

# YOU DON'T NEED AN IDEA – YOU NEED AN **I DID.**

- January 6:** Action is the engine of credibility.  
**February 15:** Ceaselessness is the common constitution of champions.  
**March 24:** Develop massive intolerance for the inconsequential.  
**April 27:** Extend unrestricted mental hospitality to every achievement.  
**May 6:** Fish are delicious but dangerous.  
**June 2:** How do you talk to yourself when you fail?  
**July 7:** Less talkie, more walkie.  
**August 4:** Never underestimate the infiltratability of negativity.  
**September 10:** Quit something average.  
**October 28:** Stupidity is the best mentor.  
**November 15:** The best way to bring home the bacon is to raise your own pigs.  
**December 31:** Your ship never comes in, only your dock gets bigger.

**Scott Ginsberg** is the author of twelve books, a professional speaker, award-winning blogger, producer of NametagTV.com and one smoking hot piece of brain candy. He's made an entire career out of wearing a nametag every day. He blames this on his parents.



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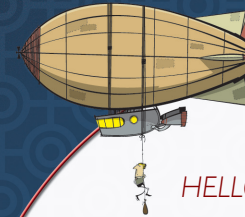
**366**

Actionable Ideas, Challenging Insights & Disturbing Questions to Help You Take Action on What Matters

Scott Ginsberg's **IDEAS ARE FREE  
EXECUTION IS PRICELESS**

Scott

"Ginsberg has dodged life's slings and arrows and still inspires audiences with acts ofchutzpah and quirky individualism."  
 – Inc Magazine



A NON-FRICTION  
BUSINESS DEVOTIONAL

HELLO my name is Scott's...

# IDEAS ARE FREE EXECUTION IS **PRICELESS**

**366**

Actionable Ideas, Challenging Insights  
and Disturbing Questions to  
Help You Take Action  
on What Matters



## Scott Ginsberg

That Guy Who Made a Career  
Out of Wearing a Nametag

**Yeah,  
but you  
didn't.**

**Year,  
but you  
bible.**

*HELLO, my name is Scott's...*

# **Ideas are Free, Execution is Priceless**

*366 Challenging Insights,  
Disturbing Questions and  
Actionable Strategies to Help You  
Execute What Matters*

My biggest advantage is that nobody can keep up with me.

I am dangerously prolific.

I refuse to slow down long enough for anyone to catch up.

I will out execute you.

Here's why:

- Nobody – who does what I do –  
can do what I do, as **fast** as I can do it.  
*That's executional velocity: Take action quickly.*
- Nobody – who does what I do –  
can do what I do – as **much** as I can do it.  
*That's executional volume: Take action prodigiously.*
- Nobody – who does what I do –  
can do what I do – as **good** as I can do it.  
*That's executional value: Take action exquisitely.*
- Nobody – who does what I do –  
can do what I do – as **long** as I can do it.  
*That's executional vitality: Take action consistently*

**LESSON LEARNED:** It's not about intellectual property – it's about executional velocity, volume, value and vitality.

My name is Scott.

I'm the guy who made a career out of wearing a nametag everyday.

And I attribute this insane accomplishment to the one sentence:

*Ideas are free, execution is priceless.*

This year – day by day – I'm going to teach you how to take action on what matters.

Welcome to my brain.



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M A Y

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J U L Y

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# **Ideas are Free, Execution is Priceless**

*366 Challenging Insights,  
Disturbing Questions and  
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**by Scott Ginsberg**

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**This year is going  
to regret the day  
it met you.**

**You're going to  
make it wish it  
was never born.**

JANUARY

# A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

Just make sure that's not the only step you take.

Otherwise it's not a journey – it's a game of hopscotch.

The world doesn't need another one-stepper.  
It needs people who step, step daily and step firmly.

*Are you one of those people?*



JANUARY 1

# **Abandonment is the backbone of entrepreneurship.**

By definition, an entrepreneur is someone who undertakes and manages risk.

Someone vulnerable.

Someone courageous enough to stick herself out there.

And what she *abandons* are outmoded traditions. Popular delusions. Stale thinking.

What she *abandons* is any shell that would otherwise choke the budding dream inside of her.

*Are you willing to let go and plunge forward into the vortex of action?*

JANUARY 2

# Abolish your excuse barrage.

What's your favorite excuse?

Personally, I like to give people the old, "I have no excuse" excuse. Works every time.

If you want to close the execution gap, here's the secret: *Let action eclipse excuse.*

Consider these three questions to help you do so.

**FIRST:** *Is there anyone else who has the same excuse as you, but is moving ahead successfully nonetheless?* Odds are, there's at least three people out there like this. Have lunch with them. Find out what they're doing differently that you could learn.

**SECOND:** *What lies are your excuses guarding?* This is a solid question for pinpointing the lies you're telling yourself. And if you're willing to isolate the excuse-ridden undertow leading you out to sea, you'll be one step closer to taking action on what matters.

**THIRD:** *Whom are you using as an excuse?* It's dangerously easy to use other people as excuses for not accomplishing your goals. Your challenge is to walk the fine line between helpful feedback and hurtful resistance. Otherwise you'll bounce from excuse to excuse like a pinball machine. Except you won't score any points.

Test your excuses. That's the only way the barrage will be beaten.

*What excuse are you falling in love with that's preventing you from getting started?*



JANUARY 3

## **Accept and applaud your uniqueness.**

In the first act of *Wicked*, Elphaba first arrives at Shiz University. Her instructor, Madame Morrible, reminds her:

*"Never apologize for talent – it's a gift!"*

This is a helpful lesson for each of us. After all, unconditional self-acceptance is the prerequisite to defying gravity. And if you don't honor what is chiefest and most powerful in your heart, gravity will get the best of you.

If you don't stay true to the light that's been given to you, every day it will become increasingly hard to shine.

*Are you open to all that you are?*

JANUARY 4

# **Accept inertia as an inevitable feature of the entrepreneurial landscape.**

Meet yourself where you are.

Instead of making war with inaction, befriend it. Greet it with a welcoming heart. Put your arm around its shoulder and find out what it's trying to teach you.

By partnering with inertia and respecting it as a natural part of the entrepreneurial experience, you can move forward from an expanded (not contracted) mindspace.

*Are you ignoring, discounting or unfriending the obvious?*

JANUARY 5

# **Accept that the planets will never be aligned.**

Don't wait until everything's perfect.

Don't wait until you're experienced enough.

Don't wait until you know what you're doing.

Don't wait for overwhelming evidence to trust yourself.

Heighten your impatience; enter into the heart of action and jump off the high board hoping there's water below.

Otherwise procrastination – the redneck second cousin of patience – will rob you of the motivation you need to carry in the cavalry charge.

*How will you leverage impatience as fuel for your motivation?*

JANUARY 6

## Action is the engine of credibility.

Nobody cares what you believe.

Or intend. Or say. Believing is overrated, intending is useless and talking is worthless.

The word “credibility” comes from the Latin *creditum*, which means, “a loan, thing entrusted to another.”

That’s interesting. *Credibility is on loan.*

Which means a stoppage in action will make the engine sputter.

Which means it might take years to assemble, but only seconds to annihilate.

Accept this.

*What is your credibility-strengthening plan?*

JANUARY 7

# Action isn't an afterthought.

Engineer action into every idea you have.

Otherwise your ideas will remain nouns in a marketplace that rewards verbs.

Incidentally, did you know the word “execution” has the same Latin derivative as the word “sequel”?

Cool. Maybe that's what it means to execute – to make a sequel.

After all, every experience contains the value of helping us decide what to do next.

*How are you entering into each endeavor with an attitude of action?*

JANUARY 8

## **Actions are antidotes.**

Action cures the fears you think are real.

Which aren't. Because they're fears, and fears are only as real as your fear of them.

Like the schoolyard bully whose sole source of power is your fear of him, most fears melt into a puddle of goo when you stand up to them.

That's the action part. And it's contrary to Roosevelt's "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

I disagree. I think the only thing we have to fear is the fear of fear itself.

Nothing a few courageous steps of action can't fix.

*If this action drains your energy and ability to change, what would cause the opposite?*

JANUARY 9

# Adopt agile development.

I read an enlightening blog post on [www.trizle.com](http://www.trizle.com) called, "How to Finish Big Projects."

They used the software industry as the quintessential example:

*"All software developers use a method they crazily call Agile Software Development, aka, ASD. They build a releasable product within weeks. Then, they build outward to create successively bigger product releases. The first releasable product has the most important stuff done. They'll term it Version 0.1. Next, they'll expand that version outward with additional features and term it Version 0.2. Gradually, the successive small releases ultimately form one juicy-good finished software item. Complete."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Focus on the most important component of your project first. You can fill in the holes later.

Mary Poppins was right: Enough is as good as a feast.

*Is enough good enough for your company?*

JANUARY 10

## **A regimen must be installed.**

How you spend your day – literally, hour by hour – will determine how much money you make, how happy you are, how healthy you are and how successful you become.

Especially if you're like me and you don't have a real job. You almost have to force yourself to create a typical day. Otherwise you get cabin fever and your time not only manages you, it drives you insane.

I'm not suggesting you choreograph every waking hour of your life. The challenge is designing a typical day for you, which enforces (some) structure and predictability, while still leaving room for spontaneity and playfulness.

As long as you constantly ask yourself if what you're doing – in this moment – is consistent with your number one goal.

The rest is gravy.

*Have you pictured your ideal day yet?*



JANUARY 11

## **Aggressively bite into opportunities.**

The book of Zechariah reminds us:

*"Do not despise the day of small beginnings."*

That statement runs my life.

Because you never know. And you never *will* know unless you maintain an attitude of possibility, openness and leverage with everything you encounter.

Ultimately, it's about making yourself approachable to the world. It's about beginning with what is – then making something more beautiful out of that.

That's the cool part about waiting: There's always something to do.

And don't give me that, "But I'm so bored," excuse.

Look: If you're bored, you're a boring person. Period.

I haven't been bored since Finance 301 senior year of college.

Why? Because I don't just hustle while I wait – I aggressively bite into opportunities while I wait. Dee-licious.

Remember: Opportunity never stops knocking – you just stop listening.

*What opportunity is going to pass you by if you don't act on it?*

JANUARY 12

## Align your action with accomplishment.

Bob Parsons, CEO of [www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com), recently published a helpful execution module on his video blog. In order to keep productivity churning, he suggests asking two questions:

1. Is this conversation directly leading to what I need to accomplish?
2. Is this immediately relevant to my success?

If the answer is no, respectfully remove yourself.

Focus on finding what matters instead, then executing the bejesus out of it.

*What questions do you ask yourself to stay on point?*

JANUARY 13

# Ambiguity assassinate execution.

While a high tolerance for ambiguity is necessary for entrepreneurial success, some clarity is helpful.

Especially when you begin soliciting support and communicating your ideas to others.

People won't be able to help with making your dream a reality if your ideas are ill thought out and scatterbrained. As Aristotle remarked:

*"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Become an expert at entertaining your ideas.

After all: Ideas are your major source of income. And all talkie and no walkie makes Jack a broke boy.

Achieve massive clarity; execute major successes.

*What is your conduit for creative clarity?*

JANUARY 14

## **Ambition without focus is stalemate.**

If you're constantly firing in all directions, you're never going to hit anything squarely.

It's only when you hunker down into the leaves and concentrate 100% of your energies on one particular target that you become a bountiful hunter.

Not just in the wilderness, but in business too.

I meet too many entrepreneurs who impatiently jump from idea to idea, project to project; never picking a lane, never making any progress. Their ambition is spread too thin. And it makes me want to strangle them with an orange extension cord.

What they don't realize is that focus is the mobilizing force.

*What consumes your time but isn't making you any money?*

JANUARY 15

## Announce your intentions to yourself.

Moving forward means architecting a vision, then aligning your daily actions with that vision.

Even if you feel scared.

Even if you don't have a plan.

Even if you don't know how to do what you need to do.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If you use a compass instead of a map, it's easier to pinpoint your general direction. Sure beats killing yourself trying to figure out longitudinal coordinates.

Remember: How is not your responsibility.

Fall in love with why and how will make its appearance when it's ready.  
Like Nietzsche said:

*"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."*

Announce your why to yourself.

*What are you forgetting to be intentional about?*

JANUARY 16

## Anonymity is the adversary of execution.

I wear a nametag 24-7.

I literally have zero anonymity whatsoever.

Except on Halloween, when I change my nametag as part of my costume. Other than that, anyone who sees me at any given moment can say to herself, "Well, I guess his name is Scott..."

I'm not suggesting you do the same. In fact, I strongly suggest you do not wear a nametag 24-7. About a fourth of the time, it's a flat-out pain in the ass.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Consider the adverse relationship between anonymity and profitability.

A good start would be to throw away your marketing plan and begin writing a visibility plan. Because it's not who you know – it's who knows you – *and*, whose life is significantly better because they know you.

*How are you making people aware of you?*

JANUARY 17

# Activate, embody and constantly rekindle your vision.

Vision motivates us.

Vision drives action.

Vision defies gravity.

And in case you're wondering, I define vision as, "telling a story about the future you want to see."

Have you done that yet?

If not, spend some time writing your answers to the following question:

*"If everybody did exactly what I said, what would the world look like?"*

Simply by asking, you accomplish a few things.

**FIRST:** The question helps you imagine what you need to become in order for your goals to manifest.

**SECOND:** It empowers you to speak from the future, then look back to identify the steps that led there.

**THIRD:** It inspires you to paint a compelling, detailed picture of the desired future and make meaningful strides toward it.

*What three things are you doing repeatedly that don't serve or support your vision?*

JANUARY 18

## Ask yourself focus questions.

If what you're doing – right now – is not consistent with your number one goal, you lose.

*Keep asking if it is.*

If what you're doing right now isn't supporting your own strategic intent, you lose.

*Keep asking if it is.*

This process of self-questioning is the single most effective strategy for self-accountability. It's confrontational, it's creative and it's guaranteed to give you a much-needed kick in the ass.

As long as you don't forget: Motivation without execution is nothing but consuming empty calories.

Like eating seven pounds of iceberg lettuce and a Diet Coke. Blech.

Instead, commit to clothing your resolutions in concrete actions.

*Are you honest with yourself about what really motivates you?*



JANUARY 19

# **Ask, believe, work your ass off, and then you shall receive.**

Snowboarding legend and multi-gold-medalist Shaun White receives constant criticism for his success.

Not for his bad-boy antics off the course.

Not for his trademark mop of flowing red hair.

Not for his natural athletic ability over his competitors.

Rather, for his personal training facility in Colorado.

That's right. White has his own private half-pipe. On a mountain. In the middle of The Rockies.

Lucky. I want my own mountain.

But here's the punch line: It's not like Shaun's rich parents cashed in his trust fund to pay for it. It was only after fifteen years of long, hard and smart practice – his commitment to building a personal brand and his ability to command legions of fans – that White (finally) earned a major sponsorship from Red Bull.

Then, while training for the 2010 Olympics, the energy drink company made Shaun's half-pipe a reality.

Hard work pays off; but hard patience pays millions.

*How long are you willing to sweat in obscurity before the right people notice?*

JANUARY 20

## Assess the irrelevant – then discard it.

From “crazy-idea-for-a-book” to “actually-in-my-hand-so-I-can-smell-the-book,” my first book, *HELLO, my name is Scott*, took over a year to complete.

My second book took two years.

My third book took eight months.

My fourth book took six months.

Now that I’m well past my twelfth title, I average about five months per book, or three books a year.

So: What happened? What divine force was at work?

Simple: I learned which corners I could cut. That meant:

No big publishers. No useless planning. No more getting ready to get ready. No more making pointless outlines. No more rewrites. No more soliciting blurbs from “experts” whose testimonials added zero value. No more endless rounds of quasi-editing from unqualified people whose opinions don’t matter in the first place. And no more killing myself over the supposed perfection of every sentence until the book was flawless.

*“Scott, this is your thirteenth draft – let it be,” says my layout designer, Jeff.*

Done.

*If you didn’t spend all your time managing and stressing over counterproductive time-wasters, what might you accomplish?*

JANUARY 21

## Assess the risk.

There is an inverse relationship between your willingness to risk and the likelihood of criticism. For example, one of the questions I ask myself every morning as I sit down to write is:

*"What do I risk in presenting this material?"*

If the answer is "not much" or "nothing," I either rewrite it, or don't publish it at all. It's simply not daring enough. Too much ink, not enough blood.

Whether you're a writer or not, the challenge is the same: Create a filter for your own work that reinforces the importance of risk.

You might ask, "Who will this idea piss off?" or "How much hate mail will this garner?"

Otherwise you're just wasting your time.

Otherwise you're just winking in the dark.

*How do you assess the risk of what you release to the world?*

JANUARY 22

## Attitude is soil.

And if it's saturated with too much fertilizer, anything that grows in it – not matter how big and beautiful and profitable it may be – will always have a stinkshit core.

As Seth Godin wrote in a recent blog post:

*"No one ever succeeded because of execution tactics learned from a Dummies book. If your attitude at the top of the hierarchy is messed up, no amount of brilliant tactics or execution is going to help you at all."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Exquisite execution doesn't last when underscored by an excremental attitude.

*When you make ideas happen, how does your breath smell?*

JANUARY 23

## **Attitude is the best asset.**

Especially in a down economy.

My challenge to you is to approach recessions as opportunities to renew resourcefulness. Because by blaming the economy, you evade responsibility and continue to not take action.

Instead, believe that greatness is near.

Instead, believe that behind every problem there's a question trying to ask itself.

And next time someone asks you, "Do these pants make my rut look big?" just reply with, "No, but your attitude does."

*How will you exponentially increase the net value of your attitudinal asset?*

JANUARY 24

# Attitude is the nucleus of achievement.

Rabbit's feet don't work. Plus they hurt the rabbit.

Your attitude is your good luck charm. And while I'm not sure that "attitude is everything" – I do think it *undergirds* everything.

What's more, attitude alters efficacy. And as long as your attitude is *just a little* healthier than it was yesterday, it's the asset that will earn you a fortune.

Three things:

**FIRST:** Take some time to appraise the current market value of your attitude. Ask: *If you had to put a price tag on it, how much money would your attitude be worth?*

**SECOND:** Take some time to evaluate the future market value of your attitude. Ask: *What are the giants you need to slay to make your attitude what it needs to be?*

**THIRD:** Learn to detect dangerous attitudes in others quickly so you can distance yourself from their blast range. Ask: *Whose mental shitstorm is negatively infiltrating your reality?*

Attitude is the soil in which success flourishes.

*What level of achievement will become possible when you realize that brainstuff determines bankstuff?*

JANUARY 25

## Avoid the paralysis of prioritization.

Dwelling incapacitates you.

Especially when the feedback is negative.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop spinning round and round in circles and over-complicating things when, if you get right down to it, what you're working on simply doesn't count.

Overanalyzing is a waste of time. Don't let words from someone who doesn't matter stress you out and make you second-guess yourself. Looking for too much feedback may ultimately result in wasted time and a failure to prioritize.

Romance author Charlene Teglia said it best:

*"In order to succeed as a writer (or really, in any area) you have to have a peculiar balance of confidence and humility. You have to know when you don't know it all and be willing to learn from those who know more. But you also have to have the confidence to know who you shouldn't listen to, because somebody can be right – and at the same time, dead wrong for you."*

Remember: Feedback from the right people (and the ability to make subsequent changes) leads to enhanced performance.

*Who do you listen to?*

JANUARY 26

## Awareness is the great advancer.

Achieving mastery in anything begins with the prerequisite plunge into awareness.

You've been there before. It's that crucial moment when you jolt awake out of your sleepwalking and exclaim, "Holy crap! I can't believe I never thought of that until just now..."

That's awareness. *Business. Personal. Spiritual. Whatever.*

And the cool part is, once you arrive at that space, the architecture of your spirit is never the same again. The bell of awareness has been rung, the waves have been sent, and the vibrations will echo in your heart forever.

Of course, that doesn't mean you won't experience an occasional relapse. Some regression back into your old, oblivious self is always possible.

But awareness simply advances you too far. As the old PSA's from Saturday morning GI JOE cartoons used to remind me:

*"Now you know – and knowing is half the battle."*

That's what I know.

*What's hidden from you that, if you were able to see, would set you free?*



JANUARY 27

## Backward progress still counts.

Sure, it's a step back. But at least you're still stepping.

Movement – whether backwards, forwards, lateral or diagonal – is necessary.

Some people just stand there. Those losers are called nouns. And they are condemned to irrelevancy.

Verbs radiate in all directions.

Verbs plant the seeds of movement.

Verbs participate with the action of life.

Be a verb.

Be a man of constant action.

Let your inner exuberance erupt through your skin.

Shine all of your heart into the world and watch it glow like a gas lamp.

*Are you worrying about the direction of movement when you should be worshipping the derivative of it?*

JANUARY 28

# Being a verb epitomizes execution.

A verb is anything that expresses action or being.

It *could* be a word.

But it could also be an idea. Or a person. Or a product. Or an entire organization.

The point is: Nouns aren't noticed.

Verbs are remembered. Verbs are celebrated. Verbs are significant.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Refuse to live in a state of low-grade vitality. Save that for the nouns of the world.

Since you're a verb, your only option is to live a drudgery-free existence. Otherwise your muscles will atrophy, hampering your ability to make meaning in the universe.

And should you wake up one day and find yourself in noun territory – that is, stalemated and unmotivated – don't beat yourself up.

**FIRST:** Determine why you stopped taking action.

**SECOND:** Apply profitable and productive pressure to yourself.

**THIRD:** Respond spontaneously to the world around you and deploy the hell out of yourself.

*What are you translating into action?*

JANUARY 29

## **Be in it for the long haul.**

One of the professional mantras I live by is, “It’s only a matter of time.”

Based on how smart, long and hard I work, based on my personal constitution, and based on the secret weapon of my attitude, I’m confident that certain payoffs, victories and accomplishments will inevitably come to pass.

It’s statistical probability. It’s only a matter of time. And this mindset is a result of self-confidence and stick-to-it-ive-ness.

I just keep telling myself that I’m not going anywhere. And that every day, I’m only going to get stronger and better. It’s only a matter of time.

*Is how you talk to yourself?*

JANUARY 30

## Be more vehicular.

The earliest translation of the word “vehicle” derives from the 1612 French term *vehicule*, which means:

“A medium through which a drug or medicine is administered.”

Cool as hell. Can you imagine how much change you could create in the world, how much meaning you could make in the universe, if you viewed yourself in that way?

It all goes back to the questions:

1. What were you designed to cure?
2. What are you the answer to?

Practice answering those questions with your actions, every single day, and you’ll be more of a verb than Merriam Webster.

*What drug do you administer?*

JANUARY 31

## **Be not overwhelmed by circumstances.**

Refuse to become imprisoned by the moment. Struggle not against the inevitable.

As my friend Neen James says:

*"Assess whether whatever is happening is in your control or not. If it is, decide whether you want to change it. Then, if so, ponder if it would even be worthwhile to expend the energy doing so."*

By exercising this type of internal communication, you cease to be imprisoned by external conditions.

And that's when you start to execute the really juicy stuff.

*How could you hold your own feet to the fire?*

**Treat your  
commitments  
seriously and with  
glowing intensity.**



**Is your dedication  
a dinner candle or  
a dungeon torch?**

**Part of reaching the  
world is equipping  
people to reach  
their world.**



**Who's succeeding  
because of you?**

FEBRUARY

# Be profitably and strategically patient.

Taking action on what matters balances patience and impatience simultaneously.

On one side, there's nothing more threatening to the competition than someone who isn't going anywhere.

Like Indiana Jones admitted in *The Last Crusade*:

*"I'm like a bad penny – I always turn up."*

The tricky part is negotiating the fine line between patience and passivity.

Sure, taking a long time to do something is often necessary – but it's rarely admirable. But as Einstein confessed:

*"I'm not smarter than anybody else – I just stick with it longer."*

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

*Will you wait?*





F E B R U A R Y 1

# Be patient with parade rainers.

As you passionately tell people about your work, some will attempt to steal the wind from your creative sails. They'll ask you questions like: "So, is this all you do?" "What's your real job?" "And does that actually pay the bills?"

It's frustrating, rude, assumptive and negatively propagates the starving artist script.

But don't get upset. Remember that when people ask questions like that, it's a projection of their artistic frustration and insecurity.

And they're not "just looking out for you," even if they defensively claim that right after spending ten minutes shooting down your dream like mallard on the first day of duck season.

The reality is, when they see or hear about your full time career, their defense mechanism silently screams, "But I couldn't make it as an artist or entrepreneur, so why should you?"

They see something in you they either wish they had, or did have at one point, but lost.

As Steven Pressfield also reminds us from *The War of Art*:

*"When we see people living their authentic lives, it drives us crazy because we know we're not living our own."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Don't take it personally. It's got nothing to do with you.

Jerks.

*When people rain on your artistic parade, how do you respond?*

F E B R U A R Y 2

## Be strategically impatient.

Authors love to pontificate about how many publishers rejected them before they made it big.

Personally, I never chose to participate in that literary pissing contest.

I've always practiced Miyagi's Law, which states that the best way to block a punch is to not be there.

Want know how many publishers rejected my book?

*None. Because I did it myself.*

In fact, I did it myself twelve times in nine years. That's more books than many authors publish in their lifetime.

SO: To what strategy do I attribute my supernatural productivity?

1. I'm single.
2. I'm very impatient.

And I don't mean, like, I roll my eyes and huff under my breath at supermarket cashiers who take ten minutes to count my change. I'm talking about strategic impatience.

Ask any entrepreneur in the world – it's in our blood. We don't wait for permission. We just go. We just do stuff.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Patience might be a virtue – but impatience pays the mortgage.

Just go. The Dalai Lama will forgive you. And Mr. Miyagi will be proud of you.

*Whose permission are you waiting for?*

F E B R U A R Y 3

## Be your own biggest fan.

It's great to have people cheering for you.

But the number of fans you accumulate is valueless if you're not the first one standing in line.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Be your own biggest fan.

Your own best friend.

Your own ideal reader.

Your own top customer.

Your own perfect audience.

Your own greatest supporter.

From that space of self-belief, you can execute anything.

Because whatever your currency is – making a statement, making difference, making a mint – you can't earn that unless you have people cheering for you.

You may as well start with yourself. Otherwise self-doubt will stop you in your tracks.

*Who's cheering for you the loudest?*

F E B R U A R Y 4

## **Believe you have everything you need to begin.**

Failure to move forward stems less from poor planning and more from the timidity to proceed.

It's a question of self-belief. And a practice I've found helpful over the years is to recite the following incantations each day:

*"I am richly supported ... I trust my resources ... I am equal to this challenge ... I am ready to proceed."*

Just accept the fact that you're never ready, you're never going to be ready, and that waiting until you are ready is like waiting on a train that hasn't come through your town since the Reagan administration.

May as well get on your bike and just start pedaling.

And believe that who you already are is enough to get what you want.

*Have you ever asked yourself why you procrastinate?*

F E B R U A R Y 5

## Beware of the over-commitment trap.

It's like owning a truck: The week you buy it, everyone and their mother needs help moving.

And you don't want to feel like a bad friend, so you allow yourself become entangled in other people's pointless wars.

No wonder you never execute. You haven't learned to be respectfully discerning about whom you give permission participate in your life.

My mentor Mr. Jenkins taught me to always ask these filtering questions:

1. Is this person asking me to create a future that I'm going to feel obligated to be a part of?
2. Is the level of help this person is asking me to offer commensurate with the type of relationship I have with them?

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If you don't set healthy boundaries for yourself, other people will set them for you.

And then they will violate them.

And then they will tell all their little friends that it's okay to do the same.

All because you never set a precedent of time valuation.

*Are you sacrificing your life by spending too much time being everybody else's dream machine?*

F E B R U A R Y 6

## Beware of the trap of thought.

Reflecting, planning and thinking – when you should be acting, experiencing and learning – is costing you money by the minute.

Enough with the thinking, Napoleon Hill.

It's time to view your enterprise as a decision factory. That's the secret to becoming a great chooser, something I learned from *The Paradox of Choice*:

*"Having high standards; yet giving yourself permission to be satisfied once your experience matches those standards. Otherwise, if you keep looking, you'll always find something better. And the tyranny of small, irrelevant decisions will keep you trapped in thought purgatory."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Constantly searching for perfect solutions leads to frustration, or, worse yet, inaction.

*Are you picking or choosing?*

F E B R U A R Y 7

## Be aware of the cost of commitment.

If you notice your foundation beginning to crumble, don't build anything else on top of it.

The bigger and grander you make it, the sooner it will collapse.

Please. For the love of God. Stop adding more bricks to your life. You're too smart to be that stupid. Defying gravity is one thing – but destroying your health is another.

I learned this lesson the hard way a few years back when my respiratory foundation (literally) collapsed. It's called a *pneumothorax*, or collapsed lung, and it's a fairly common incident among young, tall men in their late twenties.

That's what happens when you don't have a healthy relationship with your breath.

That's what happens when you're working so hard to defy gravity that you completely forget to check to see if there's any oxygen left in your lungs.

Please be careful. Don't become the victim of your own conviction.

Be smarter than I was.

Otherwise the only gravity you'll be defying is the air coming through your chest tube.

*Will your commitment to execution become a detriment to your existence?*

F E B R U A R Y 8

# Bow to the door of next.

The most important word in your executional vocabulary is “next.”

Next fortifies action.

Next symbolizes progress.

Next is the best friend of your business.

Next is the monetizer of momentum.

Next means complacency prevention.

Next means continuous improvement.

Next is the rocket fuel of your career.

Next is the playmate of your professional life.

Next is the fervent architect of creative reinvention.

Next is the critical trigger of entrepreneurial advancement.

Next derives from the German term, *nahisto*, which means, “neighbor.”

Next derives from the Old English term, *niehsta*, which means “nearest.”

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Don't just use the word next – bow to the door of next.

Bow meaning honor. Bow meaning respect. Bow meaning recognize.

Because without incremental progress, there is no incidental profit.

*What is your legacy of taking action?*



F E B R U A R Y 9

## **Brainstorming is the great time-waster.**

You don't need another meeting.

You don't need another conference call.

You don't need to spend another afternoon talking the life out of your idea.

You need to take massive action.

*Today.*

Otherwise you'll get hooked on the addictive power of brainstorming –  
when what you really need is to smoke the sweet cheeba of execution.

*What consumes your time but isn't making you any money?*

FEBRUARY 10

# Breathe help in.

Success never comes unassisted.

Admit that it's okay to ask for help.

It doesn't make you needy, incompetent or in the debt of the helper. Learn to ask for it proactively, accept it gracefully, act upon it swiftly and appreciate it regularly.

It could be as simple as, "David, would you be willing to email me once a week as a gentle probe to keep me on point?"

Or, as complex as, "Wendy, can you offer some advice on how to drag my sorry carcass out of bed every morning instead of lying like a piece of broccoli listening to Howard Stern for three hours?"

Accountability works. Ask for it. Then breathe it in.

*Are you willing to let it be okay that you need other people?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 1

## Breathe through the pain.

During some of the longer postures in yoga, I frequently find myself struggling to finish.

It's amazing how long sixty seconds feels when you're doing a full backbend in hundred-degree heat.

Fortunately, I discovered the secret to finishing. And you can apply this principle on the yoga mat, in your life struggles or to your business ventures:

*Let your body do the one thing it naturally does best: Breathe.*

There's no better way to recenter yourself.

Plus, breathing helps you reignite momentum from a relaxed, non-destructive space.

Sadly, most people lose touch with their breath. Then they clumsily plunge forward from a place of contraction and fear.

No wonder they never finish anything.

*How's your breathing?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 2

# **Build executional capacity into your ideas from the beginning.**

*"It's hard to stay motivated and excited about executing crap. But it's easy if you're changing the world. If you and your team are having a hard time executing, maybe you're working on the wrong thing."*

Guy Kawasaki wrote that on his blog. And the secret to heeding his advice is to run an execution audit at the onset of your endeavors.

Ask your team questions like:

1. How well does our team represent idea people and execution people?
2. If we don't end up taking action on this, will anybody who matters notice?
3. Will the time/money/energy investment required to execute be less, equal or greater to the benefits of executing?

Questions like these save time, save face and save money.

*How are you entering into your project with execution on the brain?*

FEBRUARY 13

## **Build in accountability.**

*"Make shipping an obligation. Ship often. Ship lousy stuff, but ship. Ship constantly."*

Seth Godin wrote that on his blog.

I agree. And the key to heeding his advice is to pair up with a fellow entrepreneur or creative professional. At the end of each day, call, text or email each other with the question:

*"What did you execute today?"*

If you can't come up with an answer, lunch is on you.

Better yet, sign a series of blank checks for each other. And if someone fails to ship, the other person reserves the right to fill in – and cash – that person's check in with any amount he wants.

*Think that would up your execution ratio?*

F E B R U A R Y 1 4

# Capitulation is the enemy of execution.

I'm all for delegation.

But when you deliberately plant your entire idea in the hands of another person, he owns you.

Which makes him the sole shot-caller.

Which means execution just made one hell of a pit stop.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Diversify the baskets you put your eggs in.

That way, if one person moves like molasses, you can reach out to someone who moves like Speedy Gonzalez while you're waiting.

For example, my book production team consists of four people: Jeff for layout, Sue for cover art, Jess for edits and Chris for printing. And after twelve books, I've learned that each person has their own individual pace. Which is fine. I respect that.

So, in order to get the books done in a timely manner, I shotgun the assignments like a golf scramble. Everyone starts at a different time. And that way, my books finish at (roughly) the same place in the process.

Your challenge is to figure out the time sensitivity of the people *you're* working with.

Otherwise deforestation might chop down the sole basket in which all your eggs lie.

Not exactly the kind of execution you had in mind.

*When was the last time you over delegated?*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Today is my birthday. Poinsettias are my favorite.

F E B R U A R Y 1 5

# Ceaselessness is the common constitution of champions.

If you dissect the demeanor of any great champion of sports, music or business – famous or not – here's what you will discover:

*Each individual, from an early age, had something that they never stopped doing.*

Free throws. Scales. Self-promotion. *Whatever.*

That's the definition of "ceaseless."

Without stop or pause. Unending. Incessant.

*What are you prepared to never stop doing?*

F E B R U A R Y 16

## Celebrate quickly and quietly.

Preserving yesterday is fun for about a week.

Eventually, it's time to get back to work. Otherwise you become so addicted to your victory dance that your sore knees atrophy your ability to take action again in the future.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** When you overvalue prior successes, the arrogance of the past comes back to bite you in the ass.

As John Mayer explained during a 2009 interview with *Esquire*:

*"To evolve, you have to dismantle. And that means accepting the idea that nothing you created in the past matters anymore other than it brought you here. You pick up your new marching orders and get to work."*

If you're too removed from action, you'll never be able to see what's wrong.

*Are you sabotaging your own ability to repeat past performance?*



F E B R U A R Y 1 7

## Change your reactions to criticism.

In *The War of Art*, Steven Pressfield suggests that we recognize criticism (especially the envy-driven variety) for what it really is: Supreme compliment.

*"The critic hates most what he wishes he would have done himself if he had the guts."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Next time someone attacks you, smile.

Even if you only smile internally. What matters is that you know you've done your job, and that this comment probably has nothing to do with you.

In fact, consider keeping a Criticism Log. Document daily victories of being hated – even in minor moments – as reminders that you haven't lost your edge.

*What's your definition of (and relationship with) criticism?*

FEBRUARY 18

## Close the execution gap.

Thank God for country music.

Especially Toby Keith's song, "A Little Less Talk And A Lot More Action."

Sing it with me:

*"I was getting kinda tired of her endless chatter. Nothing I could say ever seemed to matter. And I knew somewhere amid all this distraction, was a little less talk and a lot more action."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Too many businesspeople are accustomed to a steady diet of blah blah blah when what they (should) engage in is a daily discipline of go go go.

Even if you have zero competition, at a bare minimum, you're always competing with inertia.

*How will you close the gap?*

F E B R U A R Y 19

## Comfort is rarely part of the equation.

To increase your capacity to execute, it's possible you're going to have to choose an inconvenient lifestyle.

Sorry. It's part of the deal. Waking up at dawn might be a pain in the ass, but it's a pleasure for your bank account.

That's the crucial moment: When discipline trumps desire. As my friend Sam Silverstein explains in *No More Excuses*:

*"An excuse is a story you tell to yourself about yourself. And you always convince yourself to buy that excuse before you try to sell it elsewhere."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Refuse to let your stamina become stifled by your endless excuse barrage.

*How, specifically, did you make yourself uncomfortable yesterday?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 0

## **Commission your inner doodler.**

Twitter founder Jack Dorsey explained in a recent presentation:

*"Start drawing your idea. Get it out of your head and see it from a completely different perspective."*

Even if you suck at drawing.

Even if you're more left-brained than a computer science professor at MIT.

Draw it anyway. Tap into the unused creative faculties collecting cobwebs in the back of your brain. Produce visual understanding by letting the idea hatch before your eyes.

I draw every day of my life and absolutely suck at it.

My promise is that you'll get so jazzed about the organic growth of your idea, that the thought of (not) executing it will give you indigestion.

*What have you drawn today?*

FEBRUARY 21

## Commit to a long-term process of education.

My friend Chad is a movement educator. He once told me:

*"You only age if you choose not to use your body."*

In the same vein (rim shot), you only fade away if you choose not to use, develop and preserve your brain.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Each day, do and document one concrete activity that made you a better thinker. Then, every month, review your log with a friend who's doing the same.

You'll become a smokin' hot piece of brain candy in no time.

*How are you creating an environment where lifelong learning stressed?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 2

## **Commit to being the best.**

Actively seeking reasons for your mediocrity – then defending them to the death with twisted logic – is a one-way ticket to failure.

Instead, think about the one task, that if you could do it exceptionally well, could propel forward in your business.

Then, ask two questions:

1. What is the next step in becoming remarkably proficient in your ability to perform that task?
2. What three people need to experience you performing that task in person?

Average is the enemy.

*Are you spending your time searching for excuses for poor performance, or investing your time in becoming a better performer?*

FEBRUARY 23

## **Complacency is bankruptcy in disguise.**

You've never arrived. You've never "made it." And there is no finish line.

*Ignore these truths at your own peril.*

Or, try this: Don't be self-satisfied with past glory. Get your ass out there again and go make your life stronger.

Because when you receive regular intravenous injections of divine discontent, the money will come. Either that, or your forearm will swell up like a teenage boy who just got an Internet hookup in his bedroom.

*In what three areas of your life are you the most overconfident?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 4

# Complacency is the mistress of inaction.

Declaring victory too soon is an exercise in entrepreneurial foot shooting.

The best policy is to wait till the check clears. Or to hold off until the product is delivered. Or to stand by before you start telling the world about your new website.

Otherwise you look like a putz trying to explain yourself to people when that annoying error 404 page comes up.

Julia Cameron addresses this issue in her *Artist's Way* series:

*"The first rule of magic is self-containment. You must hold your intention within yourself, stoking it with power. Only then will you be able to manifest what you desire."*

I made this mistake several times early in my career. From interviews on major media networks to new book projects, it seemed like the more people I told, the less likely the idea was to come to fruition.

Whoops. Looks like I shot myself in both feet.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Think long and hard before waving your "Mission Accomplished" banner on the poop deck of your career, Dubya.

*What is the cost of inaction?*



FEBRUARY 25

# **Complacency is the great growth-destroyer.**

*"But I don't have time to grow right now."*

Any time I hear somebody say this, I die inside just a little more.

I know the economy sucks.

I know business is slow.

I know times are tough.

But there's never an excuse for not growing.

Every day you need to get stronger in some way.

And the size of the growth is irrelevant. Better to grow microscopically than not at all.

*Where do you need to get out of your own way?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 6

## Conditioning murders efficiency.

Since day one of preschool, we've been indoctrinated to believe that teamwork is the secret. That working together is the answer.

As the motivational poster says, "Together Everybody Achieves More."

No they don't.

In truth, the efficacy of teams is largely a myth. But we've been romanced and seduced into believing that teams are so wonderful, when in fact their power works in reverse.

In a recent issue of *Inc. Magazine*, James Freedman said it best:

*"In many cases, individuals do much better on their own. Our bias toward groups is counterproductive."*

Maybe going it alone isn't such a bad idea after all.

*Are you ready to wake up from the dangerous dreams you've been fed?*

FEBRUARY 27

# Conformity is the stop sign of genius.

Screw the herd.

Tell the status quo to go to hell.

Give yourself permission to not need permission.

And beware of the five most dangerous words in the world:

*"Yeah, but I can't just..."*

Really? You can't? Says who? Can you google that rule?

Because if you can't, it's not a rule – it's a self-imposed limitation that's squelching the dream out of you.

*What could you do – in this moment – that would be the exact opposite of everyone else?*

F E B R U A R Y 2 8

# Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.

Every day.

That's the two-word secret to executing anything.

And it shouldn't even have to be a secret, but I guess not everyone has grasped this concept yet.

For example, when I talk to fellow authors, they're always "working on their next book." But when I ask them the only question that matters – "What did you write today?" – they fumble to give me an answer.

Which means they're not consistent.

Which means they're not executing.

Which means they're going to be buried with their book still inside them.

Tragic.

On the other hand, when I talk to writers who discipline themselves to stick to their writing schedule – every day – the conversation changes.

People actually carry out their ideas. People actually write amazing books. And they also tend to be cooler people to talk to.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Not only is consistency the engine of exquisite execution, it's also the conduit of character.

There is no royal road to greatness except constantly plugging, every day.

FEBRUARY 29

## Consistency is the curriculum of greatness.

Success isn't a function of intelligence, networking, good looks or charm.

You know what really counts? A calculator.

Just kidding. My Grandpa loves that joke. Never gets old.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Only consistency counts. Only the way you structure your day counts. And only the predictable pattern of value-added behavior – as perceived by your customers – counts.

*How much money is your company losing because inconsistency runs rampant?*

**Never allow a  
gloomy reality to  
overshadow the  
possibility of a  
glorious future.**



**Are you frazzled  
but not fried?**

**The reason it's so  
hard to trust the  
process is because  
it's a form of  
surrendering.**



**Are you ready to  
press the pause  
button?**

M A R C H

# Contribution is the great commission.

When you used to go camping as a kid,  
what was the first rule your counselors taught you?

*Leave the campsite better than the way you found it.*

That's contribution. And the same rule applies when you're  
all grown up. Except this time, the campsite is the world.

And what you leave behind depends on how you  
answer the following questions:

**What are you the World Undisputed Heavyweight Champion of?  
What would the world be disappointed to hear you stopped doing?**

Everyone can contribute.

Clarify your contribution – then find a creative way to serve through it.

*What have you been commissioned to contribute?*





MARCH 1

## Constraints kindle execution.

As a writer, my favorite feature of Twitter is the 140-character constraint.

This structural limitation expedites execution in several ways.

With 140 characters, content is easier to manage and deploy.

With 140 characters, creativity and conciseness is challenged.

With 140 characters, you're forced to minimize extraneous clutter.

With 140 characters, writers don't trap themselves the relentless spiral of wanting to add more.

Ultimately, Twitter's character constraint crushes the single biggest barrier to creative execution:

*Staring at a blank page.*

With every tweet you publish, your executional victory bank grows incrementally larger. Then over time, those minor victories accumulate. You start to believe in your ability to ship. And before you know it, you're executing bigger and bigger projects – way more than just 140 characters.

Constraints provide focus, and focus paves the way for taking action.

Learn to love them.

*How are you using structural limitations to execute faster?*

MARCH 2

# Convert inertia into demonstrable forward momentum.

Execution isn't a hobby.

It's an effort. It's an attitude. It's an approach. It's an imperative.

Inertia, on the other hand, is a pervasive, expensive, urgent and real problem – in business and in life.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Moving forward might be hard – but standing still is just plain stupid.

*How will you fight the overwhelming influence of inertia?*

MARCH 3

## **Convert your workspace into a progress-rich environment.**

It's emotionally invigorating to surround yourself with evidence of your achievements.

What's more, keeping past progress in front of your nose stimulates focus – even if it's incremental.

I learned this from *Making Ideas Happen*:

*"As a human being, you are motivated by progress. When you see concrete evidence of progress, you are more inclined to take further action. Surround yourself with it. Celebrate it."*

Come to my office sometime. I'll show you how it's done, son.

*What's on your wall?*

MARCH 4

## Create a lessons-learned manual.

If you can't write about it, you don't know it.  
If you don't write it down, it never happened.  
If you can't find it, you never wrote it down.

Boeing knows this. Their aircraft engineers create lessons learned manuals for documenting and sharing wisdom. It's all part of their commitment to execution and innovation.

However, just because you've logged five hundred hours on a simulator doesn't make you a pilot. You've got to get behind the yoke, and you've got to share what you learned while you were behind it.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Keep a stack of index cards by your bed. Write down one lesson learned each night before you hit the sack.

By the end of the year, that's a lot of lessons.

*What did you write today?*

MARCH 5

## Create a nonstick surface.

When you used to bake cookies with your mom, what was the first step in the process?

*Dust the counter with flour.*

That way, the dough didn't stick.

Same thing goes with self-accountability: If you want to avoid getting stuck in trap of self-employed sluggishness, you need to take measures to create a nonstick surface.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Take short breaks every ninety minutes. This helps your body and mind refuel. Especially if, during your break, you go perpendicular to the task at hand.

For example, to break from writing, I pick up my guitar.

Why? Because after eighteen years of playing music, I don't have to think when I jam. I just plug in and rock out until my ears hurt, the neighbors come banging, or both.

After all, when your occupation is to think for a living, nothing could be healthier for keeping your schedule on task than to give your brain a break.

*Are you punctuating your day to unstick yourself?*

MARCH 6

## Create a sustainable circle of support.

It's called the long haul for a reason.

Whether it's a long-distance relationship, a new career, or an outside-of-work creative pursuit, sticking with anything is never a one-man show. More like a chorus line.

Here are the people you need to keep:

- Family. *Because they aren't going away and they're all you've got.*
- Friends. *Not your stalkers on Facebook – the people you can call at 2am.*
- Partners. *Since they're riding shotgun and they are part of whatever you execute.*
- Mentors. *Who will gladly slap you on the back of the head and put you in your place.*

You can execute all the ideas in the world, but without that support system, you'll have nobody to come running to when the world kicks you in the crotch.

*Who (aren't) you currently surrounding yourself with that can help sustain you?*

MARCH 7

## Create an unfair advantage for yourself.

*"Life isn't fair."*

You've been told this since you were a kid.

I'm here to tell you something different.

Notice:

I'm not suggesting you cheat.

I'm not suggesting you commit a crime.

I'm not suggesting you pump your veins full of steroids.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You can play the "life isn't fair card" and wallow in your self-pity, or make a conscious choice to join forces with the unreasonableness of life.

Just because life isn't fair doesn't mean you have to be.

As long as you're not doing anything illegal, unethical or disrespectful – hitch a ride on the current of unfairness.

*Do you take advantage of your advantage without remorse?*

MARCH 8

# Creativity is only the beginning.

What matters is what you convert your creativity into.

That's the distinction: Creativity is a state of being – innovation denotes consistent action. Both are essential, but the latter is what moves the things you know into the things you do.

It's like those people you meet who constantly (and aggressively) remind you:

*"I'm an idea guy!"*

Kill me now.

Every time I hear that I think, "That's great, Sheila, but have you actually taken action on anything that matters this week?"

Nope. Lots of networking events though!

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stay away from these people.

Even if they're the most creative, artistic geniuses you've ever met. Their unactionable spirit will infiltrate its way into your life and contaminate your ability to execute.

*Do the five people you spend the most time with ever ship?*



MARCH 9

## **Curb your craving for certainty.**

Sure, it would be nice to have firm footing.

But the sooner you learn to live without (always) knowing how, the longer you ultimately last.

As I learned in *The Having of Wonderful Ideas*:

*"We all need adequate time for our confusion if we are to build the breadth and depth that give significance to our knowledge."*

Not knowing rules.

*How much money is your intolerance of ambiguity costing you?*

MARCH 10

## Decide for yourself first.

The world will attempt to superimpose onto you its prefabricated definition what success should be.

Please avert your ears.

Don't become one of those people who give mass consciousness permission to think for them. Otherwise your execution track record will be about as consistent as Shaquille O'Neal's free throw percentage.

Stop listing all the reasons why you should avoid taking a risk. Waiting squanders momentum. And when you let your desires stay sobbing, awaiting your hand to take action upon them, momentum becomes a statistical improbability.

Instead:

Don't wait for instructions.

Don't wait to be rewarded to do it.

Don't wait until you have five years experience.

Just go.

*What are you rationalizing your way out of?*

MARCH 11

## **Decide how much discomfort you can absorb.**

Moving forward, establishing momentum and executing are uncomfortable and inconvenient actions.

But you can't expect to thrive only when things are safely within your comfortable grasp.

All motion carries (some) risk of injury. As Marshall McLuhan wrote in *The Global Village*:

*"Pain is the natural accompaniment to innovation."*

Overcoming inertia is a function of how uncomfortable you're willing to make yourself. Not to the point of hurting your body, obviously. But knowing yourself well enough to recognize your pain threshold.

That's why I love yoga: You stretch yourself (literally) to the point where pain is a possibility, but not a reality.

And that awareness prepares you to handle future discomfort.

*What are you pretending not to be uncomfortable about?*

MARCH 12

# **Decide what are you executing in the name of.**

Whether you're an artist, entrepreneur or non-profit warrior, without a why, the what and the how become irrelevant.

Before you progress any further in your quest, I challenge you to unite with a higher order by thinking these items over:

1. What are you on a mission to eradicate?
2. What were you mandated to cure the world of?
3. What cosmic injustice have you committed to fighting?

That's your currency. Your fuel. Your why.

Root yourself in it. Otherwise your efforts remain hollow and misdirected.

*Why do you want to make meaning in the universe?*

MARCH 13

## Decide who's worth ignoring.

Let's begin with a quick exercise to get you in the right headspace. Start a blank document. Title it, "Don't listen to people who..." List twenty answers to this question.

**FIRST:** It's easier than you think.

**SECOND:** It's more fun when done with a partner.

**THIRD:** It's most profitable when shared with a group.

By making this list, you'll learn that self-confidence means learning who to listen to, whereas arrogance is assuming you don't need to listen to anybody.

*Have you decided whom to ignore?*

MARCH 14

## Dare to shut your ears.

Feedback is enormously profitable, but only when it comes from people who matter.

Otherwise, it's nothing but procrastination in disguise. Just another confusing, unnecessarily discouraging, self-doubt-producing, undue-stress causing waste of energy and tears.

Don't torture yourself over feedback from someone whose opinion doesn't count.

Execution is the byproduct of listening to the right people while ignoring the wrong people. It's about self-trust and healthy impatience.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop exposing yourself to harsh, unsolicited feedback and start trusting your voice.

Demanding excessive reassurance is a one-way ticket to work-life hell.

*Whose advice have you outgrown?*

MARCH 15

## Declare a stern deadline of no more.

The hardest part about writing books is deleting chapters that are brilliant but unnecessary.

After twelve books, I still feel physical pain in my stomach every time I do it. Blech.

But that's the secret: I wouldn't even *have* this many books published at the age of thirty if I trapped myself in the eternal loop of pointless editing like every other author.

Instead, I declare a deadline of no more. For example:

*After the date of June 1, I will not add or subtract anything from this book.*

That's the only way to get it done. That's the only way to ship.

And yes, I find one or two mistakes in every book I write. But, in the words of Larry Winget, bestselling author of more than thirty books:

*"My crap is better than your nothing."*

Not that this book is crap.

But you knew that.

*Are you stalling a product that, by the time it's perfect and ready, some other chump will have already finished, sold and shipped their version of it?*

MARCH 16

## Defer to yourself.

Accept not the prescriptions of the world. Otherwise you allow your life to get eaten up by the incompatible expectations of people who aren't of any consequence to your life.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Flout the rules that govern everybody else's business by permanently deleting the two words from your vocabulary...

*"They say."*

There is no "they."

"They" is a surrogate for owning your own mind.

"They" is just another way of saying, "Baaaahhh!"

"They" is what people say when they're too lazy to find out for themselves.

Stop asking the waitress which steak she likes the best – just order.

Stop reading every cynical online review of the movie – just dive to the theater.

Stop mindlessly swallowing the dogma that's been indoctrinated into the fibers of your being – just go write your own bible.

Ultimately, the safest place to seek security is in the shelter of your own resources.

Just believe that you are enough – and have enough – to make the decision on your own accord.

*Are you your own authority figure?*



MARCH 17

## Defy gravity.

Gravity is a powerful force – sometimes brutal.

And the reality is, it doesn't care about you. It's not interested in your dreams. It's been around the block a few times and it has no intention of slowing down.

But therein lies the weakness of gravity: It also has no intention of speeding up.

And because of that, casual effort isn't sufficient. Whether you're building a business, moving across the country, starting a family or interning for peanuts at the company of your dreams, the six words that matter are:

*Go full time or go home.*

Run headlong into the future with sprinting shoes on, relentlessly refusing to settle for a pale version of what's possible.

Yes, you will get hurt. You will lose money. You will alienate people. And you most certainly will think about quitting at least once a week.

But I believe in you.

Enough assuming innate inadequacy. You are the person who can do this. And if you stand there with stern and uncompromising feet, stark naked to the world, trembling at the possibility of abject failure, and remind people that they will not dull the edges of your enthusiasm, you will defy gravity.

*Ready?*

MARCH 18

## Design your ideal day.

If you don't impose (some) structure into your otherwise chaotic schedule, the entrepreneurial undertow will carry you out to the sharks.

And when I say sharks, I'm referring to the chorus of meaningless distraction, seductive attention magnets and other ruthless villains of your time.

Your challenge is to introduce enough structure to fight that undertow. After all: Routine is healthy. Routine prevents insanity. Routine curtails procrastination. What's more, ritualizing your days prevents you from saying, "Why the hell am I doing this?"

Without such structure, you wind up (artfully) creating constant distraction that prevents you from seeing the pointlessness of your activity.

On the other hand, I'm not a proponent of over scheduling. I've been guilty of this in the past. Ruthlessly regimenting every minute of your day might keep you accountable to yourself, but it also might cause an ulcer.

Your goal is learning to balance structure with spontaneity.

*What's a typical day like for you?*

MARCH 19

## Detection of inertia determines emancipation.

Newton's First Law of Motion defines *inertia* as "preserving in its present state," or "an object in motion stays in motion."

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Figure out what areas of your life are suffering from inertia, and what you can do to alter their trajectory. In order to do so, you have to run an Inertia Index. Spend a few minutes entertaining the following questions:

1. Where do you need to plant the seeds of movement?
2. How could you start your workday practicing your job?
3. How will you quantify the milestones of your progress?
4. How can you keep your momentum going without burning out or getting bored?
5. What one step could you take now to start moving forward to your ideal future?

Remember: Riding a bike downhill doesn't mean you have strong legs.

The sooner you learn where you need to pedal, the sooner you'll be free to get where you need to go.

*How will inertia emancipate you?*

MARCH 20

# Determination alone fails.

Just watch *American Idol*.

Every one of those kids is *determined* to become the next international pop sensation.

Too bad their singing voice sounds like a squirrel having seizure.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Progress is the product of attitude, focus, impatience, imperfection, avoidance and courageous action.

Let's go, Kelly Clarkson. Your hands are tired of being sat on. If you (really) want to move forward:

Stop sleeping in.

Stop wondering how.

Stop listening to idiots.

Stop striving for perfection.

Stop watching *American Idol*.

Stop making so many choices.

If action is eloquence, progress is a standing ovation.

*Are you more than determined?*

MARCH 21

## Develop a relentless bias toward action.

This requires a major attitudinal shift.

Consider these ideas for initiating the change.

**FIRST:** Surround yourself with reminders of the beauty of action. Post sticky notes, messages or signs that read, "Action is eloquence," or "Those who ship, win."

**SECOND:** Surround yourself with people whose bias toward action inspires you. Build edit-ability (not just accountability, but edit-ability) into your relationships. Ask each other what you've finished recently. You could even meet each other every Friday at five with a list of the things you've finished that week.

**THIRD:** Surround yourself with evidence of your achievements. Post your goals where you can see them every day. Then, once you finish, grab a Sharpie and write, "I did it!" atop each one.

*How will you develop an attitude of action?*

MARCH 22

## Develop daily essentials.

Execution comes when you catalogue three highly valuable activities that absolutely need to be accomplished for that day to be considered a success.

I've been logging this metric daily for eight years. It works. And the effectiveness of this practice comes from the small-scale, non-threatening nature of the metrics.

What's more, if you focus on small executorial wins, the larger victories will happen by themselves.

*Are you winning a game that (actually) matters?*

MARCH 23

## Develop deep domain experience.

Meet entrepreneur turned venture capitalist, Mark Suster. A recent post on his blog suggested the following:

*"You never really have a handle on the minute details of the industry until you've lived in it. That's where domain experience comes into play. It brings wisdom and relationships. This gives your business a faster time to market, a better designed product, more knowledge of your customers problems – a higher likelihood of success."*

Obviously you can't change the past. And if you're short on domain experience, try finding someone who's been there. Pursue a mentoring or advisory relationship. Hell, pay them if you have to. Nothing wrong with investing a few thousand bucks in an unfair advantage.

But, don't drown yourself. Suster continues:

*"Too much domain experience has the potential to harm you. And you might become cynical of all the things that can't be done because you've got the scars to prove it."*

It's all about ROE: Return on Experience.

*How will you out experience the competition?*

MARCH 24

# **Develop massive intolerance for the inconsequential.**

Tolerance is bullocks.

Yet another cultural veil that needs to be pulled back.

Naturally, I'm not talking about tolerating people of different cultures.  
That's actually hugely important. Rather, I'm referring to the  
intolerance for:

Delay and opposition.

Non-stop interruptions.

Senseless barriers and constraints.

The need to get approval or permission.

The fairytale that you need to know what you're doing

The illusion that you have to be "amazing" or "experienced" or "ready."

Tolerating any of these things will not bring you closer to your dream.  
Ever.

*What unnecessary are you courageous enough to commit a hate crime  
against?*



MARCH 25

## Detect the tremors.

Like a seismograph that monitors tectonic activity, your goal is to identify the vibrations of approaching loneliness.

Even if they're just minor tremors.

Think of them as an early warning system to take preemptive action against the onslaught of aloneness. Ideally, the secret is to listen to your body. After all, it will never lie to you. It just depends on how you manifest anxiety physiologically.

Do you sweat? Get headaches? Get heartaches? What happens to your body when you realize that you've been stranded at your desk for six hours without a single shred of human interaction?

For me, I experience a steady (but not overwhelming) flood of mental panic. It's miserable but manageable. And most of the time, I can nip it in the bud before it morphs into a full-on freak out.

But it wasn't always that way.

When I first started my company in 2002, I didn't quite have the spiritual constitution to handle such anxiety. That was usually around the time I'd crawl into the fetal position and cry myself to sleep in the corner.

*How will you pinpoint the impending loneliness of being an entrepreneur?*

MARCH 26

## Depth is the greatest of heights.

Think about the last person you stalked.

Oh whatever. Don't tell me you've never gone to a guy's Facebook page (two hours before meeting him in person) and carefully scrutinized each of the three hundred pictures in his photo album.

Don't act like you've never spent your entire lunch hour googling the woman you were going on a date with later that week. Everybody does it.

Admit it: We're all a bunch of stalkers.

But, there's a valuable lesson to be learned: Nobody stalks boring people.

The more depth you have offline, the more interesting you become online. And as long as stalkers keep it in their pants and don't cross any dangerous lines, I say: Stalk away. It's a high compliment.

In fact, I once went on a date with a woman whose mother spent four hours googling me just to decide whether or not she approved of her daughter dating me. Turns out she didn't. Apparently men who "wear nametags everyday" and "build hotel room forts in the Rosemont Days Inn" are "weird" and "should never be trusted."

Whatever. That chick looked like Ron Howard's brother anyway.

The point is: Don't be a flat person. Create a persona worth looking at and listening to. One-dimensional people are about as fascinating as a tube of denture glue.

*Are you worth stalking?*

MARCH 27

## Diminish your unwillingness.

Marathon junkies frequently train in Colorado to practice running at higher altitudes.

This gives them an advantage over the competition when running in, say, Boston, two months later.

But it's not being unfair – it's being geographically strategic. It's training smart. And it's going the extra mile (rim shot) to excel beyond the mediocre masses.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Whether you're an athlete, entrepreneur or artist, you can't just pound the fake pavement on the treadmill in your living room while catching up on season three of *Lost*.

You've got to get out there, practice with distractions and make yourself better.

Even if you have to climb a mountain to do so.

*How are you leaving the pack in your dust?*

MARCH 28

## **Discomfort is the oxygen of growth.**

Comfortable people rarely take action.  
Comfortable people rarely learn lessons.  
Comfortable people rarely stretch their souls.

If you truly want to stimulate the greatest growth possible, you've got to stick yourself out there.

If there's one thing I've learned from wearing a nametag every day, it's that there's direct correlation between how uncomfortable you're willing to make yourself and how exquisitely you make a name for yourself.

*How vulnerable are you willing to make yourself?*

MARCH 29

# **Discomfort is the ultimate activator of action.**

If you're comfortable, I doubt you're moving.

And if you're not moving, I doubt you're making money.

The hard part is, sometimes it takes a swift kick to the crotch to get you off your butt. That's why it's invaluable to surround yourself with people who will consistency challenge, inspire and poke you:

People that will call you out.

People that you can't hide in the presence of.

People that will tell you when you're full of crap.

*Where in your life are you too comfortable?*

MARCH 30

## Displacement is the best sobriety.

If you're currently intoxicated – not from a *substance*, but from a *situation* – get out of town immediately.

Part of executional excellence is pressing the Off Button. Even if it's as simple as driving twenty minutes into the next county. Leave now.

I used to drive across the state line to go to Wal-Mart when I was in college in the middle of the night. Worked every time. Plus going to Wal-Mart at midnight in the middle of Ohio was a shocking window into the human experience. No description needed.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Dislocation creates clarification.

I don't know how. I don't know why. It just does.

Call the office and tell them you're not coming in today. I'm giving you the day off.

See you in aisle ten.

*Where could you go that would sober you up?*

MARCH 31

## Dissatisfaction is the ember of initiative.

Only pissed off people change the world.

Not because they're negative – but because they *notice* a blazing fire deep in the recesses of their hearts that will not extinguish until something changes.

And that doesn't mean they exhaust their entire energy supply sitting at home yelling at the television. Just because you're pissed off doesn't mean you're productive.

Take George Carlin. Now there's a guy who was pissed off. As he told his audience on the album, *You Are All Diseased*:

*"I don't have pet peeves – I have major psychotic breakdowns."*

The difference is, Carlin's dissatisfaction with the world was the motivation he needed to write twenty pages a day for fifty years. Most people don't know that about Carlin – he was a creative machine. That's how he ended upon *The Tonight Show* over a hundred and thirty times. That's how he released twenty-three comedy albums, three best-selling books and fourteen HBO specials.

Because he was pissed off. That was the ember of his initiative.

And it changed the world forever.

Or, at least seven words of the world.

*What injustice did you set out to fight when you first started your business?*

**There are few  
forces that burn  
brighter than a  
human being's  
inherent hunger to  
contribute.**



**What's your  
nametag?**



**Commit to a  
consistency  
of why.**



**Are you fulfilling  
your function?**

APRIL

# Don't lock yourself to how.

*"But I don't know what I'm doing!"*

That's the most common excuse for  
not executing something: Ignorance.

My question is: Since when is knowledge a  
prerequisite for execution?

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Check inside first.

Instead of focusing on how little you know about something; turn  
inward and focus on how important it is to do that something.  
You'll find that "Why?" trumps "How?" every time.

Don't worry: Confusion is healthy.

"How?" will come eventually.

For now, put boot to ass and touch the center of your true intention.

*How much execution have you squandered because you're  
at war with how when you should be in love with why?*



A P R I L 1

## Dissipating yourself in useless activity.

People always seem to make time for what's (not) important to them.

Weird.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop saying yes to everything.

Learn to be discerning.

Not snobby, but discerning. Create an opportunity filter if you have to. Otherwise your agenda will collapse too easily and you'll never take action on anything that counts.

Try canceling your cable. That's what I did. Changed my life.

Although I do kind of miss *Law & Order*.

*Are you a businessperson or a professional volunteer?*

A P R I L 2

# Document as you develop.

When I built NametagTV in 2006, I started from scratch.

I knew nothing about shooting or editing. Nothing about setting up a multimedia studio. And nothing about leveraging video to add value to my clients and grow my business.

Which was fine. Because what I *did* know was that I had a cool, profitable idea that made me want to get out of bed an hour earlier.

I started anyway, with the knowledge that it would take 12-18 months to overcome my learning curve. Which I did. And more importantly, which I documented. Everything I learned, everything I tried and everything I screwed up, I wrote down.

That way, I could combine execution with education.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Ask these three questions to do the same:

1. What did I (just) learn from this experience?
2. What happened to me during this experience?
3. What fundamental principles might be at work here?

Objectively step out of what you're doing and look at your start-up situation from a different plane of consciousness. This turns the learning/doing process into a self-feeding, self-repeating cycle.

Remember: We learn not from our experiences, but from intelligent reflection upon those experiences – plus – consistent documentation thereof.

*What did you learn yesterday?*

A P R I L 3

## **Dominance derives from discomfort.**

To dominate is to grow, and growth is the byproduct of discomfort.

I learned this from my yoga studio. Our instructors constantly remind us that it is possible to simultaneously experience comfort and discomfort through exertion and relaxation.

The cool part is, when you learn to respond instead of react, to breathe into that which makes you uncomfortable – like touching your forehead to your locked knee, for example – you discover a pocket of stillness that supports your posture.

But here's the really cool part: You eventually learn to apply that same principle off the mat.

You practice relaxing into your discomfort during your daily life. You practice responding instead of reacting to what the world hurls at you.

That's what paves the way to dominance.

*Are you at peace with discomfort?*

APRIL 4

## Don't be patient for the wrong reasons.

Although I've been saying that patience can be extremely profitable, four caveats do exist.

**FIRST:** Be careful not to wait so long that it becomes too late to take action. *Patience isn't a virtue if it's really procrastination in disguise.*

**SECOND:** Beware of investing valuable time waiting for something that's never going to get better. *Any number multiplied by zero is still zero.*

**THIRD:** Don't expend all your energy patiently getting better at something that isn't useful. *Getting a tutor so you can earn a degree in philosophy won't make you money.*

**FOURTH:** If being patient is the smart choice for you, do plan to go the whole hog. Going through all the trouble (and time) to get halfway there is a waste.

Something to keep in mind while you're waiting.

*Do you know why you're being so patient?*

APRIL 5

# Don't be stopped by not knowing how.

How is overrated.

How is a dream destroyer.

How is the enemy of progress.

How is the hallmark of hopelessness.

Not that it hurts to know what you're doing once in a while.

If you're a surgeon, you better know how to close sutures.

If you're an architect, you better know how to build a foundation.

If you're an accountant, you better know how to read a balance sheet.

But when the cost of incompetence isn't health, safety, respect, and reputation – or millions of dollars – knowing how isn't necessarily a prerequisite of success.

However, although (initial) success doesn't always require know-how, long-term sustainability is unreachable without it.

Eventually, you're going to have to figure out the how. Because while faking it till you make it is helpful for a while, if you never (actually) get around to making it, you're nothing but a bullshit artist. An entrepreneurial mannequin. Someone who's very successful at looking like she's very successful.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** People who are stopped by not knowing how, rarely execute the what. They're too scared. They're too invested in their egos. They're too susceptible to executorial inertia.

Just for now, forget about how. You have more important things to do.

*What stops you?*

A P R I L 6

## Don't beat yourself up when you fall short.

In your quest to stay accountable to yourself to execute, recognize that you will miss the mark from time to time. Learn to be okay with that. As my yoga instructor constantly reminds us:

*"Try not to pass judgment on yourself. When you interrupt stillness or fall out of posture, just notice it."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Next time resistance gets the best of you – let's say you unexpectedly oversleep till ten on a Tuesday – use that moment as a bell of awareness to send vibrations of self-accountability through your bones.

Instead of smashing your head into the maple bedpost telling yourself how much of a worthless, lazy excuse for an entrepreneur you are, brainstorm how you might be able to recoup that missed time later in the day or week.

Trust me, the bruises aren't worth it. And chicks don't dig scars, no matter what Lance Murdock says.

Instead, ask yourself: Could you have a working lunch? Could you read while you exercise? Could you catch up after dinner instead of watching the three-hour finale of "So You Think You Can Dance?"

Don't be so hard on yourself. It happens.

*Will you be kind to yourself when you fall short?*



APRIL 7

## Don't commit solely to one course of action.

As often as I've stressed that focus is profitable, it's not so when executed at the expense of awareness.

As I learned from Oriah's *The Dance*:

*"Open the fist clenched in wanting and see what you already hold in your hand."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Beware of being too single-minded in your efforts. Otherwise over-focus fuels neglect, and obsession blocks opportunity.

The secret is setting healthy boundaries. For example, let's say you plan to be out of commission for the five hours you are working diligently on your big proposal. Cool. Set an alarm. Have a friend call you. Anything to jolt you out of your flow state.

Ultimately, by establishing a definitive end to your time deep focus, you can switch gears immediately.

Remember: There's nothing wrong with hustling while you wait, just don't lose sight of what you're waiting for.

*Are you fully immersing yourself without coming up for air?*

APRIL 8

# Don't go the extra mile – go the extra marathon.

You've been told to go the extra mile for decades.

Unfortunately, the secret is out. Now everyone goes the extra mile. But back in the day, the extra mile was "rarely crowded."

Now the extra mile it looks like Times Square on New Year's Eve.

Because the extra mile is what's universally expected.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Go the full 26.2.

Then you'll (for sure) be the last man standing.

Just remember to hydrate. It's hot out there today.

*How much service stamina do you have?*

A P R I L 9

## **Don't underestimate the commissionability of confidence.**

Confidence is money.

Because when you believe in your value, they believe in your value. And when they believe in your value, they buy your value.

Your mission is to gain it earlier. Even if you don't have it – invent it.

That's the cool part: When you practice being confident enough, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Which, in turn, becomes a wallet-fulfilling prophecy.

Cha-ching!

*What's your system for bolstering customer confidence?*

APRIL 10

## Duality is the heartbeat of mastery.

In hot yoga, students experience the simultaneous practice of complete relaxation and absolute exertion. It sounds counterintuitive, but you can actually execute both actions in the same posture.

As long as you know how to listen to your body.

For example, *standing bow* posture practices an intense stretch of both arms in opposite directions. But it also requires that you relax your torso into your low back while doing stretching.

That's the duality. And without it, the posture is wrong.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Your business (and your life) manifests this same practice of duality in a number of ways.

For example, as you've been learning, entrepreneurship requires bottomless amounts of patience: *With yourself, with others, with your idea and with the world.* And it's the patience to take the longcut and work your face off.

At the same time, you've also noticed that entrepreneurship also requires massive levels of impatience: *Restless expectation. Not accepting delay or opposition. Raring to go. A constant desire for change and excitement.* And the impatience to "just go," even when you have no idea what the hell you're doing.

Your challenge is to pinpoint, honor and leverage whatever duality exists in your universe. Like your own personal yin-yang. And to simultaneously attend to the opposite parts of the larger whole, knowing that both are required to achieve mastery.

*What dualities do you need to honor in your life and business?*

APRIL 11

## Ego is the cunning concealer of truth.

Maybe Scarecrow was right.

Maybe thinking is overrated and no-brainers are underrated.

Maybe we'd learn a lot more about ourselves if we stopped convincing ourselves that we had all the right answers.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** It's time to think new thoughts, turn off traditions, undo rote behaviors, unzip the ego, uproot self-destructive notions and weigh the truth.

Now, admittedly, ego is simultaneously a tremendous asset and a dangerous liability.

The challenge is to know when to sling it and when to holster it.

*What is your ego preventing you from executing?*

A P R I L 1 2

# **Eloquence is the byproduct of simple.**

Complexity generates contemplation, and contemplation kills sales.

On the other hand, simplicity induces relaxation, and relaxed customers buy.

It's your choice.

Sure, it takes more time, energy and courage to execute something simple. But isn't it all worth it when your idea is so simple that a kindergartner runs home from school to tell their parents about it?

Stop creating riddles that take too long for impatient customers to solve.

*Is your business a friend of simplicity?*

APRIL 13

## Engage small starts.

If you're at a loss for what to do first, learn to ask yourself these three questions:

1. What can you do as a beginning?
2. What small part of this could you start doing right now?
3. What one step could you take – today – to start moving toward to your ideal future?

By achieving small victories first, you create a position of yes. This establishes a proven track record of initiative. Even if it only exists in your mind. Then, that mental state equips you to (eventually) to start something big when the time comes.

Remember: Even if you don't take a shred of action by asking these questions, your awareness will still increase.

And awareness is the gateway to mastery.

*What small start will you execute before lunch today?*

A P R I L 1 4

## **Enlist active and ongoing encouragement from your environment.**

In my office, you can't see the walls.

They're covered (ceiling to floor) with items of motivation:

Pictures of people I love.

Letters from gracious readers.

Testimonials from audience members.

Quotations from songs that shake my soul.

Hatemail from people with too much time on their hands.

Newspaper clippings from articles I've written or been featured in.

A map of the country with a thumbtack on every city I've given speeches in.

This is how I motivate myself each day.

Of course, I'm a visual learner. This might not work for you.

Your mission is to create atmosphere conducive to motivation based on your preferences and style.

Easy way to build an environment conducive to execution.

*How does your home turf subtly kick you in the ass?*



APRIL 15

## Establish metrics that matter.

While facilitating a recent leadership retreat, one of my participants confessed:

*"The other day I cut the grass just to feel like I did something."*

Holy hell. I hereby give you permission to thump my skull with a ball-peen hammer if I ever get that bored.

That's the rub with self-accountability: If you're going to kick your own ass, you better wear a relevant shoe. Otherwise you wind up executing – exquisitely – something inconsequential.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Establish weekly criticals. These are the five key tasks that absolutely need to be executed by the end of the week for that week to be considered a success.

Otherwise you've just wasted seven days of your life.

*What are your metrics that matter?*

APRIL 16

## Establish real-world momentum.

In physics class, you learned that momentum (mass times velocity) means moving without deliberate acceleration.

In short: Moving, but only by using what you already have.

Alex J. Mann, who blogged a series of articles on execution had this to say:

*"Momentum doesn't hit when you first edge off the starting line. But it begins to creep in when you start moving against the wind towards the unknown horizon. This is why momentum is so vital to a solid execution strategy. It proves one thing: that you are capable of getting things done with very little."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Constantly ask the ultimate movement value question.

*Now that I have this, what else does this make possible?*

APRIL 17

## **Evidence of executional deficiency is everywhere.**

I'm not an angry person.

My feathers err on the side of unruffleable.

But I *am* human. I *do* get emotional. And if there's one thing that makes me want to slowly rip each of my toenails off with a needle nose pliers dipped in sulfuric acid, it's people who spend their time flapping their gums instead of shuffling their feet.

To coin a phrase: *The executionally deficient.*

But instead of resorting to self-mutilation (again), I've decided to channel my frustration into something a bit more productive. Like this book. Hope you're enjoying it so far.<sup>2</sup>

Remember: Failure isn't due to a lack of ideas – it's due to a lack of implementation.

*Why aren't you turning your ideas into realities?*

<sup>2</sup> Which reminds me: Happy National Cheeseball Day!

APRIL 18

## Excavate the gold.

Todd Henry, founder of Accidental Creative, is an arms dealer for the creative revolution.

In a recent blog post, he wrote:

*"One of the disciplines we need to learn is extracting truth from emotion. There is a tremendous amount of fear, apprehension and ego-protection that weaves its way into the feedback process; we need to learn to listen beyond the words that are being spoken. In turn, we can be tempted to react strongly in opposition to what we hear. But the truth lies somewhere in the middle."*

I've received my share of hatemail over the years – all for wearing a damn nametag everyday. Interestingly, most of the hatemail messages I've received were sent anonymously. Huh. I guess it's easy to hate from a distance.

Anyway, occasionally a piece of hatemail contains truth. Like the letter I received the week after my website went live from a visitor who complained, "Scott, I clicked on the 'Funny Stores' page of your website, and, those stories aren't funny at all!"

Woops. My bad. I quickly changed the menu item to just "Stories," thanked my reader and got on with my life.

*How will you find (and use) the gold within the grime?*

APRIL 19

## **Execute something worth being criticized.**

If you're not polarizing, you're not monetizing.  
If you're making people react, you're not making a difference.  
If everybody loves what you're doing, you're doing something wrong.

That's your challenge: To execute something worth being criticized.

Otherwise you're boring.  
*Just another slice of average cut from the mediocre multitude.*

Otherwise you're being ignored.  
*Just another non-entity in the infinite grey mass of blah blah blah.*

Otherwise you're going to be forgotten.  
*Just another flash-in-the-pan, all-shtick-no-substance, one-trick-pony.*

Truth is: Criticism isn't something you draw – it's something you earn.  
*How much do you have?*

APRIL 20

# **Execute without remorse.**

You're never fully ready.  
You're never completely done.  
You're never entirely sure of yourself.

What matters, what counts, is that you execute – without remorse – every single day.

As Seneca once observed:

*"There is no person so severely punished as he who subjects himself to the whip of his own remorse."*

Ultimately, execution isn't an action you take once – it's a mindset you maintain for the rest of your career.

*Will you go ship something already?*

A P R I L 21

# Execution is the architect of eminence.

The title of this book also happens to be my mantra:

*"Ideas are free – only execution is priceless."*

Here's how to put this to use today:

**FIRST:** Think on paper immediately. Be impatient.

**SECOND:** Hack the rules. Don't be stopped by not knowing how.

**THIRD:** Fail like you mean it. As long as you learn, it's not a mistake.

Execution, after all, is eloquence. And there are two kinds of people in the world: Those who use their mouths and those who use their feet.

*Are you a talker or a doer?*

APRIL 22

## **Execution is the great qualifier.**

If you're not sure whether or not to trust someone, just ask one question:

*"What measurable success has this person achieved?"*

That should weed out the talkers from the doers.

At the same time, remember that your prospects are probably asking the same question about you. Better be sure to reinforce a positive pattern of execution. To present a timeline of credibility.

Otherwise you'll appear about as qualified as Barack Obama.

*What have you executed this week?*



APRIL 23

## **Exhibit confident uncertainty.**

Learn to thrive in shades of gray.

Believe that your endeavors will be executed, even if you're not sure which course of action needs to be taken.

This activates your self-starting mechanism. Which gives you more room to be wrong. Which makes risk-taking a little less risky.

The only rub is, you have to trust your resources. You have to have confidence in your abilities. And you need to celebrate past instances of those abilities bearing fruit.

Just stay patient. Before you know it, requisite competence will arrive.

And if it doesn't, there's always slave labor. I know a guy.

*What do you have to do today to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow?*

A P R I L 24

## Exorcise falsehoods.

End the barrage of lies.

Be honest with yourself about these three questions:

1. Are you making something useful or just making something?
2. Are you creating problems you don't have yet just to feel in control?
3. Are you wasting your money solving an imaginary problem beautifully?

If so, you may be foreclosing on your own good efforts.

Sure, execution is priceless; but when you're miles away from meaningful work, it's about as valuable as a used MilliVanilli record.

Don't blame it on the rain. This is your fault.

*Does what you're doing – right now – matter?*

APRIL 25

## Expand self-efficacy.

Famed psychologist Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as a belief in our own ability to succeed, and our ability to achieve the goals we set for ourselves.

According to his book *Self-Efficacy*, high levels of self-efficacy result in an ability to view difficult goals as a challenge, whereas people with low self-efficacy would likely view the same goals as being beyond their abilities, and might not even attempt to achieve them.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Get in touch with your resistance.

Know what stops, deflates and derails you. That way, your high resolve will never melt under the heat lamp of temptation.

*How efficacious are you?*

APRIL 26

## Expect to leave people behind.

Even if you love them.  
 Even if you've been friends for years.  
 Even if they didn't do anything to hurt you.

Professionals who surround themselves with other professionals who challenge and inspire them, win.

That means: No amateurs. No hacks. No bloodsuckers. No wannabes. No nevergonnabes. And certainly, no losers who bring drama you don't need.

These individuals need be deleted from your life.

Instead:

Hang with people who are going somewhere – other than the back porch to smoke pot. Hang with people who are making money – not people who want to learn how you make money.

I know it's a hard rope to cut. Personally, I once walked away from an entire group of close friends, cold turkey.

They were busy doing cocaine, and I was busy changing the world.

And while I did suffer a mild panic attack the next day, I got over it. And what's interesting is that none of my old friends ever called to ask where I was.

Instead, I found new, better, smarter and soberer friends who played in the same sandbox as me.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Your career is too important to allow your dreams to be realized at a significantly slower pace because you're too busy looking over your shoulder.

You are the financial average of the five people you surround yourself with most.

*Who do you love that you need to leave behind?*

APRIL 27

# Extend unrestricted mental hospitality to every achievement.

Self-confidence comes from self-evidence.

Personally, I keep a Victory Log. Been making entries every morning since 2002. From profitable business achievements like, “Landed a huge consulting contract!” to smaller personal triumphs like, “Didn’t pass out from massive dehydration in yoga class today.”

Hey man, a win is a win.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** With every execution victory – regardless of size – constantly remind yourself that this is not a trivial accomplishment.

I’m reminded of what Seneca wrote in *Letters to a Stoic*:

*“Call to mind things that you have done that have been upright or courageous; run over in your mind the finest parts that you have played.”*

This provides you with a secure base – a context of sufficiency coupled with an attitude of self-confidence – from which to operate.

That’s how you win, and keep winning.

*What victories did you memorialize today?*

APRIL 28

## Fail like you mean it.

Flawless execution doesn't exist.

Exquisite, yes; flawless, no.

Here's the secret: Make mistakes, make them early, make them quick and make them quietly. Then write down what you learned. Then go teach someone what you learned. And then keep moving.

Period. Amen. Q.E.D.

Without approaching failure this way, you'll get swept away in the undertow of personal drama. Which accomplishes nothing but granting your emotions an all day pass for disturbing your ability to execute.

Remember: Failure is an option – not learning from that failure isn't.

*When was the last time you screwed up royally, and what did you learn from that?*

APRIL 29

## Failure is the destiny of boring.

Nobody buys boring.

Not any more. There are too many choices and too little time. As such: There's a correlation between how successful you are and how boring you are.

Your challenge is to become the most interesting person you know. Which isn't just some vague platitude – you can literally increase your level of interestingness.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Amuse people or lose people.

Choreograph attention. Build curiosity and expectation into everything you do. Position yourself so, moment-to-moment, people want to see what happens next. And finally, be abnormal, yet relevant to humanity. That's how to be more interesting.

Remember: If you want to maximize noticeability and spreadability, you need to create a widening circle of interest around it.

*Are you drowning in a sea of sameness?*

APRIL 30

# **Fake it till you make it, but be sure you eventually get around to (actually) making it.**

Otherwise you're still a faker.

An amateur. A minor leaguer. A greenhorn. A wannabe. A never-gonna-be.

And that's the problem: Some people spend so much time and money and energy faking it that they have no time left to (actually) make it.

Hacks.

*Are you (actually) successful, or just successful at looking like you're successful?*



**Courage comes  
from the paths  
you choose  
not to pursue.**



**What action can  
you avoid this  
week?**

M A Y

# Faith doesn't move mountains, faith is the mountain.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says:

*"Ye of little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

I imagine you've heard that passage before.

But here's my interpretation:

*Faith moves mountains because when you stop believing that you are separate from the mountain, you become the mountain.*

Then all you have to do is move yourself.

Unfortunately, nothing in the world harder to move.

*If you had complete faith in the universe and in your future, what would you do?*



M A Y 1

## Fear of evolution typecasts brands.

Evolve slowly and constantly.  
Evolve regularly and effortlessly.

Sure, your genetic reflex to avoid change will try to kick in. But don't let it. Like Charles Darwin suggested:

*"Take advantage of slight successive variations and advance by the shortest and slowest steps."*

Therefore, flux is equilibrium. Occasional moments of stability are nice, but brands that keep moving keep executing and, therefore, keep winning.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Go stretch yourself. Move mental furniture. Make growth and change a normal part of who you are.

*What decade is your brand still trapped in?*

MAY 2

## Find a way to start small.

If it's gathering dust, it's bleeding money.

Even if you can't go the whole hog immediately, execute a small component of your idea early. You may be pleasantly surprised to find that nobody even notices the minor flaws you're losing sleep over.

And know that the smaller and earlier you do it, the quicker and easier it is to hide your mistakes.

Besides, what's worse? Hitting bumps in the road that project you forward, or going along sailing smoothly without realizing you're actually standing still or going backward?

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Screwing up quietly beats sitting around loudly. As I learned in *The Cult of Done Manifesto*:

*"Failure counts as done, and so do mistakes."*

Just admit it: You're never really ready. Start small and win big.

*Will you let action eclipse excuse?*

MAY 3

## Find the pivot.

In physics, a pivot is the object on which something turns.

Which means the pivot has paramount significance on any given situation.

Especially when it's time to change direction.

Your challenge is twofold: First, locate the pivot as quickly as possible. And second, move along crisply. Then strike out into uncharted territory, springboard into the unknown and navigate like a pro.

Don't worry: Life has a way of giving you just enough to move forward.

Have faith in that, and every step will be a funky adventure.

*How are you increasing circumference of your life?*

MAY 4

## Finished is the new perfect.

Perfect is boring anyway.

That's your next execution lesson: To declare it done, throw your arms up in the air and say, "The hay is in the barn."

Kind of like that night senior year when you were cramming for your calculus exam. And somewhere around midnight while all your friends were getting smashed at Skipper's, you reached the point of diminishing return and said:

*"If I don't know it now, I'll never know it."*

So, you packed up, walked home and got a good night's sleep. Then you went to class the next day and made those derivatives your bitch.

Atta baby.

Remember: You're the only one waiting for you to get everything right.

Eighty percent is enough. Trust your resources. Nobody is going to notice the final twenty anyway.

*Did you postpone (again!) because you're sweating something irrelevant?*

MAY 5

# Finishing is eloquence.

Anybody can start.

Starting costs little money.

Starting involves limited risk.

Starting requires minimal stamina.

But starting isn't how you win.

*You only win when you execute to completion.*

And that's the big problem: Execution is uncomfortable and inconvenient.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Woody Allen was wrong. Eighty percent off life isn't showing up – it's following through.

I know it's inconvenient.

I know it's uncomfortable.

I know it's harder than starting.

But those who follow through, win.

*Will you go finish something already?*

M A Y 6

## **Fish are delicious, but dangerous.**

Give a man a fish and you'll feed him for a day.

Teach a man to fish and he'll never email you again with another pointless, time wasting, boundary-violating, bloodsucking question that you don't have the time or patience to answer for free.

It's all about putting a stake in the ground.

Remember: Boundaries are saviors.

*Do you let people pick your brain or require that they rent your brain?*



MAY 7

# Flex the muscle of why.

Customers buy why – not what or how.

The final product merely gives life to your cause, your mission and your currency.

Sadly, too many entrepreneurs begin with a flawed assumption. They don't know why they're doing what they're doing. Or, they do know why they're doing what they're doing, but it's the wrong why.

Either way, starting with the wrong questions means even the right answers will still steer you in the wrong direction.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Without flexing your why muscle, you set the whole process in motion into the wrong direction. And with every step you take, the finish line fades farther and farther away.

*What's your strategy for keeping your why alive?*

MAY 8

## **Flex the muscle of why – again.**

Readiness comes from knowing why you want what you want.

Without this primary data, your flawed assumptions might set the whole process into motion – misguided motion.

Take running for office, for example. Two approaches: Either you're trying to get a vote, or you're trying to gain a lifetime of support.

Which baseline motivation do you think makes a candidate feel more ready?

Precisely.

On the other hand, if you're not fueled by an honest why – and you're not willing to work like hell to keep your why alive – all the readiness in the world won't camouflage the gaping void of purpose and meaning in your life.

Like you learned on Day 1 of math class: Any number multiplied by zero is still zero.

*Why do you want what you want?*

MAY 9

## Flub fights execution.

Flub is one of my favorite words. It means, “To perform poorly or blunder.”

Now, as fun as *flub* is to say, it’s also the purveyor of piss-poor execution. That’s the problem: Once people fail, they freeze.

Once people see a ghost, they’re always afraid of the dark.

Little do they know that execution is like a motion-activated floodlight – the more you move, the clearer you see.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Mistakes are tranquilizers.

Don’t let yourself become a prisoner of yesterday’s errors.

*Do you listen to the way you talk to yourself when you make mistakes?*

MAY 10

## Focus activates progress.

Throughout your day, beware of the distraction of the next idea.

Shiny object syndrome is executioner of execution and the preventer of progress. Believe it or not, Marcus Aurelius addressed this issue a few thousand years ago in *Meditations*:

*"Give not the strongest foothold to anything else. Nothing will sooner prevent your true spirit from flourishing or be more difficult to root out than the distraction of divided loyalty."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Pick a lane, crank up the Alpine and drop some led on the gas.

Moving forward means investing time in things that matter – not burning time trivially persisting on inconsequential wastes of energy.

*How much time are you wasting (not) focusing on your priorities?*

MAY 11

## **Focus is the solitary suggestor of success.**

Spraying is the enemy.

Take your index finger, cover up the tip of the hose, and shoot out a frozen rope of focused effort.

Otherwise you'll spread yourself too thin, the result of which will be a diffusion of energy investment.

This is not good. William James was right when he said that the art of being wise was the art of knowing what to overlook.

*How much time are you spending on things that diffuse your focus and hamper your goals?*

MAY 12

## Foot service, not lip service.

Winners win through swift action, not swell argument.

And although I hesitate to draw another simplistic, narrow-minded chalk line that divides the entire human race into two convenient categories, what the hell. Here goes nothing. There are two kinds of people in the world:

*People who talk shit, and people who do shit.*

Nouns and verbs. Decide which one you are.

This reminds me of Buckminster Fuller's 1970 book, *I Seem To Be A Verb*:

*"I live on Earth at present, and I don't know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing — a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process — an integral function of the universe."*

Remember: True success is a function of action taking, not promise making.

*Are you investing your time in shuffling your feet or flapping your gums?*

MAY 13

## Forget about your so-called competitors.

Who cares what they're doing now?

Who cares what they're doing next?

Stop obsessing.

Save the time and energy you would have spent worrying about things you can't control and reinvest it in making yourself stronger and smarter. Otherwise, by fixating on someone (or something) beyond your sphere of control, you lose unrecoverable time that could be devoted to becoming uniquely great.

But.

If you remember the credo of Optimists International, you'll be fine:

*"Give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others."*

Richard Connaroe was right: Focus less time making war on the competition and more time making love to the customer.

*When was the last time the competition stayed up all night worrying about you?*

MAY 14

## Gauge readiness internally.

In *Meditations*, Marcus Aurelius wrote the following:

*"Readiness comes from a man's own judgment – not from mere obstinacy."*

Translation: True readiness is felt in your body.

For example, when you think about taking the plunge, do you get short of breath? Does your energy shift? Does your stomach sink?

Listen to your body. It will never lie to you. Whether you're ready (or not ready) your body will let you know. Truth is the only language it knows. Even if it speaks in silence. That's still an answer.

The secret is trusting that you can meet the demands of challenging situations. Knowing in your bones that you can remain flexible enough to handle the unexpected.

*What message is your body leaving you?*



MAY 15

## Get comfortable with the risk of failure.

If you screw up early enough, quickly enough and quietly enough – then make a conscious effort to extract lessons learned from those biffs – only a few people will notice.

That's why mistake is the mentor of man.

The challenge is attending to your failures with a mindset of personal growth, life-long learning and never-ending improvement.

Do this, and disappointment will slowly dissipate.

Do this, and discomfort will become less threatening.

Then, all you have to do is ask the two big questions:

1. Why did the universe want me to make this mistake?
2. What would I have to learn about this mistake to make it no longer a mistake?

Remember: Humans aren't averse to risk – they're averse to loss, which is the result of risk.

*What can you lose today?*

MAY 16

## Get the hay in the barn.

While it's a painful part of the entrepreneurial process, you've got to put a creative stake in the ground. Otherwise you're consigned to a career as a stock boy in the warehouse of inertia.

In a recent blog post, Seth Godin riffed on this very topic:

*"People don't like deadlines because they force us to decide. But they also create forward motion. And they give you the opportunity to beat the rush. They just have a lousy name. Call them live-lines instead. That's what they are."*

Similarly, I teach this same idea to the people in my mentoring program.

Otherwise they keep adding and changing and editing and improving until the day they die. Ugh.

Call it done.

*Why haven't you put it on your calendar yet?*

MAY 17

## **Give away your talent to the market until they're ready to pay for it.**

You can't sit around waiting for your big break – you've got to learn how to manufacture your own big breaks by making yourself more breakable.

Interestingly, the term “break” derives from the Old English *brecan*, which means, “to disclose.” Which means you can't create your own big break if you're not sticking yourself out there.

I know you're hesitant to give it away. I know you need money. But the world must sample your wares. Otherwise you'll be waiting so long that you won't feel like hustling anymore.

Personally, I've given away thousands of free books and hundreds of free speeches.

I don't about you, but I'd rather work for free than not work at all.

*Why are you waiting to get paid for doing something you love?*

MAY 18

## Give your ideas some wheels.

The two best questions to ask the moment after you learn something are:

1. Where can I use this?
2. Now that I have this, what else does this make possible?

These questions help you pinpoint the movement value of your ideas. And the earlier you identify it, the quicker you can convert what-you-now-know into what-you-will-do.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Write those questions on sticky notes and keep them in front of your face regularly.

This helps drive home the concept of movement value and enhances your awareness of how leverage is the ultimate tool for translating what you know into action.

*What's the one question, that if asked consistently, would make the biggest impact on your life?*

MAY 19

## Go back to the future.

In a 2006 issue of *FastCompany*, Marcia Conner wrote:

*"Find the end at least once. By working back from the end, you gain the skills and leeway to forge your own path."*

Imagine what you need to become in order for your goals to manifest. Ask yourself a few Back to the Future Questions like:

1. Looking ahead six months, standing there, what decisions would you make today?
2. What three small acts you could take today to prepare for the life or work that you'd like?
3. What if, overnight, a miracle occurred, and you woke up tomorrow morning and the problem was solved – what would be the first thing you would notice?

By speaking from the future – then looking back to identify the steps that will lead there – you paint a compelling, detailed picture of your dream.

Then all you have to do is make meaningful strides toward it, McFly.

*Are you a time traveler?*

MAY 20

## Go back to the past.

When I wrote my first book at the age of 21, I wasn't ready.  
When I did my first interview on CNN at the age of 22, I wasn't ready.  
When I gave my first paid public speech at the age of 23, I wasn't ready.

But I took massive, forward action anyway. I stopped wondering, "Who's going to let me?" and starting asking, "Who's going to stop me?"

Go back in time. Think back to three situations in which you rallied without being ready. What were you thinking? What attitude did you maintain? What actions did you take?

The point is to find out where the rock created the ripple – then start throwing more rocks.

Every damn day.

*Will your failures become the product of poor planning or timidity to proceed?*

MAY 21

## Go full time.

You're tired of dabbling.

You're sick of being an amateur.

You're ready to go all in and play in the big leagues.

That could only mean one thing: It's time to go full time.

This is the single most important decision you could make as an artist, creative professional or entrepreneur.

Because going full time means no turning back.

Which means committing with both feet.

Which means you're accountable to others.

Which means you're in it for the long haul.

Which means you're accountable to yourself.

Which means you're not screwing around anymore.

Which means publicly (and purposefully) choosing to play big.

Which means you'll need patience, stamina and stick-to-it-ive-ness.

Which means this isn't a hobby, side interest or an extra-curricular activity.

The bad news is: You want so badly to jump off the edge, but sometimes the best you can do is slide down the side of the mountain on your butt.

The good news is: Once you choose to commit with both feet, the world says yes to you. Providence moves to orchestrate the ideal conditions for you to make a name for yourself.

*Are you ready to stop being an amateur?*

MAY 22

## Go it alone.

Thoreau was right:

*"The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready."*

That's the problem with collaboration. Or teams. Or partnerships. Or committees. The more people you have, the longer it takes to move.

Not that you should be opposed to working with others. No man is an island.

But since day one of preschool, we've been indoctrinated to believe that teamwork is the secret. That working together is the answer. This is a force-fed fairytale that's annihilating your ability to take action. And ultimately, this romantic notion of the value of teams is shooting you in the foot.

Remember: He who travels alone travels fastest.

*How much money are you losing by waiting for somebody you don't even like?*



MAY 23

## Go looking for trouble.

Victory goes to the highly imaginative, the infinitely curious and the partially insane.

Be a sponge.

Turn over lots of rocks.

Be a hunter of patterns and explorer of problems.

Become a pillar of curiosity and a ceaseless asker of stupid questions.

Instead of making waves – make a tsunami.

Instead of rocking the boat – capsize that mofo.

These actions will help you figure out what you need to execute.

Just try not to end up in jail. Because unless you're Nelson Mandela, making meaning in the universe is tough to do from a cell.

*What did you disturb this week?*

MAY 24

## Goals drive motivation.

If you don't know where you're going, you'll never get there.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Set goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely, write them out. Carry them in your wallet. Look at them every day. Then make sure everything you're doing throughout the day is aligned with them.

Motivation will occur naturally. By spending your time where it's profitable and learning to say no to things (not) on the way to your dream, you will immediately put yourself at the center of action.

And you will win.

Remember: If you plan to kick your own ass, have the foresight to print a roadmap on the bottom of your shoe.

*How's your vision board doing?*

MAY 25

## Gradual is the great moneymaker.

What's your hurry?

Try getting rich slow. There's a secret most self-help books won't tell you: *Get rich slow.*

After all, things that grow fast are easily destroyed. Might as well take a foundational approach. As my mentor William Jenkins used to tell me:

*"It takes longer to do things the right way. And people do them improperly to do them quickly. But what's the benefit of building a house in six months (that should take a year) if you're just going to tear it down anyway?"*

Hey: If you're willing to practice prodigious patience, you'll get yours.

And it will be worth the wait.

*How patient are you willing to be?*

MAY 26

## **Greatness is the glorious aftermath of hustle.**

Nothing just happens.

Somewhere down the line, somebody hustled.

Interestingly, the word “hustle” comes from the Dutch *hustelen*, which means, “to shake to and fro.” This reminds me of what Wade Boggs declared upon retiring:

*“I played the game one way. I gave it everything I had. It doesn’t take any ability to hustle.”*

Shake to and fro and watch your career get knocked out of the park.

*How much harder are you willing to work?*

MAY 27

## Hack the rules.

Hacking isn't cheating.

In the phenomenal book, *Trust Agents*, authors Brogan and Smith explain the difference:

*"Hacking is about finding alternatives for the traditional uses of a system. It's about modifying the conditions of the system you're in. It's about using a system in a different way than it was designed. And it's about figuring out your strength and applying it to the system of your choice so you position yourself as number one person playing the game in that system."*

Therefore, in the game of life, you have a few options:

1. Change the game so there are no rules.
2. Change the rules so you can win at your own game.
3. Play the game but become the exception to every rule.

And the question to ask when faced with one of these "rules" is:

*"Can this rule be ignored, modified or changed?"*

By doing so, you give yourself permission to refuse to accept your current circumstances. This opens the floodgates to diligent work on creating a new set of circumstances.

Learn the rules. Learn which of the rules are irrelevant. Then hack the hell out of them.

*What could I do in this moment that would be the exact opposite of everyone?*

MAY 28

# **Happiness is the best dividend.**

Happiness isn't your goal.

Contribution is. Validation is. Mattering is.

The cool part is, when you focus your energy on executing those kinds of things first, happiness becomes an inevitable consequence. A byproduct. Not intentional, but incidental.

And it tastes that much sweeter as a result.

Ultimately, happiness isn't the target – happiness is what you get for hitting the target.

*What will make you happy that has nothing to do with ego or image or status?*

MAY 29

## **Haste only makes waste if you believe in waste.**

Which I don't.

The way I see it, nothing is ever wasted. Ever. That's why I keep every idea I have – even the bad ones. Tens of thousands of them.

Therefore, haste is tasty. Like Alicia Keys sings:

*"In the age of love, nothing is wasted."*

Especially if you learn to ask questions like, "What good could come of this?"

Leave the wasting to all those corporate chemical companies. Bloody savages.

*How would your life be different if you never viewed anything as being wasted?*

MAY 30

## **He travels fastest who travels alone.**

Kipling made that statement in 1888.

Over a century later, it still holds true.

Imagine:

When you work alone, you always reach a consensus.

When you work alone, you know when you're not producing.

When you work alone, you take more personal responsibility.

When you work alone, you can't sit idly by as you contribute nothing.

When you work alone, you spend time (actually) thinking and not listening to others' irrelevant, inconsequential and counterproductive thoughts.

I wonder how much faster you would move if you rolled solo.

*Who is holding you back from being best, highest version of yourself?*



MAY 31

## Hesitation hinders execution.

He who hesitates isn't just lost – he's cost.

As in, opportunity cost.

This is a challenging paradigm shift for most of us because we've been conditioned to believe that patience is a virtue – which it is.

But keep in mind: Impatience, when applied consciously, creatively and cautiously, isn't just a virtue – it's a victory. If you wait too long, when the time comes to move, there will be no momentum left to execute.

Ultimately, being impatient is about the willingness to look bad on the road to immortality. The courage to plunge forward planless. And the vulnerability to be an imperfectionist.

*How much money are you losing by being too patient?*

**Exercise proactivity  
in environments  
designed to  
mitigate it.**



**How do you break  
the mold?**

**I don't have a  
career as a writer -  
I have a love affair  
with writing.**



**Are you employed  
or obsessed?**

JUNE

# Hissing is the echo of awesomeness.

Accept the fact that approximately ten percent of the people  
you encounter in life will not like you.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Screw the ten and stick with the ninety.

Pick a side, put a stake in the ground and polarize  
people purposely. And remember that if everyone loves you,  
you're doing something wrong.

Besides, you're nobody until somebody hates you.

At least that's what my parole officer tells me.

*How much hateemail have you received this week?*



JUNE 1

# Hold your own feet to the fire.

You can't beat self-employment.

Working from home.

Working without clothes.

Working your own schedule.

Working the way you want to.

No commute.

No office politics.

No pointless meetings.

No bosses breathing down your neck.<sup>3</sup>

Sounds like a dream job, right?

*Most of the time.*

Except: You're the only person who can hold yourself accountable. And if you don't hold your own feet to the fire – eventually they're going to freeze. And frozen feet don't make money.

The problem with working alone is, it's incredibly easy to think, "Ah, who's gonna care if I don't execute?"

Therefore: This is about discipline. This is about self-motivation. This is about commitment to consistent action.

*Are you taking it?*

<sup>3</sup> Did I mention that I have the greatest job on the planet?

J U N E 2

## How do you talk to yourself when you fail?

Imagine you just screwed the pooch.

Not literally, sicko. I'm talking about failing, along with the silent dialogue you have with yourself when you fail. Instead of whining, "I suck!" start affirming, "Nexttime..."

I started doing this a few years back, and found three key benefits:

**FIRST:** This helps you let go of the past and focus on the future. You can't debate what was.

**SECOND:** Maintaining a nexttime attitude forces you to begin thinking about what you'll do differently. Sure beats becoming paralyzed by your own mistakes and a prisoner of yesterday's errors.

**THIRD:** Nexttime is about (not) overreacting emotionally or being too hard on yourself. Rather, navigating the entrepreneurial waters calmly, objectively and unapologetically.

*Are you willing to increase your dosage of vitamin nexttime?*

JUNE 3

# Humility is the instant relaxer of pretension.

Humility isn't weakness.

Humility opens minds. Humility swallows ego. Humility inspires people.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Learn to lower yourself.

For example, when was the last time you worked on the floor? *Probably never*, right? In fact, the excuses you've given were most likely: "But I'll look dumb." "But the floor is dirty!" "But I'll wrinkle my clothes..." "But I'll get yelled at by my boss!"

Oh no. *God forbid you look silly. Or get your clothes a little dusty.*

Get over it. Working on the floor works. Since I started my company in 2002, I've spent at least some time, every single day, working on the floor.

In so doing, you humble yourself. By working on the ground, you ground yourself. Literally. This modest posture will instill an attitude of appreciation and respect for your creative environment.

Ultimately, by honoring your space, you invite more creative solutions for executing.

*Have you embraced the nature of humility?*

J U N E 4

## Hustle while you wait.

The Seven Dwarfs never had to deal with a recession.

They suggested you whistle while you work. Which is a great philosophy and everything, unless you're not working. *Then what?*

Short answer: Hustle while you wait.

That's what Edison preached and, more importantly, practiced. A thousand patents later, his disciplined work ethic paid off and paid well. That's the tricky part: Executing what matters while awaiting what's coming.

Remember: The strong wait, but the smart hustle while they're waiting.

Leave the whistling to Sneezy.

*How can you be patient and impatient simultaneously?*



JUNE 5

## Hype is the camouflage of quality.

I used to work in the promotions department for a radio station. I'll never forget what my boss told me on the first day of work:

*"When we record a spot for a new movie release, here's the rule: The more promotional crap the production company sends us, the worse the movie probably is."*

He was right.

Box office bombs like *K-PAX*, *Corky Romano* and *Freddy Got Fingered* sent our station truckloads of key chains, t-shirts, posters and other worthless chotchkie compensating for quality.

On the other hand, cinematic classics like *Memento*, *Donnie Darko* and *The Royal Tenenbaums* didn't send a thing. Not even a press release. The quality of those movies spoke for itself.

*Are you talking your ideas into the ground when you should be building your ideas into the sky?*

JUNE 6

## **If everything you've done up until now is just the beginning, what's next?**

Past brought you here. Past made you who you are.

When you start to align your thinking with this truth, a new world of possibilities opens up.

Extend gratitude for – and embrace the value of – everything you've already accomplished.

At the same time, don't overvalue prior successes. Arrogance of the past can come back to bite you in the ass.

*Will you view the past as a crutch or a fulcrum?*

JUNE 7

# **If your hand sucks, don't be resigned to playing the cards you're dealt.**

Be bold – *fold*.

Get up and go play another game.

Quitting is winning in disguise.

Quitting is the constant companion of winners.

Especially if you do so at the right time.

*Are you being fair to yourself by continuing this relationship?*

J U N E 8

## Ignorance is fuel.

In 1946, inventor and businessman Edwin Land took his five year-old daughter to see the Grand Canyon. After snapping the photo, she innocently asked:

*"Daddy, why can't we see the pictures now?"*

A year later, Polaroid introduced the world's first instant camera.

Fifty years later, here's the punch line: Ignorance isn't an excuse – it's a turbo booster. That's the best part. Instead of being paralyzed by not knowing how, you're energized by wondering what if.

Plus, it's a hell of a lot easier to break the limit if you don't know the limit exists. All you have to do is combine ignorance with coachability.

Because while being ignorant is acceptable – staying ignorant isn't.

*Are you smart enough to be dumb?*

J U N E 9

## Ignore feedback from people who don't matter.

I contribute regular columns for a few dozen print and online publications.

Last year, one particular article must have struck a nerve: I received over two thousand reader emails within 48 hours of its publication.

Sweet.

Unfortunately, my writer buzz was severely harshed when my editor forwarded me an email from an upset reader:

*"Scott, this letter came for you from an English professor at Princeton. Apparently, he didn't care for – or approve of – your writing style. Please see the attached three-page critique of your article."*

Imagine that was you. What would you do with that email?

Two words: De-lete.

Don't torture yourself over feedback from someone whose opinions are irrelevant.

Execution is the byproduct of listening to the right people while ignoring the wrong people.

*Who have you stopped listening to?*

J U N E 1 0

# Ignoring feedback is hard.

Still, it takes heaps of self-confidence, plenty of self-control and vast self-knowledge to not listen to someone.

But it sure beats the alternative.

Demanding excessive reassurance is a one-way ticket to executional purgatory. I challenge you to stop exposing yourself to harsh, unsolicited feedback and to start trusting your voice.

Listen to the voices that matter.<sup>4</sup>

*Who's stopping you from executing with irrelevant feedback you didn't ask for?*

<sup>4</sup> Like mine.

J U N E 1 1

# Imitation is the vestibule of failure.

There are no cover bands in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The more imitable you are, the less valuable you are.

That's why imitators never make history – only originators do. You need to honestly ask yourself if the brand you're building is (truly) an amplification of your uniqueness ... *or just an echo of somebody else's marketing.*

If you don't display your own creative originality, your brand will become (yet another) interchangeable mediocrity, fading into the multitude of sameness.

A needle in a stack of needles.

*Are you The Echo or The Origin?*

J U N E 1 2

## **Impatience is the greenlight of greatness.**

Enough limitation-driven self-talk.

Enough lame excuses for why you're not ready.

I've said it before and I'll probably say it again:

*You're never ready.*

And you never will be.

Learn to relax into that realization first.

Next, give yourself permission to plunge into the abyss of ambiguity.

Then, during freefall, trust that you contain a multitude of inner resources that will richly support you.

*What level of greatness are you unable to reach because you're too patient?*



J U N E 1 3

## **Inauthenticity is the great deal-breaker.**

I don't care how smart, good-looking or successful you are.

*If you're bullshitting the world, eventually they're going to smell it.*

Especially if you "try" to be authentic. Doesn't work that way.  
Authenticity is like pregnancy: You either are or you aren't.

Sure, it's not as obvious to onlookers as carrying a child. But time has  
this funny way of either exposing you or extolling your phoniness.

May as well go with the real version of yourself.

*What do you rationalize as authenticity?*

J U N E 1 4

## **Increase your capacity to execute.**

It's nearly halfway through your years.

You know what you need to do.

You know how you need to do it.

You know when you need to start.

But increasing your capacity to execute isn't just about what you do – it's also about what you avoid, what you stop doing and what you stop thinking. As Edison said:

*"Vision without execution is hallucination."*

Which brings me to my updated version of the same maxim:

*Talking smack without doing jack is whack.*

Let's go. The world is standing by to be blown away by you.

*If you watched half as much television, what important thing might you execute?*

J U N E 1 5

## **Inertia injures execution.**

Figure out what areas of your life are suffering from inertia.

A crystal-clear window into this reality is to grab your list of New Years Resolutions from two years ago. Honestly assess which ones have come to fruition, and which ones have fallen by the wayside.

Then, alter your trajectory by planting the seeds of movement.

Here's the easiest way how:

*Wake up one hour earlier.*

That's it. *One hour.* Single greatest piece of advice I ever practiced. And I promise, you'll be amazed at how much momentum that one hour activates for the rest of the day.

It's a surefire strategy for resisting injury by inertia.

*How will inertia boost your ability to execute?*

JUNE 16

# **Inertia is the slaughterhouse of success.**

Jon Kabat-Zinn's book *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, explains this beautifully:

*"If you can make some time early in the day for being, with no agenda, it can change the quality in the rest of your day. By affirming first what is primary in your own being, you get a mindful jump on the whole day and wind up more capable of sensing, appreciating and responding to the bloom of each moment."*

Every day.

That's my two-word answer to most questions.

*How can you arrange your day so you become unstoppable?*

J U N E 1 7

## **Inexperience is the great limit-squasher.**

When you don't know the rules, you won't know when you've broken them.

That's when you end up soaring past everyone else. Because their creativity is confined by self-imposed limitations disguised as "rules."

You, on the other hand, embraced your inexperience and took the plunge clear-eyed and confidently.

And you learned that ignorance isn't just bliss – it's bank.

*If you dreamed in terms of your unrealized potential and not your limitations, how would that change the dream?*

JUNE 18

# Inexperience is the machete of fear.

Why are children more creative than adults?

Because their sense of curiosity and innocence hasn't been suffocated by the wet blanket of adulthood.<sup>5</sup>

Temporarily suspend your adult habit of self-criticism and do it anyway. Write the following five words on a sticky note:

*"Yeah, but I can't just..."*

It's like Jeff Bridges admitted in the movie *Tron*:

*"You keep doing what it looks like you're supposed to be doing – no matter how crazy it sounds."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Innocence and ignorance overcome fear and lead to curiosity, creativity and knowledge.

*Are you willing to look stupid on the road to immortality?*

<sup>5</sup> And because adults are morons.

JUNE 19

# Initiate gravitational order.

*"Motion organizes and creates order. It is by motion that all things tend to their equilibrium and find their place in the universe. And unrelenting motion is what helps conspire towards some unifying geometrical situation."*

That's the Theory of Gravitational Order, as written by my friend Ed Sylvia in his metaphysical masterpiece, *Proving God*.

But here's the really cool part.

If you soften your eyes and re-read Ed's words with an attitude of deep democracy, the Theory of Gravitational Order (also) happens to be the secret to execution excellence, because unrelenting motion is the prerequisite of exquisite execution.

Like Seneca noted:

*"Matter lies inert and inactive, a substance with unlimited potential, but destined to remain idle if no one sets it in motion."*

Make gravitational order part of your world. People will notice.

*How will you initiate the process?*

JUNE 20

# Insanity is the great invitation of innovation.

Revolutionary ideas come from ridiculous questions.

Just ask John Brockman, the editor/publisher of *What's Your Dangerous Idea?* It's one of the coolest, most melon-motivating books I've ever read. Check this out:

*"The history of science is replete with discoveries that were considered socially, morally, or emotionally dangerous in their time. A dangerous idea is an idea you think about (not necessarily one you originated) that is dangerous not because it is assumed to be false, but because it might be true."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If you want to invite innovation into your life, entertain more dangerous ideas.

As the book explained, "'Dangerous' does not mean exciting or bold; it means likely to cause great harm. The most dangerous idea is the only dangerous idea: The idea that ideas can be dangerous."

*Are you willing to go out of mind to go down in history?*



J U N E 21

## **Intentionally surround yourself with obstacles.**

This is how champions challenge themselves to keep their chops up.

It's also good practice in withstanding external pressures that attempt to deter you from your productive path.

I learned this from the United States Tennis Association's Guidebook:

*"Systematically practice with distractions present. Otherwise, training under ideal conditions won't mentally and physically prepare you to cope with unusual events."*

Resistance is healthy. Make friends with it.

*How are you using pushback to strengthen your capacity to execute?*

J U N E 2 2

## **Interruptions are derailments.**

An article in *The New York Times* recently reported that the average employee is interrupted every eleven minutes.

If you do the math, that's forty-three interruptions over the course of an eight hour day.

Are You. Kidding. Me.

No wonder productivity is in the toilet. Thank God I'm self-employed.

What I'd be interested to know is how many of those interruptions were self-inflicted, and how many were legitimate time stoppers.

Because you always have a choice. And as you learned earlier from the wise philosopher, Mr. Miyagi, the best way to block a punch is to not be there.

*Is what you're doing right now consistent with your #1 goal?*

J U N E 2 3

## It is what it is.

No, it isn't.

"It" is what you've chosen it to be.

"It" is what you've assumed you're stuck with.

"It" is what you've allowed to exist in your life.

"It" is what you've given yourself permission to accept.

Screw "it."

I loathe the word "it."

"It" is a personal responsibility dodger.

If you don't like "it," change "it."

*Is it (really) what it is?*

JUNE 24

## It's easy to execute when you know who you are.

And, perhaps more importantly, who you aren't.

Otherwise you wind up selling your soul for a couple thousand bucks and a shiny new iPad.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Physically write out your Personal Constitution.

The word "constitution" derives from the Latin *constitutio*, or, "ordinance."

Your constitution is the composition and condition of your character.

Your constitution is the established arrangement of your non-negotiables.

Your constitution is the description of your decision-making mechanisms.

Your constitution is the system of fundamental values governing your behavior.

Your constitution is the aggregate of personal characteristics comprising your foundation.

The best part is: It's a living document. It's amendable. And as you grow and develop personally and professionally, you reserve the right to modify various elements of your Personal Constitution.

Hell, I've updated mine six times in the past year. But in so doing, I've also upgraded into the best, highest version of myself. Ever.

And it's been like rocket fuel for my ability to execute.

*What are you a living document of?*

J U N E 2 5

## **It's not about avoiding ruts.**

It's about developing the self-awareness to know when you're in a rut, understanding the thinking patterns that got you into it, and then strategizing how to get yourself out of that rut quickly.

It all depends on how you explain the rut to yourself.

And while this process requires a tremendous amount of emotional effort, your willingness to do so will help you bounce back impressively.

*How are you sharpening your rut-fighting skills?*

JUNE 26

## It's not what you do – it's what you avoid.

People frequently ask me how I manage to execute so quickly.

Okay. Here we go. I've been waiting six months to say this:

No meetings. No employees. No interns. No busywork. No filing. No copying. No excuses. No hurdles. No bullshit. No asking permission. No begging for forgiveness. No memos. No status reports. No kids. No television. No surfing the web. No mass media. No coworkers. No putting out fires. No gossip. No worrying. No headaches. No managing people. No walking on eggshells. No task requests. No micromanaging. No useless planning of things that don't matter. No processes to weigh me down and diminish my energy. No waiting for people. No endless list of people trying to reach me. No distractions. No decision-making hierarchy. No distance between the owner and decisions that matter. No awkward staff lunches. No committees. No socializing. No compromising. No doing activities that aren't focused on my #1 goals. No doing activities that don't leverage my gifts. No doing activities that aren't income generating. No office politics. No office. No clothes. No shoes. No commute. No traffic. No interruptions. No paperwork.

After deleting all of that noise, what are you left with?

*Work. That matters.*

Think about it. If that were your daily environment, you'd make ideas happen at an alarming rate too.

Execution isn't about what you do – it's about what you avoid.

*How many of your amazing ideas will never see the light of day because they're gasping for air under the weight of irrelevant time-wasters?*

JUNE 27

## Jealousy is a waste of time.

If someone else executes faster than you, it's not because you're incompetent or complacent – it's because they have more resources at their disposal.

Relax. Stop projecting. Instead, focus on what's standing in the way of accomplishing similar results.

**FIRST:** Creating busywork to avoid the important isn't execution – that's procrastination. *Are you guilty of that?*

**SECOND:** Remaining dangerously committed to not losing money is the enemy of execution. *How are you in that department?*

Be very careful about the expectations you set for yourself.

*Are you using your abilities constructively, or is your drive and ambition directed to unproductive and purely self-seeking channels?*

J U N E 28

## Keep moving until the right action arises.

Otherwise perfectionism will insist you wait for something that never comes.

For example, my morning ritual as a writer is to spend twenty minutes dumping, puking and emptying my mind on paper before I do anything else.

No deleting, no editing and no thinking.

Most of what I write is complete and utter garbage with occasional spacklings of nonsensical drivel. The cool part is, once I've cleared away the crap, my best, highest, bloodiest and most creative ideas come to the surface. It just takes a while.

Kind of like drawing a bath: The faucet defaults to cold for a few minutes before the hot water comes out.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Find your bathtub and go there daily.

*Where can you keep moving (while overlooking quality) until the right action arises?*



J U N E 2 9

## Kick your own ass.

I'm not a motivational speaker.

The only person that can motivate you is yourself.

Sure, outside influences are helpful. They can educate you into awareness. They can disturb you into discomfort. They can inspire you into excitement.

But in the end, the onus is on you. Motivation lies within.

Buddha had it right:

*"Be a light unto yourself."*

Start kicking your own ass today.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go back to my van down by the river.

*What's your secret of self-motivation?*

JUNE 30

## Know that success alone is not enough to anchor you.

Prosperity is the leading perpetrator of inertia.

That's the problem with winning: It breeds complacency and dampens interest in innovative renewal.

Beware of the arrogance of success. Otherwise you'll end up a victim of your victories, blinded by the bright light of your achievements, sitting on your butt in a blaze of self-satisfied glory.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Build forward momentum.

Like Josh Waitzkin's philosophy in *The Art of Learning*:

*"Make losing part of your regular experience."*

That way you're grounded in reality. Unlike our current educational system, which deludes kids into believing that "there are no losers."

Bullshit. Losing is part of life, and it needs to be part of your life too. Otherwise you're in for a rude awakening the day you graduate.

*When was the last time you were the loser?*

**Heroism is the  
ancestor of  
generosity.**



**What's your game  
plan for giving  
yourself away to  
the people who  
matter?**

JULY

# Later is the white lie of procrastination.

Later never comes. Ever.

Your ego just convinces you that it does.

That way you don't have to take any personal responsibility,  
nor feel guilty for procrastinating.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Write the word "later" on a sticky note.  
Then draw a big X through it. Look at it every day.

That should help eliminate that word from your vocabulary.

*How much execution is procrastination costing you?*



JULY 1

## Leap and the net will appear.

It's impossible to make progress if your ego is too invested in trying to define what progress looks like.

Just start moving. Let your feet do the talking. Progress will define itself for you.

Otherwise you'll prematurely commit to a false definition of advancement. And that assumption will function as an arrogant clamp that closes you off to potential growth opportunities.

I'm reminded of *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade*. In the final scene, we see that only when Indy has courage (and faith!) does the path appear before his feet. And the cool part is, when he looks back, the path was there the whole time.

He just wasn't tuned into that frequency yet.

*Are you willing to close your eyes, extend your leg and breathe deeply into the next terrifying step?*

JULY 2

## Learn the chords.

In a 2008 episode of HBO's *Real Time*, Bill Maher ranted:

*"When did Americans become the 'Something for Nothings'? When did we get this lotto mentality that our only chance for success was to be plucked from obscurity? Too many people get a lot for doing nothing – from models to Wall Street. And these ciphers aren't reviled or dismissed; they're adored for it. Maybe that's what leads to a Guitar Hero Culture – everybody wants to be a rockstar but nobody wants to learn the chords."*

Because of our hyperspeed, instant-gratification, A.D.D. society, people naturally assume shortcuts aren't just the answer – but that they're norm too.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** True champions take the longcut.

I challenge you to actually learn the chords.

Even if it's just G, C and D. Hell, those are the only three you need anyway.

*How patient can you afford to be?*

JULY 3

# Learn the minimum amount you need to know for now.

If you waited until you fully knew what you were doing – and, therefore, felt fully ready to do it – you’d never make it out of your garage and into the world.

That’s when overlearning becomes a trap. An infinite regression.

Like the cartoon character that keeps taking cookies off the pile – but the pile never gets any smaller. Ever notice that? It’s like the cookies (appear) to magically refill themselves. When you’re a kid, you think it really *is* magic; when, in reality, it’s just laziness on the part of the illustrator.

As an entrepreneur, here’s why that example is relevant: Your to-do list has no intention of getting any smaller either. Parkinson’s Law proves that, like the cookies, your pile of stuff to do and things to learn will always refill itself.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Don’t kill yourself learning how to do all fifty steps right away. It’s a terrible investment of time and energy.

What’s more, by the time you realize that you only (actually) needed to know the first three steps to get it done – your stamina will be as depleted as a newlywed on day six of the honeymoon.

Just do the minimum and move on.

*How many of your competitors are zooming past your vehicle of puttering perfectionism?*

JULY 4

## **Learn to balance total relaxation and complete exertion.**

Just like in yoga, striking the balance between relaxation and exertion equips you to drop deeper into the posture.

Maybe you're starting a business. Or creating an art piece. Or beginning a new project at work.

The same principle applies: Relax and exert simultaneously. Learn to ask yourself:

*"What unused, underleveraged component of this process can I engage while waiting for the paint to dry elsewhere?"*

Ultimately, this form of hustling starts with an attitudinal shift from effectiveness to efficiency.

*Are you willing to remain patient in one arena while relishing impatience in another?*



JULY 5

## Learn to dislike anything that causes delay.

Delay is injustice.

Especially when you're changing the world. Which I imagine you are.

The trick is to (either) discard anything that looks like a delay before it consumes your clock, or to plan for delay by executing multiple projects simultaneously. For example, I have writer colleagues who stalemate themselves by only working on one project at a time.

*"Well, I haven't gotten much writing done this month since my new book is being edited..."*

Why aren't you working on your next book in limbo? Do you think your current book is going to get jealous? Books don't have feelings – they have ink. And the opposite of impatience isn't patience – it's idleness.

Get in the habit of asking yourself:

*"What essential tasks can I accomplish while I'm waiting?"*

Soon, the only delays you'll experience are the long lines at the bank when you're depositing your enormous checks.

*How will you leverage wait time to take massive, productive and immediate action?*

JULY 6

## Learn to trust your voice.

When I started my career as a speaker, I used to collect evaluations at the end of my presentations.

The problem was, I'd receive two hundred glowing reviews, and one crappy critique.

Which one would you focus on?

Of course: The negative one. Because they always weigh on your heart the heaviest. Often to the point of obsessive compulsiveness. Meanwhile, all your positive feedback becomes overshadowed.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Resist the powerful pull of negative feedback. It drags you away from positive.

Trash the evaluations. Learn to trust your inner judge. Decide for yourself how well you did and let the rest go. All those negative reviews will do is bring you down to an annoyed, depressed version of yourself.

This reminds me of a speech I gave in 2006 that received horrible evaluations across the board. Except for Jody. She loved the program. So much so that she booked me (four years later!) for a gig in South Korea where I spoke to three thousand people.

I guess bombing is relative. Maybe pleasing the people who pay is what matters.

*Are you immobilized by unsolicited opinions that don't count?*

JULY 7

## Less talkie, more walkie.

When I started my publishing and consulting business in 2002, my friend Kate offered me the best piece of advice a writer could hear:

*“Stop planning and just write!”*

Well then. I didn’t realize it was that simple.

But Kate was right. I started to (slowly) learn that great authors don’t “plan” what they’re going to write – they simply show up at the page every morning and listen for what wants to be written.

That’s all creativity is anyway: Active listening.

What’s more, the more you plan, the harder it becomes to invite healthy derailments along the way. And that’s how you miss unlabeled opportunities to grow: When you’re too busy managing the stress of planning to experience the benefits of executing.

Don’t close yourself off by making gods out of your plans.

Learn to trust whatever surfaces.

*What is planning getting in the way of?*

JULY 8

# Limitation is the springboard to completion.

The word “finish” comes from the Latin *finire*, which means, “To set boundaries.”

Call it a deadline. Call it a limit. Whatever floats your creative boat. The point is to have a definite moment when you give yourself a swift kick in the ass and declare, “The hay is in the barn.”

Otherwise the aforementioned Parkinson’s Law – that work expands to fill the amount of time given to accomplish it – will eat you (and your idea) alive.

*How much longer are you going to wait before shipping something that’s never going to be perfect anyway?*

JULY 9

## Listen smarter.

The biggest secret to moving forward is closing your ears to people whose toxic noise is holding you back.

Don't listen to people who nastily try to induce insecurity in you.

Don't listen to people who put a damper on your natural versatility.

Don't listen to people who did something once and think they know everything about it.

Don't listen to people whose imagination can't encompass what it is that you want to do.

People like this undermine your execution.

Instead, learn to listen to people whose opinions are relevant. Surround yourself with a trusted team of life-enhancing high grade people. Spend your time with individuals who are examples of the way you want to live.

Growing bigger ears, after all, means growing more mature ears.

*Are you listening to people who mindlessly judge you or compassionately honor your perspective?*

JULY 10

## Locate your compass for finding what matters.

Then, invest meaning there. You can decide on details later.

For now, just go. Be intelligently impatient. Even when it seems senseless to others. Even when mistakes are inevitable. Don't let yourself get lost in what doesn't count.

Nothing threatens your bottom line more than a preoccupation with the irrelevant. The secret is to constantly ask yourself:

*"Ten years from now, what will I wish I had spent more time doing today?"*

Remember: Just because you work (diligently) on something doesn't necessarily mean you're going to change anything.

*Are you creating things to do – right now – to avoid the important?*

JULY 11

## Loosen your grip on life.

One of the reasons you're not making enough meaning in the universe is because you're blinded by the illusion that you control it.

You don't. You can only respond to it attractively. The hard part is letting go of your need to run the show. Consider auditing your control tendencies as follows.

**FIRST:** Calculate how much time and energy you're wasting on things over which you have absolutely zero control. Then reprioritize.

**SECOND:** When circumstances are beyond your control, choose to experience them differently.

**THIRD:** If things you can't control are controlling your life, discover what about your situation *is* within your control – that you can realistically change – and change that.

Remember: The minute you stop trying to control life and start allowing it to flow abundantly through you, meaning will make itself.

*Do you actually think you can go on controlling life indefinitely?*

JULY 12

## Loudness is the irrefutable indicator of weakness.

Powerful people don't scream. And a strong falcon hides its claws.

Denzel Washington hit this point in *American Gangster*:

*"The loudest one in the room is the weakest one in the room."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Next time you attend a networking event; take note of the loudest (and quietest) people in the room. Notice what patterns emerge.

Remember: If you can feel the bass of someone's car stereo from three blocks away – in your scrotum – odds are, the driver of that car is about as strong as the Detroit Lions defense.

*What does your decibel level say about your strength level?*



J U L Y 13

## Love the haters.

Here's my favorite quotation by Nietzsche:

*"And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who couldn't hear the music."*

Next time people give you shit for being crazy, dust 'em off. Don't let the bastards grind you down. Instead, be grateful for their challenge to your commitment to craziness. And understand that they can't hear the music you hear, nor will they ever hear the music you hear.

Learn to be okay with that.

Maintain this attitude throughout the feedback process, and you'll make it out alive.

*How will you use the haters to fuel your fire of insanity?*

JULY 14

## Lower the threat level.

Nobody's asking you to finish and ship the whole thing today. Or even tomorrow.

Instead, consider pulling a partial. Ask yourself:

*What is an easy, inconsequential version of this scary action I could take now?*

For example, let's say you're not ready to publish your (entire) book yet. No sweat. What if you posted a new chapter each week on your blog? Taking small action like this makes it significantly safer – and substantially easier – to convert your internal efforts into outward motion.

And if you do it enough, you'll either get the whole thing done incrementally, or sustain enough small victories to pull the trigger when the time is right.

Not perfect, but right.

*What other risky (but reasonable) baby steps can you take today to move forward?*

JULY 15

## Lower your expectations.

Never execute as if you're going to get it right on the first try.

You won't. Nobody does.

What's important is that you reflect on your experience, document your reflections and then internalize those lessons so you don't screw up as badly next time.

Otherwise you'll continue to let yourself down.

Which murders your confidence.

Which prevents you from taking positive action in the future.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** When you expect nothing, failure is impossible.

*Is your addiction to perfection adding undue pressure that nobody is going to notice anyway?*

JULY 16

## **Maintain alignment, or risk wasting your energy.**

My friend Jim writes about this in *Personal Brilliance*:

*"Pursuing a goal that's in conflict with your value system is kind of like trying to squeeze your feet into shoes that are a size too small."*

To prevent this from happening to you, I suggest creating a governing document for daily decision-making. This exercise changed my life – and my business – forever.

And the secret behind it is, when you convey a thorough understanding of yourself, create a good working model of your own identity and maintain consistency of your actions, moving forward becomes substantially easier.

After all, it's a hell of a lot easier to execute when you know how you make decisions.

*Have you considered how you decide?*

JULY 17

# **Maintenance of momentum monetizes message.**

Just do something. Anything.

Action stimulates forward momentum.

Even when progress is minimal.

Even when you have no idea what the hell you're doing.

Just keep moving.

Think of entrepreneurship as crossing a minefield: The most dangerous choice is to just freeze; the safest choice is to keep moving.

*How are you keeping your momentum going?*

JULY 18

## Make a public and purposeful choice to play big.

I started wearing a nametag twenty-four seven in 2000.

I started my career as a writer, speaker and entrepreneur in 2002.

But my company didn't start to see profit until 2005.

Why?

Well, success does take time. You'd be hard pressed to find a wealthy entrepreneur to disprove that argument.

But what's really spooky is that the year I finally started making real money – and, more importantly, making real meaning in the universe – was the same year I finally sacked up and got the nametag tattooed on my chest.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** When you publicize your willingness to commit with both feet – that is, to commit enough so you can't turn back – providence will move to orchestrate the perfect conditions.

At that point, executing what matters will be an unavoidable result. And people won't just pay attention – they'll pay money.

*Is your commitment unquestionable?*

JULY 19

## **Make progress by making peace with inadequacy.**

Progress is a form of accepting.

Examples:

Accept that you might fail.

Accept that you're never really ready.

Accept that you don't need to know how.

Accept that you don't need a complete script to start shooting.

The sooner you recognize that you're the only one waiting for you to get everything right, the sooner you can move forward.

*What is your bottomless need for perfection preventing you from achieving?*

JULY 20

## **Making decisions doesn't mean you've done anything.**

Decisions merely activate the action process.

The secret is writing the proper plan to implement the changes in a timely manner. And then, living with consequences – good or bad.

For example, you might try the approach I take with my mentoring clients. At the end of each conversation, I refuse to adjourn until they make a list of the first three things they are going to go do immediately after the conversation is over.

This works well with a partner, group – even with yourself. The key is to write it down, put a date on it, and maybe even share it with someone else for accountability purposes.

Anything that activates the driving force.

*What are you allowing to be an acceptable substitute for action?*



J U L Y 2 1

# **Matchlessness is a function of relentlessness.**

*Bound. Determined. Dogged. Dead set. Ferocious. Fierce. Inexorable. Ruthless.  
Unappeasable. Uncompromising. Unflinching. Unstoppable. Unyielding.*

Get the point?

Pick an adjective and make the choice to go the distance.

And when you come out on the other side, caked in sweat and dirt and blood, you'll be the last one standing.

Game. Set. Match.

Grab a Gatorade, take your silver cup and enjoy the applause.

*What are you the World Heavyweight Champion of?*

JULY 22

# **Mattering is the best marketing.**

Mattering means people's lives are significantly better because they know you.

Mattering means the energy in the room rises to a more beautiful level when you walk into it.

Mattering means what you do solves a pervasive, expensive and urgent problem for people.

Mattering means complete strangers email you out of the blue – not to tell you how great you are – but to tell you how their world has improved because you're a part of it.

That's what mattering means.

And the best part is: People who matter and don't have to splatter their advertisements all around town.

*Do you?*

JULY 23

## Maybe is the discharge of amateurism.

*Maybe I'll do this. Maybe I'll say this. Maybe I'll write this. Maybe I'll become this.*

No, you won't – maybes are lies. If you keep saying "maybe," then you "may be" a putz.

Come on. It's time to go pro. To go full time. To go all out.

**FIRST:** Make a list of ten actions you can take this week toward your ideal future.

**SECOND:** Send emails with that list to three people you trust that will keep you accountable. Tell them to call you on Sunday night.

**THIRD:** If you haven't achieved at least five items on your list, agree that you'll buy each of them lunch.

"Maybe" that will make a difference.

*What are you insufficiently committed to?*

J U L Y 24

## Maybe not.

If you don't say, "I will," you won't.

If you don't say, "I choose to be," you aren't.

That's how powerful language is.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Write the word "maybe" on a pad of sticky notes. Then draw a big fat "X" through each one. Then post them all around your office.

Soon enough, that word will be permanently deleted from your vocabulary.

And that's when your pattern of positive execution will begin to manifest.

You're welcome.

*What are the components of your success vocabulary?*

J U L Y 2 5

# Mediocrity is the great deception.

I hate to admit it, but sometimes mediocrity rises to the top.

Unfortunately, you can suck and still be rehired. You can be average and still be bought. Not very often, but frequently enough to annoy the hell out of you. Especially when your competitors are the ones whose mediocrity is taking the lead.

Therefore, being mediocre is deceptive inasmuch as it makes you contemplate whether or not to lower yourself to that level.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Don't be seduced by the comfort of average.

Be ridiculously patient. Because mediocrity, while it may rise to the top initially, will eventually crumble underneath the weight of your awesomeness.

*Are you willing to fly standby while the weak weed themselves out?*

JULY 26

## Mind over mattress.

Lying down will not bring thee forward.

Here's why waking up earlier works:

You'll get more done.

You'll avoid having to rush.

You'll prevent the need to launch right into your daily tasks.

You'll activate a sense of momentum that will set the rest of the day into productive motion.

Try it for a month and see how easy it is to take action on what matters.

*What time did you get up today?*

JULY 27

## Mistake is the mentor of man.

First of all, they're not mistakes – they're lessons. Catalysts.

Practice attending to your errors with a mindset of personal growth, life-long learning and never-ending improvement. By approaching failure with this attitude, disappointment will slowly dissipate.

And listen to the way you speak to yourself when you bomb. Instead of berating yourself, try asking questions like:

1. Is this a new mistake or repeat mistake?
2. Why did the universe want me to make this mistake?
3. How many different ways can I embrace, incorporate and ingeniously leverage this mistake in my life?

*How are you exponentially growing from your screw-ups?*

J U L Y 28

## Mistaking knowledge for wisdom.

I will now draw another simplistic, narrow-minded chalk line that divides the entire human race into two convenient categories.

There are two kinds of people in the world:

*Those who take the tour, and those who get a guest pass.*

Which one are you?

Look: Reading a thousand books might make you an expert, but that doesn't change the fact that you (still) haven't executed anything. Learning (i.e., reading books) builds knowledge, but doing (i.e., taking action) builds wisdom.

As Henry Rollins says:

*"Knowledge without mileage is bullshit."*

Ultimately, filling yourself up with irrelevant knowledge is akin to eating an entire can of Texas BBQ Pringles: They taste great, they fill you up, but their nutritional output isn't the worth the time investment or the orange stains on your fingers.

*What percentage of your brilliant mental effort is invested in the immaterial?*



JULY 29

## Mobilize your resources.

You can't just man the workbench and crank out a bunch of cool inventions all day.

You have to test your ideas, blow a few things up and keep plugging away. You need perfect venues (online, in person, whatever) for testing the waters with new ideas.

The only problem is, marketplaces have historically rewarded expertise. And as a result, we've been deluded into thinking that being clever is more important than taking action.

Yeah no.

Out-executing always trumps out-thinking. Don't let your mountain of data remain merely an anthology of good intentions that never drive action.

*Where is your most fertile idea testing ground?*

JULY 30

## Momentary cracks in your resolve are inevitable.

You can't build immunity against life's sorrows. You can't outsmart getting hurt.

You can, however, expand your sense of humor proportionate to the situation.

That's what my friend Rusty does. As a lifelong native of Biloxi, his philosophy toward the hurricane and oil disasters always remains the same. Framed on his houseboat is a picture that reads:

*"Attitude is the difference between an experience and an ordeal."*

After all, crying a river never takes you to the other side of the river – it just makes your shirt wet and annoys the people around you.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Be persistence personified.

Pain, according to the aforementioned Henry Rollins, is nothing but an invitation to excel.

*Will you meet misfortune with groans and tears or with nods and inhales?*

JULY 31

## More feedback doesn't always equal better performance.

I recently hosted an entrepreneur workshop Florida. During the first module, I instructed the group to write down three questions they asked themselves every day.

Next, when we scattered the index cards across the floor, one question in particular caught my attention:

*"What if my boss is right about me?"*

Jesus.

Silence fell across the room. And the young woman to my left, Ashley, sheepishly said, "Um, that was mine."

Turns out she worked for a company that, until recently, she loved. But when her new manager took the reins, everything changed.

"This bully of a boss gives me non-stop feedback – most of which is negative and nit-picky," Ashley explained. "And that does nothing but cause me stress and make me second guess my performance."

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Micro-managing insecure employees with too much feedback has an adverse effect on job performance.

If you find yourself in a situation like Ashley's, speak up early. Otherwise you might convince yourself that your boss is right about you – even if she's not.

*What one person in your life gives you too much feedback?*

**Kick your  
addiction to  
terminal certainty.  
You'll walk your  
truth in no time.**



**Are you focusing  
on being right or  
being real?**

**Committing  
to yourself  
unquestionably is  
not a selfish act.**



**How high are you  
on your own list?**

AUGUST

# Most people will wait until they see you in action to believe you.

Fine. Let them wait.

The longer they wait, the stronger you'll be  
when they finally catch a glimpse.

And the best part is, when your visible velocity alters people's pulses,  
they'll wonder why they didn't believe in you in the first place.

*Chumps.*

Take action immediately, but stick around long enough  
until the laggards come to their senses.

*If your life depended on taking action,  
what would you do differently?*



AUGUST 1

## More people equal less progress.

In a 2009 issue of *Machine Design*, editorialist Leland E. Teschler explained:

*"Development teams are often an obstacle to creativity rather than a vehicle for truly elegant solutions. Many team members work at cross-purposes. That's why throwing more people at a project frequently slows it down rather than speeds its completion."*

I agree. *Productivity, schmoductivity*. As I learned in the hysterical book, *I Hate People*, even studies from a century ago prove that individual productivity declines as teams expand.

It's an inverse relationship, and it's devastating to your execution ratio.

*Who is blocking your progress?*

AUGUST 2

# Negativity sucks – but silence sucks money out of your bank account.

Oscar Wilde was right:

*“The only thing worse than being talked about – is not being talked about.”*

I’d rather have my readers say that my books are drivel-filled hamster terds than say nothing at all.

I’d rather my audience members tell me I was the worst speaker on the planet than sit there for an hour sexting their boyfriends.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Disagreement and doubt is a form of engagement. It means people heard you, and that’s what matters.

Like Counting Crows’ Adam Duritz once told a *Rolling Stone* interviewer:

*“Happiness would be nice. Sadness would suck. But insignificance is the worst thing of all.”*

Next time something you execute gets beaned, consider it a victory. Better to be impugned than to be ignored.

*Are you earning criticism or hearing crickets?*



AUGUST 3

## Networking is overrated.

Attending lunches, conferences and coffee meetings is a great way to meet people – but it's also a great way to avoid work.

Not that face time isn't valuable. But don't overlook the importance of workbench time.

Be careful not to get sucked into the vortex of online connecting. Social media is great for guzzling your time, feeding your ego, finding mindless entertainment, causing additional stress in your life that you don't need, helping you contribute more unoriginal thinking to the echo chamber, and allowing you to participate in (yet another) online pissing contest.

But when it comes to execution, social media is largely a distraction.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop playing dress up and go create something. Stop schmoozing and start shipping.

*Are you too busy connecting with people who don't matter to execute stuff that does matter?*

AUGUST 4

## **Never underestimate the infiltratability of negativity.**

Pessimism is the great energy drainer.

No matter how positive you are, if you're exposed to too many toxic attitudes for too long, they'll eventually seep into the forefront of your consciousness. And your life will suffer, whether you realize it or not.

Life's too short to surround yourself with people who don't challenge and inspire you.

Don't let Debby Downers' black clouds block your sun. Be very careful what types of energy you participate in.

*Does this person lift you up or bring you down?*

AUGUST 5

# **No importance = No motivation.**

You always make time to execute what's important to you.

Therefore: If you want to motivate yourself to do something, either make it important to you, or connect it with something that's already important to you.

*How are your priorities affecting your motivation?*

AUGUST 6

## No more overanalyzing the inconsequential.

It saps your energy, steals your time and spoils your initiative. Plus it drives your colleagues crazy.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop investing energy in your fears. Let them go. Just because everyone else is freaking out about meaningless trivialities doesn't mean you should, too.

Instead, free yourself from the overwhelming sweep of collective panic.

Don't let widespread jealousy infiltrate your outlook. It's a form of resistance, and it will creep into your consciousness if you're not careful.

*What consumes your time but doesn't make any money?*

AUGUST 7

## **Now that I have this, what else does this make possible?**

If you want to kill two stones with one bird every time, all you have to do is consistently imagine what else can be made (or could come) from this.

Therein lies the key to leverage:

*Looking at something you've created and then playing with its potential.*

Edward Debono dubbed this process "Movement Value."

You go forth and multiply.

You look for spin-offs and related ideas.

You identify concepts that allow you to "breed" other ideas from those concepts.

You expand, grow, cook, stretch and shift your idea, allowing it to spawn creative offspring.

You also exercise enough restraint to recognize lack of potential.

Because if an idea doesn't have much (or any) movement value, you need to save it, file it and move onto something else.

*Is this idea a springboard or a straightjacket?*

AUGUST 8

## Occupy your imperfection.

Not only do you (not) have to do everything perfectly, you also don't have to do everything right.

Perfectionism is just a lie your ego tells you to mitigate risk.

Don't allow the misguided desire for perfection to prevent you from doing, having and becoming what you need. As Bikram Choudhury explained in a recent interview with *Yoga Monthly*:

*"Few of us ever do the poses perfectly. Instead, it's about how well you understood what you're trying to accomplish in each pose, and how you tried to accomplish your goal. And you don't just learn the ideal pose – you learn what challenges you will face during the process, in addition to what clues will help you make rapid progress."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** When know-how is lacking, decide what amount of progress is acceptable. Create a way to quantify that amount so you can constantly measure it.

That will help you focus on moving forward without moving flawlessly.

*Are you trying to keep from losing ground, or trying to make progress?*

AUGUST 9

## Only the wrong survive.

Be incorrect more.

Encourage aggressive mistakes.

Go screw something up – then go learn from it.

After all: The wronger you are, the stronger you become.

But only if your wrongness of action is punctuated with rightness of reflection.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Mistakes are springboards. Mistakes build instincts. Mistakes precede truth. Mistakes reframe creativity. Mistakes reveal individuality.

*What do you have to learn from this mistake to make it no longer a mistake?*

AUGUST 10

## Optimize your efforts.

Stop worrying about getting things right and start focusing on getting things moving in the right direction.

As Michael Stanier explained in *Do More Great Work*:

*"Your goal is not to find the perfect place to start. That might paralyze you, forever delaying action because it's not just so. Instead, find a place to start. Take your best guess. And choose something that will do for the time being. Choose something that has potential, somewhere that's a good enough place to start."*

You don't have to move on and know where you're moving on to at the same time. Those who are stopped by not knowing how scare themselves into hiding.

Go start something.

*What events will serve as your catalyst to start a favorable chain reaction?*



AUGUST 11

# Originality requires murder.

I was recently eavesdropping on a conversation between two businesspeople seated next to me<sup>6</sup> when I heard a powerful statement. I immediately wrote it down so I could later claim it as my own material:

*"Innovation occurs through death."*

Amen to that.

Amen to dying.

Amen to killing outdated thinking.

Amen to murdering antiquated strategy.

Preach on, Brother Scott.

*What do you need to kill today?*

<sup>6</sup> Whatever. You do it all the time.

AUGUST 12

## **Overnight successes take decades.**

Instead, you work your ass off for about twenty years when nobody notices, nobody cares and nobody remembers.

And then one day you take a deep breath, look in the mirror and say:

"It's about bloody time."

*How patient are you willing to be?*

AUGUST 13

## Override how with what and why.

Inquire within.

Instead of walking a hole in the carpet about how to do something – go plop onto the couch and reflect on why you want to do it.

You'll find that "Why?" trumps "How?" every time. And don't worry: Confusion is healthy. And "How?" comes eventually.

For now, put boot to ass and touch the center of your true intention.

Because if you're not fueled by an honest why – and you're not willing to work like hell to keep your why alive – all the how in the world won't camouflage your lack of purpose.

*How much execution have you squandered because you're at war with how when you should be in love with why?*

AUGUST 14

## Paint yourself into an accountable corner.

When I first started my publishing company, I was still living in my parents' basement.

Not exactly an environment conducive to productivity and professionalism. Ever try to make a sales call to a Fortune 500 company when your mother is screaming from upstairs to find out if you want broccoli or asparagus with your salmon?

Eeks.

That's why I made the commitment to leave the house every morning at dawn, dressed and ready to go to work. But I didn't go to an office – I went to Panera. Just to have somewhere to go. Just to get into the right mindset. And I'd spend the next two hours reading, relaxing, journaling and prepping my day.

The cool part was, I'd see the same people each morning. And if I got lazy and slept in, they'd always ask, "Scott, what happened yesterday? We missed you!"

Over a period of two years, this daily commitment sharpened my discipline and laid a foundation of self-accountability that became essential in my career. And while I don't go to the coffee shop anymore – I still start work at dawn every day. It's hardwired into me.

All because I painted myself into an accountable corner.

*What ritual will you build into your daily schedule to convince yourself that you actually have a real job?*

AUGUST 15

## Passion is the best alarm clock.

As I said, I start work early. *Very early.* Between four and five. Every day.

I do this for several reasons.

**FIRST:** Because successful people get up early.

**SECOND:** Because my best writing time is when the rest of the world is cold, dark and quiet.

**THIRD:** Because my undoubted passion and inexhaustible love for life and every moment that I'm awake prevents me from wasting time sleeping.

Sure, I still have those lazy Sundays after adventurous weeks when I'm totally spent and need to sleep in.

The point is: When your passion fuels you, your alarm clock becomes irrelevant.

You're up, ready to rock and pumped to take on the world.

Awake without assistance.

Ignited without dependence.

*Besides your screaming children and the occasional bladder problem, what gets you out of bed?*

AUGUST 16

## **Passion without purpose is pointless – and penniless.**

Otherwise your passion becomes nothing but blazing fire that burns you and everyone you touch. And nobody has that much aloe.

Here's the reality: The word "passion" comes from the Latin *passio*, which means, "to suffer." Therefore, the two questions you have to ask yourself are:

1. What would you suffer to do?
2. What would cause you suffering if you did not do it?

The answers to those questions represent the intersection of passion and purpose.

*Is your passion pointless?*

AUGUST 17

## Past is prologue in disguise.

In Marianne Williamson's *Return to Love*, she wrote the following:

*"Our capacity for brilliance is equal to our ability to forget the past. The past is over. It cannot touch me. The only meaning of anything in the past is that it got us here, and it should be honored as such."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Everything you went through brought you here.

*What has all the crap you've put up with accidentally prepared you to execute?*

AUGUST 18

## Patience is wisdom.

By waiting, you let other people screw up first. That way you learn from their failures, which helps prevent making the same mistakes in your own life.

I learned this from my older brother when I was growing up. When we were in high school, he'd sneak out of the basement window, stay out past curfew, even throw parties when my parents were out of town.

Sometimes he got away with it – sometimes he got grounded for two weeks.

Either way, I made mental notes of his victories and failures to strategically prepare myself for future adolescent delinquencies.

*How could you learn what (not) to do by silently watching others pay tuition?*



AUGUST 19

## Patience isn't idleness.

Nothing important comes into being overnight.

Except maybe quarters from the tooth fairy. But even she's been kind of spotty lately.

Crappy fairy unions.

That's the other challenge of executing: How unspectacular the process is. Plus, how few people see the gallons of sweat you pour into the process. For example:

*Nobody sees you dragging your tired ass up at dawn every morning, pounding away on your laptop until lunch.*

*Nobody hears you working until midnight, rehearsing away in your hotel room until housekeeping tells you to keep it down.*

*Nobody notices you sitting in the back of the restaurant, sneaking in a quiet hour of reading before you get back to the grind.*

Hell, sometimes you have to wait ten years before the right people even see you at all.

I just hope you've got something (that matters!) to keep you constructive in the meantime. Otherwise the wait is going to wear down on you like a junkyard car crusher.

*How patient are you willing to be, and how productively are you willing to work in the meantime?*

AUGUST 20

## **Pennies saved are opportunities burned.**

You can approach execution in one of two ways.

First, with a poverty mentality:

*"Great. How much is this going to cost me?"*

Or, with an abundance mentality:

*"Cool! If I had this, what else would become possible?"*

Remember: If you're bending over dollars to pick up dimes, you might pull a hammy.

*Which mentality are you operating from?*

AUGUST 21

## **People who tell you to “work smart, not hard” are hopelessly lazy.**

Working hard – and smart – isn’t enough.

You have to work hard, work smart and work long. That’s the trifecta of success nobody wants to face. Probably because it involves more sweat and less sleep.

Sadly, most people want the proven formula of how to “do more in less time with less stress and zero money.” Sorry, Captain Shortcut. Doesn’t work that way. Life is marathon – not a sprint.

Sure, you might see some success in the first few laps. But if you’re solely functioning on a steady diet of “work smart, not hard,” eventually you’re going to get creamed.

You have to pay your dues and take your lumps like everyone else.

Otherwise your weak foundation will never sustain you.

*What fairy tales have you been poisoned by?*

AUGUST 22

# Permission is the great delayer of execution.

The reason your dreams haven't materialized is because you're waiting for permission.

*From your friends. From your family. From your spouse. From the world.*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You don't need permission. This isn't a middle school field trip to the Science Center.

Permission suffocates ambition and delays execution.

Just go.

Who cares if you're not ready enough or smart enough?

Who cares if you don't have enough money, experience or credentials?

Just go.

You don't need somebody twice your age that knows nothing about who you really are to validate your existence and stamp your creative passport.

Give yourself permission to not need permission and get to work.

*Do you wonder who's going to let you or who's going to stop you?*

AUGUST 23

## Persevere through the low.

During the Great Recession, I actually considered the option of panicking.

Fortunately, I didn't. Although I *did* think about it. Hard.

Instead, I learned to persevere by accepting what is, leveraging my downtime, keep support flowing, stir the pot and to find a use for every crisis.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Economic downtime is the perfect vehicle for renewing your resourcefulness.

What about you?

Will you persevere through the low, or sit in a corner crying until the high makes a comeback?

I hope the former. Because hardship is at the heart of execution.

Better you hit bumps in the road and be projected forward than sail smoothly without realizing you're (actually) standing still or worse, going backward.

*How are you building your resiliency?*

AUGUST 24

## **Then, persevere some more.**

Nicolas Cage taught me in *Bangkok Dangerous*:

*"The best way to defend yourself is to know when something is about to happen."*

If you spot a valley on the horizon, write an action plan for how to leverage it. If you want to do the same, remember these ideas:

Stir the pot.

Accept what is.

Use every crisis.

Befriend the current.

Keep support flowing.

Leverage your downtime.

Keep pulling your triggers for joy.

Foster a pervasive tone of gratitude.

Double your dosage of daily inspiration.

Remember: Peaks follow valleys. Even when the economy sucks – your economy can still rock.

*How will you traverse the tough times?*

AUGUST 25

## Plans are the preventers of progress.

The cognitive dissonance of exiting is extremely painful. That's another keeper I learned from *Rework*:

*"Plans let the past drive the future. They put blinders on you. 'This is where we're going because, well, that's where we said we were going,' you say. And that's the problem: Plans are inconsistent with improvisation."*

Be careful.

Don't let the lust for what is familiar block the beauty of what is possible.

*Are you a victim of your own past commitments?*

AUGUST 26

## Placing too many cumbersome demands on yourself.

I'm all for diversification.

Pursuing multiple projects simultaneously is usually a smart move. But having *too* many irons in the fire does nothing but slowly melt your ability to execute into a steaming puddle of silver goo.

*Terminator 2* style.

The problem is, you're your own worst enemy in creating chaos in your life. You have to be willing to hang up your Superman cape and ask yourself:

*"Where (and why) am I constantly trying to impress myself?"*

Remember: The dog who chases both rabbits doesn't just go hungry – he looks like a putz while starving.

*Are you a victim of your own lack of focus?*



AUGUST 27

## Plan for an aggressive growth campaign.

That means two things.

**FIRST:** Paying the price in the off-season. Gladly submitting yourself to being whipped. And remembering that it's never a waste of time to take the time to learn. Especially when the stakes are lower.

**SECOND:** Stay committed to growth – even when you've achieved excellence. And send yourself on an open-ended quest for progress, improving until the bitter end.

The onus is on you to renew your contract with yourself.

*How are you regularly renewing your commitment to your desire?*

AUGUST 28

## Plan is a four-letter word.

Plan fuzzies vision.

Plan paralyzes action.

Plan straightjackets success.

And yet, people still obsess over it.

Because planning preserves their sense of control.

The problem is, planning is a big decision. And big decisions cause you to prematurely commit to a trajectory that (might) later prove to be unprofitable. What's more, over time, the more you plan, the harder it becomes to invite healthy derailments.

The secret isn't to evade the future. Or refuse to admit that obstacles will mount. Rather, to plunge forward planless – but with a compelling intention as your parachute.

There's another great line from *Rework*:

*"Just get on the plane and go. You can pick up a nicer shirt, shaving cream and a toothbrush once you get there."*

Remember: Failure doesn't come from poor planning – but from the timidity to proceed.

*Are you blindly following a plan that has no relationship with reality?*

AUGUST 29

## **Planning is the gateway drug to procrastination.**

You can prepare forever – but being ready means beginning.

Aristotle nailed it:

*“The things you have to learn before you can do them, you learn by doing them.”*

Eventually, you’re just going to have to jump into the pool with your clothes on and trust that you’ll figure out how to swim before the water fills your lungs.

But only if you recognize that readiness is a process of accretion. And that you don’t become ready and then take action; you become ready as you take action.

Ah, momentum – it’s beautiful thing.

*What is waiting getting in the way of?*

AUGUST 30

## Planning is surrendering.

When you blindly follow a plan that has no relationship with reality, you lose.

In that instance, it's no longer a plan – it's a straightjacket. And unless your name is Houdini, that's not good for business.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Surrender control. That's how I approach my creative process: Instead of planning what to create, I listen for what wants to be written.

Focusing more on listening and responding – and less on planning and managing.

*How vulnerable are you willing to make yourself?*

AUGUST 31

## Plunge forward anyway.

I started my company the day I graduated college.

Mainly because the prospect of getting a regular office job like the rest of my friends made me want to jump out of the window of a burning building.<sup>7</sup>

But because I hadn't yet woken up from the compliant, self-hypnotic stupor of higher education, I actually went to the library one day to, ahem, *write my business plan*.

Ugh. It was awful. I died a little inside with each page I wrote. But I still wrote it. Probably for the same reason most businesspeople obsess over plans:

*Because planning helped underwrite the illusion that I knew what I was doing.*

Which I didn't. I just wanted to feel like a grown up. A professional. A real entrepreneur.

Interestingly, I never *once* looked at that business plan. Ever. And eight years later, my company is thriving in ways I never could have imagined.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You don't need a plan to win. Especially early on in the game. Yet another classic line from *Rework*:

*"When you do write a plan, usually it's before you've even begun. And that's the worst time to make a big decision."*

It's not that I'm against planning completely – rather, I'm against the assumption that planning is *always* necessary for success.

Remember the old saying, "Failing to plan is planning to fail"?

I say failing to plan is planning to prevail.

No labels, no limits.

*Do you need to buy another book on business planning, or do you need to start selling?*

<sup>7</sup> Naked.

**Invite people for a  
leisurely swim in  
your massive sea of  
humanity or risk  
being ignored.**



**Are you showing  
the world your  
goods?**

**People can rip off  
your tag, but they  
can never steal  
your truth.**



**What identity are  
you visually  
committed to?**

SEPTEMBER

# Persistence is the great separator.

The last two seconds of most yoga postures  
are where most students give up.

Students figure that half-assing the end of asana won't hurt anyone.

Which is true.

The difference is: The remaining twenty percent of the  
students don't just stay in the posture – they push even harder.  
Because they know that the only way out is through.

That's what separates veterans from masters.

*Which one are you?*





SEPTEMBER 1

## Please stop parading your poverty.

Bitching to people about how hard it is, how much you despise something or how much farther you have to go isn't a merit badge.

I don't care what your frat buddies say – it's not cool to hate your job. Don't get swept into the seductive undertow of using misery to get attention.

I know persistence is painful process. And I encourage (insist) on using healthy methods for expressing your frustration.

But throwing a pity party won't make the process any easier – no matter how many guests show up, no matter how cold the beer is.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** If you're going to vent, see if you can't do it without excessive ornamentation.

*What pollution does your attitude introduce into the air?*

## SEPTEMBER 2

# Poll your past.

Think about the last five things you started.

From relationships to art projects to work habits to fitness goals.

Write the list down. Then backtrack. Then ask yourself three questions:

1. How long did it take you finally start?
2. What barriers stalled your eventual execution?
3. What actions, specifically, did you take to overcome those obstacles?

When you're done, step back and look for repeatable patterns based on your learning and personality style.

This will provide a framework for future starts.

*How are you learning from past starting victories?*

SEPTEMBER 3

# Practice deliberate indifference.

Not caring is highly underrated.

In fact, considering the amount of vomitous noise you're exposed to everyday, not caring is your god-given right.

Take email, for example. Personally, I have no remorse about pressing the delete button on a message sent by people who forgot to press the respect button.

You'll discover that concentrating on the essential without distraction from the irrelevant contains all the executional power you'll ever need. In the immortal words of George Carlin,

*"It's important to not give a shit – it will take you far in life."*

Focus on what matters, stay intrinsic to action and you'll remain allergic to inertia.

*Are you execution driven?*

S E P T E M B E R 4

## Practice fertile idleness.

This term was originally coined in *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, a personal journal published in 1906. And even though the idea is over a century old, it's still applicable today.

Take the airport, for example. It's the perfect reminder of the following truism:

*Life is nothing but a series of lines.*

You're not trying to get anywhere. You're not waiting for the next moment.

Life is the line. And once you realize that life doesn't get any better than that, everything changes. That's when boredom ends and the fun begins. That's when you learn to greet idleness with a welcoming heart and figure out how to leverage your wait time into something valuable.

For example, Japanese teens are masters of fertile idleness. Did you know that fifty percent of their bestselling books are written via text message?

Believe it. They're called *keitai shousetsu*, or, "cell phone novels."

Written mainly by high school girls on trains, busses and other school day commutes, this new genre of art has changed the landscape of writing forever.

All because they hustled while they waited and practiced fertile idleness.

*Are you reading the news or making the news?*

SEPTEMBER 5

## Practice natural selection.

My friend Josh is a professional poker player. He practices dangerous patience in a brilliant way:

*"Once I buy into an online tournament, I wait twenty minutes before playing a single hand. Not to study the current players, but to let the weak weed themselves out. Otherwise I might get sucked into their undertow of careless amateurism and make a costly mistake."*

In business and in life, the same goes for you: The longer you wait, the higher the quality of the remaining players. Napoleon was right:

*"Let China wait. When she wakes up, the world will be sorry."*

Don't let the amateurs stifle your ability to take action on what matters.

*How much self-control are you willing to exert?*

SEPTEMBER 6

## Practice unrelenting single-mindedness.

When you choose focus over fuzziness, executing becomes a natural byproduct.

That's what Single Mindedness Theory is all about. I learned this concept from Salaimartin and Mulligan, two scientists who are smarter than me. Their work explains SMT as:

*"The groups of people who are more able to focus on the minimum number of issues to gain greater power, thus enabling them to eventually get what they require."*

As such, the universal execution secret is asking focusing questions:

1. What daily energy keeps you from keeping focused?
2. How much time are you wasting (not) focusing on your priorities?
3. Are you subconsciously keeping yourself busy to avoid the important?
4. How much time are you spending on things that diffuse your focus and hamper your goals?

Self-probes like these help you stick a stake in the ground.

Even if that means polarizing a few people.

Even if that means sweating in obscurity before you can cry in the spotlight.

*What do you have to give up to focus single-mindedly on what will set you apart?*

S E P T E M B E R 7

## Probe your musts.

Albert Ellis, author and founder of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, coined a great term:

*Musterbation.*

He used it to describe someone who tells himself obsessively that he must do things or things must be a certain way, even though that's not the case.

"The three main musts are: 'I must do well or I'm no good,' 'You must treat me well or you're worthless and deserve to roast in hell,' and 'The world must give me exactly what I want, precisely what I want, or it's a horrible, awful place.'"

To avoid falling into this trap, regularly subject yourself to honest introspection. Take an objective inventory of yourself and ask:

1. What is the history behind the assumption about myself?
2. How could I test those assumptions?"

This inner work is crucial. Because if you don't learn to love self-confrontation, you may never pinpoint the musts that are clipping your wings.

Elphaba was right: Everybody deserves a chance to fly.

Don't disable that chance by musterbating all over yourself.

*What are you convinced you must do, think and feel?*

SEPTEMBER 8

## Problems are messages.

The word “problem” derives from the Greek term, *proballein*, which means, “to throw forward.”

Interesting.

Sounds like the challenge is keeping your receptive capabilities open enough to see what the problem points to. Three helpful questions to ask are:

1. Is this particular problem part of a larger problem?
2. What does this problem tell me about the larger picture?
3. What am I pretending not to know about my role in the problem?

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Your current problem is a message, and it's your job to reply in a timely fashion.

*What are you turning your problems into?*



SEPTEMBER 9

## Purpose is the best bread.

Bread as in "Daily bread."

Bread as in, "All that I need."

Bread as in, "That which provides sustenance for the day to come."

That kind of bread.

Regardless of your spiritual practice, here's my guarantee:

*When you eat a nice, crispy piece of purpose every day – possibly with grape jelly – you always receive the nourishment you require.*

The challenge is tracking your bread down.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Cooperate completely with the choir of your heart. Follow your own inner dictates. Accept your divine curriculum. Go the whole hog.

And as you do, don't back down from who you are. Be shamelessly enthusiastic about your calling. You'll never go hungry again.

*What did your soul eat for breakfast today?*

SEPTEMBER 10

## Quit something average.

That's the only way to create the space to execute something remarkable.

The cool part is, once you stop investing your time, energy and money in the Mutual Fund of Inconsequentiality,<sup>8</sup> you can redirect those efforts into something that matters. It's like my friend Jason once told me:

*"Sometimes you have to say no to the good to make room for the best."*

That's your goal: Never quit quitting. Otherwise you'll keep waiting. And waiting. And waiting. And then, before you know it, it will be too late.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Plunge purposefully and immediately into action.

Don't take the tour and stall – just buy a guest pass and start using the facilities.

*What could you stop doing that would help you start something tomorrow?*

<sup>8</sup> By which I mean, "television."

SEPTEMBER 11

# Rally without being ready.

My friend Perry, a marriage counselor, once told me:

*"You'll never have enough money to have a baby."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Nobody's ready. Nobody's ever been ready. If they were, they would have taken action earlier.

Which brings us to the good news: Whether you're thinking about starting a business, writing a book, having a baby, going full time as an artist, moving across the country, getting married – in short, doing anything risky and terrifying – it doesn't matter if you're ready.

It matters if you're real.

It matters if you're consistent.

It matters if you're committed.

It matters if you're willing to fail brilliantly now so you can shine spectacularly later.

And here's the cool part: The sum of those components will outweigh your need to feel ready.

If you're currently dipping your toes into the chilly waters of adventure – business, personal or otherwise – keep this in mind: Readiness is highly overrated.

*Jumping yet?*

SEPTEMBER 12

## Real progress starts with self.

Practice winning the private battle before going into the public arena.

I've done this daily for years, but didn't understand the psychology behind it until I read *Principle-Centered Leadership* by Steven Covey. He wrote:

*"Early morning private victories give you a sense of conquering, overcoming and mastering – and this sense propels you to conquer more public challenges during the day. Starting a day with an early victory over self will lead to more victories."*

Beginning tomorrow, I challenge you to use your first waking hour profitably. After thirty days, you'll build reserves of emotional stamina to be called on during the inevitable stress that accompanies execution.

*Are you willing to take charge of your own development?*

SEPTEMBER 13

## Realize what the drug of inaction is cheating you out of.

We all succumb to the seductive sirens of inertia.

And while plunging immediately into the vortex action is a romantic and simple notion, it's harder than it looks. Especially if you're addicted to the sweet, safe and snuggly nectar of idleness.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Start with one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock. Then, as your legs stretch farther and farther apart, think about what opportunities you might be cheating yourself out of by refusing to evolve.

It's a difficult truth to confront yourself with. But sometimes the only way to execute exquisitely is to create a deficit position for yourself.

*Are you a prisoner of inertia?*

SEPTEMBER 14

## **Rebirth is the inevitable outgrowth of heartbreak.**

With the requisite amount of awareness and a solid support structure, you can easily convert your current heartbreak into a heartbreakthrough.

Yes, give yourself enough time to be miserable. But soon you've got to put an end to the pity party, take the reins on your resurrection opportunity and shift your attitude to a mindset of leverage.

You will come out alive stronger and better.

*How could you leverage your frustration in this situation as motivation to grow into more of the person you've always wanted to be?*

SEPTEMBER 15

## Redefining the approach.

*Ready, aim, fire!*

*Ready, fire, aim!*

*Fire, fire, fire!*

Several problems with these all-too-common approaches.

**FIRST:** As you've already learned, readiness is overrated.

**SECOND:** Aiming has the tendency to override spontaneity and alienate unseen targets. That's the big problem with having a plan – you might hit it. Which means you probably weren't stretching enough. You weren't uncomfortable enough.

**THIRD:** Firing is a dangerous word. It's too violent, highly unfocused and overly aggressive. Plus, if all you ever do is fire, you might find yourself up to your ass in blood and shells. And that's not the kind of execution you want.

Here's an alternate approach that wins:

*Try, listen, leverage!*

**FIRST:** You just do stuff.

**SECOND:** You listen. Or watch. Or observe. And you note the trajectory of your idea to see if the flight plan needs tweaking.

**THIRD:** You leverage. And you document everything as it happens. And you reflect on your experiences by extracting lessons learned. Then you catalogue those lessons and refer back to them when the time comes to try again.

*What's your version of the "Read, Aim, Fire!" approach?*

SEPTEMBER 16

## Reduce your mass.

During a recent post-race interview, NASCAR driver Robby Gordon complained about the unfair advantage of fellow driver Danica Patrick.

But not because she made racing history as the first female driver. And not because she's sexy enough to make gay men drool. According to Gordon:

*"Danica weighs seventy pounds less than most drivers. Her car is lighter. She goes faster. And I won't race against her until something is done about it."*

Good luck with that, Robby. Too bad NASCAR's bylaws don't indicate a weight restriction. Either learn to drive faster or stop eating so much bacon.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Lowering mass means raising profits.

Cut. Cut fast and deep. Cut down to the bone. Just be sure not to cut an artery.

Never cut so deep that you diminish your capabilities.

*What do you need to delete from your business?*



SEPTEMBER 17

## Refuse the path of emptiness.

Each of my books is composed, produced, published and distributed through my own company, as opposed to a traditional publishing model.

And I'm proud to say, all of the books have been noticed by the people who matter, featured on national media and bought in profitable quantities worldwide.

Now, considering I'm just a one-man show, I'd say my books have done pretty well as an independent publisher. The exciting part is, I've been approached by dozens of major publishers over the years. And while I'm always honored by their generous offers, I still choose to hold out for the right one.

I'm not worried. It's only a matter of time before the right publisher comes along.

But until then, I'll still be here at my office, cranking books out on my own.<sup>9</sup>

Your challenge is to employ the same philosophy: Ride the smaller waves like a champ, then, when the Big Kahuna comes along, pop up on your board and ride that baby to shore.

*Are you willing to be a patient incrementalist?*

<sup>9</sup> If you're a big publisher with lots of money, please email [scott@hellomynameisscott.com](mailto:scott@hellomynameisscott.com).

SEPTEMBER 18

## Refuse to be watered down.

Starting one thing after another doesn't make you committed – it makes you a comma.

Strangled by indecisiveness, you score (yet another) “incomplete” on the report card of life.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Focus like hell. Don't permit your time to be ruled by other people's priorities. And beware of falling in love with everybody's plans but your own. Like my friend Robert Bradford reminds me:

*“Every time you add a comma to the description of what you do, you suck a little bit more.”*

Pick a lane.

Then stay in that lane, no matter how closely the truck behind you is riding your tail.

*Is this an opportunity or an obligation?*

S E P T E M B E R 19

## Refuse to exist in an inhibited condition.

If the innovation of others intimidates and inhibits you, you lose.

The secret is to use the success of others to fuel your own execution. Two examples come to mind.

**FIRST:** When I sense the warning signs of an approaching storm of creative blockage, I just read Gaping Void or Seth Godin's blog. Their innovative spirit and cutting edge philosophies never cease to light a fire under my (occasionally) uninspired ass.

**SECOND:** When I notice the declining momentum of one of my mentees' executional patterns, I do what good mentors do – model. Take Carrie, for example. She's been bragging to me for the last three years about her new book. Which I've read. And which I think is tremendous.

The problem is, she can't pull the trigger. She can't make the book real. She can't ship.

But instead of getting on her case, hounding her every week or trying to solve her execution problems for her, I just wrote another book. Then I mailed her a copy.

And now she wants to strangle me.

"Great!" I encouraged Carrie. "Now channel that frustration into your project!"

And she did. So much for existing in an inhibited condition.

*How can you fire inspiration into yourself (or others) today?*

SEPTEMBER 20

## Reintroduce the power of choice.

I just finished *Discourses and Selected Writings* by Epictetus. Here's my favorite passage:

*"If, from the moment you get up in the morning you adhere to your ideals, that is where you will see true progress embodied and find someone who has not wasted her time making the journey."*

Does that describe you?

If not, there's still hope. Try introducing this practice into your daily life: Next time someone sits you down to tell you how crazy you are for doing what you're doing (and they will!) don't react – respond.

Manage the resistance as soon as it arises. If the feedback doesn't truly reflect who you are, ignore it. Instead, clothe your daily movements with individuality. And fashion your unique future like the artist that you are.

Otherwise you enable the resistance to deepen.

And that only makes it harder to execute what matters.

*Are you handicapping your success by listening to the wrong people?*

SEPTEMBER 21

## Reluctance to make a decision is a form of resistance.

Don't wait too long to pull the trigger.

Otherwise, by the time you're ready to bust a cap, your target will be long gone. And you'll be left with nothing but a sweaty finger.

Sadly, most people can't overcome the paralyzing uncertainty of taking that crucial first step.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Violently refuse to get snared into an endless tangle of anxiety, regret and second-guessing.

You can't go through life regretting every decision you make just because it might not have been the best possible choice. It'll eat you up inside like a tapeworm. Better to just make a choice and get on with your life comfortably – as opposed to being plagued by doubt, wondering about what could have been a marginally better option.

Maybe Shakespeare was right. Maybe delays really do have dangerous ends.

Remember: Opportunity is limited only by the courage to act.

*Where is resistance beating you?*

SEPTEMBER 22

## Remain a lifelong student of the game you're playing.

Here's how to enroll:

**FIRST:** Stay *dedicated* to mastering your craft – work at it every single day.

**SECOND:** Stay *updated* with the trends in your industry – research your brains out.

**THIRD:** Stay *associated* with fellow professionals in your line of work – network your ass off.

**FOURTH:** Stay *affiliated* with your professional association – volunteer your face off.

**FIFTH:** Stay *fascinated* with the art of what you do – even if you don't consider it an art.

**SIXTH:** Stay *satiated* with the business of what you do – because if you don't plan to make it a business, don't bother.

Remember: Your education doesn't end when you get your diploma.

Lifelong learning is the landmark of exquisite executioners.

*What are you a student of?*

SEPTEMBER 23

## Remarkability comes from reinvention.

George Carlin did it – from AM to FM.

Tom Hanks did it – from comedy to drama.

Bob Dylan did it – from acoustic to electric.

And these guys were young when they reinvented, too – in age and in career.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You don't have to be huge to reinvent yourself, but you have to reinvent yourself to become huge.

Make the decision to constantly reinvent your own better future.

Don't act like you're not getting bored with the current version of yourself.

*When was the last time you reinvented yourself?*

SEPTEMBER 24

## Remember the Galatians.

*"Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we will reap a great harvest if we faint not."*

My mentor first shared this scripture with me when I was 16, and it's guided my patience ever since.

The painful part, of course, is having faith. Especially in the beginning when you've got zero proof that this principle actually works; and when everybody you know is becoming more successful than you, faster than you. And you're just sitting there, knowing you work just as hard – if not harder – and deserve the same success.

All I can say is: Hang in there. The playing field levels out eventually.

As you watch the truth of this statement play out, you'll achieve the small victories necessary to fuel your patience.

And when that time comes, you'll accelerate into pole position while all of the hacks, one-hit-wonders and bullshit artists fall to the wayside.

*Will you faint not?*



SEPTEMBER 25

## Remember your victory dance.

The satisfaction of a job well done isn't enough.

Goals are worthless unless you celebrate their accomplishment.

For example, when I swim laps each week, my primary motivation for doing so is relaxing in hot tub afterwards. But I have to earn it. I convince myself that I don't deserve to soak in the hot until I've swum up a storm in the cold.

That's my victory dance. It's minor; but it's motivating.

Your challenge is to design customized victory dances that commemorate the fruits of your motivation. That way you'll have that celebratory carrot dangling the next time. And the next time. And the next time. You might even spend a few minutes engaged in creative visualization of your victory dance directly before executing.

I've done this pre-performance ritual before every one of the 400+ speeches I've given, and found that it not helps set spirit in motion – but also equips me to be what the moment requires.

*What's your victory dance?*

SEPTEMBER 26

## **Remove what robs you; embrace what excites you.**

*"What the hell am I still doing here?!"*

Next time you look up from the source of your current drudgery and silently scream this phrase, you're on the right track. As conductor Benjamin Zander wrote in *The Art of Possibility*:

*"Chip away at the barriers that block your abilities and expression."*

And understandably, you need to be fair to the almighty mortgage. And to your family. Or whatever other obligations you have.

But you also need to be fair to yourself, your talents and your gifts.

Never forget to put yourself at the top of your own list.

*What's currently preventing you from becoming the best, highest version of yourself?*

SEPTEMBER 27

## **Resist the pressure to take action inconsistent with core values.**

Earlier you learned about the “seductive sirens of inertia,” and how idleness is the enemy to executing what matters.

Here’s another one: Movement for the sake of movement doesn’t matter if it upsets your non-negotiables.

Otherwise you become a verb people delete from their vocabulary.

After all, nobody wants to pay someone whose value system changes quicker than a racing pit crew.

*Are you negotiating the fine line between stillness and exertion?*

SEPTEMBER 28

## **Resistance either creates or compresses stamina.**

Against the backdrop of seeming hopelessness, stamina is hard.

Especially the stamina to recover rapidly from disappointment. That's why I ask:

*Is this being done to me or for me?*

With an attitude of leverage, positivity and growth, the answer is almost always "for me."

Just learn the lesson, let go of the emotion and get out of there. See this as a workout for becoming wiser and you win big.

*What could make this experience easier?*

SEPTEMBER 29

## Revenue is the aftershock of usefulness.

If you want to make money, make something that people need.

If you want to make money, make something that replaces something.

If you want to make money, make something that doesn't require explaining.

If you want to make money, make something that helps people say goodbye to something they hate.

If you want to make money, make something that makes people stop, sit up, notice, and yell into the kitchen, "Hey honey, look at this!"

If you want to make money, make something that solves people's expensive, urgent, pervasive and relevant problems.

If you want to make money, make something that saves people time and frustration.

If you want to make money, make something that is appealing to more than just yourself and your stoner roommates.

If you want to make money, make something worth making a series of YouTube videos about that people will (actually) watch instead of rolling their eyes and deleting from their inbox when their mom sends it to them.

If you want to make money, make something that people never realized they wanted – but after trying it – can't possibly imagine surviving without.

*How useful are the things you're executing?*

SEPTEMBER 30

## **Risk today's time for tomorrow's treasure.**

Stop looking for the easy win and start running the developmental gauntlet.

Science fiction novelist Tobias Buckell made a poignant observation on this issue:

*"Mastery is found not in the easy initial spurt of learning, but in the journey along the flat plane before the next major leap."*

It's about being patient with yourself, having confidence in yourself and adding value to yourself.

No incremental progress, no incidental profit.

*Are you willing to invest time in endeavors that you won't benefit from until next year?*

**If you do plan to  
crap your pants,  
just make sure  
nobody can see the  
skid marks.**



**Are you willing to  
flinch in private?**

OCTOBER

# Scare yourself out of irrelevancy.

Ideas that do not lead you to execution are nothing but meaningless arpeggios.

Honestly ask yourself two questions:

**Is this fun but not moving you toward your goal? Is this a distraction that keeps you busy but doesn't expose you to risk?**

If the answer is yes, stop yourself in your tracks.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Embrace the credo of *creatio continua*, or constant creative action. Then go do the work that scares you.

Engage in perpetual effort.

With no hint of dissipation.

Insist on rapid (but non-reckless) movement that matters and you win.

Do you have enough self-control to tweet and get on with your life, or will you get swept into the undertow of irrelevancy?





OCTOBER 1

## Self-motivation stems from self-knowledge.

It all depends on the way you talk to yourself before taking action.

For example, the silent dialogue I have with myself often includes questions like:

1. Is this supporting my empire?
2. Will this choice add to my life force or rob me of my energy?
3. Will this choice bring me closer to my highest vision for myself?
4. Will this action move me closer to honoring my values or further away?

Your mission is to take some time exploring your personal decision making process.

*Are you the world's expert on yourself?*

OCTOBER 2

## Send your guilt to the guillotine.

Remorse comes from the Latin *remordere*, which literally means, “to bite back.”

Translation: When the inevitable guilt caused by the execution process starts to creep in, bite back. Show that chump who’s boss. Refuse to be held hostage by guilty feelings like, “What if people hate this?” “What if I bomb?” or “What if someone finds a bug?”

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** All of those things are probably going to happen anyway. No sense getting acid reflux over minor eventualities.

Instead, be shameless. Be an imperfectionist. And remember that flawless execution doesn’t exist anyway.

Off with the head!

*What do you need to murder to pave the way for exquisite execution?*

OCTOBER 3

## **Serendipity is an execution strategy.**

It's not fate.

It's not luck.

It's not an accident.

It's putting yourself in the way of success.

It's being ready to pitch on a moment's notice.

It's positioning yourself in high visibility locations.

It's being in the right place at the right time by being in a lot of places.

It's being more intentional in every experience while maintaining an attitude of positive expectation.

Remember: L.U.C.K is an acronym for "Working Your Ass Off."

*In what ways can you prepare for the serendipitous?*

OCTOBER 4

## Shake hands with yourself.

Somewhere down the line, you've had a manager, boss or supervisor that you wanted to beat to death with a stapler.

And my guess is: You weren't especially motivated by their words, right?

Right. Because people rarely remain accountable to people they hate.

If you plan to be the person holding your own feet to the fire, the first key is simple: You better like yourself. Otherwise it's going to be extremely hard to listen.

And if you think that sounds corny, you're right – it is.

But corny doesn't mean ineffective.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** To execute what matters, establish expectational clarity with yourself. After all, the enemy of accountability is ambiguity. And a flawed assumption about yourself can set the whole process in misdirected motion.

Continue to isolate your why. To assess your own motives. Because when you know why something is important to you, you never fail to impose the accountability required to execute it.

*What kind of relationship do you want to have with yourself?*

OCTOBER 5

## **Share execution goals with positive people only.**

All negative people will do is deflate your enthusiasm, piss you off royally and inspire you to throw in the towel.

Invest your energy elsewhere.

Life's too short to surround yourself with mediocre people. They rarely challenge and inspire you, plus they tend to smell like turnips.

Play with people who are better than you.

Roll with people who are more experienced than you.

Hang with people who, by virtue of their presence in your life, make executing your goals a natural byproduct.

*How much time are you wasting on relationships you've outgrown?*

OCTOBER 6

# **Ship now, fix later, perfect never, bleed always.**

That's the execution philosophy for my creative process.

What's yours?

While you're thinking about that, let's turn to Derek Sivers of CD Baby for executional insight:

*"Make it. Even if you don't have the massive programming skill available, make a super lo-fi or no-fi version. Just get started with a couple friends and volunteers. It's so much more impressive to hear someone say, 'There's this thing that I've started doing that a lot of people seem to like.'"*

Remember: Poverty of philosophy prevents profitability.

What's yours?

OCTOBER 7

## Shortcuts are mirages.

I tell my audience members: *Learn to love the longcut.*

Shortcuts are stressful, expensive and time intensive.  
Shortcuts cause stress, rarely succeed and often backfire.

They never go unpunished.  
They are a refuge for slackers and a lazy man's panacea.

Stop taking them just to impress yourself.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Take the long cut.

That's where the true oasis awaits.

*Will this choice bring you long-term fulfillment or will it bring you short-term gratification?*

OCTOBER 8

## **Shout your wares at the top of your voice.**

Jump at every opportunity to show the world what you can do.

Even if it's a freebie.

Even if the money is bunk.

Even if you have to pay to play.

Doesn't matter.

Sometimes you have invite yourself to the table; otherwise you may never get a seat – much less a chance to eat. Like George Carlin advised:

*"You've got to get up in front of people every day of your life or you'll never learn who you are."*

The cool part is, small victories harvest big successes. And the more you demonstrate to yourself that you have accomplished difficult and impossible things before, the easier it is to win in the future.

Remember: There's nothing like a moment of private triumph to fuel your efforts. Especially in those moments of immobility when you can't get past the paralyzing uncertainty of following your dreams.

*What audience did you get in front of today?*



OCTOBER 9

# Significance is the best success.

Sure, you're making bank – but do you matter?

If not, maybe it's time to reorchestrate your priorities.

Because when you get down to it, mattering is what really matters.

That's all what humans want: *To feel needed. Important. Useful.*

In fact, the word "matter" comes from the Latin *material*, which means, "substance from which something is made." The question is:

*What kind of substance do you provide to the world?*

That's your mission.

*Why are you?*

OCTOBER 10

## Silence the voice of no.

People and companies with a history of not finishing need to lower the volume on the voices inside their heads.

In a recent presentation, Seth Godin illustrated this point perfectly:

*"People don't ship because their lizard brain says, 'They're all gonna laugh at you!'"*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Recognize those voices and devise a strategy for overcoming their primal powers. Smile every time your lizard brain takes the stage. Nothing will piss it off more. Except maybe when you execute.

Take that, bug breath.

*What voice are you listening to that's causing you to swiftly abandon things?*

OCTOBER 11

# Simple is the subtle masterstroke of genius.

Simplicity is currency.  
Simplicity is elegance.  
Simplicity is eloquence.  
Simplicity is sophistication.

The hard part is: Simplicity is hard.

It requires more energy, more brainpower and more courage than complexity. As Frederic Chopin remarked:

*"Simplicity is the final achievement. After one has played a vast quantity of notes and more notes, it is simplicity that emerges as the crowning reward of art."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stop being fancy. Stop creating riddles that take too long for impatient customers to solve. Stop making things bigger than they need to be. Stop complicating your message.

If you want to take action on what matters, make what matters simpler.

*Is your business a friend of simplicity?*

OCTOBER 12

## Small is the birthplace of big.

There are no small things – only big things whose bigness you haven't yet realized.

What's more, small doesn't just become big – small prepares big. It all depends on how big your thinking is.

For example, consider the acorn: What do you see when you look at it?

A nut? Or a schoolhouse where the future leaders of the world are educated by the textbooks that came from the paper made from the trees that sprouted from the acorns?

Execution depends on how big your thinking is.

*What smallness symbolizes bigness for you?*

OCTOBER 13

## Self-doubt is the dam of execution.

Smash through self-doubt like a sledgehammer through an Easter egg.

Otherwise you short-circuit your momentum. And he who takes no action makes no money. My question is:

*Why take up unnecessary mental disk space questioning yourself?*

Limits are for calculus teachers. Yes, you are the detonator of your own destruction – but you're also the conductor of your own self-belief.

To free yourself from the fear of being found out, recite the following affirmation:

*"I am the person who can do this ... I am the person who can do this."*

I use that one all the time. And it's a great tool when I need help convincing myself that I (actually) know what the hell I'm doing.<sup>10</sup>

Keep the faith.

Like the diehard fan that refuses to leave the half-empty ballpark until the last pitch is thrown, stick with yourself. And if you throw a hanging curve that gets tattooed out of the stadium, so be it.

Learn from it and move on.

*How often do self-doubt and caution take hold of your decision making process?*

<sup>10</sup> Which I don't.

OCTOBER 14

# Specialize in the impossible.

Here's how to do so:

**FIRST:** Think back to the last time you (or your organization) accomplished something most people told you was impossible

**SECOND:** Ask yourself what steps you took – and what mindsets you maintained – to accomplish those impossible goals.

**THIRD:** Extract one-sentence lessons you learned from each experience into a bullet point list.

**FINALLY:** Have your graphic designer convert that list into a one-page PDF that can be used as a handout, marketing piece or free download. You might even title it, “How We Specialize in the Impossible.” It’s a great reminder.

People will notice. People will talk. And executing won’t seem so impossible.

*What do you think used to be impossible that has now become probable?*

OCTOBER 15

## Stay accountable to yourself.

The long-term survivability of your business is dependent on your ability to kick your own ass.

Whether you work at home, work by yourself or work in an independent role, make sure you motivate yourself to execute what matters.

Yes, laziness becomes extremely attractive when you know the masses will never know the difference. But as an entrepreneur, holding your own feet to the fire is part of the job description.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Stay committed to being committed.

Sometimes you have to administer the medicine to yourself, no matter how bad it tastes.

*Are you willing to open wide and swallow the syrup of self-accountability?*

OCTOBER 16

## **Steel yourself against the thundering noise around you.**

Don't let the validity of your talent hang in the balance of some wanker critic's opinion.

Instead, give up your obsessive need for approval from anyone other than yourself. Develop personal standards for judging your own artistic talents. Visualize at the onset what a win looks like.

That way, when the bedlam persists from the haters around you, the commotion dissolves from the groupie inside you.

Remember: As long as you're your own biggest fan, your executions win every time.

Unless you're a serial killer. That's totally different. I don't care how skilled you are at decapitating people, that's just not cool.

*How much of what you believe about yourself comes from what others believe about you?*



OCTOBER 17

## Stick around anyway.

Even when it's late.

Even when you're tired.

Even when it's raining outside.

Even when you're sitting in the nosebleed section because your friend who got the tickets is a total tightwad.

That's what real fans do: They pull on their ponchos and wait the out the storm. Even when nobody notices.

Because execution isn't only about being noticed – it's about being dedicated.

For example:

When you discover that not everybody cares about you, be your biggest fan anyway.

When you learn that not everybody is invested in your success, be your biggest fan anyway.

When you realize that not everybody will notice when you fail, be your biggest fan anyway.

Like Garrison Keillor reminded us in a 2008 episode of *Prairie Home Companion*:

*"Never, ever give up. Because when you do, most of the world probably won't notice anyway."*

Don't let the breaks break you. Relentlessly pursue an upward course, crappy conditions notwithstanding.

*How are you building your resiliency?*

OCTOBER 18

## Stick-to-itiveness fuels execution.

As a Gen-Xer, I come from a commitment-averse generation. Four examples:

1. Because of our instant gratification culture, we're impatient.
2. Because of our privileged upbringing, we developed a mediocre work ethic.
3. Because of our self-reliant, entrepreneurial bent, we don't offer loyalty easily.
4. Because of our abundance of choices, we're quick to quit and pursue something better.

No wonder we can't stick with anything for very long. From college majors to new jobs to romantic relationships, stick-to-itiveness isn't exactly our forte.

Fortunately, executing via stick-to-itiveness is a skill that can be learned.

All you have to do is shift your attitude completely – work hard, smart and long while nobody notices – and design a daily practice of self-determination and commitment.

Hey. I said it could be *learned* – not that it would be easy.

Easy buttons are lies.

It takes guts to stick yourself out there – but it takes gusto to keep yourself out there.

*Up to the challenge?*

OCTOBER 19

# Sticky is the start of spreadable.

But that doesn't mean it's enough.

Sticky doesn't mean viable or substantive. *Sticky* literally means "adhesive," whereas *spreadable* means, "to stretch out and send in various directions."

Prove to people that you're worth hanging in there for. That the long-term investment in you will pay dividends eventually. As Reverend Carlin reminded us:

*"You want people to know the accumulated record, not just a spotty shot."*

Otherwise whatever you execute will be dismissed as inherently remarkable, yet ultimately inconsequential.

*Are you a fad or a movement?*

OCTOBER 20

## Stimulate a gradual reduction of dependency.

An addiction is anything that blocks your life force.

If you've ever dealt with a serious one before, you know that telling the truth of an addiction requires mountains of courage.

The cool part is, once you're willing to confront it, everything changes.

For example, I've historically been addicted to attention. Which isn't always a bad thing. Especially in my line of work as an entrepreneur, where anonymity is bankruptcy.

But attention is a seductive mistress. And when it finally occurred to me that I was using unhealthy tools to attract attention – some of which cost me money, relationships, even my health – I made a conscious choice to reduce that dependency.

Will my addiction to attention eventually disappear completely? Probably not. And whatever is currently blocking your life force is probably the same way.

This reminds me of an unexpectedly inspiring line from the hilarious movie, *Get Him to the Greek*:

*"There isn't a thing in this world you can't turn into heroin."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The secret lies in the ability to be aware of it while simultaneously keeping it at bay.

*What are you currently addicted to that's weighing you and the people you love down?*

OCTOBER 21

# Stop spending most of your time whining about the progress you're not making.

Sadly, this is a popular (but poor) energy investment decision made by entrepreneurs.

It reminds me of an old *Calvin & Hobbes* comic I read as a kid. For some reason, this particular strip always stuck with me. During a parent/teacher conference, Mrs. Wormwood explains to Calvin's mother:

*"If he put half as much energy into his work as he did into his protests, he might actually score well."*

Do you know someone like this? Work with someone like this? Marry someone like this?

It's amazing: If people sat down and actually mapped out their energy investments, they'd be astonished at how out of whack their priorities are.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Beware of investing your finest energies running in place.

Treadmills are great for a convenient workout, but the scenery never changes and your knees always end up hurting like hell. If you're wasting all your time externalizing the reasons for a lack of progress, you'll never actually make any.

Learn to greet obstacles as exciting challenges that you can creatively attack.

*Do you complain about the wind, hope the wind will stop, or adjust your sails?*

OCTOBER 22

# Stop wasting your brilliant mental effort on negativity.

When you misuse your energy like this, you don't make meaning – you make people want to slap you.

Plus, if you deplete your energy by staying mad at the world for not giving you what you want, you won't have any resources left to actually get what you want. Next time you feel the ghost of Debbie Downer rattling the chains of your heart, ask yourself questions like:

1. How can I find this situation funny?
2. What might I have done to invite this misfortune upon myself?
3. And how can I use this to become more of the person I want to become?

Ultimately, negativity is like back hair: It simply doesn't look good on anyone.

*What purpose will morph your pain into wisdom?*

OCTOBER 23

## Strengthen your why.

How to execute is not your responsibility.

Why is what counts.

Why is what matters.

Why is what makes money.

Decide details later and start focusing on the true motivation behind your current endeavors. Ask questions like:

1. What do I want this idea to become?
2. What core values motivated my decision?
3. With what attitudes do I need to approach this endeavor for me to look back ten years later and still be okay with my decision?

When you enlist a strong enough why, your plan – your how – will write itself.

Otherwise, no amount of planning in the world will compensate for misguided motivations.

*When was the last time you took inventory of your why?*

OCTOBER 24

## Stress is the best educator.

Executing what matters will add stress to your life.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. Personally, I think stress gets a bad rap. In fact, I think stress is simply beautiful. The secret is to change your relationship with your discomfort.

*Recognize it. Rename it. Love it. Then, partner with and learn from it.*

Don't be so severe with yourself. Your constant state of contraction will only help the stress grow stronger. As the *Tao Te Ching* reminds us:

*"Any over determined action produces its exact opposite."*

In short: What you resist persists; but what you accept lessens.

Instead of trying to eradicate your stress – attend to your stress. Turn toward its bid. Consider it a gift. A mini-education. You'll be amazed at what you'll learn from it.

And the tuition is free, too.

*If you asked the five people closest to you if you were stressed out, what would they say?*



OCTOBER 25

## Strike a healthy balance.

Feedback-free environments are not conducive to learning new skills.

But feedback bloated environments are not conducive to executing old skills. Your challenge is discernment. As Alan Weiss explained in *Thrive*:

*"In major decisions, involve others. Whether personally or professionally, avail yourself of the intelligence and experience of others. Conversely, never accept unsolicited feedback. It is always given for the benefit of the sender, and it will cause you to be bounced around as if you were in a pinball machine. Act only on patterns, not random events. Once is an accident, twice a coincidence, three times a pattern. Whether positive or negative, don't bounce around in the feedback pinball machine."*

Ultimately, it's like playing in a rock band: Feedback can make your performance better, louder and stronger – but too much of it can also blow your amp and ruin the show for everybody.

Especially that drunken biker with the purple mohawk sitting in the front row. And you definitely don't want to piss off that guy.

*Are you a master of discernment?*

OCTOBER 26

## Strike a passionate pose.

At the risk of sounding like (yet another) self-help, motivational fluff artist, executing without passion is nothing but a trash talker in drag.

However, here are a few thoughts about passion that you've probably never considered.

As I mentioned earlier, passion without purpose is pointless. Otherwise your passion becomes nothing but beautiful blazing fire that burns you and everyone you touch.

Also, ask yourself the following questions to gauge the relevancy of your passion:

1. Is your passion cool, but irrelevant to the marketplace?
2. Is your passion inherently interesting, but difficult to sell?
3. Is your passion intrinsically appealing, but something you suck at?

Keep these thoughts in your mind and you'll prevent striking a passionate pose that nobody notices.

*Are you currently operating out of your passion in the most profitable, healthy way?*

OCTOBER 27

# Structureless environments paralyze.

Structure allows growth.

And the impact of an idea is directly proportionate to how well it is organized.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Preserve the sanctity of your workspace.

Not an office – a workspace.

Call it an office and slice your creativity in half.

Call it a workspace – a factory of creativity – and you make ideas happen.

*Is your content as brilliant as the system that manages it?*

OCTOBER 28

## Stupidity is the best mentor.

I've mentioned several of my mentors throughout this book, to whom I am forever indebted.

Sadly, most people maintain a narrow definition of the word "mentor." It derives from the Latin *mentos*, which means, "delicious, fruity candy with awkward commercials."

Just kidding. It actually means, "intent, purpose and spirit."

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Mentorship isn't only about an individual.

It's about openness to evolving yourself.

It's about viewing every aspect of life as an education and purification opportunity.

The cool part is, anyone (or any thing) can be your mentor.

Take stupidity, for example. That's my favorite mentor. Probably because he tends to be around a lot. Like Homer Simpson once complained:

*"Why do the things that only happen to stupid people always happen to me?"*

The difference between Homer and me is that I don't complain about the stupid things I do. I give thanks for them. I document them. I write out the lessons I learned from them. And then I share them with other people so we can evolve together through our mutual stupidity.

Execution wouldn't be the same without it.

*Are you willing to look like a complete idiot on the road to immortality?*

OCTOBER 29

# Success alone is not enough to anchor you.

Embody the unshakable, unbending belief that you deserve success.

Not that you're entitled to success – but that you're good enough to receive it.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Cure the waves of whoami. Remind yourself that who you already are – is enough to get what you want. You are worthy of this dream, and this dream is worthy of you.

Otherwise you'll never reign supreme over the wounds and upsets of life. As Karen Salmonshon wrote in *Enough, Damn It!*

*"Lots of pessimism will only get you lots of opportunity to be right about your pessimism. Don't be a pessimist who succeeds at being right about being a pessimist."*

Don't just be successful.

Be convinced that you deserve it, too.

*Are you shaping your world or being shaped by it?*

OCTOBER 30

## **Success comes from surrender.**

Surrendering to your purpose.  
Surrendering to your customers.  
Surrendering to your constituency.  
Surrendering to your personal economy.

So many things to surrender to, so little room in your ego to do so.

That's the hard part. Getting past your fear of sticking yourself out there and becoming vulnerable to the world.

Two words of advice: Risk it.

*What three things do you need to let go of to ascend to the next level?*

OCTOBER 31

# **People who refuse to dress up for Halloween really piss me off.**

Don't be one of these people.

Halloween is the greatest holiday on the planet. And it's the only day of the year I (actually) get to be anonymous. Sweet.

Anyway, I'm giving you the day off. You deserve it.

See you tomorrow.

*What will your costume look like this year?*

**Brainstuff  
determines  
bankstuff.**



**How are you  
positioning  
yourself as a  
thinker?**



**If you want to take  
action on what  
matters, make what  
matters simpler.**



**Is your business  
a friend of  
simplicity?**

NOVEMBER

# **Study your advantage carefully – it's not what you think it is.**

I'll never forget the day my mentor pointed out  
my unfair advantage as an entrepreneur.

Completely blindsided me.<sup>11</sup>

Your challenge is to gather feedback from dispassionate observers.  
Ask people with no stake in your career what  
they think your unfair advantage is.

You might be pleasantly surprised.

Unless they say nothing. In that case, email me right away.

*How are you immune from imitation?*



<sup>11</sup> If you want to know what he said to me,  
go back and reread the intro of this book.

NOVEMBER 1

# **Success is (frequently) nothing but mediocrity in disguise.**

Sometimes. Not all the time, but sometimes.

Just watch *American Idol*. Or read any *New York Times* bestseller.

You don't even have to be that good. Not anymore. That's why it pains me to write the following sentence:

*Even though the cream rises to the top, mediocrity often hitches a ride.*

Personally, I couldn't do it. I don't publish junk. Average isn't acceptable in my business.

On the other hand, if you're at peace with mediocrity, more power to you. In fact, I admire you.

Sometimes insisting on being amazing is a huge pain in the ass.

*Is average enough for you?*

NOVEMBER 2

# Suffering is the sandpaper of life.

*"If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?"*

I get that question a lot – especially during media interviews and after speeches. And my answer is always the same:

*Nothing.*

I would do everything exactly the same way.

Here's why: I am eternally and unregretfully grateful for everything that's ever happened to me – good and bad. *Especially the bad.* After all: From great suffering comes from great awakening.

The person I've become is the summation of all that stuff. It made me who I am. And I love who I am.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Consider the three most powerful lessons you've ever learned in your life. Odds are, at least two of the three stemmed from some form of pain, didn't they?

And that's a beautiful thing. That's how we learn and grow.

You need to put all the bad stuff to good use. Use suffering – even if it's minor – as sandpaper.

Smooth out the edges of your life like a pinewood derby car, cruising to the finish.

*What made you into you?*

NOVEMBER 3

## **Surrender to the next phase of your own evolution.**

When I turned thirty, I made the decision not to mope around like most people do when that milestone comes to pass.

Instead, I memorialized the shift into the next chapter of my life. I didn't celebrate my thirtieth birthday – I viewed it as an upgrade to "Scott 3.0."

I even ordered a hundred orange silicon bracelets to commemorate this life change, which I plan to wear daily until my 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. It's been a fun experiment.

More importantly, I've learned a key insight about executing:

*Stay in stride with the upward, progressive movement of your life. Then, with buoyant spirit, with firm foundation and with immediate intent, reorient yourself in new directions.*

The people who matter will notice. Especially the new version of yourself.

*Will you use your situation as a catalyst to grow and evolve, or will you use it to beat yourself up?*

NOVEMBER 4

## Surround yourself with ass kickers.

Self-motivation is contagious.

If you hang with people whose footprints are plastered on their own assess, you will have no choice but to become motivated yourself.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Associate with the generous, gravitate to the cheerful, listen to the inspiring and court the challenging.

Or, if you don't have friends like that, you can always use dead Italian guys. Take Leonardo da Vinci. He once shared:

*"Rouse yourself from sleep because lying down will not bring thee fame."*

Post that quotation next to your alarm clock. Maybe that'll get you out of bed to go take action on what matters.

*Do masters of self-motivation surround you?*

NOVEMBER 5

## Surround yourself with persisters.

Their enthusiasm will infect you.

Their action will motivate you.

Their velocity will inspire you.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Think about the five people you spend the most time with. On a scale of 1-10, estimate how well each person personifies stick-to-itiveness. Then, grab a calculator and take the average of those five scores.

Ultimately, you'll develop a realistic reflection of your own level of commitment, since you're nothing but the average of the five people you spend the most time with.

And if you're not thrilled with the score, maybe it's time to rearrange your relationship priorities.

Remember: You are the average of the five people you text message most frequently.

*Who inspires your persistence and determination?*

NOVEMBER 6

## Surround yourself with starters.

Bikram Yoga is my religion. Literally. Not being clever or funny.

The word “religion” comes from the Latin term *religio*, which means, “to link back.”

That means your religion is the one thing in your life that every other thing in your life links back to – regardless of what you believe, or even if you don’t believe.

Everybody’s got religion about something. For me, it’s yoga.

When I started practicing on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, I was a beginner in every sense of the word: Never done it, never wanted to do it and never thought I’d actually do it. Especially since I heard the classes were ninety minutes in a 105° room.

Holy Deodorant, Batman!

I shared those exact words with my instructor, Rebecca, the first time I walked into the studio. She smiled and replied:

*“Yeah, that’s what I said thirteen years ago.”*

And now, here I am, practicing four days a week.

Why? Because I initially surrounded myself with veteran starters.

What about you? Are you hanging with people who move? Or people who watch *Jersey Shore*? These are the people who will fuel your ability to execute.

*Who do you need to delete from your life?*



NOVEMBER 7

## Take massive, rapid and consistent action.

That's how momentum accumulates.

Newton was right: A body in motion stays in motion.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Shoot for five Highly Valuable Activities. Every day. Even if you take an occasional step backwards – at least you're still stepping. Movement (backwards or forwards) is necessary to prevent atrophy.

Some people just stand there. They're called nouns.

Verbs, on the other hand, take action.

*Which one are you?*

NOVEMBER 8

# Take no for an answer.

Did you know that the word, “No” is a complete sentence?

Yep.

If you want to close the execution gap, learn to bring this beautiful sentence to the forefront of your vocabulary. Also, learn to stop being apologetic for what you delete from your life. Bolster entrepreneurial awareness by asking yourself:

1. Is this an opportunity or an opportunity to be used?
2. Is this an opportunity or a distraction in disguise?

That’ll keep the bloodsuckers, timewasters and energy vampires away. That’ll also prevent you from shooting yourself in the foot.

Because when you refuse to take no for an answer, you waste valuable time trying to force a yes that’s never going to happen.

*What attractive offer have you wisely turned down this week?*

NOVEMBER 9

## Take the critical number longcut.

10,000.

According to Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers*, that's the number of practice hours that earns the mark of mastery.

For you math majors, that's ten years.

Ten years of cranking.

Ten years of executing what matters.

Ten years of deliberate practice to truly master a subject area or skill.

Doesn't matter if you're a singer, writer, swimmer or dog trainer.

Rigorous training and precision drilling are prerequisites of mastery.

*How many hours have you clocked?*

NOVEMBER 10

## Talking is the enemy of taking action.

Last week I handed my friend Jerry a copy of my book, *The Approachable Leader*.

*"Scott, I didn't even know you were writing another book!"*

*"Exactly. And that's why I got it done: Because you never heard me talking about."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** There is an inverse relationship between the number of people you tell about your exciting new idea and the number of days before that idea (actually) comes to fruition.

Julia Cameron outlined this concept in *The Artist's Way*:

*"The first rule of magic is self-containment. You must hold your intention within yourself, stoking it with power. Only then will you be able to manifest what you desire."*

I'm all for sharing your goals with the world. And memorializing your intentions. And bringing your dreams to fruition through visualization and peer accountability.

I also think it's easy to blow the lid off your ideas by telling too many people about them.

Stop flapping your gums and start shuffling your feet.

*Will your lack of self-control slowly dissipate your idea into the quicksand of non-execution?*

NOVEMBER 11

## Tap into your natural sense of urgency.

Because I was born in 1980, you might suspect that the repeatedly mentioned practice of impatience is a generational attribute.

There's some truth to that. Still, inasmuch as my generation favors the A.D.D., instant-gratification, hyperspeed mindset, I'd say impatience is more of an entrepreneurial bent.

Here's proof.

Consider Dr. Edith Martin, born in the 1950's, whose resume will astound you: Doctoral Graduate of Georgia Tech, former VP of Boeing's High Technology Center and CIO of the DC-based satellite system, Intellesat. In a recent alumni newsletter, she wrote the following:

*"Impatience is an important part of being an entrepreneur. The complement of impatience is motivation. It's having a vision of what can be done, having a desire to realize that vision, and not being tied to how things occur traditionally – but a willingness to break new ground. That's willingness, not a need – just willingness. And you don't do it just for its own sake."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Even if you're not thirty years old, and even if you don't consider yourself an entrepreneur, you can still embrace restless expectation, eagerness for change and be raring to go.

*What do you need to give yourself permission to stop waiting for?*

NOVEMBER 12

## Teams degrade decision quality.

In his classic 1972 work, *Victims of Groupthink*, Yale psychology researcher Irving Janis wrote that groups often breed a false confidence that leads to unsound decisions none of the individuals in the group would have made on their own.

I've experienced this in my work as a one-man show.

When you work alone, you're forced to believe something because you truly believe – not because the group says it's so.

When you work alone, you have no choice but to decide with conviction and confidence, as opposed to following the herd.

*How many poor decisions have you made because you delegated your confidence to the group?*

NOVEMBER 13

## **Tell the world you roll solo.**

*"The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready."*

Thoreau. *Walden*. 1854.

Does that statement still hold true today?

Absolutely. And that's the problem with collaboration. Or teams. Or partnerships. Or committees. The more people you have, the longer it takes to execute.

Not that you should be opposed to working with others.

Sometimes teams help.

*Sometimes they hinder.*

Sometimes two heads are better than one.

*Sometimes two heads are deadlier than one.*

Sometimes together everyone achieves more.

*Sometimes together everyone annoys each other beyond belief and nothing gets executed.*

If the man who works alone can start today – and if the world is accelerating faster than ever before in history – it seems to make more sense (and more cents) to go it alone.

*Do you really need to have another person come along with you?*

NOVEMBER 14

## Teams might be hurting you.

Along the same lines, in Richard Hackman's book, *Leading Teams*, he explains that people tend to think that teams are the democratic and efficient way to get things done.

*"When you have a team, the possibility exists that it will generate magic, producing something extraordinary and a collective creation of previously unimagined quality or beauty."*

*"But don't count on it. Teams underperform, despite all the extra resources they have. Problems with coordination and motivation typically chip away at the benefits of collaboration. And even when you have a strong and cohesive team, it's often in competition with other teams, and that dynamic can also get in the way of real progress."*

Hackman helps us realize that with teams, you often have two strikes against you right from the start.

Sometimes, having a team is often worse than having no team at all.

*Is your romantic notion of the value of teams hampering your ability to execute what matters?*



NOVEMBER 15

## The best way to bring home the bacon is to raise your own pigs.

That way, you're the only shot caller.

*No permission. No committees. No compliance. No decision-making hierarchy.*

Can you imagine how much time, money, effort, energy and stress you could conserve by in-housing your next project?

Ask yourself:

1. What if you bought your own equipment and made it yourself?
2. What if you built everything proprietary and created your own studio?
3. What if you never had to hire anyone ever again because you learned how to do it yourself?

Just a thought.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Having done it yourself makes you a more educated entrepreneur. Plus execution occurs faster. Maybe being a pig farmer isn't as bad as it sounds.

Ultimately, pork isn't white meat – it's green money.

*How much (more) money could you be earning working solo?*

NOVEMBER 16

## The addiction to perfection is keeping you from starting.

The voice of perfection is piercing and demanding.

Unfortunately, perfectionism is nothing but:

A procrastinator in disguise.

A tired excuse assembled by your ego to prevent execution.

A trap set by your neurotic compulsions as a feeble effort to prohibit progress.

A campaign against creativity, waged by the authoritative voices in your head.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Heighten your tolerance of ambiguity. Exert your flawed humanity and become the biggest imperfectionist you know. And seek progress, not perfection.

After all, the word “start” comes from the Old English term, *stiertan*, which means, “a sudden movement.”

Doesn’t say anything about being perfect, or even good.

Just sudden.

*What are you assuming that is stopping you?*

NOVEMBER 17

## **The road to mastery is marked by periods of minimal progress.**

The world is not arranging itself for your convenience.

Nor is the world waiting breathlessly to hear what you have to say.

Enjoy your plateaus.

Celebrate small gains.

Run in place today to cross the finish line tomorrow.

That's the level of patience required to execute what matters.

*How long are you willing to do it before the right people notice?*

NOVEMBER 18

## **The path to prestige is paved with pandemonium.**

Not everyone survives success.

Becoming too successful, too early and too quickly will harm your health because although money loves speed – velocity creates stress. And stress kills people.

At least that's what I remember thinking to myself after my left lung collapsed and I spent a week in a hospital bed with a chest tube.

Pace yourself. Get rich slowly.

Don't get sucked into the addictive vortex of success and achievement.

*What new challenges will arise once you become successful?*

NOVEMBER 19

## The strong wait.

Self-control. Self-discipline. That's what it takes to be dangerously patient. You've no doubt noticed my repeated use of these words in this book.

Every time the clock seems to be moving in reverse, keep saying to yourself:

*"The longer it takes, the stronger I'm gonna be when I get there."*

Besides, you might not even be ready to handle success yet.

Like when my first book came out in 2002 and was featured on CNN and *USA Today*, yet I had no idea how to leverage that coverage.

Or in 2006 when I was interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* and became so stressed out that I had to be hospitalized.

It's like my mentor reminds me:

*"The greatest relationship tragedy is finding the person you want to marry before you're ready."*

Maybe waiting isn't so bad after all.

*Are you willing to forego short-term gratification for long-term fulfillment?*

NOVEMBER 20

## There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip.

Or so say our tea-sipping, cricket-playing British friends.

They suggest that even when the outcome of an event seems certain, things can still go wrong. What's more, many things may happen to prevent you from carrying out what you intend to do. That's why it's imperative to keep hustling till the last minute of your wait time.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Instead of taking laps around the anxiety pool, go find something you can throw your shoulder into.

Be strong. Assume nothing. Otherwise complacency will get the best of you.

*Do you confuse patience with idleness?*

NOVEMBER 21

## **There's no such thing as recession proof.**

Everyone is affected by a recession. *Everyone.*

Maybe not financially. But we all feel it. Physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Don't be so arrogant as to assume the recession wants nothing to do with you. I got news for you: The recession doesn't care if you sell an inelastic, "recession-proof" product. It's still coming after you.

And if you leave your guard down, it's going to deliver the death stroke when you least expect it.

*How are you preparing for the devastation?*

NOVEMBER 22

## Think on paper immediately.

Too many ideas never make it past their initial stages.

The reason is because too many entrepreneurs have disorganized thinking that blocks new possibilities from surfacing.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** As soon you get a new idea for a project or business venture, spend an hour writing out the following lists:

1. Every Thought I'm Having about This Idea
2. Every Question I Have about This Idea
3. People I Should Talk to about This Idea
4. Immediate Action Items to Take on this Idea.

The secret of thinking on paper is to just puke, non-stop, with no editing and no opinions. Brainstorming needs to be objective in order to prevent *premature cognitive commitment*, aka, falling in love with your idea too soon.

Use flip charts, dry erase boards, note cards, bulleted lists – whatever it takes.

Just do it soon. Because if you don't write it down, it never happened.

*What did you write today?*



NOVEMBER 23

## Time tramples execution.

You didn't execute because you didn't have enough time, right?

*Wrong.*

You didn't execute because you didn't have the right relationship with time.

In Gay Hendricks' book, *The Big Leap*, he shares a profound insight about developing a healthier relationship with time:

*"Get yourself in harmony with the reality that you are the source of time. Put yourself on a diet of complete abstinence of complaining about time. This takes you out of the victim position. Then, when you stop complaining about time, you cease perpetrating the destructive myth that time is the persecutor and you are its victim."*

Hendricks' philosophy changed my life. Based on the truth that *expectation determines outcome*, it challenged me to stop thinking time was "out there." To take ownership and acknowledge that I was where time came from. His book also taught me this:

*"Time will stop owning you if you claim time as yours, and it will release its claim on you. Stop using time (or the lack thereof) as an excuse. Stop engaging in an ongoing wrestling match with time. And stop viewing time as some big, threatening pressure that is always about to overwhelm you. Once you understand that you are where time comes from, you have the power to make as much of it as you want."*

Time is your friend because you are time. Chew on that one, Einstein.

*How much time do you really have, and how much will you execute because of that?*

NOVEMBER 24

## Transcend orthodoxy.

In the preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman writes:

*"Take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men. Re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Most of society's "rules" aren't even rules – they're self imposed limitations squelching the life out of your dream. Even The Wonderful Wizard of Oz admitted:

*"The truth is not fact or reason. The truth is simply what everyone agrees on."*

Agree on the truth that matters – your truth. The truth that *you* taste.

Otherwise you'll find yourself at the mercy of whoever wields authority over the things you desire.

*Are you doing what has the highest value or the strongest expectation?*

NOVEMBER 25

## Transitions are teachers.

My friend Ria recently reminded me that when you undergo periods of personal transformation, it's crucial to examine the new and different types of things you attract into your life.

*People. Ideas. Situations. Thoughts. Attitudes. Experiences.*

Whatever shows up in your life is your fault. Outer represents inner. You are the result of yourself.

And the trick is twofold:

1. Practicing enough self-awareness to recognize that these new things are supposed to be teaching you.
2. Maintaining a teachable, coachable attitude to convert those new things into lifelong lessons.

*If the current phase of your life were a how-to book, what would it be called?*

NOVEMBER 26

## Translate what you know into action.

Enough ideas.

Your body is tired.

Your brain is overloaded.

Your notebook is already full of new ideas.

The tricky part is translating what you know into action.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** You don't need more intellectual capital – you need more executional velocity.

Knowledge that doesn't lead you to wisdom is nothing but empty calories. Real wisdom – and real money – comes from doing.

Otherwise you're just a smart guy who knows a bunch of stuff.

*Are you turning your ideas into money or into more ideas?*

NOVEMBER 27

## Trim the fat.

It's easy to motivate yourself when you're not weighed down by heaps of unimportant, inconsequential debris.

The secret is to become skilled at dropping the rocks that are slowing you down. Try asking questions like:

1. Who creates the fires that you waste time putting out?
2. What consumes your time but isn't making any money?
3. How much time and energy are you wasting on things over which you have absolutely zero control?

Remember: Motivation means choosing.

And choosing means letting other options go.

*Are you prepared to cut yourself loose from the past and swing into the present?*

NOVEMBER 28

## **Trust that there is a place for your gifts in the world.**

Otherwise, why else would you have them?

To impress your dog? Come on. Your dog is impressed when you fart.

Look: You're amazing at something for a reason. And you've been given your own plot of soil to cultivate. It's time to unite those inner elements and regift your originality to the world.

Because whether or not you believe it, the world needs to hear your voice.

Go give it a chance to sing.

Don't be the annoying girl in the back of the karaoke bar who, every week, violently refuses to get up on stage.

Sing.

Sing your heart out.

Sing like Whitney in *The Bodyguard*.

Show the world what you can be at your best, and your voice will be the great maker of meaning.

*What corner of the universe is yours to transform?*

NOVEMBER 29

## Try jumping first.

Ever gone cliff diving?

The same thing happens every time: You stand there, shaking in your Tevas, debating whether or not to take the plunge. Meanwhile, your friends call you a sissy.

Eventually you can't take it anymore. You realize you're only delaying the inevitable.

*So you jump. No thinking. No motivation needed. You just jump.*

And as your feet cut into the icy water, your body exhilarates with excitement. It's the best rush you've had in years.

Then what happens?

You quickly swim to shore, race back up the mountain and do it again.

The only difference is, now you're motivated – because you've already jumped before.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** The best motivation for doing something is having already done it once.

*What cliff do you need to dive off of?*

NOVEMBER 30

## Trying to do everything yourself is dangerous.

As often as I've ranted for eleven months about the dangers of depending on teams, you still can't do everything by yourself.

But sometimes you try.

Which means you're a perfectionist.

Which means you're a control freak.

Which means you're never going to be fully sated.

Which means you're never going to declare anything done.

For example, my friend Mara is currently redesigning her blog.

When she sent me a ten-page document of comps, pictures and sketches – which looked awful, by the way – I asked her one question:

*"Mara, are you a blog designer?"*

As suspected, she said no. At which point I suggested:

*"Then go pay someone who is."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Next time you find yourself trapped in control-freak mode, simply ask yourself the same question:

*Is this what I do for living?*

If the answer is no, pay someone who *does* do it for a living while you go take action on something that matters.

Learn to surrender control of your ideas and let the pros do what they do. Trust smart people. Execution will happen faster, better and cheaper.

*How much money is one hour of your time worth?*



**Be a departure from  
traditional labels.  
Sweep away the  
stifling odor of the  
multitude.**



**What boundaries  
are you bending?**

DECEMBER

# Turn your pipe dream into a dream come true.

To execute is to put to death.

That's the big question:

What do you need to murder in your life that's  
preventing you from taking action?

Excuses? Illusions?

Assumptions? Procrastination?

That cute but annoying neighbor whose  
home cooking smells like hot trash?

Ideas aren't meant to stay ideas.

Don't leave them that way.

Killed anything this week?



DECEMBER 1

## Trust only discipline.

Forget about luck.  
Forget about talent.  
Forget about creativity.  
Forget about intelligence.

*Discipline is all that counts.*

Discipline is the great differentiator.  
Discipline is the unsung hero of success.  
Discipline is the bridge between ambition and execution.

But.

Discipline doesn't mean disrespecting yourself.  
Discipline doesn't mean adding more stress to your day.  
Discipline doesn't mean over-regimenting every minute of your life.

The secret is disciplining yourself without destroying yourself.

*Will you cross that line?*

D E C E M B E R 2

## Turn on the faucet.

Here's how I start every day of my life:

Wake up early. Shower. Clock in. Sit down at my computer. Open a blank document. Puke out three-pages of stream of consciousness free writing. Recite my incantation. Get to work.

That's how I get the creative faucet flowing. That's how I fuel my ability to execute. And the advantage to writing morning pages is, according to *Artist's Way* pioneer, Julia Cameron:

*"It's a time out. A ritual of reflection. A morning meditation. Your first check-in of the day. And your gripe session for working out grudges."*

Your challenge is to create a similar ritual to help get the faucet flowing.

What you'll discover is that taking action on what matters significantly easier if you have a trigger to activate the process.

*What's yours?*

D E C E M B E R 3

## Trust the process.

Whatever you're currently disciplining yourself to do, there comes a point where you have to affirm:

*"Look, I might not like doing this right now. But I have great faith. I honor and trust the process. And I know it's going to pay dividends. Sure, I might not know what those dividends are yet. Or when they're going to surface. But when they do, I'll know that the wait was well worth it."*

It's a kind of like giving birth: You can't fight the contractions – you just have to trust the process.<sup>12</sup>

The cool part is, when you trust the execution process, you allow your primal self to do what it needs to do and lead you in the right direction.

Learn to surrender. Let it have its way with you.

*Are you willing to let process take over?*

<sup>12</sup> At least, that's what I'm assuming. I've never actually given birth. Although I did used to work at Applebee's, where I had to clean up after a customer whose water broke at the table. Swear to God.

D E C E M B E R 4

## Try being a beginner.

*"Never too late, never too old, never too bad and never too sick to do this yoga and start from scratch again."*

That's the mantra of yoga legend, Bikram Choudhury.

Interestingly, the word "discipline" comes from the Latin *discipulus*, which means, "student." This suggests a few keys about execution.

**FIRST:** Declare your incompetence. Admit what you know you don't know.

**SECOND:** Learn to love mistakes. They're your best teachers.

**THIRD:** Try not to be too hard on yourself. Let go of the self-criticisms that make discipline a big bite to swallow.

**FINALLY:** Every great chess player was once a beginner.

Hey: If the road to victory were smooth, everyone would already be there.

*Are you prepared to zero out your board?*

D E C E M B E R 5

## **Transform behaviors into non-negotiables.**

The best way to discipline yourself to execute consistently is to make it a non-negotiable.

Here's how the timeline goes:

First you never do it.

Then you sometimes do it.

Then it starts to become a habit.

Then it becomes something you're disciplined to.

And eventually, after months (sometimes years!) of work, it morphs into a non-negotiable.

And that's when you're golden. That's when you're unstoppable.

Because you no longer think about – it's just something you do. And if you don't, your whole day goes to hell.

That's the point: To achieve self-sustaining momentum and make yourself positively addicted to do the execution process.

*How could you set yourself up so you never have to discipline yourself again?*

D E C E M B E R 6

## Trade in your desire.

Of course you don't want to finish your project.

*But you will anyway.* Because you know your company will thank you tomorrow.

Of course you don't want to come in an hour earlier.

*But you will anyway.* Because you know the people who matter will notice.

Unfortunately, delayed gratification isn't exactly your strong suit. Especially in a society that gives you everything you want in six seconds.

The challenge is making sure your lack of desire to do something is outweighed by the benefit of doing it.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Use visual reinforcements to keep that ratio in check. Surround yourself with pictures, images and other reminders of the positive outcome of execution.

This will help inspire a vision of the future and, most likely, annoy your spouse to no end.

Good. Maybe this will inspire him to drag his lazy carcass to work early too.

*Have you learned to love what's good for you?*



DECEMBER 7

## Make a public commitment.

My friend Andy once advised:

*"The best way finish your next book is to sell a thousand copies of it first."*

**FIRST:** This paints you into an accountable corner. *You wouldn't want to let your readers down, would you?*

**SECOND:** By building a deadline into your schedule, you put healthy pressure on yourself to execute. *You wouldn't want to let yourself down, would you?*

**THIRD:** By illuminating the light at the end of the tunnel, you discipline yourself to work backwards. *You wouldn't want to misallocate your energy, would you?*

When you add these three attributes together – then multiply them with the coefficient of public declaration – you'll have no choice but to execute what matters.

Otherwise you risk pissing off the people who count. Including you.

*To whom are you communicating your commitment?*

DECEMBER 8

## Try making history instead.

With every idea you have, ask yourself:

1. Has this ever been done before?
2. What current successful ideas could I combine to create an entirely new animal that nobody's ever seen before?
3. What slight modification, combination, juxtaposition or unique spin could I put on this to make it the first of its kind?

Do this, and you won't just make money – you'll make history.

*Are you going for the sales books or the record books?*

D E C E M B E R 9

## **Unsolicited negative feedback is (usually) a manifestation of insecurity.**

Especially when someone prefaces her supposedly brilliant wisdom with:

*"Let me give a friendly piece of advice..."*

Wrong. It's rarely friendly and it's not advice – it's projection in disguise. There's a fine line between helpful, gentle criticism and vindictive self-projection.

The question you have to ask yourself is:

*"Does this person offer feedback from the desire to see me become better or from a desire to see me fail?"*

Hopefully the former. Because as we've all experienced at some time or another, there are some people out there who simply don't want to see you succeed.

Jerks.

*Are you willing to tune out people who don't have your best interests at heart?*

DECEMBER 10

## **Unwillingness to pay the (financial) price will hurt you in the long run.**

People come to me for help all the time.

Some are corporate workers.

Some are business owners.

Some are entrepreneurs.

Some are single parents.

Either way, I'm happy to advise.

For a fee, that is.

My consulting service is called "Rent Scott's Brain," not "Waste Scott's Time."

Interestingly, the minute I put a stake in the ground and set a precedent of value on my availability, people flinch. They back off. And they always feed me the same, stock excuse:

*"Well, it's not that I don't think you're worth the money, it's just that..."*

Wrong. It has nothing to do with me, and everything to do with your unwillingness to commit with both feet. That's exactly why I charge for my time:

Because people who don't pay me don't hear me.

I charge enough so people will actually listen to – and take action upon – what I say. And with financial investment comes greater commitment to execution, every time.

*Who have you paid lately?*

DECEMBER 11

## Values are navigators.

Maps and compasses are for sailors and boy scouts.

As long as you have enough self-awareness to ask:

*"If I were me, what would I do in this situation?"*

You'll get where you're supposed to go.

That's how you chart your course.

That's how you traverse turbulent waters.

By knowing yourself so well that you could memorialize your non-negotiable decision making patterns to the point of repeatability.

Do that, and I promise you'll discover land you can execute on.

*What if you started wearing a bracelet that read, "WWID?"*

D E C E M B E R 1 2

## **Victory is fueled by optimistic impatience.**

In 2009, Bill and Melinda Gates made a historic presentation to the US Government entitled, "Living Proof." During her opening remarks, Melinda admitted the following:

*"The world is getting better – but not fast enough. Unfortunately, it's not getting better for everyone. But we've seen the living proof that global healthcare really can work. And that's the kind of thing that makes us impatient optimists."*

What about you?

I wonder what would happen if you pinpointed a little living proof in your body of experience to prove the payoff of impatience.

*How could you reinforce that proof to fuel your immediate progress?*

D E C E M B E R 13

## Wage a war against inertia.

In *The Paradox of Choice*, we learned that the desire to avoid regret induces people not to act at all.

Barry Schwartz dubbed this principle *inaction inertia*.

Your challenge is simple: Reduce your number of choices. If you want to move forward, stop killing yourself trying to pick the best of everything. Stop plaguing yourself with post-decision doubts. And stop exhausting yourself running ridiculous searches of every possibility. Choices cause stress, and stress stops you. According to Schwartz:

*"The more choices you have, the longer it takes to commit; the longer it takes to commit, the more you regret and reevaluate every decision after the fact; and the more you regret and reevaluate, the less satisfaction you ultimately receive from the choices you make."*

Eventually, there comes a point of diminishing returns. Eventually, you need to stop choosing and start moving.

When massive resistance is marshaled against you, you'll never run out of reasons not to choose.

Decide anyway. Even when it seems senseless to others.

*Are you a great chooser?*

DECEMBER 14

## **Walk where no path exists.**

Forget what the sign says about preserving the landscape.

To make meaning through execution, you must leave tracks. Muddy ones. As long as you remember these four words:

Move with more speed.

JFK articulated those very words in 1961 during a famous television interview with Sander Vanocur.

*"It's either that, or sit and wait while the world around you collapses,"* he said.

Take your pick.

*Do you follow the path already taken, or go where there is no path and leave a trail?*



DECEMBER 15

## What are the three next steps you can take on your own?

This is an expanded version of David Allen's famous question from *Getting Things Done*:

*"What's the next action?"*

The secret is twofold.

**FIRST:** By assigning a number to it (three), you set a quota of accomplishment. This forces you to stretch your thinking.

**SECOND:** By specifying the person taking action (you), execution becomes a brighter possibility because you take personal responsibility.

*Are you using specific, ownership-taking language?*

DECEMBER 16

## What will you do differently next time?

*Kaizen* is the Japanese term for continuous improvement.

That's exactly what this question is all about:

*Honoring your current performance, yet challenging yourself to envision an enhanced future.*

In my first five years as a professional speaker, I employed this philosophy as a post-speech ritual. Once my presentation was over, I'd take fifteen minutes to write a stream of consciousness list. Every thought, every feeling and every evaluation of my performance, I wrote down.

What worked? What didn't work? What killed? What bombed?

Then, when I was done, I'd make a note at the bottom of the document that read:

*"In my next speech, what I plan to do differently is \_\_\_\_\_."*

This simple ritual grew into a profitable practice for continuous improvement of my performance as a speaker.

*How could you apply the same reflection process to your job performance?*

DECEMBER 17

## When was the last time you questioned your own value?

My friend Rebel Brown explained in *Defying Gravity*:

*"If we have a faulty assumption, we have a faulty derivative. And when that derivative is used to create even more derivative numbers, the impact of that single wrong assumption multiplies geometrically."*

It's painful to admit, but maybe all this time you were confused between (a) what got you in the door, (b) what brought you to the table, and (c) what kept you in the room.

Those three things are not the same.

But that's the problem: It's rare that you define your own value. You're simply too close to the subject to make an honest, objective assessment.

For that reason, evolving beyond the previous version requires objective feedback. Ideally, from the people who love you enough to tell you how dense and blind you've been in the past.

This helps create the best possible circumstances in which your growth will be supported, enhanced and fulfilled.

Trust me: Ask them today, or risk remaining the same tomorrow.

*Have you identified the truly distinct values that will fuel your future momentum?*

D E C E M B E R 18

## What is your new definition of victory?

When you start out as a writer, you just want to be read.

And liked. And talked about. And maybe paid.

Then, after a few years, things change: Now you just want to be taken seriously.

And trusted. And not just read widely, but heard deeply. And maybe paid a little more.

Eventually, however, once you've stabilized your career, moved out of your parents' basement and figured out how to earn a real living doing what makes your heart sing, you come to the realization that all of the vainglorious crap you used to want was nothing but the preamble to what your soul truly aches for:

*To matter. To be essential. To become necessary to mankind. To make meaning in the universe. And to serve something bigger by regifting your talents to the world.*

I don't know what it's like in your industry, but that's how it works for me. And I challenge you to think two things: First, how your definition of victory has changed over the years, and second, what new strides you're going to have to take get there.

*What does winning look like to you?*

DECEMBER 19

# When creative destruction is a necessary and courageous strategy.

You know all those earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and mudslides?

Not an accident.

And no matter what Billy Graham says, it's not the fault of the New Orleans heathens living a life of homosexual sin.

It's just nature being nature, doing what she's done for billions of years:

*Devastating her own landscape.*

Why? Because devastation stimulates new growth. Not only in nature – but also in business and in life.

The problem is, most people choose not to creatively destroy themselves. Partly because of complacency. Partly because of ego. And partly because of assuredness. People think:

*"I'm sure that what I'm doing is the right path, so why keep looking?"*

That's the irony: If you don't devastate your own landscape regularly, you hold yourself hostage by something that, while it might be working, is limiting your growth.

Constantly ask yourself questions like:

1. What will this destroy?
2. Will it be worth the risk to destroy this?
3. What can I create that will destroy what I already have that's successful?

Ultimately, it all goes back to entropy: If it's not growing, it's decaying.

*Which one do you experience more?*

D E C E M B E R 2 0

## Watch out for success.

Failure is the fun part.

I don't know about you, but if there's one thing that wakes me up shivering in a cold sweat in the middle of the night wishing I still had my Teddy Ruxpin, it's success.

Winning?

Are you kidding me?

Can anyone imagine a more terrifying prospect than getting exactly what you want?

Yikes.

Two examples:

**FIRST:** It's like the fear of having your books (actually) being read, instead of being ignored. Why does that scare us? Because with great success comes great responsibility. And who wants to deal with that?

**SECOND:** The other reason I fear success is because my mentors educated me early on in my career: The arrogance of past victory becomes the aerosol of future failure. As such, recognize that legacies not only jeopardize your growth, but also fuel the gravity that handcuffs you to the past version of yourself that's not gonna cut it anymore.

Remember: Nothing fails like success. And that makes complacency the opposite of execution.

Avoid it like swine flu.

*Will the next version of you drown in the wake of success?*

D E C E M B E R 21

# What happens when you communicate that you're fully committed.

*"If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, did it really fall?"*

Most people have heard this riddle before, although few know the origin of the phrase. It comes from a book published in 1710 by George Berkeley called *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. The existential question he poses throughout the text is:

*Can something exist without being perceived?*

Berkeley says no. His theory is that if you have a message to share – but never share it – you never really had it in the first place. The tree never (really) fell. I agree.

And I think for anyone seeking execution excellence – personally or professionally – the “tree in the forest theory” is especially relevant when it comes to the topic of commitment.

Look, I know that you know:

Commitment is hard.

Commitment is essential.

Commitment is worth money.

Commitment is the cornerstone of good character.

Commitment is the keynote of inspirational leadership.

But here's what most people miss: Commitment requires consistent, visual and emotional reinforcement.

Otherwise you're just winking in the dark.

The problem is not a *fear* of commitment; the problem is a failure to communicate that you're fully committed in the hearts and minds of the people who matter.

*Will you do so publicly?*

DECEMBER 22

# You can't grow so much that you get away from the fundamentals.

Continuous improvement, personal evolution and complacency prevention are essential elements of success.

But your foundation is there for a reason – so that you don't forget who you are.

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** Don't let go of the original idea that made you successful.

And don't leave things behind that never should have been left behind. When you forget the rudiments – you forgo the revenue.

Instead, be like Larry Bird. Shoot your hundred free throws, every day.

You won't be forgotten.

*Are you regularly reinstating your brilliance of the basics?*



DECEMBER 23

# **Yesterday's consistency predicts tomorrow's profitability.**

Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.

*Not perfection. Not flawlessness. Not mistake-free work.*

Just consistency.

Interestingly, the word comes from the Latin *consistere*, or, "state of being in agreement and harmony."

That's how you endure.

That's how you stand the test of time.

That's how you take action on what matters.

When your on-stage performance is congruent with your backstage reality.

When the message you're preaching is the dominant reality of your life.

When you're courageous enough to smoke what you're selling.

*What kind of structure can you place around yourself to make sure you remember to execute what matters consistently?*

D E C E M B E R 24

## **You can't win if you don't commit with both feet.**

Although I started wearing a nametag in 2000, it wasn't until 2005 that I officially got the nametag tattooed on my chest.

Funny thing: That was also the same year my company started making money.

Huh. Weird.

I guess that's what happens when you commit with both feet:

*The world doesn't just pay attention – it pays dividends.*

And not just financially. When you commit with both feet:

You no longer stand immobile.

You unlock the doors of creativity.

You arrest the interest of the world.

You put the strength of heart behind you.

When you commit with both feet:

You stop accepting excuses that used to work.

You connect with others who are similarly committed.

You liberate yourself from the tyranny of rational hesitation.

You watch providence move to orchestrate the perfect conditions to achieve your goals.

Notice, I said, "commit."

Not fiddle with. Not dabble in. Not hope for.

Commit.

*Does that describe your pattern of execution?*

DECEMBER 25

## What's next?

My readers and audience members frequently ask:

*"Hey Scott, which of your books is your favorite?"*

Since day one, the answer has always been the same:

*"My next one."*

I challenge you to embrace that same attitude of "What's next?" in your work.

**FIRST:** On a micro level. That is, in terms of productivity. Ask yourself this question throughout the day to resurrect declining momentum.

**SECOND:** On a macro level. That is, in terms of projectivity. That doesn't mean abandon whatever current project requires your attention. It's like rock climbing: You secure a grip in your right hand while searching for the next hold with your left hand. Then, as soon as you lock your fingers into place, you swing forward into the next action. Always ascending with one hand secure, but never dwelling on the rocks of the past.

Apply those principles to your professional efforts, and you'll scale the entrepreneurial mountain in no time.

*What is your legacy of taking action?*

DECEMBER 26

## When the finish line is in plain sight, look out.

Every time I go swimming, I conveniently develop a cramp during my final lap.

Right in the calf muscle. Burns like hell.

But I always laugh it off. I know it's just resistance coming to get me. Nice try. Too bad I learned my lesson from *The War of Art*:

*"The danger is great when the finish line is in sight. At this point, resistance knows we're about to beat it. It hits the panic button. It marshals one last assault and slams us with everything it's got."*

**LET ME SUGGEST THIS:** No high stepping with ten yards to go.

Otherwise resistance will slap that pigskin out of your hand and cause you to fumble at the one-yard line.

Remember: The exit is part of the posture.

*Are you giving up one percent too early?*

DECEMBER 27

## **You don't need to respond to every attention magnet.**

You haven't trained yourself to be ruthlessly self-protective with your time.

You haven't made the conscious decision to put your own needs at the top of your own list.

Do that, and you're forever doomed to an execution-free life.

And I get it. I've been there before. I'm busy too. But overburdening yourself is easy because it makes you feel busy, important and needed.

Too bad that's all a lie.

Too bad checking your inbox forty times an hour doesn't make you any money.

Too bad spending your evenings fiddling around on Facebook, stalking ex-girlfriends from college – who, by the way, look five times better than they did a decade ago (damn it!) – isn't helping you turn your ideas into action.

*Does distraction overwhelm and enslave you?*

DECEMBER 28

# You are the result of yourself.

That's the thorny, self-confrontational reality of self-employment:

*If you don't do what you told yourself you were going to do, the only person around to notice is you.*

Which means there's nobody to blame.

Which means the onus is, was, and always will be on you.

Even if you work alone, even if you spend every day sitting in your living room wearing your pajamas, you're always in a relationship with yourself.

You still have to sleep with who you are, every night.

Don't create a reputation for unreliability. As Sir Josiah Stamp wrote:

*"It is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities."*

Ultimately, assuming success is somebody else's fault is the hallmark of an immature mind. And immaturity pollutes practically all behavior.

Never forget that you are sole source of your own job security.

*Have you allowed yourself to fully and confidently face your own responsibility for your career?*

DECEMBER 29

## **You don't need more ideas.**

As a writer, public speaker and consultant, this is a huge problem for me.

When it comes to ideas, I'm like a chocoholic, but for creativity.

Sometimes I get so entrenched in the joy of collecting and organizing ideas that I forget to do anything with them. Whoops. Maybe I should go back and re-read this book.

The secret is simple: While ideas set the wheel in motion, execution is where the rubber meets the road.

Your challenge is to regularly ask the question:

*When is it time to stop creating and start judging?*

DECEMBER 30

# You are the administrator of your own resurrection.

While the rest of the world freezes in the face of an uncertain future, you will choose to ride this wave of ambiguity to a larger version of yourself.

Even in spite of overwhelming odds against your advancement, you will show the world what you can be at your best.

And you will be unwaveringly vigilant in proving to the world that you're not going anyway.

*Have you realized that you are your fault?*



DECEMBER 31

# **Your ship never comes in, only your dock gets bigger.**

Stop waiting for things to happen to you.

Start happening to things.

Practice purposeful impatience and start taking action toward what you desire.

Don't wait for perfection.

Don't wait for permission.

Don't wait until you know what you're doing.

Just go.

It's only a matter of time before the captain says, "Welcome aboard!"

Of course, none of this happens without an eagerly desirous, raring-to-go, restless expectation and dislike of anything that causes delay.

That's the construct of an expert executioner.

Triple your impatience = Triple your proactivity = Triple your profits.

*What one step could you take – right now – to start moving forward to your ideal future?*

**Oh yeah:  
One more  
thing...**

**People ask me how I manage to execute  
so well, so fast and so often.**

**My answer is very logical and very simple:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. No meetings.  | 29. No processes to weigh me<br>down and diminish my energy.                |
| 2. No employees.   | 30. No waiting for people.  |
| 3. No interns.   | 31. No endless list of people trying<br>to reach me.                        |
| 4. No busywork.  | 32. No distractions.  |
| 5. No filing.  | 33. No decision-making hierarchy.   |
| 6. No copying.   | 34. No distance between the<br>owner and decisions that<br>matter.          |
| 7. No excuses.   | 35. No time burned on making<br>unnecessary effortful cognitive<br>choices. |
| 8. No hurdles.   | 36. No awkward staff lunches.   |
| 9. No bullshit.  | 37. No committees.  |
| 10. No asking permission.  | 38. No socializing.   |
| 11. No begging for forgiveness.  | 39. No compromising.  |
| 12. No memos.  | 40. No doing activities that aren't<br>focused on my #1 goals.              |
| 13. No status reports.   | 41. No doing activities that don't<br>leverage my gifts.                    |
| 14. No kids.   | 42. No doing activities that aren't<br>income generating.                   |
| 15. No television.   | 43. No office politics.   |
| 16. No surfing the web.  | 44. No office.  |
| 17. No mass media.   | 45. No clothes.   |
| 18. No endless tangles of anxiety,<br>regret and second-guessing<br>my choices | 46. No shoes.   |
| 19. No coworkers.  | 47. No commute.   |
| 20. No putting out fires.  | 48. No traffic.   |
| 21. No gossip.   | 49. No interruptions.   |
| 22. No worrying.   | 50. No paperwork.   |
| 23. No headaches.  |   |
| 24. No managing people.  |   |
| 25. No walking on eggshells.   |   |
| 26. No task requests.  |   |
| 27. No micromanaging.  |   |
| 28. No useless planning of things<br>that don't matter.                        |   |

**After deleting all of that noise, what are you left with?  
Work. That matters.**

# Scott Ginsberg

## *That Guy with the Nametag*

**AUTHOR.** Scott's ten books, including *HELLO, my name is Scott*, *The Power of Approachability*, *How to be That Guy*, *Make a Name for Yourself* and *Stick Yourself Out There/Get Them to Come to You*, have been featured on media outlets such as *20/20*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Fast Company*, *COSMO*, *Redbook*, *The Investor's Business Daily* and *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*.

**SPEAKER.** Scott delivers customized presentations, breakout sessions, keynote speeches and seminars to tens of thousands of people each year. He's worked with companies like STAPLES, Verizon Wireless, Manpower, Boeing, Canada Post and The Australian Institute of Management. Every program is about approachability, yet every program is different. Never the same speech twice.

**NAMETAGTV.** Scott's Online Training Network is an interactive Learning Environment that provides public AND premium customized learning modules for entrepreneurs, salespeople, frontline employees and marketers who want to leverage approachability into profitability.

**BLOGGER.** In 2007, Alexa and Technorati voted *HELLO, my*

*name is Blog!* as a "Top 100 Business Blog on the Web." With 1,200+ blog posts, every day Scott's posts are shared and linked around the web, drawing millions of readers worldwide.

**COLUMNIST.** Since 2004, Scott has written over 1,000 articles and been a regular contributor to print publications like *The St. Louis Small Business Monthly*, *INSTORE Magazine*, *Employment Info*, *The Ladders* and dozens of online publications like *RainToday* and *ExpertVillage*.

**THOUGHT LEADER.** Dubbed "The Authority on Approachability," Scott is regularly featured in and interviewed by media outlets worldwide. He's been quoted and interviewed by MSNBC, CNN, *The Washington Post*, *The Associated Press*, *The Today Show* and *Paul Harvey*. He also wrote "The Quiz" on approachability for *COSMO* and, in 2008, *The St. Louis Small Business Monthly* voted Scott as one of the "Top Young Entrepreneurs of the Year."



**Since you started  
reading this book,  
have you executed  
anything that  
matters?**