



The Best of

**READING FOR YOUR
SUCCESS**

**Define your success, live on purpose
and maybe even quit your job!**

By Scott Dinsmore

The Best of Reading For Your Success

*Define your success, live on purpose and maybe
even quit your job!*

The most useful content for discovering life on your terms.
Organized into 8 life goals for you to read & act upon anywhere you'd like.

By Scott Dinsmore
Author and Founder of ReadingForYourSuccess.com

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Welcome—

**“A successful life is one that is lived through understanding and pursuing one's own path, not chasing after the dreams of others.”
-Chin-Ning Chu**

For those of you who are new to ReadingForYourSuccess, welcome. And for those of you, who have been with me for a while, thanks for your support over the years. You are what make all of this possible (and so much fun!).

The goal of RFYS is to help you all discover your own path to personal freedom. It is my vehicle for sharing and teaching the lessons I learn from my reading, doing, exploring, traveling, limit testing and life experimenting. To give you a better chance at understanding yourself and what you are most meant to do on this earth. To define your own success and then to experience it. To allow you to live life on your terms.

Life is too short for anything less.

All of us are here for a reason. We're all unique and can add value to society in our own ways. We are the only ones who can be the judge of that. How we spend our time or how we define success is not something society should tell us (they don't have a clue anyway) and it's not something we should aimlessly go about. There is nothing more important than intentionally discovering your own success and your unique purpose.

My intention is for RFYS to serve as your guide on the journey.

Why an eBook of existing articles?

I've created this 'best of' eBook to give you the most useful pieces of what I've written in the recent year or two regarding how to live life on a whole new level and on your terms. The articles are categorized into 8 core goals that I've noticed many people to have at some point in their lives. While you can access most of this stuff on the website, some are articles that have only appeared on other sites for which I've written. It's all condensed right here. Over 70 pages and 17 articles. Trust me, this is the juice!

While reading these online is an option, blogs and the internet can get super distracting. So I suggest downloading this (and ideally printing it out) or at least reading it while totally disconnected to the internet. Seriously, put on airplane mode. This eBook also works great for an iPad or similar device if that's your thing.

Most important is that you read it, think about it and take some action. So go find your favorite reading spot and dive in. I am always here to help.

Enjoy the journey and the discovery!

For the full Reading For Your Success story, check out the [about page](#).



About Me—

**“Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority,
it’s time to pause and reflect.”**

-Mark Twain



My name is Scott Dinsmore. I’m 28, live in San Francisco and the above Mark Twain quote sums up my life approach pretty well. I try to stay on the side of the minority as much as possible because generally it’s out on the limbs where all the fruit is. There is so much available that few people pursue because they think it’s not possible. I prefer to test that theory out instead of take it for granted. I hope after spending some time with me, you’ll come along for the journey.

I am an avid reader, blogger, teacher, outdoors and adventure enthusiast, student of life and citizen of the world.

I am also a value investor, personal development writer, speaker, life-hacker, speed reading teacher and entrepreneur. I am passionately obsessed with personal improvement and am committed to enabling people to discover their own path to personal and career success,

on their terms, through learning and doing something about it!

I’ve worked in and tested out a number of careers and for the past two years I have been totally on my own running an [Investment Partnership](#) and doing my best to keep the human spirit alive with ReadingForYourSuccess and my day to day interactions with life.

I share my views with anyone who will listen. I am constantly being asked to talk to friends and friends of friends or even the occasional perfect stranger, when someone is considering a more purposeful life shift. It lights a fire inside me like nothing else.

One of my core beliefs is that if you are doing what you feel you’re meant to do in this world and adding value to society, the world will be better for it and you will be rewarded. I’m in no hurry.

For now, my time and my mind are mine. No more renting them out to others. It’s been a great ride.

I look forward to sharing and learning with you. Thanks for joining me. I have a feeling there are good things to come!

-Scott

For all the details check out [my bio](#).



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Goal #1: Discover your life purpose and learn how to live it everyday

The Beginner's Guide to Being Congruent



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Reading Time: 9 minutes

Have you ever come across someone who knew exactly what they want out of life?

Anything they say, they mean, and will quickly act on. They seem confident, eager, excited and downright passionate. You can just feel the energy. What impression did that put upon you?

Chances are you were experiencing the power of congruency.

[Tony Robbins](#) first brought this term to my attention in his Unleash the Power Within 4-day seminar as well as most of his CD's, talks and books. Tony is about as congruent as they come. But what does that mean? This was not the same math term I learned in high school and to be honest, it's a way of life that is difficult to define. The best way is to experience it. But let me give it a try.

The general definition of congruence is: *identical in form; in agreement or harmony.*

Now apply this to a life approach. **Someone who lives with congruency acts in direct accordance with their dreams, desires, beliefs, values, mission and goals.** They do not let the thoughts of others affect their approach



to the world. They take their own unique path paved by their understanding of themselves.

An awesome feeling of inherent trust comes from someone who is congruent. It's pretty obvious. Whether you know it or not, congruency is often what attracts you to another person. People want to be around people who are congruent. Customers buy from congruent salesmen. People seek friends who conduct themselves congruently in their presence. Students are inspired by congruent teachers. Women fall in love with congruent men. Congruency leads to attraction and connection...something we are all looking for.

It turns out that as humans we naturally want to act in a way that is consistent with our past actions and beliefs, as Robert Cialdini proved in his [Influence](#) studies. The difficulty is we often don't know our true beliefs and values. Many of us have not spent the proper time sharpening the saw because we were in such a hurry to cut the tree down. Before you know it many of us are busy cutting with the wrong tools, dull saws or even chopping the wrong tree altogether.

As the adage goes, you've got to stand for something or you'll fall for anything. In order to feel genuinely fulfilled, you must live congruently.

When you are congruent some amazing things happen:

- 1. Your confidence goes through the roof.**
- 2. Your energy and desire to make a difference increase dramatically.**
- 3. You feel at peace that you are going about life with intention.**
- 4. Decisions become easy to make.**
- 5. Things start to fall into place.**

Once you know what you want and believe in, you start to show it more through your words and actions, which leads to being around more similar people, which leads to more doors opening in your favor. It's an amazing phenomenon. This will begin to happen in both a conscious and often subconscious manner.

Congruency means living on purpose. But you first must know your purpose...

In order to get congruent, you must do two things:

1. Understand what it is you stand for and are passionate about adding to this world
2. Set your life up so that you can act in line with these beliefs on a daily basis



Step 1: Understand Yourself

The process of self-discovery will never end, and it should begin as early as possible. Sadly the only thing undergraduate and early education seems to focus on is acquiring skills. There is little to no time spent on which skills actually might be best for each individual to acquire. The question of what are you best at and what is most important to you in the world are rarely addressed. It isn't too surprising, since these are the hardest questions you'll ever answer (but that's still no reason to skip over it).

It is our duty to understand. And there are some amazing resources to help us do so. Foundation steps include the following; most of which cannot be simply checked off but more realized as you live your life.

1. Keep a journal of what inspires you. Let your thoughts run wild. Get them out of your head so you can get down to real thinking. Most importantly, keep a running list of what inspires you. I have done this since I moved to Spain after university. Especially while in another country, where people's minds seem to be naturally more open, the things you'll hear people pursuing will really make you think. Anytime something catches my eye or inspires me, I open up my journal and get it onto paper. Over the years you will have a running story of how you might enjoy spending your time.

2. Discover your strengths. One of the most powerful things I've done is to assess the things I am best at. The natural and unique strengths I have to give to the world. I have found some invaluable tools for this along the way. The best resource I've come across is [Strengths Finder 2.0](#). It's a book that comes with a 30-minute Strengths Assessment that asks a series of questions and gives you your top 5 strengths out of about 30. I could not believe how right on this felt.

Included in your report are also suggested daily and weekly actions to serve your strengths, job roles and career suggestions as well as a list of the most important strengths you should look for in a business partner (or any partner for the matter). My business partner and I both took the test and assigned job roles in our business accordingly.

Knowing my strengths has been unbelievably powerful and has led me in a path that has created a lot of enjoyment and fulfillment. For those of you interested, my top five are: Achiever, Positivity, Maximizer, Input and Discipline.

One suggestion was to do all I could to write, teach and speak to help people. ReadingForYourSuccess has made for a great fit.

3. Create a Mission Statement. A mission defines your essence and the mark you'd like to leave on the world. It should inspire you to jump out of bed with passion to live your purpose. When you come up with one that really jives with



you, the power is incredible. I first heard about a mission from my father and then had it reinforced when I read Stephen Covey's [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#) (first personal development book I ever read) and again in his [8th Habit](#). I've been keeping and honing a mission statement ever since. I refine it every year or six months. I've found New Years and my birthday to be good times to reassess.

The current version of my mission is: *To be an explorer. Make discoveries and put a dent in the world! Live a happy, grateful and passionate life, with extraordinary relationships and better the lives of others. No regrets.*

Every time I say these words, they get me fired up for life! Find what those words are for you.

Steven Covey's [8th Habit website](#) has some powerful tools if you need a jump-start.

4. Know Your Values. Your values are the rules and standards that guide your life. Most of us have an idea of what we value but often there is not much clarity behind it. You might say that integrity or family or friendship are what you value most. But what about health? Can you really give all you want to your family and friends if you are not in good physical condition? That's for you to decide. Tony Robbins calls these positive values Moving-Towards Values.

First, understand what your values are. Second, prioritize them. Third, define rules that will allow you to easily experience these. Do the same for the values you least want to experience, called Moving-Away-From Values.

For example one of my values is Health/Vitality/Energy. My rule for achieving this is: *Anytime I do something empowering for my body by stretching a muscle, pushing a limit, eating alkaline and all kinds of healthy vibrant foods.* This is very easy for me to achieve and I feel great about it. Think of what's really most important to you. What makes you who you are and list out those values and rules. And make them easy to feel. I gave a speech on Values to my Toastmaster's group a few months back. You can download my [Values Worksheet](#) from my talk if you'd like help.

Decisions become so easy when you know your values, and without realizing it, you will subconsciously start to act more in line with them. There is a great section on values in chapters 15-17 of Tony Robbins book [Awaken The Giant Within](#). I encourage you to start there.

My Top Moving-Towards Values (in order): *Health/Vitality/Energy, Confidence/Courage, Love/Connection/Family, Honesty/Integrity, Happiness/Playfulness.*



My Top Moving-Away-From Values (in order): *Caring about what others think, Jealousy/Envy, Rejection, Fear of Failure, Guilt*

Values are a big topic and many books are written solely on understanding them. I hope this will at least get you started. I plan to further delve into values in future articles.



Step 2: Apply Your Understanding to Everyday Life.

Once you begin to have an understanding of your mission, strengths and vision for your life and purpose, you must make a conscious effort to tap into this, your essence, your congruency, on a daily basis. The following should help.

1. Constantly remind yourself of your beliefs. Repetition is the mother of skill. You must ingrain what you learned about yourself. Do this weekly, if not daily. Every Monday morning I take a few minutes to internalize my mission and review my values and strengths. I then plan out how I can best apply my strengths to the week ahead. At this point, after years of doing it, these have become second nature. I viscerally know the core that makes up who I am. Weekly reminders keep my acting congruently.

2. Find a career that allows you to be congruent. This is also the topic of hundreds of books and something that ReadingForYourSuccess pays special attention to. Once you understand yourself, unfortunately many people realize that their career is not congruent with who they are. It has simply become a passive way to receive a paycheck and get by.

You cannot be congruent and wholly fulfilled if your career is not congruent with who you are. We spend most of our lives at work. Honor who you are and spend that time on something that leverages your strengths. This will be a tough leap but more than worth it. Dick Bolles' [What Color Is Your Parachute](#) and [Workbook](#) is an awesome place to start, as well as Tim Ferriss' [4-Hour Work](#)



[Week](#) (but don't read this unless you are really ready to pull the rip cord...It's super powerful).

3. Seize opportunities and follow through. When something comes your way that you know would utilize your strengths, then jump on it. Get to know the person, industry or company that catches your eye. At least make a note of it and better yet, get committed to learning more. You will know when something catches your eye. You must follow through on it to be congruent. This could be a new idea, a person, business, seminar, you name it. Few things feel worse than lacking the confidence that you'll follow through and not much feels better than knowing you'll do what you say and mean. When you are speaking and acting on things that honor who you are, that is congruency. Others will greatly respect you for this.

The simple equation is that the more you know about yourself, the more likely you will be to live a life of congruency. When is now a good time to begin your discovery?

Personal Story: Recognizing Congruency and Taking Action

I have been deliberately learning about myself for the past 6 years and especially in the past 3. I now know enough about my strengths and essence that I can often recognize an opportunity to act congruently. About 2 years ago I was taking a two-day speed reading seminar in San Francisco. There were about 10 people in the class and one teacher (who looked about my age). The class was invigorating and I learned a ton. My speed increased by about 3x in the two days. Throughout the weekend I was so inspired by all I was learning and how awesome it was that our teacher got the chance to spread something so powerful.

I knew my Positivity and Input strengths suggested that I jump at any chance to teach, learn and speak. So I made a little note in my journal as I always do when congruency catches my eye. A few weeks later I followed up with the teacher to see if he needed any help and it turns out he was expanding to San Francisco and was the owner of the business! Almost two years later, I am now one of the main teachers in the San Francisco area and have also gotten to help build his business.

All this just from asking. But the only reason I asked was because I knew enough about myself to recognize a chance to further my congruency. It's amazing the stars that align when you're congruent.

Make it your purpose to understand your life's purpose

Go through everyday with your eyes and mind wide open ready to notice anything that gets your heart beating, inspires you or makes you proud. The more you are present to your emotions and reactions to life's experiences, the more intimately



you will know yourself. And the better your relationship with yourself, the more congruent you'll be able to live your life. It's contagious. You will not only be enhancing your own life, but the life of those around you. Congruency inspires congruency.

Be convinced of your reason for being on this earth and your positive impact will be something the world will appreciate. The magic you will make happen as a result will be remarkable.

What do you do to live congruently? What steps have you or do you plan to take to better understand yourself. Do you need help? I am here to assist in any way possible.



Goal #2: Get motivated to be the absolute best you can be

Be Your Own Best Competition: A Guide to Victory



This is a guest post written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#) for [Make It Happen](#)

Average Read Time: 4 minutes

What motivates you to be your best? Who do you use as comparison to push your limits?

In years of competition from academics to business to athletics and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, I've found the best competition to be the same person every time: Myself.

You always have been and always will be your own best competitor.

Have you ever worked really hard only to look to someone else and be disappointed that your progress was not as advanced as hers? Was it frustrating? Did it motivate or demotivate you?

If you're anything like most of us, it took the wind out of your sails. You think, what's the point of working so hard if I still can't be as good as him or her? When it comes to peak performance, we want to avoid frustration at all cost. If we don't, it may keep us from reaching our full potential.



Comparison is futile.

In a world where comparisons happen non-stop, it is difficult to look outside yourself and to ever be content with who you are. There's always someone who's a tad bit better.

The only solution is to reach inside and measure against what Warren Buffett calls your own internal yardstick. There is no more accurate measure for comparison than who you were yesterday, last week or last decade, when you were at your best. Or perhaps the person you know you can be based on your values, purpose and mission.

Nothing useful ever comes from comparison to others. Either you see yourself as better than someone and you get lazy, or you see someone else as better than you and you feel like all your hard work is for naught.

It is a fool's game. None of us are inherently above or below the person next to us. We are who we are. Not one of us is exactly alike. The only direct and honest comparison is within yourself. Everything else is apples to oranges.

My rule of thumb is that you are only allowed to compare yourself to someone else if their life situation is identical to your own. Good luck finding that match.

And one thing is for sure. No matter how hard you work and how dedicated you are, there will always be someone who can run a little faster, jump a little higher, score a little better or look a little nicer in a swimsuit. And if there's not, you can bet someone is coming up fast behind you.

So how can you ultimately always win in life? Become your best competitor.

3 Reasons Why You are Your Own Best Competitor

1. You will always be motivated. Having an image of your most recent past limits is the perfect thing to push you to the next level. If you ran 7 flights of stairs yesterday, then do 8 today. Who cares if the guy next to you did 15? It's doesn't make a bit of difference. You are a more fit person today than you were yesterday. Your own progress is all you need.

2. You will continuously be your personal best. If you commit to a slightly higher standard of yourself every day, you will always be at the top of your game. And that game will only get better. But if for some reason you fall off your mark, you will always have the past image of your peak performance to show you what you're capable of.

When Donald Trump went bankrupt, he was asked how hard it was to become wealthy again. He said the first time was the by far the most difficult. Once you've



done it, you know what's possible and then it's just a matter of doing it again. Show yourself what you're capable of.

3. Your coach will forever be with you. You'll never have to complain that your workout or business partner flaked on you or that he's getting too lazy to keep up. He or she will always be at your side and grabbing at your heels to be sure you're giving it your all. After all, he is inside you, at your core.

So don't worry about the others. When it comes to progress, they don't matter anyway. What matters is that we all have our unique dreams, goals and desires. And then taking the actions and building the habits necessary to live those dreams. No one else wants exactly what you want. So why compare to them?

If you make yourself your one and only best competitor then you will have already won. Your progress will be nothing but fulfilling and it will stack up to achieve even more in the days to come.



Choose your own path and make comparison impossible.

Robert Frost said that taking the road less traveled has made all the difference. I always has and it always will. The path of the crowd is one overflowing with the "who's better" mentality. If you choose a career that is hyper-competitive and over-saturated where everyone steps on each others' toes to get to the top, you are going to be forced to compare yourself to others as they will all be doing the same with you. Comparison will be all too easy.



The interesting thing about the road less traveled is that there is often no one else traveling your exact path. You will see people on similar or familiar looking roads but no one exactly overtop of yours. This provides you with limitless inspirations as you see others' journeys but makes comparison nearly impossible.

You don't even have to try to find a life purpose, career or industry where it's difficult to compare. If you make one choice: to take the road less traveled, you will have no choice but to measure using your internal yardstick. Nothing else will be accurate. You will be your own best competitor and victory will be yours for the taking. The same will be the case for every one of the people wandering their own paths around you.

If you're going to play the game, pick your competitor wisely and set it up so you can win.

The notion of comparison will transform into inspiration and encouragement. Your own path and competition will inspire you to be the best person you can be.

Now go on and embrace your competitive side. See where it takes you.



Make 'No' Your Best Motivator



"Don't waste yourself in rejection, nor bark against the bad, but chant the beauty of the good."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

This is a guest post written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#) for [Live Bold and Bloom](#)

Average Read Time: 3.5 minutes

Think for a second about what lights a fire in your belly? What motivates you to be your very best?

We all need things that push us to be extraordinary and we can never have too many. Most of us have these things we can do to put us in our peak state. Maybe a favorite song, movie, speech or poem. Perhaps it's just a gesture or a fist pump. Whatever works for you is all that matters.

Those are all positive triggers we've associated with putting ourselves into action.

But what about when we are at our darkest hour? That's when we most need it. What if we could make what is to most of us a very uncomfortable and scary situation, into our best motivator?



I propose we make "No" that motivator.

What place does No serve for you right now? Probably not the best. If I ask you to think back on a time you heard No or felt severe rejection, my guess is it wouldn't be difficult. We seem to have a knack for recalling our toughest times and even labeling them as normal occurrences. All of a sudden our worst rejection is how we define any rejection going forward. Not too helpful is it?

What if No was the word that triggered us into overdrive to do our very best? Picture the possibilities.

How many times have you been told No throughout your life? If you're anything like me then it's more than you can count. After all, every one of us is a salesman or woman, so we've gotten all too used to that two-letter word.

As entrepreneurs, writers, men, women, husbands, wives or any member of a society, No is simply part of the territory. **We can either fear it or embrace.** For many of us No has become a trigger. A trigger to shut down, question ourselves, give up and move on. Imagine the effect this can have on someone's success throughout their lifetime.

Rejection is a part of everyone's life. We cannot escape it, which means there's no real choice but to allow it to serve us.

Looking back, were any of those No's really that bad? Despite past rejections, look where you are now. I bet you have plenty to hang your hat on. If they didn't kill you then they must have made you stronger. Those No's are what allowed you to have the experiences you've had since.

For years No has fed our natural fear of not being accepted.

Well I'd say it's time to get over it. **No may be one of the single best inventions to life.**

Why is No such a great thing?

1. It refuses to let us slack off. If we don't give something our all, and we get a No as a result, we know it's time to crank the discipline up a notch. No is a signal to wake up, learn, modify our approach and go after it again.

2. It makes us grow. Yes's make us lazy. Every No is a signal that you need to work harder either to better understand your prospect or to better understand yourself. Usually both. We learn with each No. If all we got were yes's, the world would be full of laziness.



3. It gets us closer to yes. Any seasoned salesman will tell you that they love getting a No because it means they are that much closer to a yes. That's an empowering meaning if I've ever heard one.

4. It clears out the competition. No's separate the committed from the uncommitted. Everyone would be doing everything if there was no rejection. If you are committed to your path, all the No's along the way will keep the less-driven competition off your heels.

Next time you get a No, get excited. You are becoming a better human being.

Thank your prospect. Genuinely ask to understand their objection. This is your chance to learn the real story behind those two letters. Leave knowing you are all the sharper for having been through it.

Viktor Frankl discovered that the last human freedom is the ability to choose our thoughts and what life's occurrences mean to us. All of us have the freedom to redefine what No means in our lives.

Realize how powerful and fundamental No is. We are the sum of what our rejections have taught us. Internalize it.

Decide today to change your meaning of No from rejection to empowerment.

If you're at all interested in doing something remarkable with the years ahead, I assure you there will be plenty more No's. Rejection is not going away. Welcome to life.

So is there really a choice?

Imagine how you'll approach your days and your life if No's begin to light a fire in your belly instead of pouncing that fire out.

There's nothing to be scared of. No can motivate us to be better and stronger. We just have to allow it.

Let it be that stepping stone to take you to a level you didn't even know existed.

Have fun with it. Go out today and look for some No's. Odds are before long they'll turn into resounding Yes's.

Photo courtesy of [Rick McCharles](#)



The Most Dangerous Word in The World



"Things may come to those who wait,
but only the things left by those who hustle."
-Abraham Lincoln

Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Read Time: 4 minutes

Words are incredibly powerful. There are some that empower us to do our very best and others that can leave us feeling helpless.

Through my own and others' experiences I have found one to be more dangerous than any other. On that when used once can give you relief, but when used routinely can leave you with the deepest feeling of despair.

This most dangerous word is: Later.

The scary thing is that it seems so harmless at first. There are all kinds of justifications to put things off until tomorrow. A lot of them can feel pretty valid. And even worse, we seem to use this word most for the things that are of greatest importance to us.

I'm talking about the big goals and life changes we've had on our mind for years. We know they are not going to be easy, but we also know the payout could be amazing. Yet despite how much they mean to us, we put them off another day. But tomorrow quickly becomes next month or next year and before you know it your Later has become Never.



Most things we put off to later are because the thought of starting them now is intimidating and uncomfortable. But just about everything outside our comfort zone is good for us, so get used to it. If it feels uncomfortable then it's likely a sign that it's the right thing.

Later comes in all forms:

- I'll get to it tomorrow (or next year).
- I need to be a little older.
- Now's not quite the right time for that idea.
- I'll do it as soon as my family grows up.
- Once I graduate I'll be ready.
- When the new year comes, I'll begin getting healthy again.
- I'll have all day this Saturday, so that's when I'll start.
- All I need is another few years of experience.

The list goes on as long as your imagination permits...

Most rationalizations as to why you should put your important things off to another day are nothing more than excuses - and expensive ones at that. If we want to experience our most cherished dreams, we must leave Later in the past. The timing will never be perfect.

4 Steps to turn Later into Now

1. We need leverage.

While financial leverage can be dangerous, emotional leverage can be the most powerful tool in personal change. **We need a reason to do things.** Without a compelling reason, nothing will get done. The right reason provides the leverage to do massive things even with little resources.

Leverage can come from one of two places. You can focus on the wonderful things you'll experience if you complete your goal (i.e. happiness, personal freedom, finding the love of your life). Or you can focus on the awful things that might happen if you don't (i.e. loneliness, a heart attack, or the death of a loved one). Positive or negative, discover what will make it an absolute must to accomplish your goal.

I heard a story of a man who tried to quit smoking for years. His friends tried to help. His wife begged. But nothing worked. Then one day his 6-year old daughter came into his office, looked up at him with a scared look on her face and said "daddy I don't want you to die". He never smoked another cigarette. That's leverage. What's yours? It could be fitting into your wedding dress or being sure



you're alive to teach your grandson math. It's your call. Just be sure there is major emotion behind it.

2. Do the big things first.

Start the day with your most important tasks. Know what things are going into it. If it's making a sales call then pick the phone up before you open your computer. If it's running five miles, then know that if you don't do it at 6am, it isn't going to happen. It's so easy to start the day by opening your computer and checking email and surfing around for a few hours. Great. Are you any closer to something meaningful once you're done? Likely not.

I didn't dig into my email until 4pm today and I got mountains done. Knocking your big things out first will feel amazing and will get you on a roll for the rest of the day. Anything you do now is ensuring that it won't be put off until never.

3. Chunk it down.

Thinking of a long-term goal as a single item to accomplish can be massively overwhelming. But every goal has all kinds of 5-minute or one-hour tasks leading up to it. Take for example writing a book. If you haven't yet written a word and you look at your goal one day that says "write a book", the intimidation is going to make it almost impossible to begin. But what if you had, "write the first page" or "write a few chapter titles" as one of your tasks? That can be done in one sitting. All of a sudden you're a step closer and you've got momentum.

"Most people overestimate what they can accomplish in a year, and drastically underestimate what they can achieve in a decade!"

-Tony Robbins

4. Clear the distractions.

It is so much easier to put big ideas off if you have little meaningless things to fill up the time. Email, TV, video games, surfing the web. We all have our distractions and most of us know when we're wasting time when we should be focusing on the important. Be honest with yourself. Listen to how you feel. Are you proud to be watching an hour go by as you mindlessly surf the web? Often these tasks aren't even necessary, and they certainly shouldn't be your priority.

As Tim Ferriss says: **Put a sticky note on your desk, right in front of you, that says "Am I inventing things to avoid the important."**

There is only Now

Have you ever been in your future? I thought not. Nothing actually happens later. When it comes down to it, it's all about today. That's what changes tomorrow.



We all have dreams we want to make a reality. And as sure as we'll continue to dream, there will always be reasons to push them to Later. Don't fall for it. Don't wait. Life is too short.

It's so easy to put things off until tomorrow. Later will not be a better time. At some point, if Later doesn't become Now, it becomes Never. The longer you wait, the closer never becomes.

It takes your whole life to never do something. But it takes an instant to decide to do it today. Why not get started? All it takes is a good enough reason. Now is where it all happens anyway. Later is nothing more than an excuse for inaction. There is always something you can do today to get you closer to your dreams tomorrow.

When is now a good time to begin?

"Change will not come if we wait for some
other person or some other time.
We are the ones we've been waiting for.
We are the change that we seek."
-Barak Obama

What important things have you been putting off? What compelling reasons can you find to turn Later into Today?

Photo Courtesy of [lulieboo](#)



13 Life Lessons I Learned from Warren Buffett



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Read Time: 5 minutes

For one day each year, any and all of us get the chance to listen to 6.5 hours of live questions and answers with Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger (and even ask one of your own if you're lucky). This year almost 40,000 people took advantage of the opportunity. I was one of them. As I was last year and the two years prior to that. The weekend has become an annual highlight that words cannot describe. Despite the fact that it's important for our business in the [investment partnership](#) my partner and I run, this is one of the best weekends of the year for learning about life and personal improvement. I love it.

The topic of the day: Life Lessons.

To most people's surprise, this is not simply another dry talk on investing and business. It's far from it. The great majority of the meeting revolves around lessons in life, relationships, education and career decisions. These guys have experienced over 160 combined years of amazing life experiences and seen success (and even some failure) on numerous fronts. They are brilliant and happen to be two of the best teachers I have come across in all my reading and learning. And the price of admission...free! Ideally you should be a shareholder but there are plenty of other ways to get into the meeting if you'd like. I have to share some of the most recent pearls with you all. I'll stick to broader life lessons, but feel free to send a note if you'd like more from the business and investing side.



13 Life Lessons from Warren and Charlie:

1. Lose money and I will forgive you, but lose even a shred of reputation and I will be ruthless [Warren]. This has been echoed across the business world for years and it applies to us all. Life is too short to cut corners to make an extra buck. Wealth can always be recreated but reputation takes a lifetime to build and often only a moment to destroy. As Warren says, "**we will not trade reputation for money.**"

2. The best defense in a tough economy is to add the most you can to society. Your money can be inflated away but your knowledge and talent cannot [Warren]. No matter the external circumstances, you are always in control of your talent, learning and passion for life. "**There will always be opportunities for talent**" as Warren says.

3. We get worried when people start to agree with us [Warren]. The best fruit is found out on the limbs. The road less traveled makes all the difference. Make a rule to always stay on the side of the minority in your life's path and you will likely be greatly rewarded and you'll certainly experience a lot more excitement.

4. We celebrate wealth only when it's been fairly won and wisely used [Charlie]. The goal is not to make money at all costs. It's easy to forget that in a lot of industries and sub-cultures around the U.S. where everyone is in constant competition to keep up with the Joneses. Wealth is worthless if you've destroyed all your relationships to attain it. As Charlie says "**take the high road. It's far less crowded.**" Sad but often true. Makes it pretty easy to stand out.

5. When you are exceptional you jump off the page. There really isn't that much competition there [Warren]. Be your own best competitive advantage. Then it doesn't make a difference what others are doing. You are in control.

6. Do what you're passionate about. If you do this, there will be few people competing or running faster than you [Warren]. The best way to be exceptional is with passion! As [Tony Robbins](#) says every day of his life, "**Live with Passion!**" And trust me, life is a lot more fun this way.

7. I think I developed courage when I learned I could deal with hardship. You need to get your feet wet and get some failure under your belt [Charlie]. Courage does not grow on its own. Just like a muscle, it must be constantly worked out and developed. Life begins outside your comfort zone and that is where your courage is developed. Most people don't succeed because they're afraid to fail. Failure isn't that bad anyway. It will make you tougher and more likely to win the next time around. No one has succeeded without going through their own failures at some point. To try and fail is much



better than to never try. Why not get started early and get some of them out of the way! What's the worst that could happen anyway? As big wave surfer Laird Hamilton says **"If you're not falling then you're not learning."**



Charlie Learning

8. There's no better way to be happier than getting your expectations down [Charlie]. Most unhappiness comes from misaligned and unrealistic expectations of life. Expect the world of yourself, but expect nothing of the world. Then you cannot help but live your life pleasantly surprised.

9. If I can be optimistic while I'm nearly dead, you can deal with a little inflation [Charlie]. This had the crowd laughing out loud. Life is what you make it. Don't let things get you down. It could always be worse.

10. If the only reason you find for doing something is because others are doing it then that's not good enough [Warren]. Enough said.

11. Bad behavior is contagious. That's how human nature works [Warren]. Watch out for this. It can catch you off guard.

12. We've done a lot of stupid things but we've avoided a small subset of stupidity and that subset is important. It's about avoiding the dumb things [Charlie]. They hammer this every year. Their success does not come from doing so many things right. It comes from avoiding the things that are terribly wrong. Some say this is two sides of the same coin. But it's not. It requires a fundamental shift in psychology. The stories are endless of people who did a few things right and were massively successful, but then did something stupid that took them back to zero. Before Charlie and Warren do anything, they "invert, always invert" as Charlie says. They list every way imaginable in which



they could fail at a particular task and then take massive effort to avoid those failures. Do that and the success will come automatically.

13. Go to bed a little wiser than when you woke up [Charlie]. This covers the whole meeting in a word. Life is about learning. If you are always learning you can never lose. Keep this as your only rule for the day and the world will be yours for the taking.

**Go to bed a little wiser than when you woke up.
-Charlie Munger**

The lessons from Warren and Charlie are endless. We can all stand to learn and be better people from what they are willing to share. They don't charge any money or ask for anything in return. Except of course that we live a life with a burning desire to learn and do all we can to be valuable additions to society.

Take these lessons to heart. There will likely not be another Warren and Charlie for a very long time. Take advantage of the education while you can. Do so and I have a feeling success and fulfillment will come naturally.

Thank you Warren and Charlie. We owe you a great deal.

How have the above points improved your life? How could they?



Goal #3: Kill stress and learn to joyfully experience life

The Power of Solitude: Taking Time to Reset



"The great omission in American life is solitude...that zone of time and space, free from the outside pressures, which is the incinerator of the spirit."

-Marya Mannes

This is a guest post written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#) for [Goodlife Zen](#)

Average Read Time: 4 minutes

When was the last time you were alone? I mean really alone.

No people, no noise, no technology, no distractions what so ever. Just you and your thoughts. For me the last time was 14 years ago on an Outward Bound adventure. I was left alone in the forest with nothing but a sleeping bag, water and a pencil and paper for 24hrs.

It was one of the hardest things I've done.



Being alone can be scary. It causes us to question all kinds of things. Ourselves, our actions, our life. The distractions of the world are so many that 'fortunately' we can go practically our whole life without ever thinking deeply about what we're really doing. All the chatter drowns out our deepest thoughts. Without space to grow, our best ideas may never materialize. We have to clear out some room.

The Benefits of Voluntary Solitude

Doing things alone is awesome. You are in complete control and you get to let the moments take you wherever they please. There are no agendas or personalities to satisfy. No one to compare against. You'll see people and the world in an entirely different light. Just pure exploring. I fell in love with it when I lived in Spain. Solo travel is the perfect example.

You get to slow down. See and appreciate the world around you. Think consciously about your life without constantly reacting to the thousands of monkeys thrown on your back each day.

You learn to appreciate your own company. Spending time alone allows us to get to know ourselves. To let it all hang out with no worry of others' perceptions. Be your own best company and never be without a friend.

You do things you'd never do. When I'm alone I do so much more thinking, reading, writing, meditating, observing and exploring than I'd ever do around the hustle of society. Your priorities change. Life gets simpler. Whether you are constantly around people or not, some intentional time to let your thoughts run wild can be valuable medicine for us all.

How to Get the Most Out of Time with Yourself

- 1. Schedule it.** Pick at least a night and ideally a full weekend or a few days where you'll be alone.
- 2. Leave town.** Solitude can be experienced at home but I've found it best to get out of your surroundings. It helps break the pattern of everyday life and thinking.
- 3. Find a place without distractions.** Maybe a friend or family's mountain cabin, beach or lake house. Anything to get away. The cheapest and simplest is to pitch a tent in the woods for a few days. Another idea is a meditation retreat for a day, a few days or longer. You won't have a choice but to slow down. I have done various one and two-day retreats and loved them. Goodlife Zen and Mary's [Virtual Retreats](#) are great ways to ease into taking some time to yourself.



4. Be close to nature. This always helps get us back to our roots and immediately tends to calm the desire to do a million things at once. The fresh air, colors and sounds are some of the best therapy one can find.

5. Eat simply. Stick to a bunch of water, nuts, fruits and vegetables if you can. It makes shopping cheap and easy and you might find yourself with a bit more energy when you return to reality.

6. Pack simply. There will be no one to impress out there so pack light. Only the bare necessities. Books, journal and a few personal items. Err on the side of less. It gives you one less thing to worry about before and during your adventure.

7. Leave the technology at home. For your first retreat I'd recommend no technology at all and especially no internet. Don't kid yourself. If it's there, it will consume you. Leave it behind. I'd even recommend a couple days with nothing. Not even a journal or book. Then you are guaranteed to do the things you rarely do at home. You are forced simply to be. There is nothing to check off so it's impossible to be in a rush. The feeling will be wild.

Note: If you must have a computer (say if writing is the purpose of your getaway), only allow it in designated times and avoid connecting to the web. Perhaps mornings and nights (so you can enjoy your days outside).

8. Get rid of your watch and calendar. Let the days flow as they may. For the first time in a while, you have nowhere to be.

9. Take some deep breaths. Find someplace quiet. Sit still. Close your eyes. Focus on your breath. Ideally do this outside. Think about nothing at all. Just listen and enjoy. Some call this meditation. Call it whatever you want. Take at least a couple 30-minute sessions a day to just be.

10. Ask the big questions of yourself. The ones you never have a chance to ask. What am I passionate about? What's great in my life? What am I proud of? What is my purpose? What am I best at? What am I meant to do in this world? The point is not to solve life's problems. It is to open your mind to them and address the idea that there's a lot to be learned about yourself.

You Deserve Some Solitude

Life has gotten too complicated to not reserve some time to ourselves and our thoughts every once in a while. It is not just about being alone. It's about being disconnected from life and consciously connected with your thoughts. For those of you who claim you don't have time for it, you are the ones who need it most. Trust me, I was there with you.



There will always be times in life when you are alone, whether it's your decision or not. Why not get used to them and learn to embrace the calm? These times give us a chance to experience life in a way we never otherwise would. Make solitude a priority and your mind and body will thank you.

"To make the right choices in life, you have to get in touch with your soul. To do this, you need to experience solitude, which most people are afraid of, because in the silence you hear the truth and know the solutions."

-Deepak Chopra

Photo courtesy of [anoldent](#)



The Art of Slowing Down: 12 Simple Ways



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Reading Time: 3 minutes

Five days ago I sat on top of a 14,000 ft. mountain taking in the most breathtaking view I'd experienced in years. I was on top of Mt. Shasta in Northern California and I'd spent the past two full days camping on snow and climbing with crampons and an ice axe to get myself to the top.

Do you know what the best part about it was? **There was no rush.**

With as badly as I wanted to make it to the top, there was absolutely no hurry. In fact I had no choice but to go slowly. If I didn't, my legs would tire, I'd risk slipping and my lungs wouldn't acclimate to the thinning oxygen. The faster you go, the more dangerous the trek. Where else in life is going slowly so strongly encouraged and even enforced? That's what made my experience up there so perfect.

There was no rush. There couldn't be. And I loved it.

When was the last time you felt no hurry in doing something? For many of us it's been too long.

But do we ever really gain anything from rushing? I've found that hurrying immediately creates stress in my body.



Even if I just run to the mailbox down the street and then walk back. Just the act of rushing can trigger stress and anxiety. Being a few seconds ahead of schedule is not nearly worth the price we pay inside.

Rushing gives us the feeling like we're getting more done but often it's just the opposite.

All this hurrying from one thing to the next takes a toll on our bodies. It's become too commonplace and we are in need of some recovery. Slowing down is something I've been working on more than anything this past year and I'd like to share what small things have helped the most.

12 Simple Ways to Slow Down:

1. Climb a mountain. This was amazingly therapeutic. Make sure it's challenging and requires focus.

2. Plan double time. We so often underestimate how long a task will take. Then we're frustrated, rushed and behind when it takes longer. If you think something will take an hour, block off two on your calendar. If it only takes an hour and a half, you'll feel like part of your life was given back to you. Use it freely.

3. Get a shoeshine. I enjoyed my first one of these in years today on Market Street. For 10 minutes there was nowhere I could go. It was awesome. And the conversation is likely to be pure entertainment. Next time you see a man shining shoes on the street, stop...for both your sakes.

4. Watch a sunset. I first fell in love with these when I lived in Sevilla. No matter where you are, there is a sunset. Sit alone or with someone you love and just soak it in. Whether it's over a building or an ocean makes no difference. One of my rules is to stop and appreciate anytime I come across a sunset. The pictures and beauty you capture will be well worth it.

5. Go on a date. What's the rush on a hot date? Just be sure it's with someone you genuinely enjoy and you'll never be watching the clock.

6. Live in Spain. Or any culture where they work to live as opposed to live to work. Ideally for a year but a month or week will do as a starter. My year and a half in Spain taught me my most valuable lessons about priorities and appreciating the moments and people around me. This is much tougher to learn in fast-paced achievement-driven societies. Spend time in a slow culture and it will change you.

7. Walk. Don't run. Look around and you'll see people running to the bus or the train or a plane or even the bathroom. Running when you don't intend or



have to causes stress. It is not worth the saved seconds. Instead, decide to walk mindfully and enjoy the stroll no matter where you're headed (unless your getting into a good workout of course). As Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia says,

"It's about how you got there. Not what you've accomplished."

8. Show up 15 minutes early. This makes walking places all the more comfortable. I continue to work on this. If you're always ahead of schedule then there's no need to rush. Afraid you'll have to wait for someone? Then always have a book under your arm.

10. Do one less thing at the end of the day. Instead of cramming one more thing in when you have a spare five minutes, save it for tomorrow. Hurried work is never good work. It will take enjoyment away from what's ahead. I am notorious for this. Next time you have five spare minutes, use them to take some deep breaths and absorb your surroundings. Maybe even smile at a few people.

11. Get in the longest line. Instead of always going for the shortest line and being frustrated when the one next to you moves faster, decide to seek out the longest one. Sounds crazy doesn't it? There will be no false expectations and you can save the short line for someone who really needs it. It's empowering to know you chose to wait.

12. Take the slower bus. I used to rush to catch the express bus near my house only to save 11 minutes. Now I've switched to taking the bus that stops at every stop. I have no expectations of getting to the office quickly and I get 22 more precious minutes of reading time each day, which I love.

And as a bonus, **leave your watch at home.** There are plenty of other ways to tell time without it being glued to your wrist. You'll end up looking at it way too often anyway. I did away with watches years ago. It was liberating to say the least.

I've picked these up over the years and made them into simple rituals to slow my stride. They are a breeze to implement and I encourage you to create some of your own as well. I don't remember to do them all the time but when I do, the calm of knowing I'm putting an end to the rush is something I hope we can all experience.

Remember there is no real hurry. There's only the one we create for ourselves through poor and unrealistic planning. Just because society is always on the go, does not mean you have to be. If we're not careful we'll miss half the fun of getting there.

Life is not a race. Do take it slower.
Hear the music. Before the song is over.

[-David L. Weatherford](#)



Take a moment to enjoy the slow dance of life today.

What are your methods for slowing your pace and enjoying the ride?

Photo courtesy of [Matheus Sanchez](#)



Find Peace in a Busy Life



"Life is just a quick succession of busy nothings."
-Jane Austen

This is a guest post written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#) for [ThinkSimpleNow](#)

Do you remember the last time you asked someone how work was? How about life in general? What was their response?

What did you say the last time you were asked those questions? I bet I know. It's the same thing almost everyone I talk to says, and something I've been keeping track of the past few weeks.

The unanimous answer: "busy"

The response is almost programmed. No need to even think. And then they look at me proudly, as if I should be impressed. Well, I can't say that I am.

I must admit that "busy" has been my response for years. But how did we all of a sudden find ourselves in a society where busy was the most acceptable way to be spending our time?

We've talked of being busy for so long that we've forgotten that being busy was never the goal. **We are not on this earth to be busy.** We are here to build relationships, experience life, go places, create things, help others, or whatever else you decide. Our reasons for being will all be different but I have a feeling that none of us feel we are here simply to be busy. But this thinking has led us to think busy is good...no matter what we're busy with.



Being busy is not the way we should measure our worth. As mentioned in [The Beginner's Guide to Being Congruent](#), it is up to each of us to decide how we ought to be spending our time. I do not believe being busy is a worthy goal for any of us. Before you know it, you might get caught up being busy doing worthless things.

Sadly the business world continues to train us this way as employees are expected to put in 8 (or 10 or 12) hours of work a day even though some days we might have only 2 or 4 hours of productive things to do. But since we must seem busy, we fill the time. Maybe with Facebook, chatting, or web surfing. It's poor life training. Tim Ferriss calls this Work For Work's Sake and it isn't helping.

I propose a revolt against being busy

Don't get me wrong, I am not encouraging laziness or not getting things done. It's quite the opposite. I've known business leaders and executives who's schedules have enough going on to give you a migraine, yet they don't feel busy at all. They feel calm, happy and congruent. If something important comes up, they have time for it.

Then I've met retired men who have all the time in the world to spend as they please, yet they always seem to be too busy for this or for that. Too busy for the things they love. They can never find enough time.

How can this be?

I've realized that busy is simply a state of mind.
A state that often causes stress, unhappiness and wasted energy.

Commit to not being busy

I propose that we all take a moment to stop, recognize this unhealthy state, and make the decision to no longer be busy. Enjoy the weight that gets lifted off your back simply by changing your focus. Perception is reality and none of us need busy to be that reality. I bet you'll get even more done and have time left over to do the things you really care about.

Personal Story: Don't be too busy to serve your purpose

Last week I had a very full schedule. All kinds of things going on. Meetings, events, projects. I had mapped out my whole calendar to be sure it all fit. Then right in the middle of the week I got a call from someone who wanted to get together for an hour to discuss her potential career transition. She had been with a company for over 14 years and recently began feeling as if she was in "career purgatory", as she put it.



A while back I decided that anytime someone needs help with a topic of such importance (especially when they use those words...), I'd make it a priority to do all I can to help. My calendar was packed, but there was no way I was too busy to sit down with her. I met her for an hour coffee and didn't leave for two and a half. It turned out to be the most rewarding, fulfilling and entertaining two and a half hours I'd spent all week.

She thanked me for meeting on such short notice and said, "I can't believe you could make time so quickly with how busy you must be." Everyone assumes everyone is so busy. Little did she know I'd recently decided that busy wasn't for me. This was exactly how I wanted to spend my time. I just hadn't planned on it when the week started.

Life can never be too busy for the things that matter most to you. If you don't have time for those, the busywork won't matter anyway.

I am done being busy. That is no longer my response to life...and I am the guy who has a pile of todo's and actions so long that they will likely never all get done. My calendar looks like a 19th century mosaic with all the things scheduled and planned. But that does not mean I'm busy. And that's liberating.

Give it a try. This week, take the "I'm not busy challenge". All you have to do is **commit to not responding to anyone with how busy you are** (even if it feels like you are totally swamped). Don't even adjust your schedule. Just change your language. It will be harder than you think. You'll stumble on what words to use to replace the cultural norm. Try "exciting" or "full" or maybe "all kinds of fun things". And if they ask directly if you've been busy...give the refreshing answer "Nope I haven't been busy at all." Then begin to act like it. Enjoy the tranquility that follows.

How busy are you right now? Pride and satisfaction are not found in busy. Decide not to be. It doesn't mean you don't get things done. It just means you do them calmly and with intent.

"Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these needs there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing."

-Thomas Alva Edison

Photo courtesy of [Ken Kayne](#)



Goal #4: Get in control of your emotions and create awesome relationships

The Power of Acceptance: A Guide to Minimizing Frustration



"Acceptance is such an important commodity, some have called it the first law of personal growth."
-Peter McWilliams

Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Reading Time: 3.5 minutes

When was the last time you were frustrated by someone around you?

Maybe they're always late, can't seem to follow through, missed another deadline, or perhaps you just don't see eye to eye.

It doesn't make a difference what it is. The possibilities are endless and we all have a long list. By nature we expect life to just be the way we want it to be. When it's not, we don't like it.

Many of us choose to carry this frustration around day to day.

We quickly forget that it is indeed a choice to feel this way.



I am no different. I have carried around a list of expectations turned frustrations for years. With all kinds of people in my life, even those closest to me. Often they are little things, and occasionally big ones. It doesn't matter. Either way, we seem to have a knack for letting the uncontrollable get to us.

But what's the point?

These are amazing people. There is nothing wrong with them. It's actually just the opposite. They are simply being who they are. And that's why I love them.

It is ok that people don't approach life exactly like you or I do. That's what makes it fun!

Life is too short to choose frustration over acceptance.

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten. I have always hoped for these little things to be different and I've gotten frustration as a result (And I'm sure others have felt the same of me). I'm tired of getting the same outcome, so I think it's time to change my approach. Why not just accept?

In dealing with others' actions, we have 3 options:

1. Cut them out of our life. This may work for some of your fringe relationships but not with the people who make your life what it is. If you have some that should be cut out, then by all means cut away. If you realize this is someone who is just too misaligned with you, then you likely don't have any room for them. But for all the other people we really care about, this option is pretty unrealistic.

2. Be frustrated. This is what many people choose. We get aggravated every time it happens. We let it affect our days and sometimes even the interactions we have with others. You must ask yourself, how much does this really help me or anyone around me?

3. Accept them for who they are and embrace it. This is where we stand to grow. With a simple choice we can add tremendous value to ourselves as well as the world around us. Think of how much simpler and more enjoyable your life would be if you let these little things roll off your back.

"Acceptance is the true thing everyone longs for. The one thing everyone craves. To walk in a room and to be greeted by everyone with hugs and smiles. And in that passing moment, you truly know you're loved, needed, and accepted."

-Rena Harmon

The only empowering choice is to accept.



Be honest with yourself. Do you really think that after all these years that person is going to change? Who knows. If it's important enough to them then maybe, but I certainly wouldn't bet your happiness on it.

I have a firm belief that we can do whatever we want, as long as what we decide is in line with who we really are. That is our own decision. Working on improving and changing yourself to be a better person is one thing (and something I wholly encourage).

But spending energy on expecting someone around you to change (especially if they have no desire to) is unrealistic. And what's even more ridiculous is being frustrated when your expectations aren't met.

Why accept others as they are?

Life is too short for frustration. There are plenty of uncontrollable aggravations in life. Acceptance allows you to control what you can.

You are forced to find the good in others. These people are in your life for a reason. You love and cherish them. It's easy to forget how amazing they are when you're bathing in negative feelings. Take time to remember what's great about them.

It creates realistic expectations of others. Expect they will continue to act as they do. Then you'll be pleasantly surprised anytime something different happens.

You likely do things that are just as frustrating. As sure as someone does something that bothers you, you do something that bothers them. None of us are perfect. Be accepting of others and they will be accepting of you.

It strengthens your relationships. The pent-up aggression will disappear as you start to focus on the best those around you have to offer. In holding nothing back, you will likely grow closer.

It might even cause a change. Sometimes taking the focus off someone's less-desirable traits raises their standard of themselves and whatever they previously did may disappear. Do not expect this nor accept others just for the hope of it happening. **The only way you and those around you will enjoy acceptance is if it's genuine.** There is no hiding this. Either your heart's behind your intentions or it's not. The world will notice.

Acceptance starts with yourself.



As you begin to more consciously accept others, realize that acceptance starts with you. Self-acceptance is often the first step in realizing life needs to be different. If you're in a sales job but you don't feel you're meant to be a salesman, then do something about it. Accept yourself for the wonderful things you are and all the things you aren't, and take action to spend your time in a way that's more in line with who you are. The world will be a better place as a result.

Acceptance means settling for the best life has to offer.

It's easy to think, in a world of "don't settle for less than you can be", that deciding to accept life and those around you is settling for less. It could not be further from the truth. Accepting is the first step in empowering yourself and others to live life on a much clearer and extraordinary level.

There is no settling in allowing yourself to unconditionally accept and appreciate the people in your life, including yourself. It's likely the greatest gift you could give.

It is of course easier said than done. The journey of acceptance is one that, no matter when it's started, will last the rest of your life. I think it's time to begin.

We can go through each day choosing one of two things: acceptance or frustration. Given that you have the choice, isn't it a pretty easy one to make?

"Truly loving another means letting go of all expectations. It means full acceptance, even celebration of another's personhood."

-Karen Casey

What are some things you could accept of others that would allow both of you to live life on a higher level?

Photo courtesy of [mcgraths](#)



How to Cure an Emotional Hangover



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Read Time 6.5 Minutes

Have you ever felt on top of the world one minute and moments later felt like you'd fallen off an emotional cliff?

Why is it that some of our favorite and most exciting experiences with others can often lead to us feeling drained or craving attention? Often the answer is that you're hung over...emotionally that is. Let me explain.

Symptoms of an Emotional Hangover

You've just had an amazing set of experiences and you suddenly:

- Feel empty and alone
- Are craving attention
- Feel anxious, hurried and stressed
- Lose your motivation to be healthy (mentally and physically)
- Experience a feeling of excitement quickly replaced by feeling lost

Personal Story:

A few weeks back I had a reunion of sorts in Santa Barbara. I got the chance to reconnect with some of the most amazing people from my college and pre college life. Old roommates, friends and a bunch of familiar faces. I was on an absolute high all weekend. We all picked up right where we left off three, five or eight years ago. We didn't skip a beat. The stories, the laughter, the energy, the excitement--



it was all there by the buckets full. As contagious as that type of energy can be, we also made some brand new connections with those around us. It really could not have gone better.

Before I knew it, the weekend was over. Sunday afternoon I said goodbye and drove away, still bubbling with energy. Then within a matter of minutes, that energy converted into one of the heaviest weights I've experienced. The excitement turned to sadness bordering on mild depression. I got anxious. My mind started racing. All of a sudden I just felt empty. What on earth had just happened? It wasn't until later in the day that it actually hit me. The hyper-stimulation from the weekend's interactions had swung so dramatically from attention to alone time, that my body and emotions hardly knew what to do. I was emotionally hung over.

And this was not the first time. In fact this happens to me to some degree every time I spend focused time with high-energy people (I don't even have to know them that well). It's just the result of the pure stimulation.

Think back on the last few emotionally-packed events you've experienced. Perhaps a wedding, birthday party or new year's celebration. Anything that involved a lot of focused human interaction that lasted for a couple days or more. **How did you feel once the music stopped?** Chances are you had the same emotional hangover I did. It turns out it isn't that uncommon, at least from the anecdotal research I've done since really coming to grips with it. In the past weeks I've asked a number of people if they've ever had an emotional hangover and their immediate response was "yes!" Then they say, "Wait, what's an emotional hangover"? Intuitively most people realize they've experienced one.

As with anything, the first time something happens, it catches you off guard. The second and third times it happens you recognize the feeling and start to notice a pattern. Then after another experience or two you have enough data to study it, learn from it and modify your actions. An emotional hangover is no different. So the real question is what can we do about it?

A Word of Warning: *The last thing you'll want to do when feeling unresourceful is try to change your state. Do it anyway. On top of that, it's not uncommon for an emotional hangover to be paired with a real hangover, which makes dealing with it all the more important. So be proactive and use the following to help get you cured.*





Seven Steps to Curing an Emotional Hangover:

1. Recognize it. We tend to overreact when something happens to us that we don't understand. Once you've accepted that you'll experience these hangovers from time to time, they become much more manageable. It's never fun to feel sad or anxious, especially when you have no idea why. **Knowing and understanding why is always half the battle.** Next time you feel this way, assess your symptoms and come to grips with it. Nothing else can be done until this happens.

2. Try to Understand it. Get out your journal and start writing. If you don't have one, then now's the time to stop into a bookstore and pick one up. I recommend a [Moleskine](#). I write more when I'm alone after a big event than any other time. **Write down what happened over the past few days. What was so exciting, invigorating and memorable about your experiences and interactions?** What do you wish you could continue? Who do you want to see again? Maybe there's even a special girl or guy you connected with--this will make the hangover especially intense and makes understanding it even more important.

3. Get Grateful and Dive into an Emotional Flood. Right along with understanding it comes being massively grateful for your experience. For the people, the stories, the fun and the excitement. What are you proud of from the event? What went right? Who made you feel special and how? Now expand it outside of this event to your life in general. **Who are you so thankful to have in your life? What life situations, emotions and interactions could you not live without? Write them down.** See them in your mind. Picture the sounds, the voices, colors, pictures, smells. Soak it all in. Flood yourself with positive emotions. Spend at least 5-10 minutes but perhaps an hour or more. The



longer the better. When you're feeling intensely grateful, it's very difficult to feel negative emotions like fear and stress.

4. Move and Breathe. This is my solution to most challenging things I come up against. Stress and anxiety can be caused by something as simple as taking short quick breaths and focusing on the wrong things. Oxygenate your body and your mind. Take some big deep breaths. Start by walking and breathing. Maybe 5 counts in, hold for 20 counts and 10 counts out. Then really start to move. **Go for a run, do some yoga or hop on your mountain bike. You pick. Ideally stay outside where it's fresh and the scenery is soothing. Just about everything feels better after a workout.** Who cares what it is. Just move. This can be an excellent time to get grateful too. There's nothing wrong with doing them at the same time. This isn't a bad way to cure a normal hangover either.

5. Eat Foods that Serve You. Most of you know what this means. Do things that support your body and your mind. Eating is one of those things where your actions can be so dramatically different based on whether you're thinking short term or long term. If you're stuck in your hangover, you're likely to treat your body poorly. But if you've just gone for a nice run and gotten incredibly grateful, you'll want to nurture your body properly. **Just take [Michael Pollan's advice](#) and eat food, not too much, mostly plants. I would stick to mainly water-rich vegetables. Grab a big salad and a nice glass of water.** Easy on the meat, cheese and cream dressing though. If you already feel emotionally heavy, those will feel like adding a 50lb weight to your back. Your body and emotions will thank you.

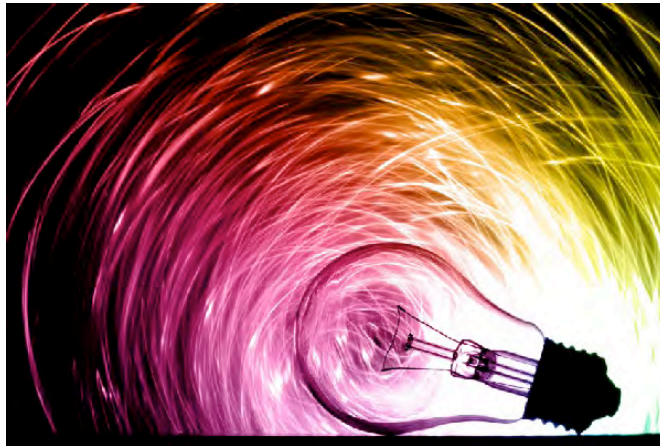
6. Ease Back Into it. When feeling drained, alone and down and out from one of these hangovers, the immediate thought is to get around more people. You're craving stimulation so this is natural. Just like an alcoholic will tell you the quickest way to feel better after too many drinks is to drink a little more (you can imagine how slippery that slope can be), that only prolongs the inevitable. If you over stimulated for a few days then take your medicine. **Be by yourself and take time to understand your emotions.**

My first thought after my emotional hangover was to set up dinner plans with someone, anyone. I racked my brain with whom to meet. Then I stopped myself and decided to enjoy a nice meal out all alone. I had my journal and a book. That was all I needed. **You will be craving connection. Resist the urge to start calling, texting, tweeting or facebooking. None of that [chatter](#) will help for more than a few seconds.** Then you'll want even more. Be happy being alone for a while. Then reconnect slowly by finding a close friend or significant other.

7. Be Conscious for Next Time. Now that you understand a bit more about your emotions, what happened and how you properly dealt with it, **be aware of**



the fact that it will happen again. As sure as you'll spend more time with people you care about, you'll have another emotional hangover. There is nothing wrong with this. Unlike the ones that come from too much booze, I believe **an emotional hangover is a perfectly normal and healthy part of the human spirit.**



The path to improvement often starts with experiencing, followed by understanding and finishing with action.

We all have experienced emotional hangovers to some extent. Maybe yours are triggered by things different than mine. Take some time to understand what leaves you feeling empty so you can recognize it and take action.

Most people fear and dread what they don't understand. This can trigger quite the unhealthy emotional cycle. Crush the fear with understanding. **Take a few minutes right now to write down what you've noticed produces your emotional hangovers.** Realize what you've done to exacerbate or remedy them. Have a plan for what you'll do next time.

And do yourself a favor. Don't be so hard on yourself next time you feel your emotions have overdosed on the one thing we all crave--human stimulation and connection. After all, that's the best part of life.

What caused your last emotional hangover? Did you realize what was happening? What did you do to deal with it?

Photo 1 courtesy of [aastrochicks](#)

Photo 2 courtesy of [No8](#)

Photo 3 courtesy of [Apture](#)



Goal #5: Get a super fit body and lead a long and healthy life

How to live to 100: Lessons from the Blue Zones



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Editor's Note: This is a book review of *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who Have Lived The Longest* by Dan Buttner

Average Reading Time: 3.5 minutes

I wonder if I can live to be 100, and enjoy every year of it? I think it might be possible. Very possible. What about you? With all the guidance regarding longevity, diet and simple living, I have a strong feeling that some of us will live a lot longer than people give us credit for – If we stop following the crowd that is.

A few years ago Dan Buttner teamed up with National Geographic to go around the world and visit the populations with the greatest number of centenarians (people 100+ years old) who still live an enjoyable life, to see if there might be any lifestyle habits they all have in common. The results were encouraging. While these “Blue Zones” spanned from little villages in Costa Rica, Japan, Sardinia, and even California, the lifestyles of these people all had a lot in common.

So what can we do to live to be 100 (or at least give ourselves the best shot at it)?



1. Laugh: You think this one's funny? I hope so. That means you're on the right track. Don't take life so seriously. There are few better remedies in life than a good belly laugh. Try to incorporate this 15-20 times a day.

2. Have close friends: The quality of our lives comes down to the people with whom we spend our days. Prioritize time with friends. Open up to them and allow them to do the same. Build genuine connections. Be there when people need you. Have a 2-3 hour weekly meal with those you care most about.

3. Stay close to your family: Don't ever forget where you came from. Your family will be there when no one else will, as long as you nurture them. Most centenarians lived with or close to their family, where they experience daily love and connection. Sadly, the life expectancy living alone was not quite as rosy.

4. Eat mostly plants: While most of these people eat some meat here and there, the majority of their diets are meat free, consisting of mainly fruits and veggies.

5. Buy a case of nice red wine – And drink it, slowly: At least one of these will be easy to do right? Besides the heart and health benefits of the resveratrol and antioxidants, wine is just a nice way to sit back and take in life. Stick to a max of 2 glasses a day and promise yourself you'll only drink with friends. That means you're with your friends every day. Two birds with one stone!

6. Slow down and show up early: Being rushed everywhere you go is a fools game. Take some time to enjoy the slow dance of life. What is the real rush anyway? Simply being in a hurry causes stress. Try showing up 15 minutes early to things. That alone can do wonders. Something I'm especially working on.

7. Move and breathe: I shouldn't even mention this one. It gets pounded over our head daily. Get off your ass and move and breathe a bit. Some of these centenarians walked or hiked miles in a day. Workout your heart. Feel what it's like to breathe hard and get your blood pumping. How many of you feel better and more energized as soon as you finish a workout? Moving and breathing is one of the best stress relievers out there. The health benefits can't be avoided but forget about those for a minute and notice how much more you enjoy your day when it starts with a workout. Twenty minutes is all you need...as a starter.

8. Have a purpose: Do you have any idea what the average life span is of men once they retire? 3 years. No joke. I am sure there are varying statistics on this but it's pretty powerful. Our life, health and vitality is directly linked to the value we add to society and our compelling reasons for getting up each morning. Life begins and ends with purpose. Perhaps it's running your business or maybe it's just making your fiancée smile. Your purpose is yours to define. The important thing is to define it.



As you noticed, only a couple of the items on this very condensed list have to do with what you put into your body. It's crucial and we hear it all the time. But I listed these other things because they almost seem too basic for anyone to consider. I assure you they are not. These are the daily habits that lead to a lifetime of enjoyment. Happiness not spent today does not equal more happiness tomorrow.

Let me repeat that:

Happiness not spent today does not equal more happiness tomorrow.

Wake up with a purpose, enjoy your friends, cherish your family, and of, course the laughing will come naturally.

It should not be a surprise that financial success isn't anywhere on the list. In fact I would not be surprised if there was a negative correlation between longevity and wealth. Money is important to a point, but it comes after the things listed above; don't make it your sole focus. Remember happiness postponed is happiness lost.

As with most guidance for treating your body and your life the way it deserves: simplify, simplify, simplify. A lot of the answers can be found by getting back to basics. If you are ever in doubt, ask yourself this question: How would someone have done it 200 years ago?

Give it a shot and who knows, maybe I'll see you at your 101st birthday party.

How long do you think you'll live? What are you doing today that will extend your enjoyable years tomorrow?



Goal #6: Become insanely productive and have hours more time to do what you love

12 Tips For Outsourcing Your Business to the Next Level in Today's Economy



This is a guest post written by [Scott Dinsmore](#) for [Elance](#)

The first thing people say when they hear I outsource is, after giving me an odd look, "well I don't really have anything I would outsource." I assure them they're mistaken, just as I was when I was first heard about it in *The 4-Hour Work Week*. As soon as I started, it was hard to stop.

It's easy to think that now's the time to do it all yourself and save every penny possible, but I propose the contrary. Today's testing economy is the perfect opportunity to leverage what resources are out there.

The point of outsourcing is not to necessarily find someone to do the task better than you or even cheaper – it's to offload the majority of your daily required work so that you can focus on the core portion of your business where you add unique value. Think of it as the 80/20 rule. If 80% of the results come from 20% of the effort, then spend all your time on that high yielding 20% and outsource the rest.



If you are hesitant because you could do it cheaper, then you likely are not valuing your time appropriately. Give yourself some credit. Your hours are worth a great deal, especially as an entrepreneur or businessman.

Over my past four years, I've outsourced more business jobs than I thought possible and more personal tasks than some would consider appropriate... and I cannot imagine doing it any other way – and not to mention, it's been a blast. Sound intriguing?

Here are my 12 tips for outsourcing success:

1. Consider this an investment. Even if you have nothing to outsource, make something up. This is an investment in your education at the very least and the start of a whole new way of doing business at the best. Set aside a few hundred dollars with no expectation of a return. It's your tuition. The return will be gained through your experience.

2. Do your due diligence. Thoroughly review an Elancer's profile, portfolio, and feedback. A thorough profile should show previous jobs, examples of work and client ratings to see if they've performed jobs of the same size and scope that match your interest.

3. Test their communication skills. Clear communication is a must for any project. Before hiring, be sure to exchange a few messages through pre-bids to not only see how quickly they respond but also to see how much they know about the particular job and how well they can communicate with you. Also, hop on a Skype call or utilize the Elance Call feature if phone work will be involved

4. Set office hours. This is especially important if you're in very different time zones. Set a few hours each business day where you both agree to be available if questions come up. They certainly will appreciate it as well and at times you'll want live discussion instead of waiting overnight for an email response.

5. Start with a few candidates and give them a test project. Don't pick one person right from the start – kick the tires on a few. There's only one way to see if they do quality work. Give the same small project to 3-5 people or teams and see how they compare. I needed a logo for my investment business a couple years ago and I was able to get 5 teams to submit a rough draft based on my creative brief. I chose my favorite guy, who happened to be in Pakistan, and he created our entire corporate identity (which we still happily use).



6. Hire for specific tasks. Remember, there are so many super skilled people out there. That being said, keep in mind that it's much better to have a few specialized people on your team rather than one really general one. I have my graphics guy in Pakistan, a few in India who do personal tasks, SEO and Wordpress, and someone down the street who does my web design. When you hire on a task by task hourly basis, you have the luxury of specializing.

7. Set clear deadlines and project descriptions. One of the best byproducts of outsourcing is it teaches you how to clearly define a project, a step that often gets missed when we do our own work. Without a clear project scope, outsourcing is futile. Also, properly defining a job at the beginning gives it a better chance of success. Then, when you put time parameters on it, it's all the more efficient. Always give a deadline and maximum time you'd like them to spend on it. The closer the deadline and fewer projects assigned at once the better. Provide clear direction.

8. Be sure they understand before they begin. Ask for them to paraphrase the task and describe their approach before beginning. There is certainly more room for miscommunication when you don't see someone and often don't even talk to them. Clear and concrete tasks are the insurance against major miss queues.

9. Don't simply shop by price. Rates range from \$5/hr to \$250+ an hour. Resist the urge to go with the lower cost option just for the novelty of the savings. It's possible they will be your best option, but test that assumption by trying a few price ranges. If the cheaper option causes more frustration and time spent, then it may be time to increase your budget. Personally, I've had success and failure with price ranges from \$5/hr up to \$50/hr.

10. If it takes longer to write up the project than to do it yourself, don't outsource it. When you get started, you'll want to outsource everything and at first maybe you will, but as this becomes a regular part of your business and personal operations, be practical. If it's not saving you time then do it yourself or don't do it at all.

11. Outsourcing does not have to mean going international. Try a few countries, including your own. I've found great guys in India and great guys in my backyard of San Francisco. It all depends on the scope of the project. Elance even allows you to search geographically if for instance you want someone who you can see face-to-face. Their tools are super easy to use and give you a great shot at finding just the right fit.



12. Expect snafus. Things will no doubt go wrong as you are learning the ropes. Do the above and you'll likely make your mistakes early on and with little time and capital investment at risk. Remember every mistake is a lesson. Only let it happen once.

When you clear your schedule of the mundane, your mind has time to tackle the ideas that will allow your business to reach its full potential. Here are just a few possible tasks you can outsource today:

- web research
- customer service
- accounting
- web and blog design
- blog and copy writing
- blog comment moderation
- locate best courses in your area for various subjects
- voice transcription
- SEO, SEM and Social Media Marketing
- personal or administrative tasks
- travel plans
- having an out-of-production product or garment made (it's amazing how cheaply India can make a replica of your favorite shirt)
- locating the perfect gift on Valentine's Day
- charting diet plan

The list is about as long as your imagination can wander. Go out and have fun with this. Once you start, it will be impossible not to. The leverage on your time, effort and dollars is such that none of us can afford to miss it. If you need more motivation, realize your competitors are likely already doing the above.

As a bonus, there's something about knowing work is getting done while you sleep that is incredibly soothing and awesomely efficient. If you have questions, I'm happy to help. Block out an hour on your schedule and make an investment in your future productivity both personally and professionally. It will likely be one of your best returns to date.

Photo courtesy of [foxspain](#)



7 Steps to Finishing a Non-Fiction Book in Half the Time While Retaining Twice as Much



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Reading Time: 7 minutes

A few years ago I read a study that out of all the books purchased, only 10% of them are read past chapter 1. The statement blew my mind. But then again how many of you have piles of unread books on your shelves? I know I do. There are a number of reasons for the above statistic, not the least of which is that so many readers have never been taught an efficient way to get through a book. I hope to change that with this 6-step guide.

Over the past year or two I have been teaching speed reading techniques to students and business professionals for a company out of Chicago called [The Iris Organization](#). I teach most of the one and two day weekend classes in San Francisco. It's been a blast--I love teaching and I obviously love reading and the tools we teach can make such a big difference so quickly.

I figured it's about time that I share some of the techniques with some of you readers. By following the below steps I am confident that **you will be able to finish a non-fiction book in half the time it usually takes you and will retain upwards of twice as much information.** And on top of that, you'll actually be more invigorated to read and use what you learn.

So here they are. The 7 steps to finishing a non-fiction book in half the time:



1. Preview the material.

All of us would agree that we can usually do something better or quicker when we do it for the second, third or fourth time. It is the first exposure to something (a sport, game, dating, you name it) that requires the most care and time. Once we know what's coming around a corner we don't hesitate nearly as much. Reading is no different.

So many people race right into reading a new book without knowing hardly anything about it. Before reading a book, give yourself a feel for the material:

- Read the front and back cover, inside flaps and table of contents.
- Then spend 15 minutes or so reading the first and last paragraph of each chapter.

You will be amazed with the tidbits your mind picks up—from core ideas to characters and general flow. This step alone allowed me to finish a book in under a few hours after doing just this one step. It's hard to realize how powerful it is until you give it a shot. The mind has an amazing ability of organizing and sorting through information. When we read a short bit from the intro and conclusion of each chapter it gives our subconscious mind so much more to work with when we actually read.

And who knows, after doing a quick preview maybe you realize you've learned all you want from the book or that it's not what you expected and you decide to be done with the book all together. Embrace the art of not finishing if you don't think it's worth your time. If you're still engaged, move on to step 2.

2. Warm up your eyes.

One of the most basic tricks to speed reading is getting your eyes used to seeing words at a much faster rate than you're usually used to. Before reading, spend 5 minutes or so doing a simple speed drill-- look at words 2-3 times faster than you'd be able to read them. Use a pen or your finger as a guide and force your eyes to fly through each line left to right, top to bottom. Do not worry about comprehension--this is a speed drill not a reading drill. You may not think it's doing anything, but you'll notice that when you go from such a rapid pace back to reading, you read at a much faster rate. By contrast your mind feels like it's slowing down (and it is when compared to the pace of the drill) but it's slowing down to a pace much faster than you'd usually read.

Steps 1 and 2 are akin to warming up before a big game. You'd never go into a sporting tournament without stretching and warming up or else you'd likely get hurt. A good warm up allows you to play the game at a higher level. The same goes for reading. You may not be at risk of getting hurt but you are at risk of wasting your time--one of the biggest dangers of all.



3. Set up an environment for success.

No matter how fast of a reader you are, the more distractions you have, the slower you'll read and the less you'll retain. Do yourself a favor and find a quiet place ideally away from other people and distractions. Concentration is usually best in the morning, sitting upright. Clear your mind and maybe even put on some soothing music (nothing with lyrics though). Do not expect to read effectively unless you are in an environment to do so.

4. Begin Reading.

Now that you're warm and focused, let's get to reading. Ideally use your hand or pen to guide your eyes and keep up your pace and concentration (our eyes are naturally attracted to motion). Using a guide while you read is one of the fastest most effective ways to increase speed and focus. I rarely read a book without using my finger to guide my eyes.

Also, take short breaks at least every 30 minutes if not more often. Maybe just to look away from the page, blink a few times or take a sip of water or a short walk. After 30 minutes of straight reading our eyes and mind will start to slow down and wander. Keep yourself sharp by allowing frequent breaks. Remember the goal is not to see how many hours straight you can read. It's to finish a book while spending the least amount of your time staring at the pages. Let's be efficient about it.

5. Make comments in the margins and begin creating a mind map.

Repetition is what leads to retention. If you want to remember the details you need to write them down. Keep track of main ideas. Ideally take notes in a format that is more conducive to the way your mind processes information. Our minds do not think in line-by-line text. They think in images, colors, sounds, pictures, and events. Make your notes visual and colorful if you can. Create a mind map. Mindmeister.com offers an awesome free app online for creating fun mind maps. For those of you who aren't familiar with mind maps you might want to check out [How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci](#).

Add to your mind map after each reading session and especially once you've completed the book. Once you're done, schedule 15-20 minutes to flip back throughout the pages to finish up your map and jot down any other ideas or tasks that came up as you were reading. I've found that reading triggers more ideas than almost anything else I do (other than travel and adventuring). Scribble them down the moment they come to mind so they don't distract you from the rest of your reading.



6. Keep your momentum.

Most people get the most excitement for their book in the first few days of reading it. Take advantage of this and schedule time to enjoy the book when you have the most energy and enthusiasm for it. Most people who do not finish a book in a week or two often never finish it.

7. Tell people about it!

Retention is all about repetition (let me know if I'm repeating myself). It is not until you can discuss and teach someone what you've learned, that you know it's been internalized. If you finish a chapter right before a lunch date, spend the first couple minutes telling another person what you learned. This will burn it into your mind and do wonders for your ability to recall it in a day, week, month or even years later.

As soon as you finish the book, do the same thing. In my case one of my best retention techniques is to begin writing a review the moment I finish a good book. I also usually cannot stop talking about what I've read--just ask my fiancée. The more forms of repetition and teaching the better. You will know the stuff like the back of your hand. And the better you know it, the more likely you are to actually do and benefit from what you've learned. Isn't that why we picked the book up in the first place anyway?

A Closing Story: Sharpening the Saw

Now I know what some of you are thinking. "He wants me to do all those things just to read a book? I'd rather not waste my time and get right to the book." This reminds me of a story I believe I first heard from [Stephen Covey](#). It goes like this.

Two lumberjacks were asked to each cut down a tree and the person who finished first got the following day off as a prize. The problem is they both had very old and dull saws. So the first lumberjack does not waste a second. He goes straight to sawing. He's working hard. But he's not making much progress, although he knows that the more sawing he does, the closer he gets to cutting the tree down.

After 30 minutes of vigorous work, the lumberjack looks over to the other man and see's him casually sitting on another log. The first man says to the next "what on earth are you doing? This is a race and you have not even started sawing." The second man looks back calmly as he runs a sharpening stone over his saw. "The saw is dull. I've got to sharpen it before I can do any real work."

The first lumberjack just laughs as he goes back to frantically sawing as the second man continues sharpening.

Another 20 minutes later the first lumberjack can hardly pull the saw another time and he is only half way through the tree. At this point the second man puts



down his sharpening stone, sets up to his untouched tree, and in one smooth stroke, cuts down the whole thing. He then sits back down and begins to plan his day off.

How often do you find yourself racing to do the cutting before you set yourself up for real success? Sharpening the saw applies to every walk of life. Be efficient with your time and you'll have plenty more to share with others. Enjoy the books on your shelf. Before long you'll need to buy a few more.

Photo Courtesy of [Nicole Dinosaur](#)



Living the 80/20 Life: 5 Ways to Achieve More with Less



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Read Time: 4.5 Minutes

We've all surely heard of the 80/20 Principle, or Pareto's Law as it's more formally known. It goes something like this:

80% of the results come from 20% of the effort.

It's often thrown around in business as nothing more than a buzzword. Few actually do a full 80/20 analysis of their business and almost no one I've come across has applied the same to their life as a whole. Other than two people that is: Richard Kock and [Tim Ferriss](#)--and the people who have since followed in their footsteps (me included). The 80/20 Principle is the source material for what Tim wrote in [The 4-Hour Work Week](#). It took me reading it a couple times to grasp the simplicity and life-altering implications of the principle. The time saved and gained will blow your mind.

The amazing thing is that the studies in this book show the principle working in just about every possible scenario. Of course it's not always 80/20. Sometimes 90/10 or 95/5 or even 70/30. But the point is it works--without fail.



Richard's purpose was to explain this ancient principle in a way that would inspire action and application to every part of life. **When applied to work, productivity will go through the roof, but when applied to your life outside of work, happiness and fulfillment do just the same.** All it takes is a shift in thinking. Try the following for a few weeks and the time in your life will never be the same.

5 ways to apply the 80/20 Principle to enhance your life:

1. Do the 20% of your work that leads to 80% of your results: Track all the time you spend on projects each hour of each day for a week. How many of these things were necessary? How many got you closer to your goals? How many were a waste of time? How many could someone else have done? Pick the 20% of your tasks that yield 80% of the results and outsource or simply discontinue the rest. Wondering what to do with your remaining time? Enjoy life. I outsourced a significant portion of my work to two very reliable virtual assistants in India starting in 2006. Ravi and Vikash now do that 70 or 80% for me. At \$3-5/hour it is very hard to beat. Check out eLance.com if you're looking to out source. Search "Virtual Assistant". Once you start outsourcing, you'll never go back.

2. Locate the 20% of your customers who drive 80% of your profits: Find your top 20% customers (by profit, not revenue) and fire the rest. Yes, fire them. The goal is not to work your life away. It is to make a good living to enjoy your life. If you must work more, then list out the characteristics of your 20% customers and go out and find more of them. You will not believe how liberating it can be to fire a customer who's been a real pain in the ass.

3. Prioritize the 20% of your friends who provide 80% of your support and enjoyment: If you apply 80/20 to your relationships you will surely find that a few people in your life provide the majority of your support, excitement, laughter and feelings of connection. On the other side, there is likely another 20% group of people who account for most your sleepless nights, tears, anger and frustration. If you don't want to feel this way, stop spending time around your bottom 20. Fire them and work on duplicating your top 20. This may sound a little callous, but it's not. It's practical. The quality of our life comes down to the quality of the people and experiences that fill it.



4. Fill your life with the 20% of your experiences that provide 80% of your happiness: As humans, our two biggest priorities are to move towards pleasure and away from pain. As mentioned above, find the few people, things, places and experiences that provide 80% of your happiness, fulfillment, pleasure and excitement. Also find the things that cause you to feel the majority of your negative emotions. Focus your time on the top 20% and avoid the bottom 20% like the plague.

5. Do the 20% of your workouts that lead to 80% of your physical gains: The majority of fitness results come from a small portion of most workouts. 80% of the muscle is built in the last 20% of the reps. [Crossfit](#) is a great example. The workouts are 7-14 minutes long on average but they provide more physical benefit than most hour-long workouts. Spending more time on something is not always a good thing. If you believe your workouts must take an hour then you'll likely miss a lot more of them. What if they only took 7 minutes, but that seven minutes really tested your limits? You're likely to show up a lot more often.

I know this sounds simple. But few people stop to actually do it. It is truly possible to spend the majority of your time doing the things that you love. The only way to get there is taking Pareto's 80/20 principle seriously. It will make all the difference.

Do not let more than 3 months go by without performing a full 80/20 breakdown of all areas of your life (especially your personal life). It will only take a couple hours and those hours will likely save days before you know it... 80/20 in action yet again.

Somewhere along the path of life, most of us were taught to associate fulfillment and worth with the number of hours spent--thinking the more the better. This has lead many of us to working aimlessly just to say we filled the day. This IS NOT the goal.

The goal is be fulfilled, happy, efficient, effective and more than anything else, to enjoy life. Happiness is a daily right. It is not something we need to work our ass off for years to finally achieve. That is what Pareto stumbled on all these years ago. I encourage you to do the same.



Quadruple Your Productivity and Enjoy a Little Life: 8 Steps to Getting Things Done



Time is the only real scarce resource. We are all battling for more of it.
The only way to have more is to spend it wisely.

Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Read Time: 4 minutes

I just finished *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity* by David Allen. I know. I'm a little late to the game. It was a quick read and I loved the premise. There were no doubt some clear productivity "ah-ha's" as I read. I have spent a lot of time learning and developing my own productivity system over the years and I'm excited to implement a few more of Allan's nuggets. Most of the things he mentions are not totally novel but the package he puts them in catches an eye.

Top 6 Ways to Quadruple Productivity and Have a Little More Time to Enjoy Life:

1. "What is the next task that will get me toward my desired outcome?" This is the biggest point Allen drives home. Always ask this question upon completion of a meeting or task. This alone will put your productivity through the roof. Let this be the last time that you leave the site of a goal, plan or meeting without a clearly defined and scheduled next action item to make it a reality.



2. Plan Your Week. Spend at least a half hour or an hour at the beginning (or end) of each week taking stock of what you accomplished the prior week, what you didn't accomplish, what you learned and what your desired outcomes are for the week to come. Many people dive right into the week with no plan of what they want their week to look like. And then get frustrated when nothing gets done. Be intentional and get committed. Things will start to happen. Spending an hour sharpening the saw will make the week's cutting all the easier. I have been doing this every week for years.

3. Schedule It. Things do not get done unless you schedule them. By definition in order for a task to be completed it must physically occupy some portion of your life. Lists have become so arbitrary. They get longer and longer and are rarely prioritized, leaving you overwhelmed when everything doesn't get checked off. Also, the average person drastically underestimates how long something will take (at least we're optimistic). This causes them to put 27 hours worth of work on one day's list. Reserving time on your calendar forces you to be honest with yourself and get completed only what is reasonable in the time you have available. Proper expectations are a huge part of getting things done.

4. Schedule A Buffer. Now that we have come to grips with the fact that everything takes longer than expected, we also need to accept the fact that things always come up that we didn't plan. They take time and sometimes they have to happen right away. Schedule buffer time for these. I literally block off an hour or two each day that simply says "buffer time". It almost always gets filled up with something urgent and unexpected and when it doesn't, I have an hour of my life back--an amazing feeling. That's when it's time to get outside and have some fun (or do whatever you like to do with spare time--other than check email).

5. Give Yourself Strict and Short Deadlines. This is not contradictory to Schedule It. Yes, things take longer than expected, and they also will take up as much time as you have available. We call this [Parkinson's Law](#). The time required to complete a project is directly proportional to the time you have available. In other words, if you have time to waste, you will waste it. You have a day to study for an exam. It takes a day. You have two weeks to study. It takes two weeks. Give yourself enough time to complete a task but not a moment more. Set these limits up in advance.

6. Don't Check Email First Thing in the Morning. If you haven't heard this before, you have not been listening. This is huge. No matter what you're doing, email will immediately throw you off and suck the time and energy out of your life. Get your most important things done in the first 2-3 hours of the day. Then check some email and a little Facebook. I know I do not need to convince you on merit of this. I just need to break you from your addiction.

7. Do Your Most Important Things First. This goes with the above. First thing in the morning (after a good workout and breakfast), since I already have a



plan for the week, I know what's most important for the day. So I dive into those 2-3 tasks first. Often before even opening my computer or connecting to the internet, and definitely before checking email. You will feel mountains better about the rest of the day with your major items behind you. Then there's plenty of time to waste away on email.

8. Get a Good System to Keep Track of Your Life. Everyone does things differently and no system will be perfect for all of us. But there are some amazing tools out there for free or almost free to get you started. Whatever the cost, if it gets you organized and motivates you to get things done, it's worth the investment. I use a combination of the [Tony Robbins](#) Time of Your Life Planning System, [7 Habits](#) and [4-Hour Work Week](#) in conjunction with my iCal, Google Calendar, [Things](#) and [Evernote](#), all synced to my iPhone for what I feel has become my own little work of art. Can't forget a good clean workspace of your own and maybe some physical file cabinets either. It took a while for me to get the right system in place and its always changing, but it's empowering once you get it. Find a few sexy productivity toys and have some fun.

These steps are easy and any one of them alone will dramatically transform the way you go about your moments, days, weeks and life. Take advantage of them and let me know what you do with all your free time!

[What have you found most useful to manage your life and create time for the things you really care about?](#)

Photo courtesy of [koalazymonkey](#)



Goal #7: Sell what you want to who you want

10 Lessons a Pickup Artist Can Teach a Salesman



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Reading Time: 7.5 minutes

What do you think a pickup artist could teach a salesman? I bet you'd be surprised. I know I was.

Can you think of a more crucial and technical sale than convincing a man or woman to go out with you, spend their time and maybe even locking lips? That sale can take a lifetime to master.

A couple years ago when starting my [investment business](#), a respected mentor and salesman recommended only one book: *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists*. I laughed until I realized he was serious. Then I bought the book. He promised the techniques for picking up women were just as relevant for business relationships (well most of them at least...). A little common sense and discretion is required.

It turns out that these days the author, Neil Strauss, does one-day workshops on social dynamics and rapport building for the likes of premier global management consulting companies and he charges top dollar. These guys are the cream of the crop when it comes to consulting and we can be pretty sure he isn't teaching them how to get a date. Understanding how to interact in social situations is crucial and this was a pretty entertaining (and very real) way to learn a few things.



I've been in a relationship for over 7 years (getting married in August!), so picking up on women is not something at the top of my "skill acquisition list", but I'm a diehard learner and entrepreneur, so I had to see what this was all about. Thankfully my fiancée was understanding.

These tools, when used *genuinely*, have been powerful beyond belief for my relationships, personal and business, ever since.

Before you dig into the list, I suggest you adopt a simple rule that will ensure good comes of the below. **Care about people.** The best way to receive is to focus on giving. Be a resource, not a manipulator.

Life is built on relationships. We are all salesmen, so I hope you pay attention.

10 Sales Techniques I Learned from a Pickup Artist:

1. Smile

There is no more powerful way to command the attention of a room than to give a grin ear to ear. A fake smile will be obvious but a real one will do amazing things. Similar to the intersecting rings that form when throwing a couple stones into a pond, a smile can ripple across a room in a heartbeat. Smiling at someone usually causes them to smile back, which makes them more likely to smile at the next person, then guess what happens? You've created a room full of happy people.

Sometimes a smile is all one needs to feel good. Sadly the competition is few and far between here. People just don't seem to smile that often, especially around people they don't know. They are so busy trying to fit in that they don't think to be themselves and enjoy the moment. Smile happily as you meet and talk to a prospect. This is your first chance to create a connection.

2. Be Original

No one wants to talk to someone who looks and sounds like every other person. A customer is no different. If everyone wears a suit, then throw out the tie or maybe add in a bow tie or perhaps turn the loudness of your shirt up a couple notches. Feel out what's appropriate. Do the things in this article and I have a feeling you'll be original.

This also goes for your product. We know that differentiation sells. But today most businesses have become commodities, which makes this all the more important. Present your product in a way that shines. Explain its benefit in a story that strikes an emotional chord with the buyer. If nothing else, the originality will stand out and they'll remember you among a sea of gray suits.



3. Be Interested

It amazes me that this even has to make the list. It's as common sense as they come but it's so rare. Often people approach someone and start going on and on about themselves or their product. Your prospect doesn't give two hots about you or your product until they know you care. Ask questions...And remember the answers. You are not asking questions just for the sake of doing so. You are doing it to show genuine interest for the other side. Find out what they care about. Who they are. What topics touch their emotions.

Questions are the fastest way to make a connection with someone in conversation. Listen to their answers and bring up topics so they know you heard them. Find similarities between their answers and you or your product. If it's the first meeting then maybe you hardly mention your product. I've been amazed how much people are willing to open up to me within minutes of meeting them just because they were dying to talk to someone. Be there to listen and they won't forget it.

4. Be Interesting

This one's as easy as they come. **The best way to be interesting is to be interested.** Be genuinely interested and they will find you to be as interesting as could be. Add in some personal stories as they connect with what you learn and there will be no looking back.

5. Remember Their Name

[Dale Carnegie](#) used to say that there is no more enjoyable sound in the world than hearing a person's own name. Think about it for a moment. How good does it feel when someone calls you by name, especially when it's unexpected? Give that feeling to others as often as possible. And don't tell me you can't remember names. It's not true. That just means you don't care enough. Sure it's hard to do. Most people are so busy thinking of their first impression that they never even hear the other's name in the first place.

Be interested enough to remember. Say their name over in your head a few times and repeat it back to them three times within the next few minutes. I even write down their name in my iPhone as soon as I get a free minute, and add a few descriptors to help me remember. It's that important to me. I don't care if it's a new face at a networking event, a hotel manager or my waiter. Have the courtesy and interest to remember their name. You never know when you'll cross paths again.

If you really want to throw someone through a loop, call them by name hours or days after a very brief first introduction. They will respond with so much energy it will blow your mind. At the core of every customer is a person. And we all love



to be known. Bonus points for remembering their kids, friends or spouse's names.

There is no more enjoyable sound in the world than hearing a person's own name.

6. Associate Positive Emotions with You and Your Product.

In the world of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) they call this anchoring. When people experience great pleasure or happiness, they tend to associate the things around them with those positive feelings. The same goes for negative ones. If a messenger delivers news that your dog just died, even though he had nothing to do with it, you will likely still feel negatively towards that person. The goal is to get the customer to associate massive pleasure and enjoyment with you and your product. On a date you may do this by being genuinely interested in hearing their most exciting moments from the past, or taking them to a comedy club or salsa dancing. That's the point of a date isn't it? To show someone that being around you means having a good time.

The same goes for a customer. They want to know that having you around will mean enjoyment for them, be it in the form of their boss praising them, the actual product improving their lives, or knowing they'll always laugh when around you. The options are limitless. We are positively influenced by things we like. This is why companies are always taking clients out to ball games and nice dinners. Even though the customer knows they are being courted, subconsciously they are associating their enjoyment with your company (assuming they are actually having fun). We all want to spend time around people who bring us up. Be that person.

7. Win Their Friends First

The people close to us have massive influence on our decisions. How easy is it to get a date with someone if their friends don't like you? Sometimes the best place to start is with your prospect's friends and colleagues. Referrals are the most powerful source of advertising and new business. If you can get others selling for you by genuinely liking and promoting you and your product, then sales will be a cakewalk.



Just as a man or woman will ask their friends if you're safe to date, a customer will ask their colleagues and past customers if they should do business with you. Show them all a great time using what we've talked about. In fact, if you do that with the people the prospect trusts, selling likely won't be necessary.

8. Be Vulnerable

People want to spend time with a human, not a businessman or a product. We are so scared to cross over the line from business to personal that we hardly connect with the other side. Open up a bit. Show that you have some emotions. Tell an embarrassing story about yourself. Talk about your kids or your spouse. Don't get carried away, but do let them in on a few mild secrets. It's disarming and before you know it they will be sharing the same things with you. As soon as you've both shared some personal information, you've begun a deep connection. Who knows, maybe they've been waiting to share some tough experiences with someone who'd listen. Be a supportive pair of ears.

9. Make Contact Early

Most lasting relationships start with a friendship and grow over years. The sooner you can have your first introduction the better. Just as you shouldn't wait two years to say hello to someone interesting on the bus, don't waste any time connecting with future prospects and business partners. Start with a friendship. If the fit is there, it will grow into a sale. If there's no fit, then you shouldn't want the sale anyway. The more contact the better...to a limit.

Get them following you. And keep up with them by providing useful information based on what you've learned about them. The sales process can take a long time. Most people are too timid to make contact in the beginning because they don't feel they have enough to talk about. Be the one who does and you'll stand out. Get on their radar. They'll be impressed to see your progress over the months and years to come. The last thing you want is to wait a few years to build up a track record, only then to approach your prospect and find they'd now like to "keep an eye on you" for a couple years. You could have started that process from day one.

10. Don't Be Dependent on the Sale

Desperation is pretty easy to pick up on. Don't beg. You must have the confidence to speak with authority. If you can't influence yourself, don't expect to do so with others. Treat them with respect but let them know that what you have to offer is special and it's not something you're interested in giving away to just anyone. Treat a sales call as a two-way interview. There is an interesting shift in dynamic as soon as the other side realizes that they might not be allowed to have what you're offering.



A sale starts with a relationship, and the people you sell to should fit a specific criteria that you've set up over a lifetime of understanding yourself and your product. Stress the importance of a fit on both sides. The harder it is to acquire something, the higher its perceived value. Make a decision up front not to settle. Your prospect will appreciate it and want to be a part of the club.

Care about people. Simple as that. If you honestly care about the peoples' feelings with whom you interact, these simple rules will stand to benefit everyone involved. If not, then you will likely end up in a hole that will be tough to dig yourself out of.

Any one of the above, if applied with sincerity, should produce some exciting results. If you step back a bit, you'll notice that these rules are universal. They are not just tips for a single guy or a burned-out salesman. They are fundamental components of all human interactions. Begin living them and watch the results. You are going to love the deeper connections.

There is no room in life for disingenuous relationships. I don't care how short or how long-term the interaction.

Treat everyone like you'll know them for the rest of your life. Some of them you certainly will. Be honest with what you want out of your relationships and avoid assumptions. This stuff will produce much more harm than good if its not fueled by a genuine interest to help others and produce rich connections.

Be genuine and I think you'll find there's nothing more rewarding.

What are your rules for creating lasting connections? What's your best customer pickup line?

Photo 1 courtesy of [Ask Men](#)

Photo 2 courtesy of [Happy Customer](#)



Goal #8: Save a boatload of money

The End of Paying Full Price: 7 Quick Tools for Getting a Better Deal



Written by: [Scott Dinsmore](#)

Average Reading Time: 5.5 minutes

When was the last time you were shopping for a pair of jeans and you told the clerk, "you'll have to do better than that" after seeing the price? My life experience would say that none of you have. For some reason we feel like the number on a price tag is set in stone when we go to most shops--retail, grocery, etc. Well I have news for you. 95% of the time it's not. Those storeowners are using the rule of legitimacy on us and it's working--because it's been written and printed, we assume it's their best offer. Let's change that assumption.

Over the last few years I have proven that this is far from the case. In fact, I very rarely pay full retail for things I buy in shops--whether it's sun glasses, a few tomatoes, a new shirt or the web hosting package for this site. I often get a 10-15% discount or better. It turns out that just about everything is negotiable. Last week I took a two-day Karrass Negotiating Course (which I highly recommend to all of you--do your best to take it from Dennis Bain, an unreal presenter) and it brought some of these techniques to the front of my mind. Dr. Karrass is the businessman who went out to get his PhD in Negotiating about 40 years ago and realized one did not exist. So he created one. And now he teaches it all over the world. He seems to know his stuff. I want to share a few techniques with you--all of which I have tested successfully over the past years. Have fun with these.



7 Tools For Getting A Better Deal

1. ASK! You can go ahead and stop here if you'd like. This is all that really matters. Most people never even ask. Just think about what you have to lose. Likely nothing at all. So get out on a limb and just ask for a discount. The other side will often take it from there.

2. Let them know you found a better price somewhere else (but be sure you honestly did). You may be referring to Amazon.com or the shop down the street. Some places will discount just based on this. It's best to have the evidence of the better deal if possible. [Red Laser](#) is an awesome iPhone app that scans bar codes and tells you where to find the best price. Very useful fixed price negotiating tool.

3. Give a big smile and ask for a fun and creative discount. Examples that I've used successfully are "the nice guy's discount", "the tourist discount", "I'm new to town discount", "I am a local business owner discount" or "I'm a teacher discount". You get the idea. Have fun with it. They will too if you ask with a big smile.

4. Any sales going on? Lots of times there are things on discount that aren't marked or that are going on sale tomorrow or were on sale yesterday. Ask for the sale price and you'll likely get it.

5. Ask for the floor model. Sometimes this can be the best deal yet. I always ask for the floor model, especially when it comes to furniture. You know how long it takes to assemble that stuff? With the floor model you might get 10% or 20% off and you save a whole Saturday and maybe a couple minor arguments with your spouse in avoiding the construction step. This is worth a lot of money to me. And if the floor model has a nick or scratch, they will likely be happy to get it off their hands.

6. You don't always have to negotiate on price. Realize there are other things that have real cost to you that may not be a part of the sticker price. Tax, shipping, assembly time, packaging, warranty, customer service or a little extra avocado on your Subway sandwich. This stuff is expensive when you add it up. If someone is sticking to their firm price then look for something else. Their guard will be down and the concession will likely be easier to get.

7. Trade your cheese for avocado. In negotiating, if you ever give something of value to the other side, be sure to ask for an equal or larger concession immediately in return. My favorite example is something we come across every day--ordering food. I rarely get cheese on my sandwiches but I love avocado. If I order a sandwich with avocado they will charge me the extra \$1.25 but if I frame it something like "I don't think I'll have any cheese today but could you put some avocado instead?", they see this more as an equal trade. I still don't



know why cheese is free but other add-ons are not, but as long as it is, I will continue to use it as a bargaining tool.

Have fun with these. It's amazing what you can get. And I will say it again, the most important of these **BY FAR is #1: ASK!** Just ask. 99.9% of us are afraid to even ask for a discount. And then if we do, it's with such little confidence that we are pretty much inviting the other side to reject us. What are you afraid of? I guarantee that if your ask comes with some character, playfulness and a big smile, you will have nothing to lose. The worst case is you get the price you were going to pay in the first place. And what are your chances of a discount if you don't ask. That's right--100%. So ask.

Deal Making Success: A Personal Story

I'll end with a short story. Last weekend I went on a hike to the top of Mt. Tam just outside San Francisco. The adventure took many more hours than expected and when we got to the top we were low on food and very thirsty.

To our amazement there was this oasis of a snack shack at the summit that had all the Gatorade and trail mix one could dream of. Then it hit me. We didn't have a dime on us. So I did some thinking.

Then I went in with a big smile and started to inquire about their "day-long hikers who did not know what they were getting themselves into payment plan" among other things. Within 2 minutes the price of one Gatorade and one Snickers (my favorite treat at the pinnacle of an adventure) had gone from \$4.50 to \$0.00! I was thrilled and the other side was probably more jazzed about it than I was. The dollar amount savings may not have been too big but the 100% savings ranks up there in the record books. It was a blast. I did tell them I would get the money to them somehow/someday. So at the least, I negotiated some very favorable payment terms on nothing but good faith.

I thought my chances were just about zero of me getting anything from that shack. But it didn't stop me from trying. I encourage you to do the same. I don't write these articles just for your entertainment. I write them because the actions you take as a result will have an impact on your life. Big or small, you will notice the change and I think you will enjoy it.

Give this a try within the next 24 hours. I know it's a bit outside your comfort zone but that's the point. Have fun!

What's been the best deal you have ever gotten on an item? How have these techniques worked for you?



Onward...

**I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
-Robert Frost**

I hope the above articles and ideas have served you in not only finding your own path but in getting a bit more out of life. There is nothing I love more than helping others discover the life they are meant to live. I will continue to learn, experiment and share all that I encounter with you all. I welcome you to join me going forward. I am here to help and together I know we'll help one another.

If you haven't subscribed to updates for ReadingForYourSuccess, please take a moment to do it now, and come along for the adventure. You can [subscribe here](#).

Remember, now is the only time you'll ever have to do something with your life.

You owe it to yourself to know who you really are.

Never stop learning and never stop acting.

The road less traveled does make all the difference.

A journey starts with a single step.

A path is created by walking.

Take your first step. Discover your life and be exactly who you want to be.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts and for listening. May this be just the beginning.

To life on your terms,

Scott Dinsmore

P.S. If you enjoyed this, it would be awesome if you'd spread the word. Share it with others. There is no copyright so you can send it to whomever you'd like. Even better, send them over to [ReadingForYourSuccess](#) so they can join us for the action.

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