

the least you need to know



HOW TO BE REMARKABLE

by Colin Wright

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For me! For you! For weird Aunt Phil!

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WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

THE WHY

Don't you love meeting remarkable people?

You know, the kind of person that you exchange a few sentences with and immediately know you'll be inspired by. You tell your friends about them later, not sure exactly what it was about them that impressed you so much.

I make an effort to surround myself with this kind of person because I've gained so much from them in the past. Just by living their lives they make me work harder and push myself to achieve more, to be happier, to live a fuller, richer life.

THE CONTENT

Over the years I've picked up a lot of useful pieces of advice from these people, while at the same time observing and trying to figure out what makes them tick. I've worked to apply many of these same lessons to my own life and have seen very positive changes as a result.

I wrote this book to share some of these tidbits of knowledge with everyone because I firmly believe that if the world has more inspiring, ambitious and remarkable people we'll all be a lot better off.

THE LAYOUT

In the following pages you'll find 97 of my favorite pieces of advice that I've been told by or gleaned from people who I respect, along with some advice directly from some of the remarkable people in my life.

At the bottom of each tip page is a piece of supplementary information, which may include quotes, URLs or factoids. At the bottom of the pages written by others, you'll find a brief explanation of who the person is. If you'd like to find out more about that person, go to the very back of this book and read their longer biography, or click on their name to go to their website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (1/2)

001 Be More	034 The Zone
002 Indulge	035 Value Beauty
003 Laugh at Yourself	036 Go Local
004 Lose School	037 Be Inspirational
005 Upgrade Reality	038 Be Asymmetrical
006 Know Bullshit	039 Public Diplomacy Magazine
007 Make Waves	040 Create Art
008 Be Round	041 Know Your Bias
009 Scarcity Living	042 Be Sustainable
010 Have Fun!	043 Break Habits
011 Ask Questions	044 Work Your Mind
012 Be Confident	045 Know Pop
013 Be Healthy	046 Do It Well
014 The Imagists	047 Kill Limitations
015 Let Go	048 Money? Meh
016 Relate Well	049 Doubt Destiny
017 Give Rewards	050 Segrave Associates
018 Communicate	051 Pay It Forward
019 Be Inspired	052 Greensmith Consulting
020 Respect Opinions	053 Reject Honor
021 The Big Picture	054 Relax
022 Go Away	055 Be Polite (Please)
023 Be GGG	056 Be a Hero
024 Avoid Drama	057 Wage Slave Rebel
025 80/20 Principle	058 Your Ethics
026 No Addictions	059 Be Open-Minded
027 Find Yourself Lost	060 The Right Crowd
028 Your Website	061 Seek Knowledge
029 Be a Sponge	062 Don't Destroy
030 Obey (Mostly)	063 Middle Path
031 Make Bad Good	064 The Life Design Project
032 Play Games	065 Be a Thinker
033 Automate	066 Do You Love It?

TABLE OF CONTENTS (2/2)

067 Make Habits	100 Jealousy
068 Tip Well	101 Enjoy Novelty
069 Business Cards	102 Own Labels
070 Reject Celebrity	103 Be Naïve
071 Be Minimal	104 Elbow Grease
072 You First	105 Use School
073 Know Marketing	106 Be Rejected
074 Be Symmetrical	107 Social Amber
075 Owl Sparks	108 Use Limitations
076 Self-Reflect	109 Embrace Change
077 Be Thrifty	110 Sort of Stoic
078 Don't Antagonize	111 The Idea is King
079 Be Sporadic	
080 Stand Up	
081 The 9 to 5 Alternative	
082 Go Résuméless	
083 Be a Part	
084 Make Mistakes	
085 Have Goals	
086 Vertu Studio	
087 Personal Brand	
088 Be a Geek	
089 No Baggage	
090 Be Optimistic	
091 Know History	
092 Wake Up Early	
093 Jet Set Citizen	
094 Be Informed	
095 Be Apart	
096 Alone Time	
097 Location 180	
098 Expand Horizons	
099 Be Tech-Savvy	

NOTE

Stay tuned after the tips to read more about the remarkable people who contributed to this book and to find out how to get in touch with them.

ANOTHER NOTE

If you read to the very end you'll be treated to an extra-special super-secret tip. Ooo!

THIRD NOTE

If you find an error, email me [here](#). If you would like to find out about the next ebook I put out, or just want to stay in the loop, sign up for my nifty newsletter by clicking [here](#).

BRING IN DA' TIPS

BRING IN DA' FUNK

WHAT THIS IS

Advice and tips gleaned from people much more knowledgeable, successful or just plain interesting than me.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

Shakespeare. Hemmingway. The Bible.

BE MORE

The last thing you want to be is a rock star. Seriously.

A rock star will seldom be anything but a rock star to almost everyone. Billy Idol couldn't just walk into a party and have a normal conversation with another person about politics or euthanasia or his love of chess. People would want to talk about the rock n' roll lifestyle. Drugs. Women. Other musicians. That's his life, forever.

Billy Idol can't go to the supermarket.

It's my goal to become known and respected enough in my field to make changes I want to make, but not so well known that I'm limited by the expectations of others.

I tend to hop from field to field fairly regularly so this is especially important to me. Why would you want to be pigeonholed for life?

Doomed to always be the marketing chick or the car salesman?

Make sure there is more to you than your job. It's okay to talk about your work, especially if you enjoy it, but have hobbies and interests, too.

Join a bridge club or play polo. Be a hula-hoop champion or model train enthusiast.

Anyone who is not a geek for something is boring, so keep that in mind and find something worth geeking out about.

ON LIVING

"It is your work in life that is the ultimate seduction."

-Pablo Picasso

INDULGE

Allow yourself to enjoy life. If this means going overboard with something, do it, but only occasionally.

As the **Postal Service song** says, “It’s not a party if it happens every night.” Even something you love more than anything else will get boring if you do it all the time, and then not only will you be sick or dead from overindulging but you’ll also hate something you used to love. Not good.

Instead, reward yourself when you deserve it, but most of the time find your enjoyment elsewhere. This can also serve as a motivation to get stuff done.

Double-whammy.

ON INDULGENCE

“Every once in awhile, a girl has to indulge herself.”

-Sarah Jessica Parker

LAUGH AT YOURSELF

You will make mistakes.

You are not perfect.

Learn to laugh at your failures, your successes, what you love, what you hate and what you do, and you'll be able to recover from a boneheaded move and work hard whether you fail or succeed much more easily.

It's been shown (by science!) that the act of smiling and laughing can actually improve your mood. Make use of this when you are feeling really down by laughing. You'll be amazed at how much better you feel.

GOOD ADVICE

"Laugh at yourself first, before anyone else can."

-Elsa Maxwell

LOSE SCHOOL

I decided on what I wanted to do for a living early on in college (freshman year) and then got my core (Math, English, etc) classes out of the way so I would have more free time later to focus on the really difficult classes and take on jobs in my field.

I prioritized my time so that I would be able to work on my own projects (there were many) and do well in the classes I needed to get into the design program.

Sophomore year I took my first design job, which was relatively simple and didn't pay as much as the server job I had been working. It did allow me to learn a new skill set (Flash) and also gave me my initial professional experiences in the field (learning to deal with office life, communicating clearly with coworkers, etc). I then took a job with the design department, running the design lab and print shop (helping other students with the software and operating the printers).

I also worked as a columnist for the school newspaper (I wrote my articles while working in the lab) and then another design position with Publications at my school (which dealt more with printed materials than my other position). Finally, I took on a design job with a local glossy magazine.

It was a lot of work, but each and every job provided me with more than just a paycheck; each allowed me to hone a skill set, gave me back time and money to spend on other jobs and class projects, or provided me with some other benefit.

Choose the work you take in college very carefully, because if you are able to learn at work while you are learning in school (or instead of school), you'll emerge from your formal education ready for the job market or to start up your own business.

BOO FORMAL EDUCATION!

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.”

-Albert Einstein

DIGGY DE BRUIN

UPGRADE REALITY

In your life you have to realize that you alone are responsible for fixing your own problems. People can show you the path but you have to walk it. Do not be afraid. It is your life, yours to live and yours to enjoy. Every day is an adventure, an opportunity to start something new and correct any mistakes you have made in the past.

“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

-Michael Jordan

The above quote is my favourite quote in the world. It reminds us to never never never give up. No matter how many times you fail at something, it is one step closer to succeeding at it. Do not limit yourself. Do not cut yourself short. You can do anything you put your mind to.

Your perception of reality is reality.

Diggy de Bruin founded Upgrade Reality where he writes about personal development, health and enthusiasm for life. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

KNOW BULLSHIT

Some things are so clearly untrue that it's not worth spending your precious free time on. Fortunately you can usually identify these kinds of ideas by the company they keep.

If someone is asking for money (trying to sell the idea), that's usually a pretty good indication that they have different priorities than what they are telling you to your face. Also watch for false logic (arguments that depends on arguments that don't make sense in order to be true) and anything with an air of mystery (if you can't find out everything about a subject fairly easily because someone is standing in your way, more than likely there isn't anything to hide and THAT is what they are hiding).

Avoid these kinds of tricks. Your time is better spent doing almost anything else. Go [play Tetris](#) instead.

ON BULLSHIT

"Children always understand. They have open minds. They have built-in shit detectors."

-Madonna

MAKE WAVES

Authority isn't there to be challenged; it's there to maintain the status quo. This means that the way things currently work is how they will continue to work, unless someone forces change upon the system.

The Iron Law of Oligarchy (a political theory of leadership) essentially says that those in power will do all they can to maintain that power and to gain more power. This means that your boss or the people who are in charge of creating DMV regulations or the city council are all working hard to keep themselves in power, which can impact the way they use the power they currently have.

If you want to change something that is unjust, irrational or simply inefficient, do what you can to work within the existing power structure first. This means going through the channels that currently exist to try and influence change.

If this doesn't work and this change is important enough to continue pursuing, go around the current structure, but follow the rules as much as possible.

If that doesn't work, then openly or clandestinely work to break the current system so that a new one can rise in its stead.

I want to note something here in great big letters so that no one misinterprets what I'm saying: **THIS DOES NOT MEAN USE VIOLENCE**; what I'm talking about here is peaceful revolution that brings about positive change.

Your efforts should be constructive, effective AND let you sleep at night.

ON CHALLENGING AUTHORITY

"Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth."

-Albert Einstein

BE ROUND

There's something to be said for having a specialty; a particular dish that you cook really well, for example. After a while, though, you and everyone you cook for will be sick of that dish. What then?

It's like those guys at the gym that work their arms really hard, lifting lots of weights and flexing in the mirror. If you look the rest of their body, in a lot of cases their beer bellies and love handles are like Jello inside their sleeveless shirts. A person of unfortunate proportion, whether physically or mentally, is a sad, sad thing.

Being a well-rounded person is a much better goal. Rather than just focusing on bulking up your arms, work your legs, core and do cardio exercises. Eat well. Take care of yourself. This will result in a much healthier (and attractive!) you.

The same holds true with your skills and activities. If all you do is scrapbook, it doesn't really matter how well you do it. Your friends are already really sick of hearing about your scrapbooks, and you are missing out on a much wider world.

A good way to start expanding your reach is to get involved with things related to what you already do. If you ARE a scrapbooker, maybe start painting, or get into decoupage, or write a book. These are all related, but each skill also stands on its own. Voila! Instant versatility!

TRENT REZNOR SAYS

“Though I still have no semblance of a life outside of Nine Inch Nails at the moment, I realize my goals have gone from getting a record deal or selling another record to being a better person, more well-rounded, having friends, having a relationship with somebody.”

-Trent Reznor, Nine Inch Nails

SCARCITY LIVING

To have a scarcity mentality (as I'm defining it) means that even during periods of great wealth and success you remember what it means to be poor and failing, and you have planned for such an event.

This doesn't mean that you have to constantly scrimp and save and not live it up, but it does mean that you should keep your future in mind, including the knowledge that anything can happen and while you might be doing well now, many people have been in the same situation and then suffered a great loss (death of a family member, personal injury, job loss, natural disaster, etc).

Your future self will thank you for preparing contingency plans, including how you will deal with devastating situations, financially and emotionally.

ON INCOME

"Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic. It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating."

-Oscar Wilde

HAVE FUN!

A lot of people seem to think lifestyle design and conscious living are terribly boring pursuits. Why would you want to analyze the fun out of your life? To me, that's not even a question, because I work hard to design my life so that I can have MORE fun.

I personally believe that I have a finite amount of time to live and because of this I should make the most of the time I have. It would be a shame to have spent my 100 or so years on Earth quietly trying to improve myself while hating the process and waiting to be finished.

Nay! I enjoy every single hour of every single day, and if I don't, then I work to change my circumstances until I do.

There's no reason to suffer, and though there are some good arguments in favor of Stoically dealing with bad situations and really experiencing bad things when they happen, even these coping mechanisms are designed to help you enjoy life more and with greater intensity.

THIS IS IMPORTANT

“Live life fully while you're here. Experience everything. Take care of yourself and your friends. Have fun, be crazy, be weird. Go out and screw up! You're going to anyway, so you might as well enjoy the process. Take the opportunity to learn from your mistakes: find the cause of your problem and eliminate it. Don't try to be perfect; just be an excellent example of being human.”

-Anthony Robbins

ASK QUESTIONS

If you don't ask questions, you won't learn as quickly as those who do.

You won't benefit from the experience of others, you won't be able to clarify unclear information and you will be ignorant compared to those who do.

Any questions?

INTERESTING QUESTIONS

What makes a #2 pencil so special?

Who's the AOL 'You've Got Mail!' guy?

Where does nougat come from?

Is there a move that's most likely to win at rock-paper-scissors?

Which came first, the can-opener or the can?

How does a word become a curse word?

Why do battery letters skip from A to C? Was there a B battery?

What does McDonald's have in common with the CIA?

Why does Hawaii have interstate highways?

Why do most snooze buttons only give you 9 more minutes of sleep?

Why do we call them grandfather clocks?

Was 'turkey' a bird or country first?

Who invented sliced bread?

Why is it called 'blackmail'?

Is it possible to own property on the Moon?

Why can't you tickle yourself?

Is human meat healthy?

Can you sense weather with an injured body part?

What are Seamonkeys?

How many pounds of chimpanzee is needed to defeat the average human?

-from Mental Floss Magazine, Top 25 Most Important Questions in the Universe

BE CONFIDENT

You know what? You're awesome. Act like it.

You're reading a really frickin' long ebook right now, which means that you give a damn, and that means that you are improving yourself in some way.

Walk tall, man/woman, because confidence is noticed by the world around you and there are few things more attractive or useful to have on your side.

Confidence is like working out your abs. Once you get your core to a certain point, with your 6-pack popping out and your oblique's waving 'hi,' those muscles will actually begin to sustain themselves. You will be passively burning more calories and working out those muscles without even having to think about it...they just DO.

Confidence works the same way. We all have our bad hair days, but if you become a confident person that confidence will become self-sustaining. That means that even when you're at your lowest you will be aware of your own value and get out of your pit of despair much faster.

Confidence is great, but be sure not to cross the line and become arrogant. Your confidence means being attractive and useful in reality, while arrogance is being annoying and destructive (it's essentially over-confidence...believing you're the cat's meow without being able to deliver AND rubbing it in everyone's face).

Part of being confident means not having to prove your value to everyone else. If you are constantly trying to assert your superiority you're showing a lack of confidence. Knowing you have value means not having to flaunt it or put down others to feel good about yourself.

ON CONFIDENCE

"Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent"

-Eleanor Roosevelt

BE HEALTHY

I've known some very intelligent and self-aware people who just don't seem to be able to find the time or motivation to keep themselves in good health and good shape. I keep those two things separate because there is a difference.

There are professional weight lifters that look all ripply and athletic, but health-wise they're killing themselves. There are also some people who look overweight but are actually going to outlive us all because of the high quality of their diet and lifestyle.

It's all about figuring out what's important to you and establishing a balance. I love my work and there are days when I simply forget to eat and sleep and take care of myself physically because I'm so engrossed in whatever it is I'm doing.

I can afford to do this from time to time because in general I eat a healthy diet and work out every day. These are habits I've established so that I can look good and feel good (both are important to me) without worrying too much about my off days.

If you have trouble getting into a regular workout plan or changing your diet, I'd recommend setting realistic goals. Saying 'I'm going to lose 20 pounds because I want to fit into my skinny jeans' is not ideal. If you want to make this a permanent thing your goal will need to be 'I want to be able to slim down, feel healthy, be able to climb stairs without panting and not have to be as concerned about what I eat.' That's realistic and won't set you up for any yo-yo diets or crash exercise routines.

It's also important that you keep up a certain level of personal hygiene. You can be the most physically fit person in the world, but if you smell terrible, have corn-yellow teeth and never wash your hair, you'll still have some issues getting work, going on dates, etc. Taking good care of yourself hygienically can actually help you get into a good exercise/diet routine, too, since your investment in your appearance will frame any gains you see from the health side of things, keeping you more motivated.

BUDDHA'S HEALTH ADVICE

"Every human being is the author of his own health or disease."

-Hindu Prince Gautama Siddharta, the founder of Buddhism

CHRISTOPHE GALLAND

THE IMAGISTS

At age 20, I graduated with a Master's degree in law from the University of Paris II. At that time, I was entering my third year as communication director and owner of a successful consulting firm implanted in 5 French cities. Due to irreconcilable differences with my business partner, and a tenacious will to see the world, I moved to Los Angeles to get an MA in Communication Management from the University of Southern California. It was possibly the best decision I ever made, even though it required many sacrifices and a great ability to leave things behind.

In order to remain in the United States legally, I had to quickly find a company that would employ me and sponsor me for an immigrant visa. I ended up accepting in a rush a position as an assistant in a Public Relations agency. After all those years of successes as my own boss, working for others and with so little responsibilities was the epitome of a humbling experience. I was chomping at the bit.

Having an edge is essential to depart from your competition. My edge was simple: no overhead. No salaried employees, but a collaboration with the best freelancers in the country. No expensive offices in Beverly Hills. This philosophy allowed me to reduce my prices drastically, making my services available to clients who would otherwise have to pass on them. I wanted to use Hollywood's frenzy for profit and overcharging to my advantage. Use the "economical crisis" and people's new concern for smart spending to convey the message that you CAN get great services for a reasonable cost. Don't get me wrong: I do not run a non-profit. My business is meant to generate revenue. But I try to prove everyday that it is possible to do so while having a code of conduct, and being honest with your clients and business partners.

Change directions with the market. Sense it before it happens and be ready when the trend hits. With my studio, The Imagists, I decided to explore the realm of personal branding. Individuals are more aware and accepting today that they can be branded and that the way they convey their message is essential. This branch of my business exceeded all my expectations and confirmed that personal branding is something to be taken into account in tomorrow's market. Do not fear to start over, no matter how crazy it seems, as long as it's to cultivate your happiness. And if you know yourself and your market, you will succeed.

Christophe Galland is the owner and creative director of the wildly successful Los Angeles-based communication and branding studio The Imagists. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

LET GO

If you love something, be willing to let it go.

Or, to take it a step further, if you love life, be willing to let go of anything if necessary to be happy.

Far too few people are willing to make the difficult decision to let go of something good in order to pursue something even better.

If you are confident in yourself and willing to take risks, you'll be much more likely to end up at the top of the world and a whole lot less likely to be stuck in a situation you find unfulfilling.

NO MORE CLINGING

“Let go. Why do you cling to pain? There is nothing you can do about the wrongs of yesterday. It is not yours to judge. Why hold on to the very thing which keeps you from hope and love?”

-Leo Buscaglia

RELATE WELL

You should always do your best to see things from other angles, which will allow you to empathize even if you disagree.

The alternative is essentially being a bigot; unwilling to consider anyone else's opinions and needs and living in ignorance. You don't need to change sides, just take a second and make sure you're on the RIGHT side.

ON EMPATHY

“Compassion automatically invites you to relate with people because you no longer regard people as a drain on your energy.”

-Chogyam Trungpa

GIVE REWARDS

Want others to treat you a certain way? Want good service at the local coffee shop, your significant other to pay more attention to the details of your relationship, or your family to back off a little?

Start rewarding others when they act the way you want and slowly but surely you'll see more of those results.

The reward will be different based on the situation, of course. Tip that barista well and you'll have a much better chance of getting high-end service. Be a bit more affectionate to your significant other when they take the time to be more aware of those little things that are so important. Make an effort to keep in better touch with your family when they give you your space.

It's simply Pavlovian psychology, but can be very effective

ON REWARDS

"The reward of a thing well done is to have done it."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

COMMUNICATE

They say that communication is the most important part of any relationship, and it's true. This applies not just to romantic couplings but also your relationships with family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances and strangers. Unclear or imprecise communication with anyone can lead to misunderstandings, which can in turn lead to uncomfortable situations, breakups, or, on an international scale, war.

The secret to being a clear communicator is to keep things simple and to find common ground. When writing an article for **my blog**, I could load my arguments down with jargon so that only a select group of people understands what I'm saying (those already 'in the know'), but usually I keep the slang to a minimum and focus instead on presenting broader ideas with a sprinkling of well-defined, well-explained industry chatter to keep things flavorful.

This same tactic can be used in real life to great effect. Recognize that your audience is whomever you're speaking to at that moment, and if you are saying something that they don't understand or care about, you may as well be talking to yourself.

ON COMMUNICATION

"One of the basic causes for all the trouble in the world today is that people talk too much and think too little. They act impulsively without thinking. I always try to think before I talk."

-Margaret Chase Smith

"I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

-Robert McCloskey

BE INSPIRED

What inspires you? If you see a painting, does it make you want to paint or write or do your taxes? Do you get a thrill every time you see a movie or talk to a stranger or read an ebook (*crossing fingers* oh please oh please oh please!)?

You'd better have something to get your creative juices flowing because otherwise you'll be at a serious disadvantage in the modern workforce.

Already, a whole lot of what can be automated - done by machines and outsourced - has been. The jobs that are going to be left for you to do will be things that others can't do more cheaply and in general that means something that requires a bit more creativity than spreadsheet karate.

You'd better have something special to offer and in a lot of cases that something will come to you in a flash of inspiration: you hear a piece of classical music and BOOM, you've got new ideas instead of just regurgitating.

Not only that, but you'll still have a job. Thanks Chopin!

ON YOUR MUSE

"Spend time every day listening to what your muse is trying to tell you."

-Saint Bartholomew

RESPECT OPINIONS

Other people have the right to disagree with you about anything they like. It's up to you to be mature enough to respect those differences and though a friendly conversation or debate can be stimulating, don't get offended or intentionally offend someone because of these differences. That's not okay.

Remember, your opinions come largely from your experiences, and no one in the world has had the exact same life experiences as you. If they believe in a different god or think that a different governmental system is superior or think that one sports team is better than the other, that's all the result of their environment and upbringing...it's not something they had any say in, so lay off.

On the other hand, don't change just because someone else insists upon it. It's a bit humbling (but true) to remember that they may feel the same discomfort or disdain you feel, but because of YOUR beliefs.

And you know what? Neither of you is right. There is no right and wrong because they are just opinions. No reason to get angry. Keep an open mind and be willing to change, but be willing to defend ideas you believe in strongly (hopefully the other person has an open mind, as well!).

OSCAR KNOWS

"In all matters of opinion, our adversaries are insane."

-*Oscar Wilde*

THE BIG PICTURE

Let's put things in perspective here. Say you lose your job; that's really bad and you will be stressed about money and finding a new income stream and some of your relationships might suffer and you'll most likely be unhappy.

Somewhere in the world someone your age is dying of violence or malnutrition or disease. They've never had the chance to work or have a full meal or known peace.

And think about this: if you spread your arms as far as they will go out to your sides and straighten your fingers, the length of the white line at the end of the nail on your middle finger is the total length of human history. The rest of the length of your arms and fingers and nails is the amount of time the Earth has been here without humans. No buildings, no jobs, no society, no relationships, no money and no sentience.

More: the Universe is incredibly vast and our galaxy is not even a speck of a speck in that vast abysmal stew of matter, dark matter and dark energy (which is something we THINK exists, but still can't see or measure...we're pretty sure we know what about 5% of the Universe is made of but even that's left open to interpretation).

Who knows what's out there? And then what's past that? And do other dimensions overlap our own? And what's outside of those dimensions? Is there some kind of Creator? And if there is, who created the Creator? And if there's not, what then?

Keep things in perspective, apply yourself to thoughts higher than 'Who will win Dancing with the Stars?' from time to time and enjoy the hell out of not knowing because it's not likely we'll be able to figure it all out any time soon.

CARTOON SONG

"It's a great big universe / And we're all really puny
We're just tiny little specks / About the size of Mickey Rooney
It's big and black and inky / And we are small and dinky
It's a big universe / And we're not"

-Yakko Warner, Animaniacs

GO AWAY

When you are around the same people, places and things for a while, you begin to form habits that go deep. You pass the same buildings and hang out with the same crowd. There are the same music venues to attend shows at and the same comic strips in the paper. Your brain locks those coordinates and has trouble shifting gears.

When you leave and put yourself in a new environment you suddenly have a very large opportunity: the chance to start over. You can be whomever you want. Different name. Different haircut. That thing that happened at that one party? No one in the new place knows about it. *Tabula rasa!*

Old friends and family - no matter how awesome and well intentioned they might be - can hold you back. They don't do it consciously, but it does happen.

It's even worse with friends than with family. When I started making positive changes in high school, some of my very good friends (including my best friend) were visibly offended. I stopped dressing like a slob and was taunted with 'pretty boy' and 'Mr. Metro;' this from people who have always known me to dress fairly tastelessly.

My new friends from college, on the other hand, would likely be surprised to find out that I ever dressed differently than I do now. I have a completely different reputation in my college town than I did in high school, and I had a completely different one in LA than in my college town.

While traveling I have the opportunity to reinvent myself more frequently and it is incredibly liberating.

Get away from what you're accustomed to and figure out who you really are, not just who other people think you are.

ON LEAVING

"Traveling is not just seeing the new; it is also leaving behind. Not just opening doors; also closing them behind you, never to return. But the place you have left forever is always there for you to see whenever you shut your eyes."

-Jan Myrdal

BE GGG

I'm a big fan of **Dan Savage**, the advice columnist from Seattle. He came up with a concept that I really like that he applies to relationships, but I think can apply equally well to live in general.

The concept is being 'GGG,' which means that in your relationship you should be Good, Giving and Game. You should be good at what you do, giving to your partner and game to try new things, especially if they make your partner happy.

In life, too, you should try to be a good person...there isn't really any reason not to be, and being a good person comes with so many benefits (other than just the pure satisfaction of being a good person) even the most hardened Objectivist should be able to find a self-serving reason to do so.

Being giving will also help you in your personal and professional life. Take the time to help others out and you'll be helped out in return. Just helping others out without any compensation from them usually helps you; it solidifies concepts in your mind, gives you more experience with whatever you're helping them with and builds up an aura of goodwill around your personal brand.

To be game in real life, you have to be willing to take things as they come and roll with the punches. When life gives you lemons, set up a lemon gelato stand in LA and make millions of dollars.

When your plans are waylaid, find joy in the adventure. Do this, and you'll never be disappointed and life will be full of exciting surprises

QUOTABLE DAN

"It doesn't matter what you're doing, it matters how you're doing it."

-Dan Savage

AVOID DRAMA

I find that most relationships between people are a whole lot more complicated than they need to be. To some, the kind of relationship they're in is up for debate (this has become more obvious since the inclusion of 'It's Complicated' as an option in the Relationship Status field on [Facebook](#)).

A simple way around this is to communicate clearly with everyone, but especially people whom you have a romantic (or otherwise intimate) relationship with. Talk with them and don't let any subject be taboo. I've dated people who have been made very uncomfortable any time exes came up, so they never wanted to talk about it. How can you really know someone if you don't know about where they've been?

A person is made up of the combination of their genetics and their experiences; if you can't discuss the past, you're missing out on half of what makes someone else whom they are.

Need a good way to breach the subject? Next time you're hanging out with them (try to do this in person), say 'Hey, I just read this ebook that said we should talk about our exes/our likes and dislikes in bed/our relationship status...what are we anyway?/insert thing you're confused about here. Here's my side, what's yours?'

I'll gladly take the blame if anything awkward happens, but really, do you really want to be in a relationship wherein wanting to know more about the other person would lead to conflict?

You don't need that kind of drama...life's too short.

ON RELATIONSHIPS

"Man is a knot into which relationships are tied."

-Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*

80/20 PRINCIPLE

If you don't know what it is, the premise of the 80/20 Principle is that about 80 percent of your results come from about 20 percent of your effort. This means that a very significant portion of what you are doing is bringing in very little money (or fame, or prestige, or whatever you're working for) while a small bit of what you're doing is bringing in a lot.

I applied this principle by taking a look at my studio and cutting out the super time-consuming and low-paying work. I then sought out more of the kinds of projects that were left over, which allowed me to make a lot more money with less time and effort.

I then applied this same principle to my lifestyle, cutting some of the time- and emotionally-draining relationships from my life and leaving the ones that really brought me value (whatever that happened to mean in each case). In doing this, I was able to reclaim even more time to use in whatever way I see fit.

I was able to cut my working week from 60-80 hours all the way down to 10-15 hours using this principle, and I continue to make the same amount of money (or more) each month.

I recommend that you take stock of what time-wasting activities are mucking up your lifestyle and try getting rid of a few. If the world starts to crumble you can always bring them back, but I think it's more likely that you won't miss them and will enjoy the extra free time a whole lot more.

THE 80/20 PRINCIPLE ALSO APPLIES TO:

Frequencies of words in longer texts, the size of human settlements, file size distribution of Internet traffic which uses the TCP protocol, clusters of Bose-Einstein condensate near absolute zero, the value of oil reserves in oil fields, the length distribution in jobs assigned to supercomputers, the standardized price returns on individual stocks, size of sand particles, size of meteorites.

via StateMaster.com

NO ADDICTIONS

Obviously it's not ideal to be addicted to alcohol or drugs or sex or pain. These things can bring momentary joy, but long-term can have serious consequences. Addictions are a hindrance and should be cast aside as quickly as possible.

In fact, even so-called 'positive addictions' like working out and cleaning your room should be avoided because they are, after all, addictions. If you cannot stop yourself from doing something when you really need to, it's time to take a good long look in the mirror and come up with a new plan.

I was hooked on Mountain Dew (seriously) for a long time (up until Junior year of high school). I would drink so much Mountain Dew every day that when I quit cold turkey I had major withdrawal symptoms. After a few weeks of headaches, nausea, an inability to sleep, shakiness and a general sense of unease, I was free of the greenish-yellow monkey on my back and felt great.

I had no idea how terrible I felt all that time until I didn't feel terrible anymore. It wasn't something that anyone would have ever pointed out as an addiction, but it was definitely holding me back and I'm a much better person for kicking the habit.

Why be a slave to anything? It may not be immediately harmful (especially in the case of the positive addictions), but in the long-term any addiction is a bad addiction and can keep you from achieving your goals and the life you wish to have.

ON ADDICTION

"Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism."

-Carl Gustav Jung

KRISTIN NORRIS

FIND YOURSELF LOST

You are the unquestionable authority on yourself. (I always liked to think I'm an authority because it feeds my ridiculous ego. This time it just happens to be true).

There's a lot of noise going around in the world about getting in touch with yourself and making peace with your emotions. Eff that noise.

Being messy emotional (complete with gobs of snot and tears – the more disgusting, probably the better) is like having an owner's manual that screams instructions at you. If done effectively, though, it's like installing a Google search bar in your body. What should I be doing with my life? What makes me happy? Let's try pressing the 'I'm Feeling Lucky' button right here... oh and there's the answer... top of the list. (Yes, personally, my responses have amazing SEO.)

Now, you're probably thinking, "Well great, Kristin. This is all well and good in theory, but how do I actually go about being emotionally messy in an effective way? I don't want to be a puddle of snot (come on, it's really just an awesome word!) on the floor!"
Me: (in my most skeezy marketer voice) "You don't have to. You can have both the search bar and a successful personal and professional life. And (dusts nails off on lapel) I'm going to tell you how."

The trick is to acknowledge your immediate emotional reactions and analyze them rather than judge them. Really it is such a simple concept that most people are unable to train themselves to do it. We like to complicate things. We like drama. We're addicted to blowing things out of proportion. Major emotional reaction equals major external response. I'm telling you: keep the emotion, ditch the drama.

Feel jealous or angry or sad, they're the best keywords to understanding yourself. When you can step back and analyze these reactions, you'll be frequently lead right to understanding some discontent you have with yourself.

Yes, please, give me tears, give me stress; let me feel like a human, relate like a human and reap the productive advancements of a robot.

Kristin Norris runs Find Yourself Lost, a blog that focuses on tips for practical lifestyle design from the perspective of an emotional, creative person. Follow her on Twitter and Facebook.

YOUR WEBSITE

Okay so-and-so@aol.com, it's time you got up to date and became an active player in your own life. It's time to take Brand You to the next level and produce a resource that explains your ins-and-outs.

It's time you got a website, and there's never been a better time to make one.

Why would you want a website? It's the window to who you are that faces the public. As people go window-shopping, Googling your name, what will come up? Will it be a newspaper article of you being brought in on a DUI? I hope not. But you won't know for sure unless you take that space and make it your own. If your personal website is not on the first page when someone Google's your name, you need to create more content pronto.

A big part of that content is your website. By creating a website/blog, even through a free service like **Blogger** or **Wordpress**, you'll automatically be in charge of where the conversation about you goes. You can write about what you want and if you stick to topics related to your personal brand you might rank for those as well.

At the very least, a website provides an online base that someone you met at a party or at a business meeting or wherever can find you at after the fact. It says to the world, 'I take what I do seriously. Seriously enough to get my own website and beat those uncomfortable newspaper articles down in the rankings. Booya.'

ON PERSONAL WEBSITES

"Looking at the proliferation of personal web pages on the Net, it looks like very soon everyone on Earth will have 15 megabytes of fame."

-MG Sriram

BE A SPONGE

It's amazing how much free information is out there. It's even more amazing how few people take advantage of it.

People are out there just GIVING it away! They're writing tutorials and blogs and **ebooks**, giving presentations, making movies and even talking directly to you! Every conversation is a potential lesson in whatever the other person knows about, so ask guiding questions and learn something. If you show a genuine interest in what the other person does or cares about, they will usually be more than willing to open up, show you the ropes and make sure that the information spreads. To you.

The alternative, of course, is allowing all this information to remain unabsorbed or unnoticed. Albert Einstein could be standing next to you at the subway station, but if you never speak up, he'll have nothing more to offer you than the homeless person asking you for money on your way out the door. Don't do that to Einstein.

FREE INFORMATION LINKS

howcast.com

5min.com

instructables.com

eHow.com

monkeysee.com

ocw.mit.edu

itunes.stanford.edu

OBEY (MOSTLY)

There will be times when you feel that you can't keep your silence anymore. Something so horrible will have happened and you will need to incite change by whatever means are necessary. You might end up breaking the law.

In preparation for situations like this: **obey the law most of the time.**

If you are a well-known rabble rouser – someone who is constantly shouting and screaming and biting and clawing about the most recent political news or war or overseas injustice or whatever – it will be much more difficult to get people to pay attention to you when you speak. Think 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf.' You will be considered untrustworthy because EVERYTHING that comes out of your mouth is supposedly the most important thing ever.

When everything is worth rioting over, nothing is worth rioting over.

Disagree with what is going on all the time if you must, but do so intelligently, calculatingly and with great dignity. Meet the challenge head on but do not invade other people's space, scream at the top of your voice or break the law.

On the day when something absolutely unfathomable happens, however, go crazy and let people know what's what. Do what you need to do, because if the cause is really worth it you will have let everyone know about it and they will listen because you are the person who never overreacts, never raises your voice too loud and never invades their space. This must be important!

It's an investment, for sure, but choose your battles wisely or you will lose them all.

ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

"If...the machine of government...is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law."

-Henry David Thoreau, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience, 1849

MAKE BAD GOOD

Any time I find myself in a really bad situation – whether it’s dangerous or sad or just not great – I tell myself ‘man, this is going to make a good story someday. I’m going to learn something from this. Self, pay attention and make sure you take it all in.’

In other words, today’s tragedies are tomorrow’s comedies.

By facing the worst moments in life without flinching, you’re able to appreciate the good moments even more (and the average moments suddenly become much more noteworthy).

Keep this in mind because there will always be bad times; it’s how you respond to them that determines whether they end up being pointless or beneficial.

THE GLASS IS HALF FULL

“If you will call your troubles experiences, and remember that every experience develops some latent force within you, you will grow vigorous and happy, however adverse your circumstances may seem to be.”

-John Heywood

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

-Winston Churchill

“I’m not afraid of storms, for I’m learning how to sail my ship.”

-Louisa May Alcott

PLAY GAMES

I'm a big fan of games. I play games for kicks, I play games to learn, I play games to socialize; I make use of games whenever possible. Games are fun and games tap into our feral desire to achieve a goal that we wouldn't necessarily care about otherwise ('Ha! I sunk your battleship!').

A lively game of Twister can be the highlight of an otherwise ho-hum party and **turning meeting new people into a game** can really increase the size and quality of your network. Hell, playing a game of Halo (which I'm terrible at, by the way) can make an awkward meeting with a younger sibling more than tolerable.

I find that looking at life as a game makes it a whole lot less intimidating and confounding. As I work harder and achieve more, I gain more experience (points?) and become stronger.

From time to time I come across really difficult scenarios (bosses?) and once I overcome them, I can move on to the next level. Of my life.

How I live my life (play the game) determines the types of people I meet, obstacles I encounter and rewards I receive. Anything that gets in my way is just a temporary setback until I can figure out how to get past it (or in some cases, make use of a cheat code, bypassing the game's intended course completely).

The storyline of real life is more epic than any game I've ever played (which makes it a lot easier to focus on improving myself and playing MY game than, say, beating Final Fantasy or Warcraft).

MARIO'S INFLUENCE

"Video games are bad for you? That's what they said about rock and roll."

-Shigeru Miyamoto

AUTOMATE

One of the most common pieces of advice you'll hear from the lifestyle design crowd is to automate. Get the stuff you don't want to do or don't know how to do off your plate and free up time to enjoy life. Go on a date. Learn to fly fish. Do whatever.

Making use of clever software is a fantastic way to gain back lost time, especially if you work or socialize online. I use [HootSuite](#) to keep track of my many social media conversations, [su.pr](#) to plan, post and track articles that I advertise on Facebook and Twitter, and [Adium](#) to keep in touch with people from all the instant messaging services I'm a part of.

I use [Things](#) as my to-do list, and [Evernote](#) serves as my all-purpose notes/ideas/media/important document depository.

[Linotype FontXplorer](#) organizes my enormous collection of fonts, while [Gmail](#) and [Google Calendar](#) allow me to run my business from any computer with Internet access. The time these apps have saved me is IMMENSE and what's really amazing is that all but one of them (Things) is free.

Another way I automate is called batch processing, which means I'll take a series of similar tasks and do them all at the same time. By doing this, I benefit from a hefty increase in speed (from getting into the 'zone' and not being interrupted).

Outsourcing has become a very big part of many people's automation arsenal and though I've only dabbled in this, I can already tell you that if you can find the right person, it frees up a LOT of time. You do pay for it, but you also see a big return on your investment, so if you can outsource paying work especially, you could have a winning situation for everyone involved while regaining a nice portion of your day.

ON AUTOMATION

"Besides black art, there is only automation and mechanization."

-*Federico Garcia Lorca*

THE ZONE

You should learn how you best get into ‘the zone.’

This is like a super-power if you can get it working correctly and when you need it. You’ll get things done at super-speed and do much higher quality work because your mind is focused and has the right kind of activity for what you need to get done.

Next time you get in the zone, take a second and think through everything you did to get there. Was it a certain routine? Exercise and then read for a few minutes until you feel inspired? A cup of tea and kicking on the A/C? Replicate whatever seems to work and refine it until you can get in the zone at will.

Boom, super powers.

ON FOCUS

“The first rule of focus is ‘Wherever you are be there.’”

-Unknown

VALUE BEAUTY

Looking to get more out of life? Stop and take a look at the pattern of tiles on the ceiling. Or the color and texture of the rusty pipes in the alleyway. Or the drop of dew falling from the ivy that's crawling up and slowly tearing down a wall.

Being able to find beauty wherever you look will increase the quality of your life by 472% (approximately).

Something that really helped me achieve this goal was taking a life drawing class. Some people just aren't attractive in the traditional sense, but it's the people with the rolls of fat or scarred face or hair in awkward places or completely asymmetrical features that are the most interesting to draw.

As you draw someone that would conventionally be considered unattractive (or 'ugly,' though that's such a rough term as to be nearly worthless in describing something aesthetically) you start to see the beauty in the lines and the wonderful perfection in the imperfections. This carries over easily to non-human objects as you begin to study color and composition (which you can learn a lot about in Color Theory or Photography classes, respectively).

I highly recommend that if you have trouble finding the beauty in anything, that you find a local community college or life drawing group and start going a few times a month. In time you'll begin to see what those artists and poets see and it really does make the walk through life a much more enjoyable one.

LOOK AROUND

"Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Notice the bumble bee, the small child, and the smiling faces. Smell the rain, and feel the wind. Live your life to the fullest potential, and fight for your dreams."

-Ashley Smith

GO LOCAL

When traveling, it's important to respect local laws, customs and people. Don't be the asshole who goes on and on about how things are so much better back home, disrespects unfamiliar practices and is rude or inconsiderate to locals. How would you feel if someone came to your home and did the same?

I find that attempting to live as much like a local as possible helps me to get a good idea of what a city, state, country, etc is all about. If you stay in a hotel, go to tourist attractions and eat out for every meal you're getting the tourist experience and really only seeing a whitewashed version of wherever you happen to be.

If you are able to stay a while, rent an apartment, go to the grocery store, cook your food, learn as much of the language and jargon as possible, attend local classes and interact with and befriend locals; trust me, you'll end up walking away with a much more authentic experience.

This is just my preference, but it seems silly to travel so far only to have the exact same experience you could have had back home, just with accents and slightly different pastries.

ON TRAVEL

“People travel to faraway places to watch, in fascination, the kind of people they ignore at home.”

-Dagobert D. Runes

BE INSPIRATIONAL

One of the most rewarding things about my [Exile Lifestyle](#) project has been the response I've gotten from others.

Many people who have read my blog or heard my story have contacted me a few days or a few months later to tell me that, as a direct result of having come into contact with what I was doing, they've begun to make changes in their own lives.

Some people have quit their job to pursue what they really want to do. Some have stopped making excuses and gotten out of bad relationships or begun to take night classes in a subject that has always fascinated them. Some have started working out more or simply begun to be more aware of their life and what they want to do with it.

Though these changes happened as a result of people reading or hearing my words, they really have nothing to do with me.

I'm no guru on any of these topics. They saw that I could do what I wanted to do and that inspired them to do what they wanted to do. I was a catalyst, nothing more and it's amazing to me that such a small thing could lead to such huge life changes for other people.

You can do that same! Spread positive change in your wake and you'll not only feel a greater sense of accomplishment (your presence changed someone's life! That's a big deal!), you'll also be helping to make the world a better place (in the sense that when more people are happy with their situation the better our goods, services and interpersonal relationships will be).

ON BEING INSPIRING

"Good actions give strength to ourselves and inspire good actions in others."

-Plato

BE ASYMMETRICAL

No one ever started a revolution by fitting in, and it's important to maintain a sense of rebellion and question everything.

This doesn't mean that you have to flaunt your opinions in everyone's face just because you can, but rather that you should work steadily toward the changes you wish to make while at the same time fitting in enough so that your voice can be heard (some people call this 'throwing rocks from inside the establishment').

At one point in college I had 5 jobs, working primarily as a graphic designer and creating a whole lot of promo materials for family-friendly events, periodicals, etc.

At the same time I would get up early and stay up late to create zines that were distributed around town with the intent of rabble-rousing and getting people to talk about confrontational subjects (abortion, coal power, militarism, etc).

Because I was a respected member of society, my voice was heard and the zines became a great hit. If I had spent most of my time at protests and spray-painting the windows of local businesses I wouldn't have had the same kind of support (who wants to listen to the guy who does nothing but shout?).

Being asymmetrical also means that you should break traditional lifestyle molds.

I run a traditional business in the United States, taking on clients like most other businesses do, but I operate from other countries and write about my experiences. One part of my model is standard enough to make people comfortable, while the other part is untraditional enough to keep people interested and allow me to thrive.

POP MOVIE WISDOM

"Stop trying to fit in when you were born to stand out."

-*Movie: What a Girl Wants*

ANOUSH RIMA TATEVOSSIAN

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY MAGAZINE

People & Places Open Doors: Move to a Small Pond, and Meet the Mad Ones.

One of the best decisions I ever made was moving from a country of 300 million, to one of 2 million people. I left the United States upon graduating from undergrad, and volunteered in Armenia for 6 months. In those months, I had the opportunity to travel to remote villages, take part in civic protests, write a travel book, assist with a film that went on to win an award at Tribeca, and land a long-term job which brought me back to Armenia to work for another year and a half. The frequency at which you'll bump into new people, be welcomed into new "scenes," and access various opportunities is much greater in a condensed metropolitan area, than in a sprawling place like the States. Other friends who have spent time in small countries – like in the Baltics or the Caribbean – have tended to agree with me. Particularly in a developing, or "in transition," country there is a sense that it is evolving, and changing; that your presence and involvement there can be part of the molding process.

The second and most important thing in my life has been meeting passionate and dynamic people—the "mad ones"—and meeting lots of them. I'm particularly drawn to uncommon individuals from different walks of life (animators, women's rights activists, graphic designers, teachers, journalists, rock musicians, photographers, diplomats, TV producers and film editors, anthropologists, glass-blowers...) and it is because of these people that I'm constantly inspired and driven to keep things interesting. Each person is like a door that opens up to an entirely new world, and they can be your tour guide. As long as your interest is in earnest, those kindred "mad ones" will sense it, and be happy to grant you access, sometimes for a short visit (sitting in on a friend's session at a recording studio), and sometimes the opportunity can evolve into something even more substantial (friends involved in publishing inviting you to contribute or co-author!). Pay attention when the new people you meet begin to talk. If you see a glimmer of madness in their eyes when they speak about what they do, then pull up a chair and let them transport you to their world.

Anoush Rima Tatevossian was the Editor-in-Chief of Public Diplomacy Magazine, a USC-based print- and web-based magazine focused on public diplomacy issues. Follow her on Twitter and LinkedIn.

CREATE ART

There are few things more fulfilling than stepping back from a canvas/computer screen/piece of parchment/clay wheel and thinking 'I made this.'

Creating artwork of any kind is like being able to give birth every day; you bring into the world something that would never have existed if you hadn't been there to do it.

It's yours and you created it with your own hands. Whatever statement it makes or impact it has on others is a direct result of your actions.

Even if you don't think you're any good, create something that makes you happy.

Artistic endeavors are good for your creativity (keep it exercised!) and can be very relaxing. Not only that, but you may just find you have a knack for it, and most if not all artistic skill sets are transferable in some way to other fields (the visual composition skills you learn while taking photos, for example, can be easily utilized by an industrial designer, event coordinator or architect).

GOOD NEWS!

"An artist cannot fail; it is a success to be one. "

-Charles Horton Cooley

KNOW YOUR BIAS

I have biases, you have biases; we all have biases. It's part of the human condition. It helped us survive and evolve into the (mostly) civilized folk we are today.

That being said, it's not really ideal to have a lot of biases because they can keep you from trying new things and being receptive to new ideas. A closed mind is often an ignorant mind and biases can cause a person to slam the door on certain people, cultures, ideas, etc.

A good way to deal with personal biases is just to become aware of them.

When you find yourself having particularly negative or positive feelings toward something or someone, take note and see if you can determine why. More often than not you'll be able to come up with some reason why you might feel the way you do ('I hate cows because cows burnt down my childhood home! Of course!').

Remember that you are viewing the world through tinted lenses and act accordingly.

ON BIAS

"To know the true reality of yourself, you must be aware not only of your conscious thoughts, but also of your unconscious prejudices, bias and habits."

-Unknown

BE SUSTAINABLE

It's easy to be wasteful: easy and irresponsible.

I'm not going to preach about recycling and reusing and buying secondhand and such, because honestly sometimes it's just not possible, and there are plenty of other people preaching it better than I could.

You SHOULD consider that having a loop you can close usually leads to savings, whether it's for your business or your personal finances.

And if we keep messing with the planet and building up more and more trash and such, it WILL come back to bite us in the ass. Anyone who claims it won't is either 1) lying because they work for an industry that requires a lot of wasteful practices to operate, 2) lying because they're a politician or person of faith whose political party or religion require them to ignore the painfully obvious consequences of their actions, or 3) simply out of touch with reality, because seriously folks, we're cutting down all the trees, polluting the air and filling up every square inch of empty space with waste.

What do you THINK is going to happen?

So do what you can, even if you can only move in baby steps. I don't know that we're going to have a major ecological disaster any time soon, but our quality of life can only improve when we pay more attention to sustainability.

Also: our coffers will be much larger as we move closer to a 'use every part of the buffalo' attitude.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

"Modern man no longer regards Nature as in any sense divine and feels perfectly free to behave toward her as an overweening conqueror and tyrant."

-Aldous Huxley

BREAK HABITS

Unfortunately, we all tend to develop many habits we don't want.

Smoking, eating badly, watching TV every day after work, etc. It's a bit tougher to break a habit than to start one, but something that works for me is to make sure that every single time I'm going to perform that habit I'm aware of what I'm doing.

This breaks the subconscious cycle and allows you to make a rational decision rather than just falling prey to muscle memory (which is what happens most of the time).

It helps to have a physical reminder, too, especially when the habit is something insidious and hard to lock down (like biting your nails...I had this problem and I would be dead set on stopping, but then I'd start doing it without thinking and wouldn't become aware of it until 5 minutes later).

If you watch too much TV, tape a piece of paper over the screen that says 'Do you REALLY want to be doing this?' That way you'll be forced to think about the tradeoffs every time you start to do the activity and you can deal with the consequences of your own conscious actions rather than blaming your reflexive habits.

KILL THE HABITS

"First we form habits then they form us. Conquer your bad habits, or they'll eventually conquer you."

-Dr. Rob Gilbert

WORK YOUR MIND

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health, and you'll need to exercise your mind regularly if you want to get the results you desire out of your mental processes.

But what's that MEAN? Well, exercising your mind means giving it tasks that are challenging. Crossword puzzles are great for this, as they help your mind create relationships between disparate chunks of knowledge, which helps you to learn more effectively and swiftly in the future (because its associative abilities will improve over time). Reading, word problems, doing math, having interesting conversations: these are all things that are good for your mind and are hopefully enjoyable as well (though if they aren't, find something that is mentally taxing but still enjoyable).

Mental problems can include but are not limited to things like depression, emotional baggage, an adherence to preconceived notions, bad habits, etc. Some of these things are more difficult to cope with than others (depression can be a life long struggle, and emotional baggage can be just as tough to get over), but it's still vital that you keep working your mind muscles, mentally jumping up and down all day so that eventually you'll be able to leap over those hurdles with ease.

Getting over something that is mentally debilitating is a great victory, and though the road is difficult, a success can remove all handicaps and allow you to perform on a much higher level.

EXERCISE YOUR MIND

A black dog stands in the middle of an intersection in a town painted black. None of the street lights are working due to a power failure caused by a local storm. A car with two broken headlights drives towards the dog but turns in time to avoid hitting him. How could the driver have seen the dog in time?

Courtesy of Mindtrapgames.com, answer on the last page

KNOW POP

This is sometimes tough for me because of my disdain for celebrity culture, but understanding pop culture is important for many reasons.

For one, it allows you to participate in society like someone that, you know, belongs there. Among people.

You don't have to know every juicy detail of their relationship, but if you don't know who Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are, you simply don't fit in United States culture... there's something missing that makes you stand out in a bad way.

Second, knowing what's going on in pop culture can help you see where trends are going and act on them instead of being forced to react.

Finally, pop culture is kind of ridiculous and fun and though it might not be the most intellectual of pursuits, it's easy-going mind-candy that we could all honestly use a bit of from time to time.

FAMILY GUY REFERENCE

Lois: Okay, one more minute, and then if there are two pink lines...

Peter: Oh god, I hope you're not pregnant, we can't afford another kid. We already got Chris, Stewey, Richie, Joanie, Greg, Marsha, Bobby, Jan, Mike Seaver, Carol Seaver, Boner, Urkel, Mr. Furley...

Brian: Peter those aren't your kids, that's the Nick-at-Night lineup.

Peter: Blanka, Zangeif, Chun-Li, Guile, E. Honda...

Brian: That's Street Fighter.

Peter: Red, blue, green...

Brian: Those are colors."

-Family Guy, episode Sibling Rivalry

DO IT WELL

Looking at the low quality of products and services on the market these days I can't help but wonder how we got to where we are now. Then again, I suppose it could be argued that even the low quality fare is valuable in that it's cheap and easy, which is a niche that needs to be filled...

But I digress. The point here is that if you're going to do something, do it as well as you know how. Whatever quality means to you and your field, you should aim for that and not accept excuses from yourself.

Work at it until you really know what you're doing and then work some more.

It's unlikely that anyone will ever be the 'best' at anything (it's such a relative term as to be useless, anyway), but being excellent is something worth striving for. There aren't any simple paths to this; you basically just need to find out as much as possible about what you want to do and then focus on making it so.

QUOTES ON QUALITY

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives."

-William A. Foster

"Quality means doing it right when no one is looking."

-Henry Ford

"Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren't used to an environment where excellence is expected."

-Steve Jobs, Apple CEO

KILL LIMITATIONS

Most of the time I find that limitations exist for their own sake; they perpetuate a bureaucratic system or exist because of some outdated idea that no longer applies.

Break through barriers that don't make sense! Show people what can be done when you are uninhibited and you'll find yourself in the position to work without constraints more often.

You can call this outside the box thinking, but that seems a little limiting to me...

DEALING WITH LIMITATIONS

"In imagination, there's no limitation."

-Mark Victor Hansen

"The mask can be a limitation, but you just deal with it. You do get superhuman strength and pumpkin bombs and all this other stuff to express yourself with."

-Willem Dafoe

MONEY? MEH

I'm a fairly capitalistic person: I enjoy the challenge of making money and of producing value in exchange for that money. At the same time, I recognize that money is a means to an end and not an end unto itself.

This is an important distinction. You know those really unhappy rich people? The ones that get depressed or drink their lives away or kill themselves? They are the people who thought that money would bring them happiness.

This is a myth. Sure, money can help you buy nice things and get you access into interesting social circles and open up all kinds of doors, but if you don't have that happiness already, all money will do is give you more sadness. Or boredom. It is an amplifier, and whatever you already feel will become more intense as you get more of it. This includes unhappiness.

I think the pursuit of money is silly.

The pursuit of things and ideas that bring you money, sure, and the things money can help you do. But to have money for money's sake? Nah. I don't want to be that bored.

I'd rather earn it my way...through things that make me happy.

ON MONEY

"Money and success don't change people; they merely amplify what is already there."

-Will Smith

DOUBT DESTINY

I'm not a big believer in anything that can't be supported by scientific evidence and destiny falls squarely into that category.

Some people who find this out about me think it's terribly tragic and ask how I can live without feeling that there's something guiding me...something to live up to.

My feeling is that by NOT having a destiny I'm even more inclined to strive and fight my way forward because I feel like what I do matters more. If events were already predestined then I wouldn't have to worry about doing the right thing because that right thing would already be locked in. It would happen regardless of whether I put thought and time and effort in.

Living my destiny-less life encourages me to blaze my own trail, try new things, make waves, make conscious decisions and think things through.

It also allows me to accept no limitations. If I believed it was my destiny to do X, then I would feel pretty limited in what I could do. 'If I go to so-and-so country, it will take me far away from what I'm supposed to do...better stay put.'

Fortunately that's not the case and whatever I end up doing is the right thing at that moment in time. It's an invigorating thought and one that I cherish greatly.

ON DESTINY

"It's choice - not chance - that determines your destiny."

-Jean Nidetch

"Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice:
It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."

-William Jennings Bryan

CAROL SEGRAVE

SEGRAVE ASSOCIATES

The main reason I am remarkable is I had a mother who insisted I be remarkable. She did that by being remarkable herself, by letting me know with certainty she loved me and by opening the doors to a myriad of rich and varied learning opportunities—everything from horseback riding to a Master Degree. My Mom was by no means a woman of wealth. She was simply and totally committed to my Best.

Looking back at the last 67 years of my life, I see that around age 21 I made the internal commitment to continue her commitment to being the Best I could be. It was all I knew how to be. It has included marriage (tried my best for twenty-five years-divorced), children, grandchildren, loving and being loved by family and friends, eternal continuing education, triathlons, outward bound, more graduate work, senior Olympics, competitive salsa dancing, three different careers, small business owner for 30 years, traveler, adventurer, spiritual seeker.

When my mother died at ninety the year I turned 52, it was hard at first to be my own cheerleader. Over time I came to realize that if I didn't be that for myself, I would not be being my Best. I had to choose and choose and choose again to live my life moving forward always to a new level of Best.

Okay, I admit I have an ongoing bet with myself! Here's the real story. My life has been and is all about figuring out what does it take to wind up the most highly evolved, financially independent, mentally, physically and spiritually radiant, and at the same time sexiest centenarian that has ever walked the earth. Now that would really be Best, wouldn't it?

Carol Segrave runs Segrave Associates, a consultancy through which she helps build teams and make people into better leaders. Follow her on Twitter and LinkedIn.

PAY IT FORWARD

Do nice things for others and you will have nice things done for you.

It's a simple concept and one that many people consider to be spiritual. Whether you believe in karma or not, it does tend to work: if you put effort into being a good person and treating others as you would like to be treated, you're stacking the deck in your favor.

I personally believe that this works so well and consistently because people who are actively trying to be good visually display a certain something that others can pick up on. Their posture is different, their head held high, their eyes are friendly, and a ready grin is present.

In other words: they're the kind of person you want to be friendly to.

Another reason that this tends to work is because a favor given usually leads to a favor returned.

If someone comes to me with a project I don't have time for and I recommend a friend of mine who can handle it instead, my friend gets the work and the client gets their project done by someone who has been vouched for.

Now if my friend has the opportunity to give me a recommendation, they'll likely do so. I can't be sure it will happen, of course - there are no social or physical contracts that require this kind of tit-for-tat - but the chances of my being reward in some way are definitely improved because of the initial kindness.

Help others out when you can, whatever your motivation. Jerks can make it in the world but they'll have everyone else fighting against them the whole way.

INVISIBLE KARMA

"Like gravity, karma is so basic we often don't even notice it."

-Sakyong Mipham

PAUL SMITH

GREENSMITH CONSULTING

Find hubs. Create hubs. Be a hub if you need to. This, in a nutshell, is how I've been able to create a life of my own design. Twitter provides the space for a hub, but you have to design your own experience. Do you value yourself, your time? Then choose carefully who you follow on there.

There, and in the rest of your life, ask yourself, is inviting this person/circumstance/environment in something I want, or do I feel compelled to do so by an external (or self created) obligation? You matter. Your quality of life matters, so you can best be of service to those around you and those you touch with your actions.

Software hubs that stitch together multiple parts of your on and offline world can make your life a lot easier, more robust, serendipity prone. It's increasingly important to continuously learn, share, and be active on social media channels, both as an individual and as a business. A tool called **Feedly** has become my weapon of choice for this purpose.

Feedly at its core is an RSS reader. But it goes far beyond that, humanizing information, turning it from overwhelm to true engagement. Unconstrained by the typical boundaries of what an RSS reader should/can do, it's become a hub for how I interact with and learn from what and who is on the web. Precisely what can help you move from passive receiver of life to proactive engager with it.

One more thing: Don't hold back praise. Let people that you know and/or respect what you like and appreciate about who they are, what they do, the benefit it brings. Genuinely, without ulterior motive. To experience someone really seeing, appreciating and expressing it to you is something you don't quickly forget.

I've met some truly amazing people in my time, and when people ask how it is that I've managed to connect with so many from so far, it's 80% this.

And be generous. With yourself and others.

Paul Smith is the owner of Greensmith Consulting through which he advises his clients how to spread the word about their commitment to environmentally-friendly practices. Follow him on Twitter and LinkedIn.

REJECT HONOR

In most cases ‘honor’ and ‘pride’ are really just ways of saying ‘I have a sensitive ego so don’t hurt me because I’m trying to be manly.’

If you get into a fight because of your pride, I’m sorry, but you’re misguided. What does it matter if someone said something to hurt your pride? Who are they? What does their opinion matter? Clearly enough to make you fight them over it (do you think their opinion of you will improve after you beat them? After they beat you?).

No, honor and pride are just labels for outdated ideas that really have no place in the modern world. Wars are fought over petty, silly things like this and it’s time we phased them out for good. Instead of improving your ‘honor,’ work on real, useful, tangible aspects of yourself. Go learn something. Honor won’t get you a job.

HONOR ENSLAVES

“A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon.”

-Napoleon Bonaparte

RELAX

Since I started really getting into design and taking my future seriously, it's been incredibly tough for me to relax.

In some ways this has been beneficial: if you can't relax, you keep working and when you're starting out this helps you get a lot of low-paying, low-value work out of the way so you can get up to the big leagues faster.

Long-term that kind of schedule can wear you out and I've crashed pretty hard a few times because of the intensity and stress.

Learning how to relax has been super-valuable for me and though I had to convince myself it was essential for productivity before I could spare the time to learn (and it is!), I have no regrets about making that investment.

If you take care of your car you'll be a whole lot less likely to have your engine fail while on the highway. I was running my engine into the ground without changing the oil or checking the tires or anything preventative like that. Nothing serious happened, thank goodness, but it could have. While on the highway (LIFE is a highway, you know). Not good.

If you invest the time and money to change your oil (relax) you'll be much better off. No one relaxes in the same way and it took me some time to figure out what would really put my mind and body at ease (a good book, a snack, a little exercise and most of my commitments out of the way). You'll likely have to go through some trial and error before you find the right circumstances for optimal relaxation. Take the time to do it, though; you really don't want to have to buy a new car (I'm not even sure what that means in the context of the metaphor...body transplant? Yeah, I guess you don't want to have to try and do that).

IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

"Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop."

-Ovid

BE POLITE (PLEASE)

One of the most important lessons I learned when I was very young was to be polite. My parents taught me, sure, but my grandmother really drilled the lessons into me one summer. What I learned about holding doors and shaking hands that years has been incredibly valuable to me since.

What's considered polite will be different every place you go, but in general be willing to adapt to local customs (I'm currently in Buenos Aires, and though some people here shake hands, it's customary to give one quick peck on the cheek of whomever you're greeting, while in the United States a firm handshake is the norm) and be considerate of others (this means holding the door for men and women, not eating until the other person's food has arrived, etc).

There IS a point where you can become too proper. In most cases pulling out chairs for women and the like can be a bit over the top for contemporary times, and you should always be willing to bend your manners when it's clear the that other person would prefer it (some people will insist you start eating so your food doesn't get cold, or would prefer to hold the door for you, instead).

Looking for and reading these signs from the people you are with is probably the most important rule of politeness because in the end the real point is to show respect for other people. Forcing your own ideas and traditions upon others certainly misses this point.

If you are polite, you will be more pleasant to be around. It's also very good for your reputation, relationships, and can help you more easily adapt to local customs. Yay!

GUNS AND HANDSHAKES

"An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to back up his acts with his life."

-Robert A. Heinlein

BE A HERO

This is a visualization exercise that I've found to be quite useful.

When you have a tough decision to make, think of yourself as the hero in your own story. As the protagonist of this story what would you do? There's your answer.

This works in a lot of situations, because it can make even the most hum-drum days seem like adventures, but it also helps you stick to your philosophical guns because thinking about what the hero would do in a story makes you quickly analyze of what the RIGHT thing to do is.

Of course, there is no real right thing to do in any situation (it changes based on your perspective)...only what seems to be the MOST right for you in that very specific moment in time

Going with your quick, instinctual, gut-reaction to what a hero would think is right can help you figure this out.

ON HEROES

"A hero is no braver than an ordinary man,
but he is brave five minutes longer."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

J.D. BENTLEY

WAGE SLAVE REBEL

For this book, I was asked to relate some bit of wisdom regarding how I became remarkable. This, of course, was met with immense confusion and taken with great offense, seeing as how I've never claimed to be (nor do I ever expect to be) remarkable. The desire to be remarkable is, itself, a very unremarkable goal. My generation has been bought and sold on such narcissism and I do not wish to perpetuate the myth. You weren't put on this earth to be remembered.

Here's the short version of my journey.

I quit a job that exploited my labor and abused my humanity for the lowest legal wage. I then stumbled into self-employment thanks to my life-long passion for design and technology. Over time, I relegated myself to a life of reasonable expectations, living mostly as a minimalist and attempting to curb my appetite for more and to cultivate the necessary mentality for being content with "enough." I now have the freedom to do whatever it is I want whenever I want to do it with only what I already have and all for the purpose of achieving the most good possible. In earnest, it's a learning process, but one I'm happy to meet every day.

I don't regard this lifestyle as remarkable, but as necessary. I didn't approach it for the purpose of showing off in certain company or having great stories to tell or flaunting my freedom, but because there is most certainly no other way for me to live. The American Dream is not sustainable and it's a sorry state we're in that remarkableness is signified by how thoroughly one can escape its grasp.

I'm in no position to advise anyone on how to be remarkable, but I do know how to get the most out of life: do what you love, claim the fruits of your work (that is, avoid top-down corporations who profit from your labor at all costs), be content with what you have, buy as little as possible, utilize your skills for meaningful causes, give a good amount of your time to friends and family, and love all people (especially your enemies).

J.D. Bentley runs Wage Slave Rebel, where he writes about dismantling the status quo and liberating the minds of wage slaves everywhere. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

YOUR ETHICS

This can take some serious time (like, your whole life) to figure out, but you should know what you ethically believe about as many things as possible.

Is it ever okay to kill? Should drugs be illegal? If so, which? Who should decide if your country goes to war? Abortion? Euthanasia? Global climate change? Capitalism? Suicide?

These are important subjects that you should know enough about to have an opinion. If you don't, when it comes time to make a decision (or help others make a decision) you very well might do something you regret for the rest of your life.

Also: live according to your philosophy. It's great that you think that violence is wrong, but if you beat your wife while preaching about peace and pacifism you don't have a moral high ground. Or any ground. That's a really douche thing to do.

ON PERSONAL PHILOSOPHIES

"A man with one watch knows what time it is;
a man with two watches is never quite sure."

-Lee Segall

BE OPEN-MINDED

The quickest and easiest response to a new idea is to discard it. It's unfamiliar! It's scary! Surely if it worked someone else would have thought of it before now! Blah blah blah!

But every once in a while you'll come across a new idea that's world changing. It might inspire you to reach new heights or see life a different way or change your perspective on gun control or lead to an appreciation of a new kind of food.

Dismissing new ideas offhand is bad form. You're a smart person, but you don't know everything. None of us do.

The only way we learn more is by keeping an open mind and allowing ourselves to take it all in, familiar or not.

Just in case.

ON OPEN MINDS

"People are very open-minded about new things - as long as they're exactly like the old ones."

-Charles F. Kettering

THE RIGHT CROWD

In my [ebook on Personal Branding](#), I talk a lot about surrounding yourself with the right kind of crowd. This is a very important concept because so many people are being held back from their true potential because the company they keep is lazy, unmotivated, or aimless.

There's nothing wrong with having a group of people that you hang out with, party with, go clubbing with, etc. What's not ideal is **ONLY** having that crowd and not having a group of people you can grab a cup of coffee with while you talk about your hopes and dreams.

You need people who will be aware of your goals and your progress; people who have similar goals and a similar drive to achieve them.

If you don't have a group like this, don't worry because it's really easy to find one. The Internet has an incredible number of resources, including social networks like [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), forums like [20 Something Bloggers](#), and even dating sites like [Plenty of Fish](#) and [OKCupid](#) (you'd be amazed how easy it is to get motivated when you find someone to date who is worth impressing).

Remember, relationships of any kind are a give and take, and you won't find many people who are willing to just carry you without getting anything back. You'll need to be an inspiration to the other members of your group, too. Be ready and willing to make waves and fight the good fight and you'll find that other people will start coming to you, rather than the other way around.

WASHINGTON'S WISDOM

“Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation; for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company.”

-George Washington, 1st US President

SEEK KNOWLEDGE

What do you know about oranges? How about Europa (the moon)? World War II history? Know anything about quantum mechanics or Latin or SEO? You don't NEED to know about these things, but if you do you'll have a leg up over those who don't.

I can tell you from personal experience that knowing as much as possible about a lot of different fields of study can be personally gratifying and financially beneficial.

I went to school for design and illustration but also learned some programming and marketing skills in my free time. I was able to leverage these interests into paying work, which gave me enough money to take some classes and spend more time refining those skills and learning others (social media, consulting, sustainability, etc), which I've also been able to turn into services that I provide to my clients.

Knowing about a lot of different fields is fulfilling on a personal level because I am able to make connections between disparate concepts faster than most.

As you read a book, you take in information and your mind builds relationships between what you already know and what you're reading. This helps you to retain the new information much faster and more efficiently.

Building these associations doesn't require any studying, it just requires that you take learning seriously and read/watch/investigate a lot so that you have a massive backlog of facts and concepts to draw from when you're taking in new information.

The more you know, the better off you and everyone else will be. A big part of the world's problems exist because of widespread misinformation and ignorance. By making yourself a hub of information you can start to chip away at these problems.

WHERE KNOWLEDGE LEADS

"All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason."

-Immanuel Kant

DON'T DESTROY

I remember more or less destroying anything that came within reach when I was a kid. Pieces of paper would be slowly crinkled and torn, soda bottles would have their labels meticulously peeled off, posters would be scribbled on (a moustache here, a cigarette there); nothing was safe.

I've lost most of the desire to destroy as I've grown older, and mellowing that destructive urge has brought me a great sense of peace (partially because my environment isn't riddled with shreds of paper and graffitied posters, no doubt).

Many people I know never got past the whole destruction thing (guys, especially) and they continue to rip and tear and slice and shoot and all manner of other interesting and active verbs until everyone around them is annoyed or destroyed. This is not good for their reputation or the environment (natural or human).

If you find yourself with a destructive urge, take a deep breath and occupy your hands with something else. Draw something. Make a cat's cradle. In other words, CREATE instead of DESTROYING. Destruction is easy and harmful. Creation is more challenging and generally makes the world a better place.

ON DESTRUCTION

"To build may have been the laborious task of years.
To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day."

-Winston Churchill

MIDDLE PATH

This is an idea I ganked from Buddhism, but it's a guideline that I very much try to apply to my life whenever possible.

The idea is that too much of anything is bad for you, and too little of anything is bad for you, so take the Middle Path...have just enough and you'll be peaceful, fulfilled, better looking, etc.

So have some ice cream, but not too much. You don't want to give it up completely, though, because it makes you happy (too much of it and it will make you unhealthy and it will cease to be as pleasant). The same is true with sex, drugs, rock n' roll, and anything else that people generally advise you avoid.

Don't get trashed, just tipsy. Watch a little bit of Springer if you like, but for Christ's sake, don't sit around on the couch all day watching daytime television.

This is just a guideline, of course: if you really think you'll see positive results from overindulging in something or completely eliminating something from your life, do so. But as a general-purpose, default measuring device, the Middle Path works wonders and can keep you from numbing yourself to good things with extremes.

THERE'S HOPE FOR EVERYONE

“However great an evil immorality may be, we must not forget that it is not without its beneficial consequences. It is only through extremes that men can arrive at the middle path of wisdom and virtue.”

-Wilhelm von Humboldt

ROBERT GRANHOLM

THE LIFE DESIGN PROJECT

“He who is not everyday conquering some fear has not learned the secret of life.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

It takes an unrelenting will to live out those wise words.

I may have only read that quote within the last year but my unrelenting will was sparked long before. I went through a series of knee surgeries when I was about seventeen, seven knee surgeries to be exact, each one more frustrating than the next. I remember at one point the doctor giving me an option, to go in for more surgery, or simply stop and be nearly inactive for the rest of my life. I had no choice; I had to fix my leg.

I struggled for the next few years with my knees but because of my trials I became someone who could not be beat. I went on to finish several triathlons in the following 6 years. It was in that experience I learned I wanted something more out of life than a cookie cutter job and working for the weekends.

Our experiences shape us; find whatever you need in life to make you hungry for experiences. It's with this hunger I come at being an entrepreneur.

Robert Granholm is the co-founder of The Life Design Project and writes about lifestyle design as it relates to fulfilling your dreams and living the life you want to live. Follow him on Twitter and LinkedIn.

BE A THINKER

It's easy (especially as a motivated person) to actively utilize every moment of every day for something productive.

Cramming our calendars full of meetings and projects certainly helps get things done, but if you want to get things done WELL you'll need some time every now and then to space out, reformat your mental hard drive and relax.

I recommend 20 minutes per day. I use this **'20 Minutes of Awesome'** a day to let my mind wander a bit. I sit or lie down in a comfortable position, turn off all the music and close the door so that things are as quiet as possible. I then pick a spot on the opposite wall to stare at, unfocus my eyes and let my thoughts go where they will.

My thoughts usually center on what I've done during the day, what I'm going to do the rest of the day, my hopes and dreams, things I need or want to do, interesting memories from the past, or philosophical quandaries I'm working on wrapping my mind around. You might think of different things. It doesn't really matter.

What matters is that you give your mind the freedom to just be, without trying to force it into a particular shape or activity. By the time you're done you'll likely have a handful of things to write down (good ideas are common, things I've forgotten to do or write down previously are even more common!) and you'll feel refreshed, motivated and ready to hit the ground running.

If you find that the time is too short or long, adjust it (everyone is different). I started out doing 30 minutes a day but found that the last 10 minutes tended to be wasted: I would just sit there wanting to go work and waiting for the timer to run down.

WORK HARD, REST HARD

"No rest is worth anything except the rest that is earned. "

-Jean Paul

DO YOU LOVE IT?

If you aren't doing what you love, why are you doing it? Cut it out.

Write down what you want to be doing, write down what needs to be done to get there, and then actively work toward completing the first item on that list. Once that's complete, do the next one. Then the next. Don't fall prey to the 'what-if's' and 'but that's not how it's done's.'

It's your life and you only get one time around, so every moment that you aren't doing something you enjoy is wasted time you'll never get back.

Better to get started now! The clock is ticking!

WISDOM FROM A BANKER

"The man who does not work for the love of work but only for money is not likely to make money nor find much fun in life."

-Charles Schwab

MAKE HABITS

Developing a new habit can be very easy, provided you to do it right from the start.

When trying to start a new habit - let's say doing 25 pushups a day - you want to make sure you'll be able to do 25 pushups per day for at least a month before being interrupted (so if you'll be traveling a lot or anything like that in between be careful; that one day where you can't fit in the pushups could be what ruins the progress you've made).

It also helps to tether the new habit to an old habit...say, eating breakfast. If you do your pushups every single day after breakfast, you'll be much more likely to build up the habit and make it stick than if you do them at a different time every day.

Habits are great because they allow you to learn and otherwise improve yourself without having to think about it.

YAY HABITS!

“Good habits, once established are just as hard to break as are bad habits.”

-Robert Puller

TIP WELL

Being a good tipper is right up there with brushing your teeth daily and being nice to old ladies; not everyone does it (for various reasons), but if you do, you're stacking the deck in your favor (in this case, you avoid having your food messed with next time you eat out, and maybe even get special treatment).

The amount you should give obviously varies from region to region, but in most parts of the US it's customary to tip at least 15% and if the person did a decent job, 18-20% is usually more appropriate. If you want to say 'thank you' with your dime, drop closer to 25%. The more you give the better service you are likely to get the next time you sit down at that establishment, and honestly the serving staff doesn't make much except for tips (a few dollars an hour sans tips is standard) so help them out if you can.

I've discovered that tipping is quit a bit different in Buenos Aires; tipping nothing at all is quite common, and a 10% tip is something to write home about. Wherever you happen to be, make an effort to find out what the local tipping customs are.

CLEVER TIP JAR LABELS

"Tipping: it's not just for cows." (at ice cream parlor)

"Scuze' me, while I tip this guy." (at music shop)

"Feeling tipsy?" (at bar)

"Keep your tips up." (at ski resort)

BUSINESS CARDS

Consider this: you're out at a wine bar and your significant other stops on the way out to speak with someone she recognizes. You're standing there and you strike up a conversation with the other people at the table. Lo and behold, one of them asks you what you do and is in need of your services!

What I did when this happened to me was whip out my business card and hand it to the potential client. I was just starting my studio at the time, but I made sure before anything else that I had something to take out with me when I networked.

If you don't have a business card you'll be forced to 1) awkwardly put their number into your phone right then and there, 2) scrawl your name and number down on a napkin or receipt you happen to have in your pocket (ick), or 3) tell them your name and hope they Google you.

My business cards express who I am beautifully. I designed them to be super-simple and minimal, with only the necessary information and a market-wise introduction along the top. I found a great letterpress studio that printed my information in a nice vegetable oil ink on super-sustainable paper that is ridiculously thick and expensive-feeling. When I hand out my business card, 99% of the time the recipient comments on it, giving me a chance to reinforce my brand in their mind.

Your card doesn't need to be as much of an investment as mine have been, but know that you can turn the ritual of exchanging business cards into a powerful personal brand reinforcing exercise just by making sure your card says something about you and what you stand for.

Get business cards. Even super-simple ones. Just have something with your name and contact information (phone number, website URL and email address is all you need). Don't overload the thing, don't make it tacky (unless that's your look, in which case you should go for it!), just make sure you keep some on you at all times. You never know when your next opportunity will arise.

BUSINESS CARD EXAMPLES

50 Creative Business Cards of 50 Graphic Designers

REJECT CELEBRITY

There's a lot to love about Los Angeles, but there is also plenty wrong with that town, and one of the big issues that I have with it is the citywide obsession with celebrity.

Most people that you meet in LA are connected in some way to the TV and movie industries (even if they are a few steps removed) so the appreciation for everything poppy and gilded runs deep.

I've known people who couldn't tell you where France is on a map, but could tell you the most intimate details of Brad and Angelina's relationship. Ooh la la.

Celebrity is just icing. It's easy and can be delicious but man, is it bad for you. There's simply no substance; it's all sugar. No nutritional value at all.

Instead of reading Perez Hilton, why not read [The Economist](#)? Instead of flipping on The Buzz, why not turn to the Discovery Channel? It may not be the same kind of mental candy, but it will make you a much more well rounded person and much more interesting to talk to at parties (and parties ARE important).

ON CELEBRITY

"A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized."

-Fred Allen

BE MINIMAL

When I decided to leave LA and travel the world I sold or gave away everything that wouldn't fit inside a carry-on bag, which has just enough room for a handful of shirts, a few jeans, a pair of shoes, my laptop and a few cables and toiletries.

I don't miss a thing, and I haven't even used everything I brought with me!

When we live in one place for a while and have extra space, we tend to nest. 'I might not ever use this,' we think, 'but if I DO sometime in the future, I'll be happy I kept it.'

There's nothing inherently wrong with possessions; in fact, I really enjoy the possessions I do have and go out of my way to get the best of whatever I'm buying.

That being said, when you have too much it weighs on you mentally and physically. It's stressful to have so many things to store and take care of!

If you've ever traveled with a bunch of checked luggage you likely know this feeling: you're not able to do everything you want because you are limited by what you have with you. The same is true with life in general.

I'm not saying you should sell everything like I did...it wouldn't make sense for most lifestyles. What I am saying is that you shouldn't buy/consume/accumulate more than you need. It's bad for the environment and it's bad for your stress levels (not to mention your bank account!).

Keeping things simple allows you to have the best of what you do own AND have less clutter. Hard to argue with that.

ON MINIMALISM

"The secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less."

-Socrates

YOU FIRST

There's a school of philosophical thought called Objectivism (created by author and philosopher Ayn Rand) that, among other things, says that one should not live their lives for someone else.

This is a simple but often forgotten (or misunderstood) concept, largely because people don't tend to like the idea of 'looking out for Number One' (yourself) before anyone else.

But think about it rationally: if everyone took care of themselves first and then used whatever they had left to help out others who aren't able to muster the same energy and strength we'd all be a whole lot better off.

Rand once said: "When 'the common good' of a society is regarded as something apart from and superior to the individual good of its members, it means that the good of some men takes precedence over the good of others, with those others consigned to the status of sacrificial animals."

In other words, when everyone gives of themselves into a 'pool' to be divided up between everyone equally, invariably there will be those that are getting a bad deal, giving a whole lot more than they are getting back. It doesn't make sense for those people to be coerced into a position where they cannot even support themselves because everyone else has decided that these people of ability should give to others before themselves. That's called slavery.

It IS good to help others out when you can; it's beneficial for them and it's beneficial for you. If you wear yourself out trying to help everyone else before yourself, though, you won't be able to help anyone.

MORE FROM AYN

"To know one's own desires, their meaning and their costs requires the highest human virtue: Rationality."

-Ayn Rand

KNOW MARKETING

The world is one big consumer society. Everything out there - from charities to businesses to other people - are brands. They are all trying to sell you things, services and ideas, and if you are aware of the tactics they use you'll be a lot less likely to fall for them, instead making rational decisions that are right for you.

[Learn about marketing](#). It'll help. And now a word from our sponsor...

ON BRANDING

“Like so much of cool hunting, Hilfiger’s marketing journey feeds off the alienation at the heart of America’s race relations: selling white youth on their fetishization of black style, and black youth on their fetishization of white wealth.”

-Naomi Klein, *No Logo*, pg 78

I am irresistible, I say, as I put on my designer fragrance. I am a merchant banker, I say, as I climb out of my BMW. I am a juvenile lout, I say, as I pour an extra strong lager, I am handsome, I say, as I put on my Levi jeans.”

-John Kay

“Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind.”

-Walter Landor

BE SYMMETRICAL

In this context I'm using symmetry to represent what is socially 'correct.'

In nature, symmetry represents something that has good genes, perfect for the standard life cycle and reproductive purposes of the species. Symmetry implies that you can fit in with the status quo and flourish.

If you can present yourself as someone who is acceptable by mainstream standards, you'll have a much easier life. Others won't be fighting you at every turn and you'll get support from people you don't even know (because you are, at least externally, a sterling representation of what they think is important).

I'm a pretty weird guy, so I make sure to take care of myself physically, to stay well groomed and to be well dressed, taking note of local customs and niceties so that I can easily fit in as a respected member of society without too much extra effort.

This allows me to get away with all the crazy stuff with few repercussions.

TWAIN, ON FITTING IN

"A round man cannot be expected to fit in a square hole right away. He must have time to modify his shape."

-Mark Twain

CARLOS MICELI

OWL SPARKS

Explaining what makes me remarkable without sounding pompous is not an easy task. I know that I must be somewhat smart, somewhat lucky, and have most of the social skills that we need to succeed in this world. But many other people do and that doesn't make them remarkable. There has to be something else.

While I have achieved some of the traditional accomplishments that used to make someone remarkable - high grades, degrees and big time jobs - I'm sure that's not what makes me (or any other person for that matter) a remarkable man. Some people that have accomplished all of these tasks are the most boring and dull individuals I've ever met. So I don't think this has anything to do with being remarkable, either.

Being in the right place at the right time, being curious, not caring about what others say and following all the cliché advice about "doing what you love" must have something to do with my remarkable situation, as well. But it is still not enough. There must be some secret that ties all remarkable people together.

Not making sense is what makes ME remarkable.

Because I don't care about big plans, established paths or consistency (remarkable people quit a lot, despite what your parents may have told you). I don't care about fitting in with what's expected of me, or in other people's idea of what my potential is. I don't care about society's meaning of success, obligations and safety because I define those things very differently. I don't care about any of that because I know that people who ignore change and the unexpected are doomed to fail.

Doing things for fun, because it challenges you, because you want to work hard on it to feel the self-gratification, is what will separate you from the rest. No purpose, no reason, no destiny. Enjoy the challenge of embracing randomness and just trust that sense will find you eventually. Ever since I've done it, I have stumbled with quite a remarkable life.

Carlos Miceli runs Owl Sparks, where he writes inspiring posts that are aimed at 'sparking' your creativity and thinking. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

SELF-REFLECT

Take the time to self-reflect. It doesn't have to be a long time (**20 minutes a day will do**), but if you do you'll be a whole lot more aware of who you are, what's going on in your world, where you want to be, how to get there, and what steps to take next.

It also helps to be in touch with your emotions even though it can be a very difficult and draining task.

Being aware of what kinds of things make you angry or jealous can help you avoid those situations or cope with the emotions when they arise so that they don't hold you prisoner.

ON REFLECTING

"They only babble who practise not reflection."

-Edward Young

BE THRIFTY

Do not spend more than you make. That's the short and dirty answer to all of your money problems.

The slightly longer answer is that you need to prioritize and eliminate debt first. Any debt you have will slowly accumulate more debt, and that means any gains you make saving money and accruing interest will be cancelled out.

If you are in debt, stop going out to clubs. Stop going out to lunch every day. Stop paying premiums for services that you can just as easily do yourself.

I know it sounds like social suicide, but it doesn't have to be. Buy a cheap bottle of wine and have friends over to your place instead of hitting the clubs (that bottle will cost less than it would cost for you to walk in the door of a club). Learn to cook or just brown bag it instead of going out to lunch every day.

When you're out of debt you can rethink some of this, but until you are you've got to buckle down so you have some money to throw at the debt problem each month.

Also: keep in mind that in most cases buying brand name products means you are wasting your money. There are some exceptions, but paying \$5 for hand soap when you could pay \$1 for something that is just as good is ridiculous. All you're paying for is the brand name (many of these products are made in the exact same factory and the only reason there is a premium is because that brand pays more for commercials and promotions...the product itself isn't any better).

ON THRIFTINESS

"It is thrifty to prepare today for the wants of tomorrow."

-Aesop

DON'T ANTAGONIZE

This seems pretty obvious, but I'm truly amazed by the number of people I know who simply couldn't care less about who they offend and antagonize; sometimes casually and ignorantly and sometimes with active intent.

My philosophy on this is that one should make as few enemies as possible. There's no avoiding it sometimes - certain people will just want to hate you, or will interpret something you do as being so heinous that you won't be able to set them straight - but every enemy you make is one more person who wants you to fail and may even actively try to prevent you from succeeding.

I knew a guy in college who clearly hated me even before he met me because I had just started dating his ex-girlfriend (who, I found out later, he was trying to get back together with).

Long story short, while talking to him at a party (trying very hard not to offend him, since it was clear he was trying to pick a fight), I said something that he took the wrong way and he attacked me. This attitude continued throughout college, making our common friends very uncomfortable.

I couldn't stand that things were that way, but once someone has it in their head that you're the bad guy, it's very difficult to change their mind.

What I recommend is this: avoid situations that will inevitably lead to making enemies (I should have done this when I realized he was trying to pick a fight when I first met him) and respect everyone the best you can.

You will make enemies as you go through life (if you're doing anything worth doing, at least), but the fewer you have the less you'll have to look over your shoulder, waiting for someone to throw a wrench in your plans.

REASONABLE PRECAUTIONS

"Love your enemies just in case your friends turn out to be a bunch of bastards."

-Joseph Conrad

BE SPORADIC

When something unexpected happens, go with it! Some of the most interesting, fun and memorable moments of your life will be the ones that you didn't plan and had no inkling were on the horizon.

Cultivate an attitude that allows you to easily adapt to new situations or you'll miss out on a lot of opportunities.

If something you planned got nudged out of place by some unforeseen turn of events, just roll with it. Why not? You can always do what you had planned again in the future, but you can't plan sporadicism

ON SPORADICISM

"It's a terrible situation, but you just have to roll with the punches. I don't worry about it. There's nothing you can do about it."

-Otis Williams

STAND UP

You spend your whole life learning about yourself and the world; you're bound to form opinions about many things.

If there ever comes a time where something you truly believe in is being threatened or someone is doing something that just appalls you, then by all means take a stand and say your piece. The meek and silent seldom start revolutions, and if you really want to live your philosophy, you'd better act on what you believe.

When I was in college, the city I was living in was voting on whether or not a new coal-fired power plant should be build. I personally believe that burning coal for energy is foolish when we have so many other alternatives options, most of which are more future-proof than something as destructive and inefficient as a coal power plant. I couldn't believe they were seriously considering this option, so I put together a zine (DIY-style magazine) that protested the construction in various creative ways. I distributed them all over town.

The power plant went in anyway (the coal industry funded a huge campaign that convinced most of the voting population it was for their own good) but I felt good for having at least spoken my piece and convincing at least a handful of people that the power plant was the wrong direction to go. It's given me the will to stand up next time I see an unforgiveable wrong occurring, as well.

ON PROTEST

"Our tradition is one of protest and revolt, and it is stultifying to celebrate the rebels of the past while we silence the rebels of the present."

-Henry Steele Commager

ALAN PERLMAN

THE 9 TO 5 ALTERNATIVE

Generate your own luck.

Surround yourself with creative, engaging people. Read a lot. Become a unique and noteworthy conversationalist. Say yes more often than you say no. Take social risks and make mistakes.

From discussing politics with Serbian royalty to buying drinks for a famous British comedian in Ukraine, some of the wildest, most memorable encounters and experiences I have had can be traced back to this philosophy. By exposing myself to new interests and remaining open and flexible in my day-to-day decisions (especially when I travel), I have chanced upon once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and connected with interesting, like-minded people.

One of my favorite mantras is “Attitude almost always determines your altitude in life.” Stay positive and always look for the good in a given situation, and you are sure to lead a fulfilling, captivating and remarkable life.

Alan Perlman writes the popular blog [The 9 to 5 Alternative](#) which focuses on travel, lifestyle design and entrepreneurship. Follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

GO RÉSUMÉLESS

If you feel the need for a résumé in the new business marketplace you probably aren't being hired for the value you can contribute, but for the time you put in.

This isn't a good trade because it means you will be stuck working even if you have completed all of your tasks, gone above and beyond and given 150%.

They have you and no matter how hard you work, that time is theirs to waste. This is probably not how you want to spend your life.

I draw the parallel between these two things because the résumé is antiquated and so is being paid for your time, not your results. These days, if you're on your game and motivated and know what you're doing, you'll catch potential employers' and clients' eyes with your personal branding, social networking, by making connections and taking advantage of all the resources the modern world has to offer.

Don't depend on a résumé. If you have to interview for a position, you're already getting shafted...make people aware of what you can do for them before they even speak to you.

DEFINITION

“Résumé: a written exaggeration of only the good things a person has done in the past, as well as a wish list of the qualities a person would like to have.”

-Bo Bennet

BE A PART

Being a part of something that is larger than yourself and your personal concerns can be a great benefit to you individually and to the world as a whole.

Some people choose to be involved with religious organizations or school clubs. Others opt to really dig in to their work and others join Greenpeace or Doctors Without Borders.

Whatever the case may be and whatever level of involvement you take on, being a part of groups like these can help you develop valuable interpersonal skills, including the ability to relate to and help with other peoples' problems.

By working with other people who have similar goals you can also make a much larger dent in whatever problems you are trying to solve or changes you are trying to bring to fruition.

You might be a very capable person, but 4 very capable people will always be more effective. Or 12. Or 500. That's a lot of hands and minds working toward the same goal and there's little that can't be accomplished with enough people who are willing to work for it.

ON GROUPS

"Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

-Vince Lombardi

MAKE MISTAKES

Learn from your own mistakes and learn from the mistakes of others. It's astounding how many people don't do either of these things.

If you mess up badly, take a moment to really let it sink in.

I know, I know, what you want to do is drink a beer and eat an entire box of Girl Scout cookies, but what you should do is make sure that you understand what went wrong so that it doesn't happen again.

I know people who are held back because they keep making the same mistakes at work or in their relationships or with money, and if they had just paid attention the last time they would know exactly how to stop making the mistakes.

It's also super-valuable to talk to others frequently and get them talking about their lives. People LOVE to tell stories and dole out advice. People also LOVE to talk about themselves, so you'll likely make a friend in the process.

ON MAKING MISTAKES

"Mistakes are a part of being human. Appreciate your mistakes for what they are: precious life lessons that can only be learned the hard way. Unless it's a fatal mistake, which, at least, others can learn from."

-Al Franken

HAVE GOALS

There are few things more depressing than meeting someone who coasts through life, existing but without a goal in sight. Hell, even Existentialists have goals, even if they all revolve around having a good time right now.

If you don't have goals you'll be like someone wandering aimlessly through the woods. You might see some interesting stuff but you won't have any landmarks to help you find your way out should you change your mind.

What if you decide you REALLY want to go to Europe next summer? If you don't have any goals, it probably means you aren't financially secure enough to be able to take a vacation to wherever you want whenever you want...that requires planning. Your lack of goals in the past will have crippled your personal infrastructure so that cobbling together a plan on short notice will be nearly impossible.

Fortunately, most of us have goals, even if we don't realize it. Want to be promoted to manager or get a new car or win an online poker tournament? You have a goal. Having a goal is not good enough by itself, though; until you identify these goals and make them real, you'll have a very difficult time visualizing how to achieve them.

Try this: take out a sheet of paper (or if you want to be eco-friendly, just open up a text editor on your computer and use that instead) and write down a few goals. Big, small, it doesn't matter. Make sure you have a few of them.

Now, next to each goal, write the very next step you'll need to take to reach that goal. It could be as simple as 'take out trash' or as involved as 'organize closet,' but identifying the next step for each goal allows you to break these larger projects into more digestible chunks. Now you can systematically go down the list and perform each first step as you're able. As soon as you perform one step, write down what the next step for that goal is, and repeat the process until you've achieved that goal.

MAKE A BUCKET LIST

43 Things (online list)

Doomi (Adobe Air list)

Things (Get Things Done-style list for Mac/iPhone)

JENDA MICHL

VERTU STUDIO

Abandon the Plan

From award of design to first build of a pop-up art gallery was two weeks. It was four days from the build and I had just received the steel for the structure. All I had to do was drill some wood and I'd have all the parts for assembly, leaving me a few days to iron out any details. Not so fast. I soon learned that the holes to bolt them together didn't line up. My parts weren't interchangeable any more; I would need to individually mix and match each piece and custom drill specific holes for them. Suddenly everything was custom, and took all the time we had. While we still got everything pre assembled, we lost our chance to do a test build. I also learned that we would only have 5 hours to construct the gallery for the very first time, with a hard deadline and failure not an option.

An hour from the onslaught of crowds and clearly with no chance to complete the intended design on time, I was racking my brain for ways to more efficiently complete an impossible task. Fortunately the overall client made an executive decision to alter the design. My wisest decision of the day was to welcome this usurping of design responsibility. It was a wonderful relief, and the gallery looked good. So good, I incorporated some of the changes into future installations.

The approved and intended design never came close to getting built, but the client still reveled in praise at each build, even the first one. When our goal was leading to failure, an assessment of exactly what was possible given new possibilities and realities allowed the project to become a greater success than it could have before. Having a plan is critical; abandoning it may be the only path to success.

A second vital piece of advice: Never give incomplete instructions. I did not specify the exact locations of the holes, so I had no one but myself to blame.

Jenda Michl is the founder of Vertu Studio, a multidisciplinary, sustainability-focused architecture and design agency based in Los Angeles, California. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

PERSONAL BRAND

A personal brand is one of those things that sounds fancy and business-speaky, but in reality it's just being yourself and telling your story. The way that you express that story and the consistency with which you do so is the real determining factor of how successful you are in building yourself into a brand.

Why should you want a brand? For one, a brand is easy to understand. If a random person comes into an interview, they could be reliable or unreliable, social or anti-social, bossy or a follower; you have no way of knowing who this person is and what they stand for, other than what you can glean from their answers to the questions.

Consider now that someone comes into the interview and they have a clear, defined personal brand. Just by looking at their website or business card or resume you automatically know a lot about them. Their copy is written in a particular fashion and the design is done in a way that expresses what they are all about; even the way they shake your hand, the expression on their face and the way they're dressed adds up.

It's the difference between buying from Rolex and buying a watch from a guy on the street: it's a lot less of a risk to go with Rolex because they are established, have a track record and can tell you exactly what you'll get with each and every transaction.

Building a personal brand is not too difficult, but it does take a little planning. Learn all the ins-and-outs by reading my [free Personal Branding eBook](#).

FROM PERSONAL BRANDING EBOOK

“Personal branding involves managing your reputation, style, look, attitude and skill set the same way that a marketing team would run the brand of a bag of Doritos or a bottle of shampoo. The idea is that you can develop a collection of symbols and associations with yourself, granting your name, face and work the same benefits that companies with solid brand equity (like Coco-Cola or Apple) enjoys.”

-Colin Wright, Personal Branding (the Least You Need to Know)

BE A GEEK

You know how every once in a while you'll meet someone who is just incredibly dull but you can't quite put your finger on why?

I'll tell you why: they aren't a geek. Or rather, they aren't a geek for SOMETHING.

Anyone who isn't just crazy interested in something will be a fairly boring person. If they can't get excited about anything enough to want to talk about it, then what else is there to talk about? The weather. That's it. Snoresville. Don't be that person...find something that interests you.

You don't even have to like something popular. Antique teacups. Ponies. Birdhouse carpentry. Video games from the 1980's. You just need something you can get real passionate about, not only for your own mental health (though that's a big part of it), but also for the sake of those who have to interact with you.

Those without interests are not interesting. Act accordingly.

GEEKY QUOTE

"There are 10 types of people in the world: those who understand binary, and those who don't."

-Unknown

NO BAGGAGE

This tends to be a touchy subject, but stick with me here.

Sentimentality is defined as excessive tenderness, sadness or nostalgia, and is usually associated with a person who gets easily weepy over memories or losing a treasured memento. This can stand in the way of having a happy life.

If you can be brought to tears at the thought of your cat that died 5 years ago, you may want to try to deal with the memory in a different way. I personally think that remembering the good rather than the unfortunate end of your cat's life would be a much better testament to your love for it than mourning. Also: coping this way leads to happy, positive feelings rather than sad, negative thoughts.

Attaching memories to objects is always a bad idea.

Those memories should be in your head instead of imbued in something tangible. Physical things can be stolen, lost or destroyed, while memories can be treasured no matter where you are, what you're doing or what happens in between.

Further, hanging on to 'stuff' that has no practical value but means something only because of a memory associated with it leads to closets and drawers full of junk that, for one reason or another, can never be discarded despite the lack of intrinsic value. This leads to accumulation and clutter and when you are surrounded by artifacts of the past it can be very difficult to move forward, evolve, and be happy.

Start small if you have to, but allow yourself to let go of the physical manifestations of the good times (or bad). Those memories are YOURS and you shouldn't limit them (or change them) by remembering them only through the lens of a trinket.

ON SENTIMENTALITY

"Sentimentality is a superstructure covering brutality."

-Carl Gustav Jung

BE OPTIMISTIC

There's nothing you can't do if you really, really, really want to do it. Seriously.

Sure, some people have more barriers than others and it may take a great deal of luck to get there, but if you work hard enough and set your sights on a goal, you'll take advantage of any luck that does come your way to the utmost and make some of your own, besides.

There is every reason to be happy and never any reason to be completely destroyed. If something happens that brings you down, remember that it's a learning experience and something to be treasured and remembered, not something to hold you back or push you down.

You're stronger for each bad situation you go through, so focus on that if you must.

Otherwise, focus on the good and remember that you decide how your life moves forward. Isn't that great?!

ON OPTIMISM

"Having a positive mental attitude is asking how something can be done rather than saying it can't be done."

-Bo Bennett

KNOW HISTORY

I can't tell you how frequently I sit and shout at my computer screen while reading political news.

If everyone would just take a good, long, hard look at the past and how things work today I think a lot of our problems would stop before they start.

As the Barenaked Ladies **song of the same name** goes, "It's all been done before." This is true, folks, so if you want to know where we're going, take a look at the past and patterns will become clear.

Plus there's just some really crazy stuff that's happened. Did you know Archimedes may have built a death ray out of mirrors to set ships ablaze? Even crazier, he was killed while his city was pillaged for yelling at an invading soldier 'Don't disturb my circles!' (I guess he was really serious about his circles).

For serious, circles.

ON HISTORY

"Those who cannot remember the past
are condemned to repeat it"

-George Santayana

WAKE UP EARLY

It's great waking up at 5am refreshed and ready to start (and maybe finish) your day's tasks before everyone else gets up.

It takes some practice to get to this point - most people get up a whole lot later than 5 - but if you wake up 15 minutes earlier every week, you'll see results very quickly and add productive (or, if you prefer, non-productive-but-enjoyable) time to your day.

ON SLEEPING IN

"If you're going to do something tonight that you'll be sorry for tomorrow morning, sleep late."

-Henry Youngman

JOHN BARDOS

JET SET CITIZEN

There are three secrets to being remarkable: focus, hard work and luck.

Look at any person at the top of their field and you will find a steadfast dedication to a single goal. You can't be world class at five things at the same time. You have to choose. Most people can't make that single choice so they stumble along with the other 99.9% of humanity. There are so many opportunities to do so many different things now. That is the problem; we have so many choices that people are too afraid to choose only one.

Once you make that single commitment you have to put in 110% effort. Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers*, writes about the 10,000 hour rule. It takes 10,000 hours of productive and effective practice to be world class in almost any field. Sports, music, business, academia are all the same. Basically, it means 10 years of almost full-time effort. That is the cost of greatness. Most classical musicians who go to top music schools rarely put in more than 5,000 or 6,000 hours. That is why they become music teachers rather than world class performers. I love to play guitar but even after 25 years of playing, I am still only at about 2,000 hours of productive practice.

Another factor that Gladwell points out is luck. Great hockey players tend to be born at the beginning of the year because they are bigger, faster and stronger for their age, than those born at the end of the year. Bill Gates was fortunate enough to have unlimited access to a top end computer while he was in high school. He was one of a few high school students in the world that had that opportunity at that time. Regardless of how smart or hardworking Bill Gates was, without that mainframe access, there would be no Microsoft today.

Of course luck is not enough. Being in the right place at the right time AND working your ass off on only one thing are what super success is about.

Then again we are all remarkable in our own ways. You don't have to become a billionaire to make a difference in the world. Do as much as you can for others every day of your life and you will be remarkable enough in the lives you touch.

John Bardos runs Jet Set Citizen where he muses about location independence and lifestyle design and interviews other remarkable people. Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

BE INFORMED

Being informed is different than being knowledgeable in that what you are trying to learn is not necessarily an historical or scientific fact, but rather tidbits of information you can use to plan your actions and lifestyle.

For example, knowing the capital of Uruguay (Montevideo!) is knowledge, while knowing whether or not the girl you're flirting with at the bar is already seeing someone relates more to being informed. This information is knowledge that you will hopefully pick up sooner rather than later, but because of the direct impact it has on your actions there is a distinction.

A big part of staying informed is simply being a good communicator: if you ask the right questions, you'll be able to find out who's dating who before you make an ass of yourself or offend someone.

Staying informed can also involve keeping up with what your many friends, family, colleagues and other connections are up to. This is getting easier and easier to do because of the popularity of online social networks, but because there's so MUCH information, it also requires you to filter out the chafe without discarding the really important stuff.

Take a little bit of time each day to quickly glance through your friends' and family's status updates on **Facebook** (or wherever your friends tend to frequent) and make note of anything out of the ordinary. You don't need to know all about the party your friend from high school was at last night, but you may want to remember that your buddy from college (who you'll be seeing soon) has just proposed to his girlfriend.

IT'S GOOD TO KNOW

"Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights."

-Thomas Jefferson, 3rd US President

BE APART

While it's important to be social, interactive and collaborative, don't be afraid to have your own space, time and projects as well.

Sometimes being in a group can water down your ideas since you generally have to meet in the middle when working with others.

Fortunately, solo projects are much easier and less time consuming to get started; there are no meetings or even discussions necessary; all you have to do is decide to do it and then do it.

If you succeed when working alone, that success is all yours. This also means that if you fail, that failure is completely on you. Either way, be willing to accept the results and you'll take a lot away from every experience.

BEING A LONER

"Yes, I guess you could say I am a loner, but I feel more lonely in a crowded room with boring people than I feel on my own."

-Henry Rollins

ALONE TIME

I'm a people person and tend to thrive when around other people, but I definitely need time to recharge. I need me-time. And you do too.

When you're around others you constantly have to bend a bit and make room for other peoples' needs and desires. There are a million little changes that you undergo when around others compared to when you're all alone.

And it's when you're alone that you can truly be yourself; be as strange or awkward or self-conscious as you want. You can slump in your chair and read a book in your underwear and eat a big bag of Doritos and take a nap. Sounds wonderful. Sigh.

It's also good to take time for yourself because then you can be sure that you won't be interrupted and can give your full, undivided attention to all those little personal projects that you keep putting off.

Take time for yourself, your health, your productivity and your sanity.

ON BEING ALONE

"One travels more usefully when alone, because he reflects more."

-Thomas Jefferson

SEAN OGLE

LOCATION 180

If there is one thing I have realized over the last few years, it is that life is too short not to be doing something that makes you happy. If a 9-5 job is what you are looking for, and provides you with happiness and fulfillment, then that is fantastic. However, for me, it just wasn't working. Early in 2009 I made a promise to myself that by the end of the year, I would have made significant steps to doing the things I was really passionate about: entrepreneurship and travel.

Since making that decision, I have started a successful blog, left my job, and am getting ready to start traveling early in the new year. My life is filled with more uncertainty than I have ever had, yet I can't believe how much happier I am due to the changes I have made.

I learned that you can't do something just for the paycheck. Over time, as it continues to grow, it will be harder to make a change. If you are unhappy now, a big raise isn't going to fix that. It might seem risky to leave something that is comfortable to pursue a greater passion, but I promise, it is much riskier to do nothing.

Sean Ogle runs Location 180 where he writes about lifestyle design, location independence and the fulfillment of his 'bucket list.'
Follow him on Twitter and Facebook.

EXPAND HORIZONS

If you spend your life inside a bubble of familiarity, you will not only miss out on a lot that the world has to offer, you will also be a pretty boring person.

You know that guy who only eats hamburgers and chicken tenders? Won't eat anything else? Scoffs at the concept of sushi (which he's never tried)? That guy is living in a very small world and doesn't even know what he's missing out on.

Don't be that guy. Take risks and seek out new opportunities. If you don't like something then you'll know better the next time. But at least you will have made the effort and had the experience so that you can know your tastes in the future.

TRY NEW THINGS

"Everyone has a 'risk muscle.' You keep it in shape by trying new things. If you don't, it atrophies. Make a point of using it at least once a day."

-Roger Van Oech

"Don't fear failure so much that you refuse to try new things. The saddest summary of a life contains three descriptions: could have, might have, and should have."

-Louis E. Boone

"I think my new thing will be to try to be a real happy guy. I'll just walk around being real happy until some jerk says something stupid to me."

-Jack Handy

BE TECH-SAVVY

If you are afraid of or refuse to use technology for any reason - first of all kudos for figuring out a way to read this book - and second get a grip.

We live in the 21st century and technology is a basic part of everyday life in most countries. If you don't know how to use a computer, go take a class right now, please. Just stop reading and sign up for something right now. It's that important.

If you don't know how to use social networks or blogs or Microsoft Office or have a working knowledge of how the software and hardware work in your machine you don't have to stop reading right now, but I still recommend you take a class.

Knowledge of technology is already a big part of what divides the successful (hell, the employable) from the unsuccessful. If you lack a basic knowledge of something so fundamental you're really crippling your own career and lifestyle possibilities out of ignorance or fear (that stems from ignorance).

On the other hand, if you understand social networks, have a blog, know some Photoshop and basic HTML, you're in a good spot. True, most young people are the same, but at the very least you have a foundation on which you can build many different career structures.

ON TECHNOLOGY

“The number one benefit of information technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential.”

-Steve Ballmer

JEALOUSY

I'm just going to say this to you straight: if you cannot control your jealousy, you will have a lot of problems with relationships - in business and your personal life. Being able to control your jealousy (it's difficult to completely get rid of it, so just aim for control at first) is key to being able to roll with the punches and take life as it comes and that is key to being happy.

I remember being jealous in my first relationship. Any time I'd see my girlfriend even talking to another guy, I would get a knot in my stomach and would get really down on myself. The thing is, jealousy stems from low self-confidence; I wasn't a very confident person back then and I suffered from immense amounts of jealousy because of that deficit.

The more confidence I've gained, the more I've realized that most things simply aren't worth worrying about. Why should I care if the girl I'm dating talks to other guys? Why should things like this bother me? If there were anything to worry about, she'd tell me, and if anything should happen, I'd deal with it then.

There's the breaks, as they say. And that's life, and there are plenty of fish in the sea, and yadda yadda yadda.

The prime thing to take away is that if you are the jealous type, don't just cop out and live with it ("I'm a jealous person and can't help it." Sorry, you can, you just don't want to put in the effort). Jealousy does nothing but hurt you and those around you and the easiest way to be less jealous is to deal with your own self-esteem issues.

SOME WORDS FROM WILLIAM

"O! beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on."

-William Shakespeare, Othello

ENJOY NOVELTY

No situation should ever be boring. Even if you should find yourself stuck in an uncomfortable position or tedious responsibility, you can still get your kicks by acknowledging and celebrating the novelty that is inherent in every moment of every day.

I know, it sounds a little hokey when explained like that, but consider this: having lived in the Midwest, I found myself in small towns with nothing to do a lot more frequently than I would have liked. When I was a kid, I took these experiences to be punishments (for what, I wasn't sure). There were no video games! No friends! No familiar restaurants or stores! Why would anyone do this to their children?!

These days, I go out of my way to check out small towns and for the very same reasons that I used to hate them. Removing yourself from the familiar allows you to break the chains of habit and try something new. The lunch you have will be different, the people you meet will be different and the things you do will be different all because you won't be able to fall into comfortable routines.

Routines can be good - they help you establish positive habits like working out regularly and eating well - but they can also be terrible hindrances if you become dependent on them. Having an excuse to break habits is a great way to shake things up, reevaluate your situation and implement new habits if necessary or desired.

Every novel experience opens you up and makes you reconsider your place in the world, how everything fits together, and what you think you know. It's an opportunity to change, and you should pounce on every such chance you come across.

IDEAS ABOUT NOVELTY

“Novelty has charms that our minds can hardly withstand.”

-*William Makepeace Thackeray*

“There is nothing new under the sun.”

-*Ecclesiastes 1:9*

OWN LABELS

Labels and titles can be very limiting and should be avoided at all costs.

Since we live in the real world, though, there will always be labels and titles to deal with. The best plan B is to be aware of what labels apply to you and just own the hell out of them.

Case in point, every time I take a Myers-Briggs personality test I end up labeled a strong ENTJ (extraverted, intuitive, thinking and judging). This isn't the most flattering thing in the world, as it tends to apply to not-so-pleasant people like Richard Nixon and Newt Gingrich who are a little emotionless, not very sporadic and sometimes difficult to get along with.

I find that by embracing the positive qualities of the ENTJ title (born leader, controller of environment, logic seeker, possessor of an intuitive understanding of symbolism and communication, etc) I can make this label an asset rather than a burden that I can use to apply for jobs, build communities and other such endeavors.

Labels can also help you establish a niche. Professionally it doesn't matter that you are a woman, but if you're able to bring more attention and support to your cause by leveraging that fact ('Youngest Ever Female CEO!'), why not?

Of course the ideal is to be recognized for our accomplishments and not our labels, but this is an imperfect world, so we roll with the punches!

ON LABELS

"I came to live in a country I love; some people label me a defector. I have loved men and women in my life; I've been labeled 'the bisexual defector' in print. Want to know another secret? I'm even ambidextrous. I don't like labels. Just call me Martina."

-Martina Navratilova

BE NAÏVE

Try to approach the world like a child would.

You know that feeling you get when you're showing a friend around your home town, how everything familiar seems new again as you see things through their eyes?

All of a sudden that boring old park is amazing, the roller rink is a blast and the well-tread hiking trail is fantastic fun.

Train yourself to see the world through fresh eyes by letting go of the burden of knowledge from time to time. Forget that you know the right way to walk down the trail and make your own trail. Go to the roller rink at a different time of day or try participating in a group event (roller derby, for example) and play laser tag at the park instead of just sitting on the swing.

This kind of outside the box thinking will bring value back to things that you have undervalued for a long time, leaving you open to new experiences in familiar territory and increasing your ability to see any situation or from a different perspective.

THE UPSIDE

“Every true genius is bound to be naïve.”

-Friedrich von Schiller

ELBOW GREASE

Something that most entrepreneurs have trouble with is moving from the startup mentality – where they have their fingers in everything and get their hands dirty working on every aspect of every project – to the business mentality, which requires more management and less direct involvement and elbow-grease.

This is something that I battle with a lot, because I got where I'm at now by basically being willing to work a lot harder than just about everyone else.

I worked 5 jobs along with my full load of classes in college so I would have the experience I needed when I got out of school to get the kind of job I wanted. When I started up my own business, I put in a whole lot more effort than I was being paid for because I wanted to make sure that the relationships I was building would be strong and didn't want anything to go wrong.

I didn't have much free time and I would pull all-nighters all weekend.

And it worked! Here I am, doing what I want to do and I have that hard work to thank for it. I've been able to reduce the amount of pure labor I put into projects by cutting back on the lower-value projects and activities, but I wouldn't know how to do that if I hadn't worked so hard starting out.

You don't need to kill yourself to do well like I did, but sometimes hard work is the best option and your success may depend on whether or not you're willing to invest that kind of time and energy.

ON HARD WORK

“I do not know anyone who has gotten to the top without hard work. That is the recipe. It will not always get you to the top, but it will get you pretty near.”

-Margaret Thatcher

USE SCHOOL

If you have the opportunity to get a formal education (for however long), take full advantage of what you're being given.

There are many people in the world who don't have access to what you can learn in elementary school, so being able to move on through the system and then to college/university is a HUGE gift.

Use the time to investigate different areas of interest. Many people I know who are my age or older still don't know what they want to do for their first career, and they are already graduated from college.

If you take a little time to really think about it during high school, you can move on to college with a good idea that can then be refined as you learn and take more classes.

Remember that the people teaching you are NOT your enemy, and though their methods might be generally outdated and less effective than they could be (our generation will be the ones to fix this, if I have any say in the matter), they are doing the best they can with the system they have.

Be respectful, thank them for helping you expand your mind and do your best to learn for the long-term rather than the short.

YAY FORMAL EDUCATION!

“Education is not the answer to the question.
Education is the means to the answer to all questions.”

-William Allin

BE REJECTED

Rejection happens. Rejection of you and of your ideas. And you know what? It's okay. You and your work are still great.

People have different tastes, different points of view, and different motivations behind their comments.

Have thick skin, take criticism well, and if there is any useful advice in that criticism be prepared to accept and utilize it. Take as much away from the experience as possible and there will be less rejection in the future.

ON REJECTION

“I take rejection as someone blowing a bugle in my ear to wake me up and get going, rather than retreat.”

-Sylvester Stallone

AMBER RAE LAMBKE

SOCIAL AMBER

The speed at which I think overwhelms me sometimes. I have many thoughts and ideas racing through my mind at all hours of the day. The more I explore and focus my attention on the people, sights and sounds around me, the more inspired and alive I feel. This energy is unlike any other emotion I've ever experienced in my life. It's addicting. I call it my connection with self. It's a combination of appreciating the remarkable world in which I live, allowing myself to feel the emotions involved with every new experience and moment, and then taking the time to internally investigate and reflect on my feelings for understanding. This is where I find my calm. When calm and connected, my racing thoughts become fluid, focused and actionable. I call this my intuitive path. It's my life direction.

For as long as I can remember, this is how I've approached the world around me and this is how I've actively lived my life. This is what makes me remarkable and it's how I live remarkably.

My advice to you... Be an explorer. Become immersed in the world around you and marvel at the beauty, design and colors. Monitor your behaviors closely and investigate your emotional responses for insight into who you are and where you want to be. The most strange, bizarre or seemingly incomprehensible experiences are often the most invigorating, meaningful and worthwhile. Chase these moments until curiosities exhaust or answers are found.

Chance discovery is standing before you. It's the future knocking on the door. Be ready and hold on tight.

Amber Rae Lambke blogs at Social Amber and works as a social media guru while living a risky life full of travel, adventure and ambition. Follow her on Twitter and Facebook.

USE LIMITATIONS

A project I did for one of my illustration classes in college showed me the value of artificial limitations. The assignment was to create 100 rabbits. The limitation was that we could only use each medium ONCE. This meant that I was able to use watercolors for one rabbit, charcoal for another, pens for another, etc.

After 16-20 rabbits my collection of conventional illustration and art supplies were used up and I was forced to really get creative.

I made a broccoli rabbit and painstakingly shaped a rabbit out of peanut butter. My girlfriend was turned into a rabbit and I shaped a rabbit out of my shoelaces. I made a shadow-bunny with my hands and I drew a rabbit with my own blood.

It was amazing. I never realized how many illustration tools I had at my disposal, each and every one resulting in a very unique look and texture.

The artificial limitations of the project resulted in more interesting products than I would have created had there been no limitations. It was also just a whole lot more fun to use this approach than to just draw 100 rabbits with a pencil.

Try something similar in your life, relationships or projects and see how it turns out. If it doesn't work, you can just break your own rules. Who's going to stop you?

PRO LIMITATION QUOTE

“Art consists of limitation. The most beautiful part of every picture is the frame.”

-Gilbert K. Chesterton

EMBRACE CHANGE

I'm an anti-addiction kind of person and if I find myself getting hooked on something I try to remove whatever it is I'm addicted to from my life.

One thing I'm planning on keeping around, despite my near-addiction to it, is change. Throughout my life change has always brought a next step, new adventure or chance to reinvent myself.

Embracing change can be tough, since we have a natural tendency to find stability where possible and to lock it down. You can see this in many peoples' relationships, careers and actions, and there's nothing at all wrong with this way of living (it's just not very conducive to constant evolution and in fact limits it quite a bit).

I find it helpful to have some aspects of my life that are constantly in a flux while others are kept more consistent.

For example, with the [Exile Lifestyle](#) project I'm moving to a new country every 4 months. That is change I can depend on (the best of both worlds!).

Change doesn't have to be that dramatic, though. You could change up something as simple as your hair color or the route you take to work or the TV shows you watch from time to time. Just so long as you are giving your mind a chance to get out of habit-mode and flex a bit you're doing yourself a service.

IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

"Things do not change; we change."

-Henry David Thoreau

SORT OF STOIC

There is much wisdom to be derived from Stoicism, but one aspect of this philosophy that I find to be incredibly helpful on a day-to-day basis involves tolerating hardship in order to increase the level of happiness I am able to enjoy.

Think about it this way: if you have a really terrible day where everything goes wrong, the next day could be just average but will seem great in comparison to the previous day. This idea transfers and scales really well and if you are able to cope with bad situations without reverting to escapism or victimhood, your highs will get higher and your mediums will be pretty darn great.

Even better, every bad situation will turn into a learning experience rather than a day ruiner. Nice!

SHORT QUOTES FROM STOICS

“Wherever I go, it will be well with me.”

“No man is free who is not master of himself.”

-*Epictetus*

“Get rid of the judgement...get rid of the ‘I am hurt,’ you are rid of the hurt itself.”

“How ridiculous and how strange to be surprised at anything which happens in life!”

-*Marcus Aurelius*

“That which Fortune has not given, she cannot take away.”

“Virtue is nothing else than right reason.”

-*Seneca*

THE IDEA IS KING

One of my favorite ad agencies, Crispin Porter + Bogusky, has a really fantastic set of rules laid out in their employee handbook.

The book itself is nothing fancy, but the rules that are included are groundbreaking and in some cases hilarious (if at any point any person involved in a meeting yells out 'PINEAPPLE,' the meeting ends immediately and everyone has to leave).

Among these rules is that the best idea is boss, which in practice means that the best ideas stand on their own merit regardless of who comes up with it. If the Creative Director comes up with gold, it's her baby. If the janitor brings the bouillon instead, then he's made a part of the process that brings it to fruition.

The point here is that wisdom can come from any source, educated or uneducated, experienced or naïve, young or old, man or woman, white or black...none of that matters. When you hear good advice or if someone shares knowledge with you, it's in your best interest to listen, take it seriously, and make use of it if warranted.

Elitism has no place in a student's mind, if one wants to keep growing as a person (and ideally we'll all be students of *something* forever).

ON IDEAS

"A good idea can come from anywhere, from any person in any department at any level. If you've been here a long time, if you're overdue or if you've worked on that account longer than anyone, that doesn't matter. And just because a person's title is associate creative director or management supervisor doesn't necessarily mean their ideas are automatically weighed more toward the good end of the scale."

-Crispin Porter + Bogusky Employee Handbook, page 13

IT'S BIO TIME!

BRING YOUR PARTY PANTS!

WHAT THIS IS

More information about the people who contributed their advice and writing to this ebook, including their contact information and Twitter/Facebook accounts.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

Written in French. Désolé.

JD BENTLEY

Mr. Bentley is a [freelance web designer and developer](#) who specializes in Wordpress and sexy, modern aesthetics. His code is clean, and so is his style.

When he's not custom-building sites for his clients, JD writes the blog [Wage Slave Rebel](#), where he covers topics ranging from escaping the mainstream work lifestyle to [liars](#).

Follow JD on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

ROBERT GRANHOLM

Rob Granholm is a jack of all trades; a designer, entrepreneur and adventurer. He builds [websites and consults on everything tech](#) with clients through his company, IT Arsenal, and gives back to the community by blogging about lifestyle design at [The Life Design Project](#).

Check out his post on how to [Reboot Your Brain and Regain Life Control](#), then follow Robert on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

SEAN OGLE

Sean Ogle has made a name for himself in the blogging community for his transparency, down-to-earthedness and impressive [bucket list](#). He has also recently left his 9-to-5 job in order to pursue a location independent career, which he has been documenting at his blog, [Location 180](#).

Take a gander at Sean's post on [why he's a hypocrite](#) and then follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

ALAN PERLMAN

Alan has one of the coolest jobs in the world: he travels from country to country collecting local pricing information. This means that he has a lot of opportunities to move around, try new things and rack up interesting experiences.

At his blog, [The 9 to 5 Alternative](#), Alan writes about his travels, lifestyle design and progress completing the [Personal MBA](#).

Read about Alan's [experiences in Kazakhstan](#) and then follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

JENDA MICHL

Jenda is an extremely talented architect and product designer who hones his craft working with groups like [Opportunity Green](#) in Los Angeles and running his business, [Vertu Studio](#).

Mr Michl is LEED accredited and works hard to create structures and products that are functional, iconic, poetic and sustainable.

Check out his work at [Vertu Studio](#), then follow Jenda on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

CHRISTOPHE GALLAND

Christophe Galland, 27, is the owner and creative director of [The Imagists](#), a communication and branding studio based in Los Angeles, CA. He resides between West Hollywood and Paris with his partner, fashion photographer Garet Field Sells.

Find out more about Christophe's studio at [The Imagists](#) website, then follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

PAUL SMITH

Paul Smith is the charismatic head of [Greensmith Consulting](#), where he counsils his clients on how best to get the word out about the eco-friendly benefits of their products and services.

Paul is a widely published scribe, writing for a major green company and contributing to [Triple Pundit](#). He's also the social media strategist for [GenGreen Digital Media](#) and one heck of a dancer.

Find out more about Paul and get in touch with him through [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn!](#)

AMBER RAE LAMBKE

Amber is highly curious and easily inspired. She's an explorer, energizer, visionary, entrepreneur, writer and detective. She loves risk, fears little, lives for adventure, enjoys change, appreciates the little things, feels deeply, gives much and smiles often. Human behavior, consumer trends, culture, innovation, design and technology fascinate her. New and unique experiences, people, self-reflection and art inspire her.

Amber runs [Social Amber](#), a blog about social media, and can be connected with via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook!](#)

ANOUSH RIMA TATEVOSSIAN

Anoush Rima Tatevossian is the former Executive Director of the [Armenian Volunteer Corps](#). During her graduate studies at USC, she was the Editor-in-Chief of [Public Diplomacy Magazine](#).

To find out what Anoush will be up to next, follow her on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!

CARLOS MICELI

Carlos runs [Owl Sparks](#), where he writes about lifestyle design and explores everything from philosophy to marketing. Carlos recently quit his high-flying corporate job with a major telecommunications company and will be moving to Perth, Australia to further his education (in school and life).

Say hello to Carlos (and keep up with his heretical discussions) on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

CAROL SEGRAVE

Carol is the President of [Segrave Associates](#), a consulting firm that specializes in leadership coaching and team building, with billion-dollar clients ranging from IBM to NBC.

Carol is a triathlete and Senior Olympics Silver Medalist in the 50 yard freestyle. She was also a Gold and Silver medalist in the Miami Beach and Palm Springs International Salsa Competitions.

Start a conversation with Carol on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

KRISTIN NORRIS

Kristin is a Jane of All Trades: she has performed at Disneyland and on stage at various theatres, she ran a personal training and massage therapy business and now she runs a design and development studio in Seattle called [Dezabulous](#).

She also keeps a blog called [Find Yourself Lost](#), where she tells stories and gives practical lifestyle design advice for emotional and creative people.

Check out Kristin's [thoughts on the phrase 'I Love You'](#) and then friend her on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

DIGGY DE BRUIN

Diggy blogs at [Upgrade Reality](#), where he shares his ideas about lifestyle design, enthusiasm for martial arts and general upbeatness with his readers.

When he's not writing, Diggy keeps busy dancing, modeling and helping people set up their own blog. Check out his [post on giving and taking value](#), then follow Diggy on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

JOHN BARDOS

John is the mastermind behind [Jet Set Citizen](#), a blog focused on living a more modern lifestyle that includes more experiences and less rampant consumerism.

Mr. Bardos is currently working on his one year plan with his wife which will result in their leaving Japan and moving to another country.

Check out John's [impressive list of interviews](#) with equally impressive people, and then follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

COLIN WRIGHT

Colin writes the blog [Exile Lifestyle](#), through which he writes about his experiences and how they relate to lifestyle design, philosophy, minimalism, sustainability and a whole collection of other long words.

Colin also uses Exile Lifestyle as an excuse to run his design and development studio, [Colin Is My Name](#), from a new country every 4 months. He also writes about himself in the third-person when writing his own bio, as if you'll believe someone else is writing it. Ha!

This is Colin's second free ebook, the first was about [Personal Branding](#).

Start a conversation with Colin on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).



EBOOKS? MEH

Don't trust everything you read. Ebooks can be fun and informative, but just because someone took the (many, many) hours to put it all together doesn't mean the information is good. Or even if it is good, there's no telling whether or not the information inside is pertinent to YOU.

So use a filter. Read what you can but there are no real 'experts' and all anyone can tell you is what has worked for them and people they know in the past.

That's all this has been, and I hope it's been useful to you nonetheless.

If you have any comments, questions, typos or just want to connect, shoot me an email at colin@exilelifestyle.com

THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE (TIP #44)

It took place during the day, so the dog was easy to see.