly reminding oneself of the grim reaper hovering at everyone's shoulder. Perhaps a better solution is to look at the problem from the other end. Cultivate a habit of impatience about the things you most want to do. Don't wait before climbing that mountain or writing that book or visiting your mother. You don't need to be constantly reminding yourself why you shouldn't wait. Just don't wait.

I can think of two more things one does when one doesn't have much of something: try to get more of it, and savor what one has. Both make sense here.

How you live affects how long you live. Most people could do better. Me among them.

But you can probably get even more effect by paying closer attention to the time you have. It's easy to let the days rush by. The "flow" that imaginative people love so much has a darker cousin that prevents you from pausing to savor life amid the daily slurry of errands and alarms. One of the most striking things I've read was not in a book, but the title of one: James Salter's *Burning the Days*.

It is possible to slow time somewhat. I've gotten better at it. Kids help. When you have small children, there are a lot of moments so perfect that you can't help noticing.

It does help too to feel that you've squeezed everything out of some

experience. The reason I'm sad about my mother is not just that I miss her but that I think of all the things we could have done that we didn't. My oldest son will be 7 soon. And while I miss the 3 year old version of him, I at least don't have any regrets over what might have been. We had the best time a daddy and a 3 year old ever had.

**Relentlessly prune bullshit, don't wait to do things that matter, and savor the time you have. That's what you do when life is short.**

## Notes

[1] At first I didn't like it that the word that came to mind was one that had other meanings. But then I realized the other meanings are fairly closely related. Bullshit in the sense of things you waste your time on is a lot like intellectual bullshit.

[2] I chose this example deliberately as a note to self. I get attacked a lot online. People tell the craziest lies about me. And I have so far done a pretty mediocre job of suppressing the natural human inclination to say "Hey, that's not true!"



# NEVER Do These

*Do you know why most New Year's Resolutions fail? Of course you do. Many people set their goals once a year and then they never follow up on them. Not me. I am a goal freak. I am constantly updating my goals, tracking my progress every day, week, and month. If something isn't working, I adjust it. If I accomplish a goal in a few weeks, I set another. If the goal doesn't fit my future, I let it go.*

*So many people reach the end of the year with regret, but those who figure out how to set, review, track and keep their goals moving forward will look back on their year with satisfaction. Below is an article on some key things successful people never do. My favorites are:*

- *Don't let other people define your life — Everyone has their own Fantastic Life. It looks different for everyone. Make your own path, your priorities, your life.*
- *Don't live in The Gap — FL Rule #10: Stay Out of the Gap. Set goals and work toward them. Comparison is the thief of living your Fantastic Life.*
- *Don't live in the past — Of course, use the past to fuel your growth. But always make your future bigger.*
- *Don't look for happiness — Create happiness. Set goals that matter to you, work toward them, get the win, and along the way you will be happy.*

*How will you feel on New Year's Eve 2020? Full of regret for the wasted year? Or excited about crafting your Fantastic Life?*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #11: The Growth Paradigm:** You are in control of your growth. Whether you're content to grow slowly, or eager to make leaps and bounds, it's up to you.

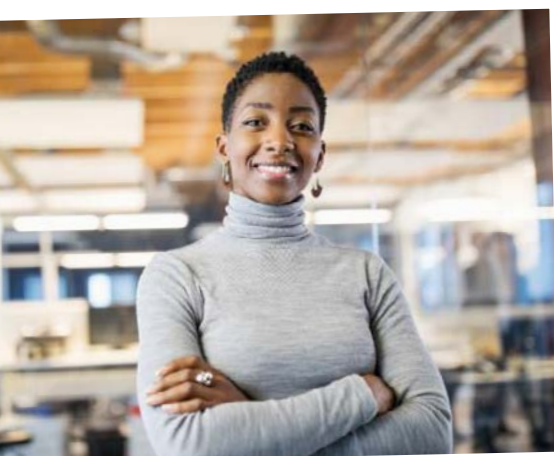


# 6 Things Successful People Never Do

By Terina Allen

December 14, 2019

Source: **Forbes**



It's the end of yet another year and a prime time for all of us to take stock of who we are, where we've been and where we want to go. Many of us start each year with big ideas, plans and hopes and then end each year with analysis and reflection. Some of us will look back over the

year with joy about what we've accomplished. **We'll remember all the big wins we had and the many new connections we made. We'll think fondly about how well we performed on our jobs and then pat ourselves on the back for achieving the personal and career goals we set. But only fulfilled people will do this.**

**Far more of you will end this year with disappointment—maybe even regret—about all the things you wanted to accomplish but didn't.** You might experience disappointment or regret for not advancing the ball on your career goals. You could find that you feel bored in your current job and crave a career change. You might feel undervalued or underappreciated by your current boss. You might even experience deep sadness about what to do next and wonder if you have what it takes to ever truly experience career success.

If you are tired of making resolutions that go nowhere; tired of reaching for the stars to only land in the dirt; and tired of running in place, take heed. You can have a much happier life and take your

career to the next level by subscribing to the same six principles that most successful people subscribe to.

## **1. They never let other people define their success.**

Before you can own your career and get it off the sidelines, you need to define what career success means for you. **Career success starts and ends with realizing that what you want to accomplish matters more than what others want you to accomplish.** And what you want to experience matters more than what others want you to experience. So long as you allow the expectations and opinions of others to dictate your career choices, you will suffer or struggle with internal conflict.

When you let other people put their expectations on you and define what success should look like for your life, you risk becoming miserable. You can't experience success if you are being pulled around trying to align yourself with standards and career expectations that other people set.

**To experience meaningful career success, you must have the courage to go after what you want even when it might disappoint other people.** To be successful, you first have to get real honest with yourself. Decide what you truly want to do with your personal life and professional career and make it your priority.

## **2. They don't let the gap between where they are and where they want to be discourage them.**

You'll never get anywhere other than where you are right now if you don't first get started. Don't let the gap between where you are today and where you want to be tomorrow cause you to feel deflated. **Don't let the distance between where your career is today and where you want it to be tomorrow discourage or paralyze you.** And don't let your own mind and negative thoughts stop you either.

Successful people know they can create a better life. They know they can have a better career, and you should know this too. You can own your power to create happiness and fulfillment for yourself. Yes—you have it within you. But first you have to ignore the doubters,

leave all the haters behind and take control of your own mind.

The difference between success and failure is often grit. And when you get up and put one foot in front of the other—even if you can only take baby steps—you are showing that you have the determination, persistence and grit necessary to change your whole life.

The real questions are:

1. *Do you want what you want bad enough to take that first step?*
2. *Are you willing to go after that new job or new career even if it might disappoint someone else?*
3. *Do you want that big win bad enough to change your thinking and even your behavior?*

**3. They don't give yesterday's failures more power than tomorrow's successes.**

You might have made some big messes in your life and in your career. You might have dropped the ball on some big projects. You might have struggled—and even lost—with all variety of legal, mental, family, relationship or career challenges. If so, you will have some heavy lifting in front of you, but you absolutely can repair your reputation, rebuild relationships and restore your career.

Successful people do the work necessary to make amends where necessary and then make peace within themselves so they can create a different and better tomorrow. Don't let your past indiscretions, missteps or failures consume any more of your life than you've already given. Reflect on your failures, learn from them and then keep it moving or you risk allowing past regrets to overwhelm your ability to ever really achieve anything different and better for yourself.

It doesn't matter. What you failed at yesterday doesn't matter. What you never achieved, gave away—and even what you accomplished yesterday—doesn't really matter. Realize that everyone struggles, but only the people who stand up and start (even if it means starting over) have any chance of success.

#### **4. They don't try to coast on past successes for too long.**

What you did to get where you are may not be enough to get you where you want to go next. If your goal is to keep advancing your career, you can't rest on your laurels and ride yesterday's gravy train. You have to do something different today to get something different tomorrow.

**Successful people know they are only as good as their last win, their last success or their last accomplishment.** What you accomplished yesterday is great, but if you stop with that, you risk becoming irrelevant without having anything new to celebrate or new goals to embrace.

Yes, you should celebrate your efforts. Relish in the big successes, and the small ones as well, but not for so long that you forget how to grind. **Don't stop for so long that you lose your motivation.** Don't stop for so long that you can't find inspiration. Successful people stay hungry, and they understand that their best and worst battles in life will actually be found within themselves.

#### **5. They don't let fear stop them from saying yes when they need to.**

Is your fear of risk, failure or rejection causing you to pass up opportunities to expand your network, develop new relationships and advance your career? Are you passing on opportunities for growth and change because you don't want to be made to feel uncomfortable? Is fear paralyzing your ability to advance your career?

There are mainly three different types of fears that hold people back from experiencing greater levels of success—the fear of failure, the fear of success and the fear of rejection. These fears cause many people to say no far too often when they should be saying yes, and they cause people to resist taking the kind of career risks that can open doors to new and amazing opportunities.

In order to achieve the career success you want, you have to say yes more often and take more career risks. Career risks might include things like:

- Voluntarily accepting a demotion in pay or title because the lower position would put you on the better career path for you to break through with a much more suited position.
- Seeking out and accepting assignments way outside your job description or comfort zone because they provide opportunities for learning new skills or serving on different teams that could help to expand your network.
- Investing your own money into your entrepreneurial venture because no one else has yet to appreciate your talents enough to invest in you.
- Relocating for a new job because you know you've totally outgrown your current role, but the next step for you only exists in a different city, state or country.

## 6. They don't waste time searching for happiness.

Happiness isn't something you find, it's something you create. Successful people know this. They also know that, **in order to create happiness, they have to control their thinking, remain focused and disciplined, ask for what they want and persevere through the ups and downs of life.**

Successful people make decisions about who they are and align their behavior and lifestyle with those decisions. Successful people set goals about their careers and then become laser focused on goal achievement. **Successful people prioritize their needs and are willing to move outside their comfort zone to satisfy those needs.**

The truly successful people demonstrate the mental fortitude necessary to sustain meaningful success. They recognize that money and career success aren't the whole of it. Successful people know they must also experience inner peace and joy as well. For these people, it starts and ends with aligning their purpose, passion and principles with their decisions, behavior and career choices.



## Bill Lee is my friend

*In 1991, I was one of eight Founding Principals of Lee & Associates Arizona. Bill Lee, the Founder of Lee & Associates, recruited us to be the first Lee office outside of California. I have said many times that being a part of creating this company and being a Principal here for the last 28 years has been the best business decision I ever made. One of the most important reasons is because I have had the privilege to get to know, hang out with, and learn from Bill.*

- *Bill Lee is more than the Founder of Lee & Associates (55+ offices and over 900 brokers). He is also my friend. How do I know?*
- *He promotes me. When I am in the room and when I am not. I have been able to meet some “bitchin” (Bill’s word) people because of Bill.*
- *He is the Co-Author of our book **Chasing Excellence**. Buy it and read some great stories about being a street broker.*
- *He gives me ideas. Some of my best times with Bill have been brainstorming and story-boarding. He is an endless supply of ideas.*
- *He supports me for what I have done, what I am doing and what I want to do.*
- *He makes me feel like I can do anything.*
- *He is great to hang out with. I travel to San Luis Obispo at least every 90 days just to spend time with him at his home.*

- *He mentors me every single time I get to see him. Invaluable lessons.*

*As you can see, I am blessed to have Bill in my life. We should all be so lucky. What is the point of this LIFEies? Find and cultivate friends like Bill Lee and your life will be enriched beyond what you could ever imagine.*

*“The greatest gift of life is Friendship and I have received it.”*

- HUBERT H. HUMPHREY



*I love Bill Lee.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #4: All of Life is Connected:** My life is better because of friends like Bill Lee. Whether he's lifting me up with a kind word or challenging me to work harder, his friendship and mentorship have influenced all aspects of my life.



# The Freedom of Discipline

For a long time, I have argued that, contrary to popular thought, discipline actually creates freedom and the ability to be spontaneous. Below is an article by Dan Markovitz discussing this very idea with a twist. He proposes using your calendar to chunk your time. By doing this, you have the freedom to choose what you are going to do and when. This includes time for free periods, reading, friends, family meals... everything. I have been working in this manner for the past couple months. I like it. Try it for yourself.

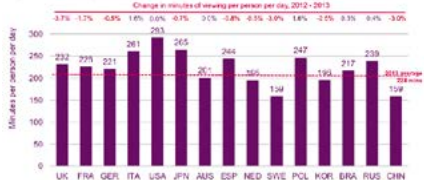
Craig

P.S.—Last week I got quite a few comments on the amount of time Americans watch TV and how we can change it. Turns out that over the past 200 years the time people use to watch TV comes from a decrease in working. In 1870, the work week was 70 hours (see the graph below). I will say it again—stop watching TV and use this additional time to make your life more complete by reading, exercising, getting better.

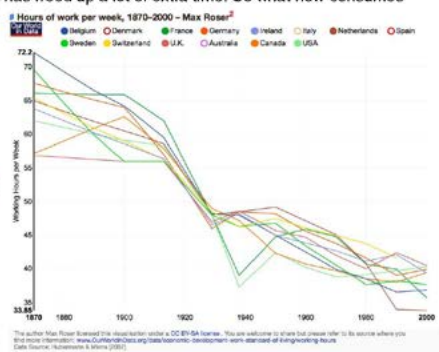
Most human beings get about 75 years of existence. That's about 3,900 weeks. Or 27,000 days. Or 648,000 hours. We spend about a third of those hours sleeping, a number that hasn't changed much over the centuries. What has changed is what we do with the remaining time. Over the past 150 years, thanks to our inventiveness, we have engineered a profound shift in what we do with our waking hours. There are 168 hours in a week. 56 go to sleeping, which leaves 112 for everything else. About 150 years ago, we spent about 70 of those 112 waking hours working. Thanks to productivity enhancements we have made over the past 150 years, the average workweek in most countries has dropped by about 30 hours. This drop in working hours has freed up a lot of extra time. So what now consumes those extra hours? **We spend them watching television.**

**According to recent figures, the average human spends about 4 hours a day, or 28 hours a week, watching television.**

Figure 3.50 Daily TV viewing per head: 2012-2013



Sources: MediaMonitor; Eurostat; TV Worldwide; Viewing in France relates to France National; Japan data relate to viewing in the Japan-Kanto region; Viewing in Australia relates to Australia Regional which is calculated on the regions Queensland, Northern NSW, Southern NSW, Victoria & Tasmania.



The author Max Roser licensed this visualization under a CC BY-SA license. You are welcome to share but please refer to its source where you find more information: [www OurWorldinData.org/data-from-the-visualization-worksheets-and-all-other-worksheets](http://www OurWorldinData.org/data-from-the-visualization-worksheets-and-all-other-worksheets). (Data Source: "Nations & Income" [2012])



# The Freedom of Discipline

By Dan Markovitz

July 23, 2007

Source:



Barry Schwartz, a social scientist at Swarthmore, has written a book called *The Paradox of Choice*. In his view, our nearly unlimited options in cellphones, salad dressing, toilet paper, even careers (dotcom entrepreneur? painter? firefighter?) create suffering for people as they try to find the best option in each of these areas.

Schwartz is primarily concerned with people as consumers (single-ply or two-ply? creamy or chunky? organic or free-range?). But I'd argue that his thinking also applies to people as producers – as workers and employees who must attend to overflowing email boxes, endless to-do lists, stacks of paperwork, and continual meetings. How do you choose what to do? How do you select one item from the four-page to-do list?

It's simple – too simple – to say, “just focus on the most important item.” It's not always clear which is the most important. And besides, what's unimportant for you might be absolutely essential for someone else.

More to the point, the act of constantly choosing among the options on your to-do list is itself both time-consuming and fatiguing. (Do I answer email now or later? Do I begin writing Sarah's performance review, or should I review the latest budget numbers?) When you're constantly spending time and energy making choices, when you never have the option of running on autopilot, you impair your ability to think creatively. You get so mired in making small decisions that you can't free your mind to attack the really big stuff. As the psychologist William James said, The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automation, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their proper work. There is no more miserable person than one in whom nothing

is habitual but indecision....

I've written before how standard work can help make you more productive precisely because it automates simple tasks, in keeping with James' recommendation. **But there are other ways to reduce the constant decision-making, too: by designating time in your calendar to handle specific tasks or projects.**

**Rather than carrying around a to-do list that provides you with nearly infinite choice about what to do at any moment, block out time in your calendar to handle the important stuff. When you've pre-committed to tackling the first draft of the press release at 2pm on Tuesday, "the higher powers of mind will be set free" to focus on that task when the time comes, rather than on the decision about what task to do.**

**How do you do this? Get into the habit of reviewing and processing all the stuff you have to do with your calendar open. It doesn't matter whether you do it once at the end of the day or several times during the course of the day: the key issue is that you put a stake in the ground and choose a date, time, and duration for the task.**

This, then, is the freedom of discipline: you discipline yourself to "live in" your calendar and follow your own pre-determined directions. You've reduced the number and frequency of the decisions you have to make so that you have the freedom to think deeply.

To some extent, your to-do list reduces the number of decisions you need to make. But it doesn't work that well, because it only addresses half the problem: What do you need to do? However, it doesn't account for the very real limits on your time — **when can you do what you need to do? A calendar entry tied to a specific date, time, and duration is the only way to address your boundless commitments in light of your very bounded time.**

Undoubtedly, you'll still have to modify your calendar. Nothing ever goes according to plan, and when there's a crisis with a major customer, whatever it is you planned on doing goes out the window. But if you can eliminate some of the choices during the course of each day (prepare my expense report? confront my manager? order

new toner for the copier?), you can eliminate the constant mental juggling of tasks, enhance your productivity, and reduce your stress.

Barry Schwartz states that “the choice of when to be a chooser may be the most important choice we have to make.” **By embracing the discipline of your calendar, you’ll liberate yourself from having to make choices all the time. And in a world where attention and focus are the most valuable commodities, that’s a priceless kind of freedom.**



# Great List of Things to Stop Doing to Yourself

*Everybody has a list these days. Even my Fantastic Life book is a list of 18 rules for living the Fantastic Life. Here is another list of things to stop doing to improve your life. My favorites include:*

- *stop spending time with the wrong people*
- *stop trying to buy happiness*
- *stop exclusively looking to others for happiness*
- *stop letting others bring you down to their level*

*I highlighted the above and some other favorites in the article. Can you identify which of these are holding you back from getting the most out of your life?*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #6: Stay Out of The Matrix:** The biggest limitations to success are the ones we create ourselves. Keeping out of the Matrix means breaking down these barriers to live your best life.

# 30 Things to Stop Doing to Yourself. #10 Is An Absolute Must.

By Travis  
LIFEBUZZ STAFF

March 20, 2014

Source: **{LIFE}BUZZ**

Marc and Angel, two passionate writers, life-hackers and “admirers of the human spirit,” have come up with an amazing list of 30 things to stop doing to yourself. If you like their list, make sure you check out their site and sign up to their amazing newsletter.



## #1. Stop spending time with the wrong people.

Life is too short to spend time with people who suck the happiness out of you. If someone wants you in their life, they'll make room for you. You shouldn't have to fight for a spot. Never, ever insist yourself to someone who continuously overlooks your worth. And remember, it's not the people that stand by your side when you're at your best, but the ones who stand beside you when you're at your worst that are your true friends.

## #2. Stop running from your problems.

Face them head on. No, it won't be easy. There is no person in the world capable of flawlessly handling every punch thrown at them. We aren't supposed to be able to instantly solve problems. That's not how



we're made. In fact, we're made to get upset, sad, hurt, stumble and fall. Because that's the whole purpose of living – to face problems, learn, adapt, and solve them over the course of time. This is what ultimately molds us into the person we become.



### **#3. Stop lying to yourself.**

You can lie to anyone else in the world, but you can't lie to yourself. Our lives improve only when we take chances, and the first and most difficult chance we can take is to be honest with ourselves.

### **#4. Stop putting your own needs on the back burner.**

The most painful thing is losing yourself in the process of loving someone too much, and forgetting that you are special too. Yes, help others; but help yourself too. If there was ever a moment to follow your passion and do something that matters to you, that moment is now.



### **#5. Stop trying to be someone you're not.**

One of the greatest challenges in life is being yourself in a world that's trying to make you like everyone else. Someone will always be prettier, someone will always be smarter, someone will always be younger, but they will never be you. Don't change so people will like you. Be yourself and the right people will love the real you.



### **#6. Stop trying to hold onto the past.**

You can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading your last one.

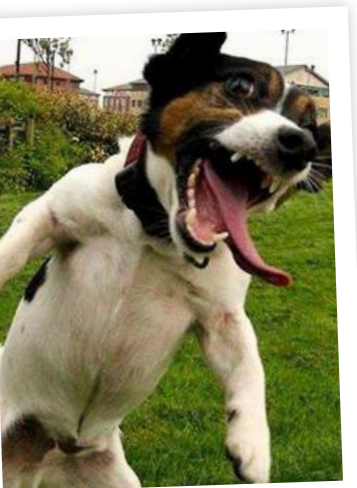


### **#7. Stop being scared to make a mistake.**

Doing something and getting it wrong is at least ten times more productive than doing nothing. Every success has a trail of failures behind it, and every failure is leading towards success. You end up regretting the things you did NOT do far more than the things you did.

### **#8. Stop berating yourself for old mistakes.**

We may love the wrong person and cry about the wrong things, but no matter how things go wrong, one thing is for sure, mistakes help us find the person and things that are right for us. We all make mistakes, have struggles, and even regret things in our past. But you are not your mistakes, you are not your struggles, and you are here NOW with the power to shape your day and your future. Every single thing that has ever happened in your life is preparing you for a moment that is yet to come.



### **#9. Stop trying to buy happiness.**

Many of the things we desire are expensive. But the truth is, the things that really satisfy us are totally free – love, laughter and working on our passions.

### **#10. Stop exclusively looking to others for happiness.**

If you're not happy with who you are on the inside, you won't be happy in a long-term relationship with anyone else either.





You have to create stability in your own life first before you can share it with someone else.

### #11. Stop being idle.

Don't think too much or you'll create a problem that wasn't even there in the first place. Evaluate situations and take decisive action. You cannot change what you refuse to confront. Making progress involves risk. Period! You can't make it to second base with your foot on first.



### #12. Stop thinking you're not ready.

Nobody ever feels 100% ready when an opportunity arises. Because most great opportunities in life force us to grow beyond our comfort zones, which means we won't feel totally comfortable at first.

### #13. Stop getting involved in relationships for the wrong reasons.

Relationships must be chosen wisely. It's better to be alone than to be in bad company. There's no need to rush. If something is meant to be, it will happen – in the right time, with the right person, and for the best reason. Fall in love when you're ready, not when you're lonely.



### #14. Stop rejecting new relationships just because old ones didn't work.

In life you'll realize that there is a purpose for everyone you meet. Some will test you, some will use you and some will teach you. But most importantly, some will bring out the best in you.





**#15. Stop trying to compete against everyone else.**

Don't worry about what others are doing better than you. Concentrate on beating your own records every day. Success is a battle between YOU and YOURSELF only.

**#16. Stop being jealous of others.**

Jealousy is the art of counting someone else's blessings instead of your own. Ask yourself this: "What's something I have that everyone wants?"



**#17. Stop complaining and feeling sorry for yourself.**

Life's curveballs are thrown for a reason – to shift your path in a direction that is meant for you. You may not see or understand everything the moment it happens, and it may be tough. But reflect back on those negative curveballs thrown at you in the past. You'll often see that eventually they led you to a better place, person, state of mind, or situation. So smile! Let everyone know that today you are a lot stronger than you were yesterday, and you will be.



**#18. Stop holding grudges.**

Don't live your life with hate in your heart. You will end up hurting yourself more than the people you hate. Forgiveness is not saying, "What you did to me is okay." It is saying, "I'm not going to let what you did to me ruin my happiness forever." Forgiveness is the answer... let go, find peace, liberate yourself! And remember,



forgiveness is not just for other people, it's for you too. If you must, forgive yourself, move on and try to do better next time.

**#19. Stop letting others bring you down to their level.**

**Refuse to lower your standards to accommodate those who refuse to raise theirs.**

**#20. Stop wasting time explaining yourself to others.**

Your friends don't need it and your enemies won't believe it anyway. Just do what you know in your heart is right.

**#21. Stop doing the same things over and over without taking a break.**

The time to take a deep breath is when you don't have time for it. If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting. Sometimes you need to distance yourself to see things clearly.

**#22. Stop overlooking the beauty of small moments.**

Enjoy the little things, because one day you may look back and discover they were the big things. The best portion of your life will be the small, nameless moments you spend smiling with someone who matters to you.

**#23. Stop trying to make things perfect.**

The real world doesn't reward perfectionists, it rewards people who get things done.





**#24. Stop following the path of least resistance.**

Life is not easy, especially when you plan on achieving something worthwhile. Don't take the easy way out. Do something extraordinary.

**#25. Stop acting like everything is fine if it isn't.**

It's okay to fall apart for a little while. You don't always have to pretend to be strong, and there is no need to constantly prove that everything is going well. You shouldn't be concerned with what other people are thinking either – cry if you need to – it's healthy to shed your tears. The sooner you do, the sooner you will be able to smile again.



**#26. Stop blaming others for your troubles.**

The extent to which you can achieve your dreams depends on the extent to which you take responsibility for your life. When you blame others for what you're going through, you deny responsibility – you give others power over that part of your life.



**#27. Stop trying to be everything to everyone.**

Doing so is impossible, and trying will only burn you out. But making one person smile CAN change the world. Maybe not the whole world, but their world. So narrow your focus.



### **#28. Stop worrying so much.**

Worry will not strip tomorrow of its burdens, it will strip today of its joy. One way to check if something is worth mulling over is to ask yourself this question: “Will this matter in one year’s time? Three years? Five years?” If not, then it’s not worth worrying about.

### **#29. Stop focusing on what you don’t want to happen.**

Focus on what you do want to happen. Positive thinking is at the forefront of every great success story. If you awake every morning with the thought that something wonderful will happen in your life today, and you pay close attention, you’ll often find that you’re right.



### **#30. Stop being ungrateful.**

No matter how good or bad you have it, wake up each day thankful for your life. Someone somewhere else is desperately fighting for theirs. Instead of thinking about what you’re missing, try thinking about what you have that everyone else is missing.



This is such a beautiful list, and we all are guilty of some of these. The best thing to do is just remember each day to appreciate and reflect a bit, even if it’s only a few minutes.



# Wealth Traps

*We are all trying to get ahead in life. Financial independence was a 30-year goal of mine. I wanted to know I could take care of myself and my family without worry. There are lots of reasons why people are not wealthy. Sometimes they simply do not want to be. For others, they get stuck in wealth traps.*

*Here are the seven traps Tanz Loudenback talks about below in her article:*

1. **You're comfortable in your job** – Take a job that puts you out of your comfort zone and challenges you to grow.
2. **Avoid risk** – The more ambitious the financial goal, the greater the risk involved.
3. **Viewing wealth negatively** – View your wealth as a positive road to personal freedom.
4. **Giving up** – Don't quit! Stay on the bus!
5. **Holding on to toxic friendships** – Remember, you are the average of the 5 people you hang out with. Learning to discern the people that don't have a positive impact on you is a powerful skill.
6. **Victimizing yourself** – Don't linger in doubt and self-pity. Look for an action you can take to make your current situation better.
7. **Thinking you know it all** – There's always more to learn. I'm 56 years old and I am still focused on learning and trying to get better at everything I do. This habit came from working to be financially independent all those decades.

*Keep these in mind as you go through your day today. What traps have you set for yourself?*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #18: Do Nothing in Moderation:** If you have a goal, don't pursue it half-heartedly. If you want to be wealthy, don't "give it your best shot" and then be content to fall short. Wealth comes to those who pursue it doggedly.

# 7 Reasons You're Not a Millionaire Yet, According to 2 People Who Are

By **Tanza Loudenback**

April 28, 2017

Source: **Inc.**



“Wealth is just code for freedom, and freedom is the ultimate gift in life,” write entrepreneurs, real estate investors, and self-made millionaires David Osborn and Paul Morris in their new book “Wealth Can’t Wait.”

Osborn is the operating partner of Keller Williams Realty and managing partner at private equity group Align Capital. Morris

is the CEO of the second-largest Keller Williams franchise, located in Beverly Hills, California.

In their book, they outline how to build sustainable wealth — not the kind you get from a “get-rich-quick formula” — by shifting your mindset, overcoming obstacles, cultivating smart habits, and developing a dynamic business.

One of the first steps on the journey to building wealth, Osborn and Morris say, is identifying and conquering the seven “wealth traps,” or ways you could be inhibiting yourself from reaching your goals.

**“To build awareness and enhance your state of mind, think of someone who is less talented, less hardworking, less smart, and less**

of whatever it is you are good at, yet has more wealth than you. The odds are that person has escaped the wealth traps,” they write.

Below, check out the seven wealth traps and how to avoid them.

### **1. Staying in a comfortable job**

It's easy to get comfortable in a job you enjoy, or even seek out a position that aligns with your interests. For example, Osborn and Morris write in their book, a ski instructor who loves to ski or a bartender who loves to meet new people and be social.

“All of these individuals are getting some subset of their needs met,” they write. “But is it enough?”

Osborn and Morris encourage you to use your learned skills to find interests outside of your comfort zone. “Building wealth is a contact sport. It requires movement, action, and impact. Be purposeful and build a network that takes you closer to your goals,” they write.

### **2. Avoiding risk**

Fear is a universal feeling. Once you realize you're not alone in that feeling, “ask yourself, ‘What is truly at risk?’” Osborn and Morris write.

Remember, if it's a worthwhile endeavor, there will almost certainly be some sort of risk involved.

“We're not going to sugarcoat this — building wealth involves taking risks,” they write. “But it's overinflated compared to the risk of doing nothing. The biggest risk in life is not taking one.”

### **3. Viewing wealth negatively**

We're all brought up around different attitudes about money, whether that's the idea that wealth is glamorous and unattainable, or that it's a sign of greed and corruption.

Your ability to build wealth effectively hinges on these beliefs, Osborn and Morris said.

“Celebrate your pursuit of wealth and look at it as a pathway to freedom. And, steer clear from those who think money is a dirty word,” they write.

#### 4. Giving up

As with any challenge in life, you’ll experience ups and downs in your pursuit of wealth. **Those people who make it to the top are the ones who never quit.**

Osborn and Morris explain:

“When you face a setback, you have a choice: You can jump ship by focusing on the sting of the loss or stay the course and reap the value of the lesson.

“Just remember: You had courage before the loss, and now you have the power of more experience and information as you move forward.”

#### 5. Holding on to toxic friendships

“How many people are best friends with their kindergarten buddies? Not many. Yet how many folks have a friend they won’t cut loose, even though they are a negative influence?”

Osborn and Morris ask these questions to emphasize that you have total control over who you surround yourself with. Ultimately, **they say, don’t get trapped in a “weak social circle.” If you do find yourself there, be sensible enough to walk away.**

#### 6. Victimizing yourself

Bad things happen every day and at times it may even feel like you’re taking more hits than others. Did you lose money on your investment? Run your new business into the ground? That’s going to be difficult to get through, but it’s no excuse to victimize yourself, Osborn and Morris explain.

“Victimhood leads to blame, apathy, and general malaise. **It’s hard to move forward with a positive vision when you are locked into an event from the past.** Negativity tends to lead to inertia and despondence. Don’t let a bad occurrence hold you back,” they write.



## 7. Thinking you know it all

Osborn and Morris quote Stephen Hawking to illustrate this point: “The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it’s the illusion of knowledge.”

Thus, thinking you know all there is to know — the “expert syndrome,” as they call it — hinders teachability and growth.

In other words: **We all, always, have something to learn.**



# Embrace Boundaries

*We talk a lot about people having work-life balance. It's always positioned as a good thing, something to strive towards so you can "have it all." But we never step back and ask ourselves, "What exactly is work-life balance, and is it really working for me?"*

*Last week, I introduced the topic of a sandbox. In his article, Chip Conley mentioned a great blog about getting rid of the idea of work-life balance in favor of a more efficient practice. Below is that blog.*

*Life has too many factors to try and balance them all together. Often, work-life balance feels more like a juggling act, where things constantly fall, instead of a sustainable way of life.*

*Instead, setting boundaries between work and personal activities can lead to more comfort, control, and happiness in your life.*

*Check out a few of my takeaways and tips to get started with a new mentality.*

- *Priorities, obligations, and experiences suggest flexible boundaries*
- *Boundaries require daily maintenance*
- *It takes time to establish, edit and implement boundaries*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #2: Be Crystal Clear on What You Want:** Setting boundaries can be easy in theory but difficult in practice. That's why starting with a clear understanding of what you want, and holding that goal in your mind, will help you stay true to those boundaries.

# Embracing This Concept Will Bring You Way More Long-Term Happiness Than “Work-Life Balance”

By Lauren Laitin

Source: [www.themuse.com](http://www.themuse.com)



People talk about work-life balance as if achieving it is the precious key to happiness. Tips and tricks abound. But there are two big problems with this supposed golden ticket. First, the very phrase suggests that work isn't part of your life, it's separate.

Yet your career probably takes up a huge amount of your waking hours, so how could it not be an integral part of your life? The second

issue is that balance is elusive and rarely attainable. At its core, the act of balancing is both inflexible and delicate, but life requires flexibility. So on your quest for happiness, success, and fulfillment, there's actually another “B” word you should get excited about. That word is boundaries. Develop a boundary-setting practice, and you'll wonder why anyone is still talking about work-life balance.

It's fine to value stability, but since life isn't still, putting balance on a pedestal is problematic. Think of all the moving parts in a given week: big meetings, work travel, doctor's appointments, family events, internet outages, a co-worker quitting, another one getting promoted, a lost Uber driver on the way to the networking event. Life, as you know, throws curveballs—like when your boss gets feedback from the client that he needs to push a deadline up and all

of a sudden your planned 6 PM departure goes out the window, and instead of going to your favorite boxing class, you work late and pass out at 2 AM. On that kind of unpredictable day, it's pretty hard to feel good about the whole work-life balance thing.

You can, however, feel good about boundaries, which put you in the driver's seat with the understanding that stuff happens and won't always go as planned. **You can regularly reconfigure how your day and week is going to play out based on professional responsibilities and personal needs and not freak out if one day is all work and zero play.**

Here are three ways to ditch balance and embrace boundaries:

### **1. Set Your Boundaries Daily Based on Your Priorities**

The amount of time or effort you're willing to put into a work day, planning a friend's engagement party, or blogging will change based on what each day looks like. If your boyfriend's 30th birthday involves you pulling off a surprise party with all his friends, you're probably not going to volunteer for a time-sensitive work project. If you're in the middle of putting together a conference, you're probably not going to double your volunteer hours. **When you learn to set boundaries based on your various priorities and obligations, you'll feel in control and at liberty to make decisions that work for you and the kind of life you want to lead—not the kind of life you're supposed to lead.**

### **2. Practice Establishing Your Boundaries With Others.**

Let people know what you're up to. **Tell your colleagues and friends why you're doing away with the idea of work-life balance and explain how your boundaries mean you can't meet for happy hour as frequently as you used to.** Up for a promotion? Speak to your significant other about working a few late nights while the higher ups are making a decision on your advancement.

**By sharing some details of your boundary practice with the people in your life, you give them an opportunity to support your goals instead of constantly tempting you with invitations that threaten to step on**

the lines you've drawn.

### 3. Understand Your Boundaries by Failing First

Sometimes you have to slip up to learn about your boundaries; redefining them is a part of the process. Pushing yourself too hard, or underestimating how long something takes will help you draw better, clearer lines in the future. Let's say you're having a relatively busy week at work, but it's important for you to make time for friends and get in a long bike ride.

Even though you think the way you've planned it makes sense, you end up sacrificing sleep, which leads to a longer day at the office because you're unfocused and easily distracted. That leads to bailing on dinner and drinks. Don't stress over the change of plans—just know that next week, you'll tweak your boundaries. Correctly identifying what you need under the circumstances to comfortably achieve your goals takes some time.

So go ahead and give yourself permission to set balance aside and instead start drawing some lines. Each week will look a little different, and not all of the lines are going to be straight. You'll be surprised at how much control and comfort you find when you stop trying to achieve the impossible work-life balance.



# Keep on Knocking

*Being in sales is not easy, and sometimes (ok almost all the time) it is incredibly hard. But the rewards and accomplishments can be amazing. Just the habit of knocking on the next door will change your perspective on your life and what you can (and will) accomplish. This is not only in sales but in all areas of your life.....keep on knocking.*

*Craig*

*P.S.– Below are two links covering the same topic: choosing experiences over things. The first link is a LIFEies I sent on November 3rd and the second is a new article I found. I thought we all could use a reminder on why this is important for our happiness.*

*1. Buy Experiences, Not Things:<https://www.thefantasticlife.com/buy-experiences-not-things/>*

*2. The Science of Why you Should Spend Your Money on Experiences, Not Things:<http://m.fastcompany.com/3043858/world-changing-ideas/the-science-of-why-you-should-spend-your-money-on-experiences-not-thing>*

# Keep on Knocking

By Michael Josephson

March 25, 2014

Source: [WHAT WILL MATTER](#)

In the summer of my junior year in college I took a job as a door-to-door salesman for the Fuller Brush Company. My mother had just lost a long battle with cancer, and I wanted to earn enough money to have a photo of her turned into a painted portrait to give to my dad.

What I earned depended entirely on what I sold; there were no guarantees. Things went well at first, but then I hit a long bad streak. Hardly anyone was home and those who were just weren't buying. What's worse, some people were outright rude and literally slammed their doors in my face.

I was on the verge of quitting, but something my father used to tell me over and over stopped me: "Where there's a will, there's a way; where there's not, there's an alibi." I had always resented this simplistic mantra, but suddenly I got it.

I realized that every meaningful opportunity in life would stay behind closed doors that would never open unless I knocked on them. Beneath this simple insight was another: If I couldn't muster the confidence and courage to knock on more doors despite the certainty of frustrating and unpleasant experiences, I would never make it.

I earned enough to buy the portrait, and it now hangs next to another one of my dad in the lobby of the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics, a nonprofit organization I founded in their honor.

I'm so glad my dad taught me to persist and grateful I learned that an important part of character is to just keep knocking.



# The Butterfly Effect

*If you ever question your importance in this world. If you ever doubt your ability to make a difference. If you are ever uncertain about your “place”.*

*Remember this story.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #1: Know Your Story:** There are two stories to every person: who you really are, and who you show the world. Sometimes we forget that we are the authors of our own stories. We allow others to define us by their perceptions, forgetting the truth of who we are. Know your story, internalize it, believe in it. Then, go out and tell it.





# Moments

*Mindfulness is now a big trend in people's busy lives. While I have dabbled with it for years, I am now on a Mindfulness kick. Each day. Every day. I am particularly interested in working on being more mindful throughout each day. Below I have highlighted a quote that is so true. Live your moments.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #4: All Life is Connected:** Take control of your life and the moments that occur. Each decision we make, each activity we participate in, each interaction we have, are all connected to one another. There is always a cause and always an effect. Make the effect of those moments matter.

# What's the one thing about mindfulness you'd like every executive to remember?

By Ellen Langer

March, 2014

*Source: Harvard Business Review,  
Spotlight Interview on Mindfulness  
in the Age of Complexity.*

It's going to sound corny, but I believe it fully: **Life consists only of moments, nothing more than that. So if you make the moment matter, it all matters.** You can be mindful, you can be mindless. You can win, you can lose. The worst case is to be mindless and lose. So when you're doing anything, be mindful, notice new things, make it meaningful to you, and you'll prosper.

“What you want is a soft openness—to be attentive to the things you're doing but not single-minded, because then you're missing other opportunities.”



# The First Hour of Work

*Today's LIFEies includes a few nice items to start your work day. Here are three that caught my attention:*

- *Make your client calls in the first hour. This includes all past clients and influencers.*
- *Do not check your e-mail until you finish your top three big tasks for the day.*
- *Plan your frog (worst item to do that day) the night before each morning. Then eat it first thing (do what you can immediately).*

*At our company, we are committed to working on these. I have highlighted in green below our top three at The Coppola-Cheney Group.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #9: Set Goals:** This rule simply shows how setting goals allows you to successfully make changes in your life. Set them and see the difference it makes.

# What Successful People Do With The First Hour Of Their Work Day

By Kevin Purdy

August 22, 2012

Source: **FASTCOMPANY**

*Many successful people schedule themselves a kind of grown-up home room at the start of every day. You should, too—here's how.*

Remember when you used to have a period at the beginning of every day to think about your schedule, catch up with friends, maybe knock out a few tasks? It was called home room, and it went away after high school. But many successful people schedule themselves a kind of grown-up home room every day. You should too.

## **Don't Check Your Email for the First Hour. Seriously. Stop That.**

Tumblr founder David Karp will “try hard” not to check his email until 9:30 or 10 a.m., according to an Inc. profile of him. “Reading e-mails at home never feels good or productive,” Karp said. “If something urgently needs my attention, someone will call or text me.”

Not all of us can roll into the office whenever we want to, but most of us with jobs that don't require constant on-call awareness can trade e-mail for organization and single-focus work. It's an idea that serves as the title of Julie Morgenstern's work management book *Never Check Email In The Morning*, and it's a fine strategy for leaving the office with the feeling that, even on the most over-booked days, you got at least one real thing done. It's a gradual but rewarding process of training interrupters and coworkers not to expect instantaneous morning response to anything they send in your off-hours.

## Gain Awareness, Be Grateful

One smart, simple question on Q & A site Quora asked “How do the most successful people start their day?” The most popular response came from a devotee of Tony Robbins. It involves light exercise, part of it involves motivational meditation, but the **most accessible piece involves 10 minutes of thinking of everything you’re grateful for: in yourself, among your family and friends, in your career, and the like. Then, visualize “everything you want in your life as if you had it today.**

### “Do the Big, Shoulder-Sagging” Stuff First

Brian Tracy’s classic time-management book *Eat That Frog* gets its title from a Mark Twain saying that, “if you eat a live frog first thing in the morning, you’ve got it behind you for the rest of the day, and nothing else looks so bad.” Combine that with the concept of getting one thing done before you wade into email, and you’ve got a day-to-day system in place.

### Choose Your Frog

**Choose your frog, and write it down on a piece of paper that you’ll see when you arrive back at your desk in the morning. If you can, gather together the material you’ll need to get it done and have that out, too.** One benefit to tackling that terrible, weighty thing you don’t want to do first thing in the morning is that you get some space from the other people involved in that thing—the people who often make the thing more complicated and frustrating. Without their literal or figurative eyes over your shoulder, the terrible thing often feels less complex, and you can get more done.

### Ask Yourself If You’re Doing What You Want to Do

Feeling unfulfilled at work shouldn’t be something you realize months too late, or even years. Consider making an earnest attempt every morning at what the late Apple CEO Steve Jobs told a graduating class at Stanford to do:

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: “If you live

each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

### **"Customer Service" (or Your Own Equivalent)**

Craigslist founder Craig Newmark answered the first hour question succinctly: "Customer service." He went on to explain (or expand) that he also worked on current projects, services for military families and veterans, and protecting voting rights. But **customer service is what Newmark does every single day at Craigslist, responding to user complaints and smiting scammers and spammers. He almost certainly has bigger fish he could pitch in on every day, but Newmark says customer service "anchors me to reality."**

**Your own version of customer service might be keeping in touch with contacts from year-ago projects, checking in with coworkers you don't regularly interact with, asking questions of mentors, and just generally handling the human side of work that quickly gets lost between task list items.** But do your customer service on the regular, and you'll have a more reliable roster of helpers when the time comes.

# What Would I Tell My 20 Year Old Self?

*Fortune magazine asked some of their 40 under 40 business people the simple question: What would I tell my 20-year-old self? All of the below replies are worth reading, but my favorites are:*

- *Alexa Von Tobel—Get up, dress up, show up.*
- *Kevin Chou—Focus on working with great people, and not the job with the highest paycheck.*
- *Ivanka Trump—Ask questions and listen more than you talk.*
- *Nate Morris –Visit your mother more often.*

*I have tons of advice I would give my 20-year-old self, but here is one from the University of Arizona basketball program: Honor the process. By keeping the main thing the main thing, and doing what you need to do every day whether you want to or not, you will discover that great things will happen.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #1: Know Your Story:** Everyone has two stories: who they are and who they show the world. Knowing your story, honoring where you came from and who you've been, is the best way to figure out where you're going.

# 40 Under 40: ‘What I would tell my 20-year-old-self’

By Michael Casey

October 9, 2014

Source: **FORTUNE**



*Ivanka Trump, no. 33 on this year’s 40 Under 40 list, is reshaping how we think about the modern workplace.*

*Photograph by Ben Baker for Fortune; Grid Photo: Neilson Barnard—Getty Images*

Hindsight, as they say, is always 20/20.

Each year when we select the new class of our 40 Under 40, we get them talking about their business, sure, but we also go deeper. We ask them about their best de-stress tactic, how they manage their time, where they like to travel, and even about their favorite room in their home. We ask them about the best advice they ever got—and then we tweak that and ask: what advice would you give to your 20-year-old self?



Here are some of their best answers.



**Ivanka Trump, EVP, Development and Acquisitions, Trump Organization (no. 33)**

Ask questions and listen more than you talk. You can't be an expert at everything—and at 20 you're more likely to be an expert at nothing! That said, with inexperience comes fresh perspective.



**Nick Woodman, Founder and CEO, GoPro (no. 12)**

It was the same advice that I gave myself when I was 20, which is, any time you have a difficult decision, imagine yourself as a 90-year-old looking back at this moment. What decision would you wish that you would have made? Go forward and look backward.



**Michael Patterson, Partner, Highbridge Principal Strategies (no. 38)**

Construct your own definition of success, don't let the world do it for you. Just because someone puts a carrot in front of you doesn't mean you have to chase after it.



**Sophia Amoruso, Founder and CEO, Nasty Gal (no. 30)**

Shave your legs.



**Vijaya Gadde, General Counsel, Twitter (no. 28)**

I would tell myself that life is going to be really, really unexpected and not to be easily discouraged about whether or not I picked the right class. You never know where you'll end up and just have to keep moving forward.



**Sarah Kauss, Founder and CEO, S'well (no. 36)**

I would tell myself to buy real estate next to the High Line in NYC! I'd also tell young Sarah to be more patient with my career and to realize that good things will happen with hard work and time.



**Tristan Walker, Founder and CEO, Walker & Co. (no. 35)**

Keep up that relentless determination but couple that with some faith. You'll find that you spend less time managing your anxiety and fears and more time getting things done.



**Kevin Chou, Co-founder and CEO, Kabam (no. 25)**

*Photograph by Robyn Twomey for Fortune; Grid Photo: Courtesy of KABAM*

**When pursuing your first job, focus on working with great people, and not the job with the highest paycheck.**



**Anthony Watson, CIO, Nike (no. 19)**

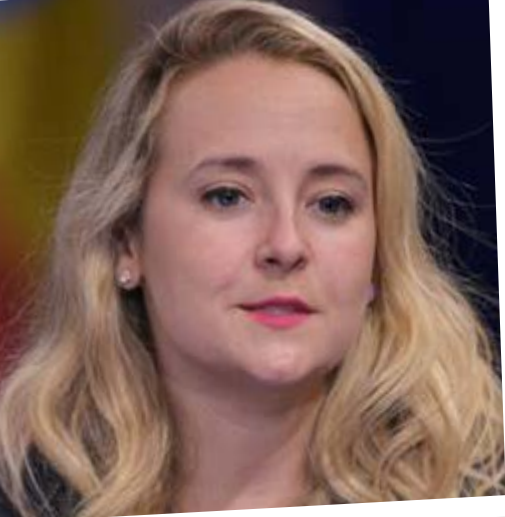
I would tell myself that tackling and overcoming the challenges of growing up as a member of the LGBT community will make you a resilient, authentic, compassionate, perceptive and powerful leader one day. Hang in there, you will have many amazing people walk along side you and bring out the best in you.



**Nate Morris, CEO, Rubicon Global (no. 34)**

*Joe Harrison, JH Photography Inc.*

Visit your mother more often.



**Alexa von Tobel, Founder and CEO, LearnVest (no. 37)**

*Mandel Ngan—AFP/Getty Images; Grid Photo: Vivien Killilea—Getty Images*

Get up, dress up, show up. I think of it as my motto—get up with the energy to tackle every day, dress the part, and show up with your best A+ attitude.



**Josh Tetrick, Founder and CEO, Hampton Creek (no. 22)**

There are too many urgent needs in this world—whether in food, education, health, campaign finance reform—for you not to focus your energy on them. They're too urgent, and the irony about focusing on what the world needs the most is that there's actually a lot of happiness that flows in engaging something higher than yourself.



# What Healthy People Do in the AM

*Sometimes you read something and it just clicks. That's how I felt when I read the below article about healthy morning habits. I am a morning person, so bear with me if you aren't. Even if you dread waking up, consider applying a few of the following habits to make sure you start the day off right:*

- *Think of one thing for which you are grateful as soon as you wake up.*

OR

- *Say your affirmations before you get out of bed.*

*All of the ones listed below offer good advice, but as usual I have highlighted my favorites. Let's all try to do at least a few of these for the next month.*

*Craig*

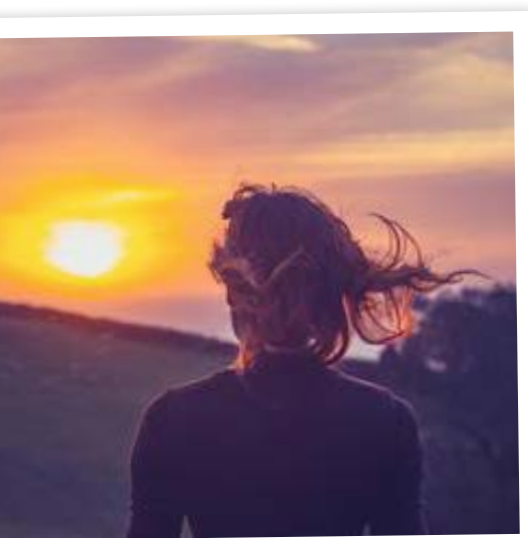
**The Fantastic Life Rule #4: All of Life is Connected:** Just like the human body, all systems in your life are connected. From people, to situations, to habits, everything you do has a tangible effect. Starting your morning with a grateful heart or a healthy habit will seep through the rest of your day, paving the way for more healthy choices.

# 7 Things Healthy People Do Every Morning

By Krista Butler

3 October, 2014

Source: **FOOD MATTERS**<sup>®</sup>  
You are what you eat.



My alarm is set to the song “Happy” by Pharrell Williams. It’s impossible to not smile when this song plays. This, combined with the other habits below, set the tone for a productive, happy and healthy day.

## **1. Drink a glass of water as soon as you wake up.**

This rehydrates your body, revs up your digestive system, and gets things

flowing. You may notice positive changes like clearer skin and better digestion. Bonus points if you add a squeeze of fresh lemon juice or a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar.

## **2. Do not check your email or phone for at least an hour.**

Do you sleep with your cell phone next to you and grab for it first thing when you wake? This is not a good habit. If you choose to resist the temptation to check your email and Facebook feed until at least an hour after waking up, you’ll find that your mind is more clear, focused and happy.

### **3. Think of one thing for which you have gratitude.**

This sets the stage for positivity throughout the day. If you come up with three or five things, even better.

### **4. Step outside and take a deep breath.**

Fill your lungs with fresh air. Even if it's cold outside. This only takes 10 seconds! It reminds you that you are alive and breathing.

### **5. Move your body.**

You don't necessarily have to do an intense workout before breakfast, but moving your body even a little is a great way to get the blood flowing and shake the body into wake-up mode. Simply doing a few stretches is a great option. Or turn on your favorite song and dance like no one is watching.

### **6. Take time to eat a healthy breakfast.**

Rather than reaching for a box of cereal, focus on getting real foods in your body. Eggs, soaked oats, and smoothies are all great options. (And they really don't take that much time to prepare.) Try it out.

### **7. Say your affirmations.**

Look into the mirror and say something positive to yourself.

Some ideas:

- I radiate beauty, confidence and grace.
- Every cell in my body is healthy and vibrant.
- I feel great when I take care of myself.

*So are you up for the challenge of incorporating these healthy habits? What about you? What helps you start the day off right?*



# A Sincere Apology

*Mistakes happen to the best of us, and believe me, I have had to apologize more than anyone I know. I have learned (the hard way) how to make a sincere apology. The way we apologize or respond to mistakes displays personal character and can be used to leverage growth, trust, and credibility within relationships.*

*The first step is owning up to the mistake. That in and of itself took years of hard work for me. Here are a few ways to make a sincere apology.*

- *Be accountable and express knowledge of the poor actions.*
- *Be sincere in the apology—this is a critical step.*
- *Address each step of the problem and any corrections you will make.*

*Once you apologize, don't linger on the mistake — analyze, apologize, then move on. Finally, I will add that you need to do the same for others as they apologize to you. Let them say their piece, and move on.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #7: Be Value Driven:** What do your words and actions say about your values? When you apologize sincerely, what kind of person does that make you? How can that help you grow?



# 3 Secrets to a Sincere Apology

By Vanessa Van Edwards

December 21, 2017

Source: **Entrepreneur**



You blew a critical deadline, lost a client, released a dud product or failed in some other way that wreaked havoc on your credibility, your business and your team. It happens. The question is: What now?

If you're like a lot of leaders, you'll probably first try to cover up the problem or ignore it. **A global study by The Forum Corporation found that only 19 percent of leaders apologize on a regular basis, because they fear it will make them look incompetent or weak.** And sure, there's a certain sense in that. To apologize is to show you're fallible. And to some people, looking fallible means looking weak.

Fortunately, that's nonsense. **A study published in the Journal of Business Ethics found that leaders who apologize for their mistakes are actually perceived as stronger and more inspirational than those who don't acknowledge their mistakes.**

Yes, apologizing forces you to admit that you're far from perfect, and that you had a moment of weakness. But it also allows you to show people that you are willing to take responsibility for your actions and use your failure as an opportunity for growth. This is the best way to create a culture of credibility and accountability. **If you, as the boss, are willing to transparently own your mistakes, your employees will, too.**

Take Reed Hastings. In 2011, the Netflix co-founder was trying to push his company into the budding online streaming market. To do that, he infamously renamed the original DVD-by-mail service Qwikster and raised prices 60 percent for existing Netflix mail and online customers. It didn't go well. Hastings faced a monster backlash from customers and shareholders, and the company's stock price cratered.

What did he do? He said, "I messed up," and he admitted that Netflix's prior successes had made him arrogant and blinded him to the potential problems with his plan. His apology helped restore the company's good name. By the end of 2012, Netflix was beating subscriber growth estimates and its stock had rebounded.

A lot of work must come after a major screwup, but if you want to start out on the right foot, an apology is profoundly powerful. You just have to do it properly. Here's how:

### **1. Reestablish a sense of security.**

**When you let your team down, there's usually a period when people are, for lack of a better phrase, freaked out. They're trying to fix the immediate problems, but they're wondering if this lapse will damage their careers.** According to Dr. Robert Hurley, author of *The Decision to Trust*, people who feel that they're on shaky ground often struggle to trust others. So be prepared to put in the extra hours and do whatever it takes to alleviate that insecurity. This might mean scheduling more one-on-ones, doing early performance reviews with team members, and sending out more frequent update emails showing progress in the weeks following the incident. **Show that you**

are in control. Once people feel more secure, they're more likely to trust you again.

## **2. Ask why.**

A major screwup is, ironically, also a good time to reinspire — to ask yourself why you do what you do and why it matters, and then to reaffirm that sense of mission with your employees. Simon Sinek, speaker, consultant and author of Start with Why, argues that the more prominent your “why” is, the more buy-in you'll get from your staff and stakeholders. It reminds them of why they do this work as well, and it helps them move forward.

## **3. Move on.**

Once you say you're sorry, it's time to move on. The faster you can go into fixing the issue, the faster people will move on with you. Your initial apology will go a long way. But after that, whether they are clients, investors or employees, they don't care if you're penitent. They just want the mess cleaned up, and the future won.



# The biggest mistakes on resumes

*I am always amazed to find typos (including my own over the years) or outright lies on resumes. Just a few months ago, I had to terminate an interview with a prospective associate when it became clear the person had lied on his resume. Mistakes like these can and have cost people great opportunities. Years ago, I was fortunate to get invited to participate in the FBI Citizens Academy. We learned that something like 50% of FBI applicants have some mis-truth on their resumes.*

*The below article is about a well-covered topic but it is so distinct that I found it to be refreshingly insightful. After personally reviewing over 20,000 resumes, the Senior VP of People Operations at Google provides new tips on how to correct the biggest mistakes made on resumes and how to get your resume to stand out from the stack.*

*My top three are:*

- 1. No typos*
- 2. Watch out for the length*
- 3. No lies!*

*See highlights below for more tips, or read the full article if you are updating your resume. This is also a great reminder that we should all take this time to update our own resumes...I am.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #3: Build Your Resumes Every Year:** Your resume is a great place to showcase your achievements, skills and education. Try to constantly be improving your resume, in every area of your life, and make sure to watch out for formatting and mistakes!

# The Biggest Mistakes I See on Resumes, and How to Correct Them

By Laszlo Bock

SVP, People Operations at Google

September 17, 2014

Source: **LinkedIn**.



I've sent out hundreds of resumes over my career, applying for just about every kind of job. I've personally reviewed more than 20,000 resumes. And at Google we sometimes get more than 50,000 resumes in a single week.

I have seen A LOT of resumes.

Some are brilliant, most are just ok, many are disasters. The toughest part is that for 15 years, I've continued to see the same mistakes made again and again by candidates, any one of which can eliminate them from consideration for a job. What's most depressing is that I can tell from the resumes that many of these are good, even great, people. **But in a fiercely competitive labor market, hiring managers don't need to compromise on quality. All it takes is one small mistake and a manager will reject an otherwise interesting candidate.**

I know this is well-worn ground on LinkedIn, but I'm starting here because — I promise you — more than half of you have at least one of these mistakes on your resume. And I'd much rather see folks win jobs than get passed over.

In the interest of helping more candidates make it past that first resume screen, here are the five biggest mistakes I see on resumes.

### **Mistake 1: Typos.**

This one seems obvious, but it happens again and again. A 2013 CareerBuilder survey found that **58% of resumes have typos.**

**In fact, people who tweak their resumes the most carefully can be especially vulnerable to this kind of error, because they often result from going back again and again to fine tune their resumes just one last time.** And in doing so, a subject and verb suddenly don't match up, or a period is left in the wrong place, or a set of dates gets knocked out of alignment. I see this in MBA resumes all the time. Typos are deadly because employers interpret them as a lack of detail-orientation, as a failure to care about quality. **The fix?**

**Read your resume from bottom to top: reversing the normal order helps you focus on each line in isolation.** Or have someone else proofread closely for you.

### **Mistake 2: Length.**

**A good rule of thumb is one page of resume for every ten years of work experience.** Hard to fit it all in, right? But a three or four or ten page resume simply won't get read closely. As Blaise Pascal wrote, "I would have written you a shorter letter, but I did not have the time." **A crisp, focused resume demonstrates an ability to synthesize, prioritize, and convey the most important information about you.** Think about it this way: **the \*sole\* purpose of a resume is to get you an interview.** That's it. It's **not to convince a hiring manager to say "yes" to you (that's what the interview is for)** or to tell your life's story (that's what a patient spouse is for). Your resume is a tool that gets you to that first interview. **Once you're in the room, the resume doesn't matter much.** So cut back your resume. It's too long.

### **Mistake 3: Formatting.**

Unless you're applying for a job such as a designer or artist, your focus should be on making your resume clean and legible. **At least**

ten point font. At least half-inch margins. White paper, black ink. Consistent spacing between lines, columns aligned, your name and contact information on every page. If you can, look at it in both Google Docs and Word, and then attach it to an email and open it as a preview. Formatting can get garbled when moving across platforms. Saving it as a PDF is a good way to go.

#### **Mistake 4: Confidential information.**

I once received a resume from an applicant working at a top-three consulting firm. This firm had a strict confidentiality policy: client names were never to be shared. On the resume, the candidate wrote: “Consulted to a major software company in Redmond, Washington.” Rejected! There’s an inherent conflict between your employer’s needs (keep business secrets confidential) and your needs (show how awesome I am so I can get a better job). So candidates often find ways to honor the letter of their confidentiality agreements but not the spirit. It’s a mistake. While this candidate didn’t mention Microsoft specifically, any reviewer knew that’s what he meant. In a very rough audit, we found that at least 5-10% of resumes reveal confidential information. Which tells me, as an employer, that I should never hire those candidates ... unless I want my own trade secrets emailed to my competitors.

The New York Times test is helpful here: if you wouldn’t want to see it on the home page of the NYT with your name attached (or if your boss wouldn’t!), don’t put it on your resume.

#### **Mistake 5: Lies.**

This breaks my heart. Putting a lie on your resume is never, ever, ever, worth it. Everyone, up to and including CEOs, gets fired for this. (Google “CEO fired for lying on resume” and see.) People lie about their degrees (three credits shy of a college degree is not a degree), GPAs (I’ve seen hundreds of people “accidentally” round their GPAs up, but never have I seen one accidentally rounded down — never), and where they went to school (sorry, but employers don’t view a degree granted online for “life experience” as the same as UCLA or Seton Hall). People lie about how long they were at companies, how

big their teams were, and their sales results, always goofing in their favor.

There are three big problems with lying: (1) You can easily get busted. The Internet, reference checks, and people who worked at your company in the past can all reveal your fraud. (2) Lies follow you forever. Fib on your resume and 15 years later get a big promotion and are discovered? Fired. And try explaining that in your next interview. (3) Our Moms taught us better. Seriously.

So this is how to mess up your resume. Don't do it! Hiring managers are looking for the best people they can find, but the majority of us all but guarantee that we'll get rejected.

The good news is that — precisely because most resumes have these kinds of mistakes — avoiding them makes you stand out.

In a future post, I'll expand beyond what not to do, and cover the things you *\*should\** be doing to make your resume stand out from the stack.





# Condolences

*Giving condolences is not easy. Sometimes the sympathy we try to share with grieving friends and loved ones creates more damage from overlooking or simply not knowing how to comfort them. There is an art to condolence. Please don't say something just to be saying anything (especially comparisons). Being speechless is better than sharing misguided phrases/comparisons. Here are a few suggestions:*

1. *Remember and share positive memories.*
2. *Be straightforward and genuine.*
3. *Don't let technology be your only form of reaching out.*
4. *Positive support is still appreciated when things have settled back down. Reach back out to check in.*

*You can take an in depth look at the 7 tips and a few of my highlights to improve your abilities of sharing condolences.*

*LIFEies is about learning all the time. I have learned these lessons personally over the past couple years.*

*Craig*

## **The Fantastic Life Rule #15: Take the Decision out of the Moment:**

When loss occurs, we are often blindsided, left unsure how to respond. Taking the time to understand how to offer sympathy will help you avoid saying the wrong thing in the moment.

# The Art of Condolence

By Bruce Feiler

October 1, 2016

Source: **The New York Times**

Recently a teenage boy in my community committed suicide. I immediately sat down to write the parents a sympathy note. I pulled out a monogrammed card, placed it on the desk in front of me, and proceeded to stare at it blankly for the next two hours.

Though I have been a professional writer for almost 30 years, I could think of absolutely nothing to say.

Offering a written expression of condolence (from the Latin word *condolere*, to grieve or to suffer with someone) used to be a staple of polite society. “A letter of condolence may be abrupt, badly constructed, ungrammatical — never mind,” advised the 1960 edition of Emily Post. “Grace of expression counts for nothing; sincerity alone is of value.”

But these days, as Facebooking, Snapchatting or simply ignoring friends has become fashionable, the rules of expressing sympathy have become muddled at best, and concealed in an onslaught of emoji at worst. “Sorry about Mom. Sad face, sad face, crying face, heart, heart, unicorn.”

One mark of this change is in the card industry. Just over two and a half million Americans die every year, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, and we buy 90 million sympathy cards annually, a spokeswoman for Hallmark said. But 90 percent of those cards are bought by people over 40.

For those who are inexperienced or out of practice in comforting someone in grief, what are some tips for mastering (or at least not humiliating yourself in) the lost art of condolence?

## 1. Being tongue-tied is O.K.

When I solicited advice from friends on social media, the one overwhelming thing I heard was it's perfectly acceptable to admit you don't know what to say. **One rabbi said, "Admitting you're at a loss for words is far more caring and helpful than writing pithy statements like 'he's in a better place' or 'your child was so perfect, God wanted her to sit beside him.'"**

Chanel Reynolds's 43-year-old husband was killed in a biking accident, leaving her a single mother of their 5-year-old son. Ms. Reynolds was so destabilized she started a website now called GYST.com, shorthand for the off-color version of "Get Your Stuff Together." Her advice: "Zero platitudes. If you're feeling the urge to panic-talk and fill the air with clichés, don't."

She singled out two expressions that particularly grated. The first was, "At least he died doing what he loved."

"Getting hit and run over by a van was not his love," she said. "Riding a bike was."

The other expression, "At least you weren't married for so long that you can't live without him."

"Thank God we were only married for nine years," she said dryly. "Dodged a bullet there."

## 2. Share a positive memory.

**Instead of falling back on a shopworn phrase, savvy condolers often share a warm or uplifting memory of the deceased.**

Kevin Young is a poet and creative writing professor at Emory University whose father died more than a decade ago. He channeled his grief into words, first publishing an anthology of poems about mourning called "The Art of Losing" and later a collection of his own work on the subject called "Book of Hours."

The condolence notes that moved him most, he said, were from strangers who shared a recollection of his father. "That was important

for me because I realized his place in the world,” he said. “At the time, you’re only thinking of your own relation to the loved one. You realize this person had impact beyond you. That was comforting.”

### 3. No comparisons.

One bit of quicksand worth avoiding is the temptation to say you know what the other person is going through. Everyone experiences grief differently. While you may have felt angry or overwhelmed when your loved one died, the person you’re writing to may have channeled her grief into work or hyper-efficient house purging.

“The temptation is to bring it back to yourself, but this is not about you,” Ms. Reynolds said. “I heard things like, ‘I was at my friend’s house when I heard,’ ‘I couldn’t sleep all night long,’ ‘I cried so hard.’ Really? Because I think I’m sadder.” A better approach, she said, is to be neutral. “You can absolutely express your sadness and sorrow,” she said, “but remove yourself from the conversation.”

### 4. Don’t dodge the ‘D’ words.

Death in our culture has become so sanitized, we have become afraid to mention it by name. While this instinct may come from a good place, it often lands in a bad one, the treacherous territory of euphemism and happy talk. Loved ones don’t “die” anymore; they’re “carried away” or “resting peacefully.”

“When did people become so squeamish,” one friend griped. “All the euphemisms make my skin crawl.”

To avoid this tendency, consider following the lead of the police support website [officer.com](http://officer.com), which advises law enforcement officials doing death notification to use “simple, straightforward language.”

“Don’t be afraid to use the ‘D’ words — dead, died or death. Terms such as ‘expired,’ ‘passed on’ or ‘lost’ are words of denial. ‘Expired’ can be used on a driver’s license but not in person — it’s not respectful.”

### 5. GET REAL.

By contrast, grievors hear so many vacuous phrases that a little

straight talk can often be a welcome relief. A little bluntness goes a long way.

The food writer and editor Jane Lear has collected etiquette books for many years and studied how condolence notes have evolved. She prefers the model outlined by Millicent Fenwick in “Vogue’s Book of Etiquette,” published in 1948. First an expression of sympathy (“I was so sorry to hear...”). Second a word about the deceased. Finally an expression of comfort.

“This all makes perfect sense,” she said, “but I think my favorite note upon the death of my brother was from one of my closest friends. ‘My dear Jane,’ he wrote. ‘IT STINKS.’”

## 6. Facebook is not enough.

These days many people first learn of the death of a friend’s loved one via social media. The instinct to post a comment or dash off an email is understandable.

But everyone I spoke with agreed on one point: **Even heartfelt gestures like these do not replace a condolence note.** A stern reminder from Ms. Fenwick still seems apt: “A letter of condolence to a friend is one of the obligations of friendship.”

The current iteration of Emily Post, emilypost.com, agrees, saying that **commenting in public forums or sending an email is an acceptable first gesture, as long as you follow “with a handwritten note and, whenever possible, attendance at the funeral or visitation.”**

## 7. There’s no time limit on sympathy.

**While writing immediately is comforting, it’s not necessary. Many mourners are overwhelmed in the immediate aftermath, and a number told me they especially appreciated cards that arrived weeks or even months after the death.**

One friend told me, “I personally back off from doing anything right away and offer to take the griever out for lunch, coffee or dinner a month or so later when everyone has returned to their lives and the person is left alone to deal with the pieces.”

Ms. Reynolds said: “Even three or four months later, touching base can help. I would encourage people to send notes on the deceased’s birthday, on the couple’s anniversary, or some other meaningful occasion.”

Even with these tips, many people may still feel daunted with the pressure to come up with the right words. In that case, send someone else’s words. Mr. Young recommended three poems: “Clearances” by Seamus Heaney, “Funeral Blues” by W. H. Auden or “Infirm” by Gwendolyn Brooks.

Or, do something: Take the deceased’s pet for a walk, run an errand, offer to pick up a relative from the airport.

Or, fall back on what loving supporters have been doing for generations: Send food, even if it’s by mail. Citing his own experience, Mr. Young said: “Cookies are great. You’ve got to eat.”



# Habit

*In September 2014 the Wall Street Journal magazine asked six well-known people to weigh in on a single topic—Habit. Below are their answers. I love habits (well most of them), because they can make your life easier, more productive, and take you in the direction you want to head.*

*I loved a few of the below comments including:*

- We're all looking for greatness. And in order to be great, you have to be consistent. -Thomas Keller, Chef*
- It's important to turn disciplined behavior into a habit. -Maria Sharapova, tennis player*
- One of the reasons I started traveling at an early age—on my own, and for work—is that travel has always been a way of stepping out of habit. -Paloma Picasso, designer*

*Bottom line: Make sure your habits are good ones.*

*Craig*

**The Fantastic Life Rule #13: The 2% Rule:** Create your habits to get you a win. One win can lead to another, and habits are a great way to position yourself to move in the direction you want.

# WSJ. Magazine

## September 2014 Men's Style: The Columnists

WSJ. asks six luminaries to weigh in on a single topic.

**This month: Habit**

September 5, 2014

Source: THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



### Jeff Koons

**“In my day-to-day life I am a person of habit.** I come to the studio every day around 8:30 a.m. and I leave around 5:30 p.m. I have a strict diet—every day I have the same amount of pistachios and the same amount of Cheerios and I’ll eat two Zone bars throughout the day. I try to be right on the edge of getting the exact best proportion of fats, carbs and protein. I enjoy the discipline, and it lets me not

really have to think about my diet, so I can think about other things. I train five days a week at lunchtime between noon and 1 p.m. I have a gym at my studio and I go there for one hour, and it lets me forget about everything else. When it comes to my work, I would say that my process, the way I go about starting to think about a work, is the same—I just follow and focus on my interests.”

—Koons is an artist.



## Paloma Picasso

“I resist habit. One of the reasons I started traveling at an early age—on my own, and for work—is that travel has always been a way of stepping out of habit. If you’re in a different place, you do things differently.

When designing a collection, I often use high tables; but I’ve also worked while lying on the floor or sitting on a plane. I’m not a person who needs to design out of a special studio or

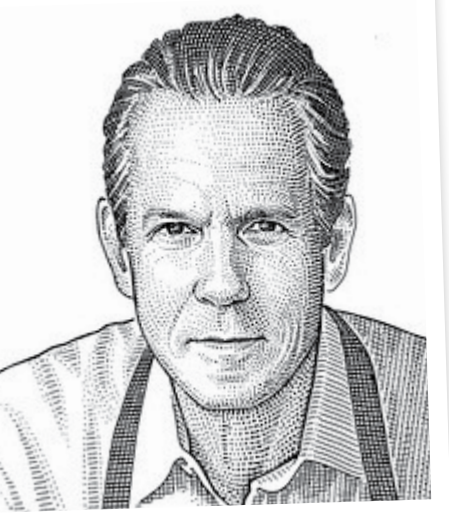
with special tools. My father [Pablo] never had a special hour for working; there was nothing he did particularly geared towards habit. I created a perfume as a self-portrait that I wear almost every day. But the problem is that the smell becomes so much a part of you that you can’t smell it any longer. So I have one or two other scents that I put on every now and then. When I break the habit, I can smell my fragrance again, which is really a part of me.”

—Picasso is a designer famous for her jewelry collection for Tiffany & Co. and her namesake perfume.



## Thomas Keller

“I’m a naturally habitual person. I find that I’m comfortable in situations or environments where repetition is the norm, and I try to establish that wherever I go. In kitchens, we’re all looking for greatness. And in order to be great, you have to be consistent. Do you want to be a Peyton Manning, a Derek Jeter? What makes these guys who have been in the game 20 years great is that they’re great every day they go out and play. Does habit interfere with inspiration? Not at all. If I’m cleaning a salmon, in the first two years of doing that I’m really paying attention. But after a while, I don’t have to



concentrate so much. It becomes habitual, which allows me to start thinking about what I'll do with the salmon once I've cleaned it—look at the fat content of the belly or what to do with a fillet. That's when you can start to be inspired by the salmon. You become liberated by repetition.”

*—Keller is the only American chef to have earned three Michelin stars at two restaurants, Per Se and the French Laundry.*

## **Audra McDonald**

“I'm currently playing Billie Holiday on Broadway, and she's someone who had terrible habits. One thing I do before I go onstage is I have a bottle of gin in my dressing room and I take a little bit of it and put it behind my ears, on top of my mouth between my lips and nose and on my wrists and neck so I have the smell of gin around me. It reminds me that she's slightly inebriated when she starts the show. As actors, we do these little magic tricks to get out of our own way. During a long run of a show, it's very easy to get ingrained in doing things certain ways. It can lose spontaneity. **I always say, if you usually look left at a certain point, look right. It changes perspective and all of a sudden there's freshness.** Billie Holiday never sang a song the same way twice, and that's what made her a true jazz artist.”

*—McDonald is an actress and singer who has won six Tony Awards, more than any other performer.*



## Michael Kors

“At the end of the day, my most consistent habit is that I’m a contradiction. There are parts of me that fully fall in the comforts, the rhythms of life. Iced tea is a constant in my hand—doesn’t matter what time of day or year. When I travel to places I go to often, I always go to the same place: I think I’ve stayed in the same room at Claridge’s in London for

20 years. I can only draw with a Sharpie and I like to sketch on lined paper; I’ve been sketching like that since I was a teenager. But, at the other extreme, I have the attention span of a gnat and I want something new and I’m curious about what’s next. It’s always a swing between the two. I’ve been going to Peter Luger’s steakhouse since I was four, and the steak sauce there is like Proust’s madeleine. But if there’s a new restaurant and they’re not open yet and there’s no phone number, I’ve got to go there in the first three days. It’s one extreme or the other.”

—Kors is a fashion designer.



## Maria Sharapova

“It’s important to turn disciplined behavior into a habit: early to bed, not too many splurges in my day-to-day routine. However, as a professional athlete it’s really important not to fall prey to habit. Success on the court means being able to adapt to changing conditions, to different players, playing styles and more. One of the things I love most about tennis

is that it's an ever-changing game. No two matches are alike, and the responsiveness to change is what sets great players apart. For me, a huge part of recuperating from my shoulder injuries was about being in touch with my body and every action's reaction. The ability to tune in and edit my response was the way I was able to unlearn the bad habits I'd fallen into from my injury. Being able not only to adapt but to anticipate the need to adapt is more important to me than habit."

—*Sharapova is the sixth-ranked female tennis player in the world.*

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- Keith Earnest  
VANTRUST REAL ESTATE

*"I try and limit my responses to your "LIFEies" to only two per year – because if I responded to them all, my opinion would lose value. This one, my friend, is my favorite, in the three or so years I've been receiving your "LIFEies." It's so true, and the way you explain it is so spot on.... Thank you for the very clear and concise way you break down a concept that so many people (like me) need to be reminded of!"*

- Andrew L. Atkinson  
INSURICA

*"Thank you for the inspiring emails I continue to receive. No matter how busy I am at work, I always stop to read your words of wisdom and am always glad I do. You never disappoint."*

- Ellen Bolton  
TITUS BRUECKNER & LEVINE PLC

*"Just wanted you to know that every Monday I forward your emails to both of my college sons.... Great stuff!"*

- Rick Myers  
THOMAS & MACK DEVELOPMENT GROUP

*"I have enjoyed reading your Fantastic Life blogs, and appreciate so much of what you've learned and share.... You are really reaching and touching people in this work.... I applaud you, am grateful to be on the receiving end, and am helping you spread the word!"*

- Anne Mariucci  
General Partner for FAMILY OFFICE INVESTMENTS

*"I just wanted to pass on a collective Thank You from a few of us at Weitz. I subscribed to your newsletter on the recommendation of a friend a few years ago and read the Fantastic Life book as well. I have since recommended them both to friends and colleagues – one of them sent me this note a few weeks ago and I definitely agree with him! Thanks for continuing to provide wise words and encouragement."*

- Samantha Pinkal  
Formerly at THE WEITZ COMPANY

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