YOU 2.0

STOP FEELING STUCK
REINVENT YOURSELF
AND
BECOME A BRAND NEW YOU

- MASTER THE ART OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

AYODEJI AWOSIKA

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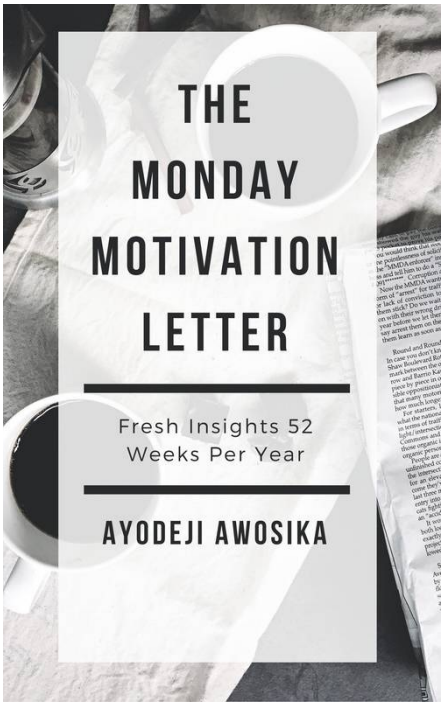
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INTRODUCTION

Life moves quickly.

A handful of decisions you make in your early life will impact your future. Choices have consequences, and the ones you made in the past might lead to a regret filled future.

Maybe you *thought* you had made the right decisions at the time.

You did what you were told to do. You followed the rules and played it safe. You were told the path to success was stable and went in a straight line—only to find there was no gold at the end of the rainbow.

Now you're feeling stuck. You look at your life in the present and think, "Is this it?"

Call it a crisis or a fork in the road, but *something must change.* You don't want to live the rest of your life on someone else's terms.

You're not getting any younger, and you look back at the spent years wondering what you could've done differently.

You look in the mirror, and you don't see the person your youthful self thought you'd become. The dream career never panned out, the book never got written, and the business never got started. The ripped body, full bank account, and freedom to have amazing experiences have never come.

What you *do have* is a past riddled with mistakes and a situation that needs changing.

So, what do you do?

You reinvent yourself.

In this book, I'm going to show you how I went from depressed, addicted, and broke to living out my dreams of becoming a writer and building a business.

I didn't just change. *I got rid of my old self.*

I want the same for you. To become a brand-new person, you need a different approach.

Instead of carrying all your baggage with you—past mistakes, limiting beliefs, and an identity that doesn't belong to you—you're going to start over.

You won't need to swear to yourself that you'll become super motivated and accomplish all your dreams. You won't need to rely on "willing your way to success," no matter what.

Does the "pull yourself up by the bootstraps," method work? Sure, it does. But for many, it falls short. As humans, we have a lot of psychological and emotional weight we carry with us, and it's hard to stay motivated with it strapped to our backs.

This book will help you *accept the past, unravel your limiting beliefs, and wipe your slate clean.*

I learned how to reinvent myself through hundreds of hours of trial and error, reading, and connecting with smart people.

I failed more times than I can count, but the transformation I've made in my life *still shocks me.* If you'd told the person I was a few years ago he'd be a published author with his own business, he wouldn't believe you.

I want the same for you.

Together, we're going to *unlearn* the patterns that led you to this point and *relearn* ways to find success based on *your terms* and no one else's.

This book isn't about making a million dollars. It's about becoming the person you were meant to be and living the type of life you were meant to live.

You'll discover methods for identifying and reframing the subtle stories you tell yourself that hold you back.

After this fresh start, we'll work on ways to identify what the *new you* wants and come up with a plan to help you achieve it.

Most importantly, you'll have a process you can use and reuse.

After reading the book, you'll have the confidence to try new ventures, and you can build layers of success throughout your remaining life.

You could wait. You could put reading this book off…like most people would.

What will your life look like a month from now if you don't change? How about a year? How many years have *already* slipped through your fingers?

I've had many times where I decided to put my life on hold. I waited six years before penning my first word. I waited another year before writing my first book. I don't have many regrets in life, but I do wish I'd discovered this process sooner because by now, I'd be even further along.

You don't have to spend the rest of your life waiting and wishing for a better one.

You *can* act now. I have made this book brief and simple so you can get to the heart of your issues, resolve them, and move forward as a new person.

Don't be that person who fails at their New Year's Resolutions every year until they die. Be that person who takes a chance on him or herself and does what it takes to rewrite their story.

In this book you'll read strategies I've learned and implemented from psychologists, stoic philosophers, the Buddha, billionaires, and other people who *know what they're talking about.*

If you don't trust me, put your trust in the endless hours I've spent navigating life and finding a degree of success.

I used to be so lazy I wouldn't get out of bed unless I had to go to work. Now, I wake up in the morning and write 1,000 or more words almost every day. I'm a new person, and I'll continue to create better versions of myself—all the while building a legacy.

You can completely flip the script on your life. I know it because I almost guarantee I was less motivated than you are. *If I can do it, you can do it.*

Don't wait another minute. Jump into the material and begin the reinvention process. Right now.

1

THE POWER OF REINVENTION

In many ancient societies, the Phoenix was a symbol of strength and rebirth. It lived for hundreds of years at a time. When it started to feel weak, it would arrange a stake for itself and burst into flames.

After being consumed by the fire, the Phoenix rose from the ashes and started a new life.

In a way, you can be like the Phoenix.

You can start over and live a new life. You can let the fire consume the "old you," and rise from the ashes again.

Reinventing yourself is different from simply setting goals or trying to change. See, we try to change our behavior and make our circumstances better, but it doesn't work until we *become the type of person* who can make those changes.

We can't become the person who can make those changes if we're stuck in the past, ruminating on our mistakes, and trying to rewrite what's set in stone.

The past teaches you about yourself. The mistakes you made in your past can help you avoid repeating them in the future. Your past can act as a lens that foreshadows what your life *might be like* if you continue to live the same way.

In an ideal world, we'd all analyze our pasts, move on, and improve ourselves. This doesn't often happen because we've created an identity around our past selves.

Up until this point, you've collected experiences and memories. You believe who you are as a person matches these experiences.

You *think* you're a "professional," a working stiff, a failure, destined for mediocrity, or one of the endless labels we attach ourselves to.

You can't help but pick up these subtle cues from the world—not only telling you who you are but that you can't change.

Most people move through life clinging on to their assigned identities. A select few *realize* something's wrong and do something about it.

I'm not here to judge. I don't know your dreams and desires. I can only ask about them.

Are *you* satisfied with the person you've become over the years? Do you have the nagging feeling you've been "duped," into becoming something you're not?

If you want a fresh start—to live *your life* instead of someone else's—you *can* reinvent yourself. You *can* get rid of the parts of your life that don't suit you. You *can* unlearn what you've been taught about life up to this point and start over.

There were versions of myself that couldn't do what I'm doing now.

I'm *nowhere near perfect*. I still have baggage. I still screw up (all the time). I still have worries, doubts, and fears.

But I'm not the kid who cared about nothing more than weed, booze, and women (more on him later). *That* person was incapable of disciplining himself, doing work of any kind, or being positive in general. He was lazy, depressed, and quick to anger.

To be reborn, he had to let go of certain people, environments, beliefs, and last but not least, his identity.

You've been told the key to success is always pushing harder, being motivated, and trying to *force yourself* to make your situation better.

But what if the "you," you are right now simply can't do it?

As strange as it sounds, we can be strangers to ourselves.

Trying to improve your life without self-awareness is like trying to hit a target blindfolded. You keep trying to make changes, but you get sidetracked *because* of underlying beliefs and mindsets you *don't even know you have.*

This book will show you how to shine a light on yourself, learn from your self-examination, accept yourself, and start over.

I want this book to be different. I want it to feel real and stick. To do that, I'm going to do my best to be straight with you, and avoid the common pitfalls most self-help books fall into.

The Problem with Self-Help Books Self-help books come and go every 15 minutes like the subway train.

Most people read them once, get a jolt of motivation, and fail to follow through with what was taught.

How am I going to write something that stands out among the infinite shelves of self-help material?

I'm going to do my best to do *the opposite* of what most self-help authors do.

I Won't Act Like I'm Perfect or Assume You'll be Perfect I won't name

names, but you know the type.
He wakes up at 4:53 am every day.
He steeps his tealeaves at the perfect temperature to extract the essential antioxidants.
He reaches all his goals within the predetermined time limit, never slacks off a single day in his life, and seems to have no emotional problems whatsoever.
I'm not that guy. I'm just a guy who likes to write and happens to be interested in helping others help themselves.
I've learned about reinventing myself only because I've made so many mistakes, and was stuck, depressed, and lost.
I regress sometimes, and I realize I'm not immune to falling back into bad patterns.
Since I know I'm incapable of being perfect, I'm not going to expect you to be either.
I'm going to talk *to you* instead of talking *at you.*
Self-help books sometimes have a way of making you feel bad about yourself if you aren't motivated 100 percent of the time and don't always have a positive attitude.
Life can be *quite shitty* at times. Regardless of who you are or what you've done, a storm is on its way.
You're either in the thick of a storm, on the tail end of one, or on the brink of a new one. That's life. It's also where reinvention comes in.
You *will mess up,* which is exactly why you'll benefit from the ability to start over.
I'll expect a lot from you—just as I expect a lot from myself—but I won't expect *everything* from you.
I Won't Operate in Should or Must Perception is powerful. Even though our individual perceptions *seem* like reality, they're not. They're just our own versions of what's real.
I wrote this book because I want to help you figure out what *you* want. I'm not going to tell you what you need.
Telling people what to do based on a set of morals, rules, or guidelines doesn't work.
One of the best ways to get through to someone is to appeal to their self-interest.
In the book, *Poor Charlie's Almanack,* billionaire business owner Charlie Munger tells a story about a manager working at a company who finds out one of the employees is doing something unsavory.
He alerts the owner, telling him it is his moral duty to reprimand or fire the employee. The employee in question hasn't violated any laws or regulations *per*

se, so the owner ignores the manager's plea.

However, the employee's actions end up being so egregious the entire business crumbles. It ruins the owner's reputation and he is blacklisted in the business world.

What lessons can we learn from this story?

Per Munger, the owner would've been convinced to make the right decision if the manager had appealed to his self-interest.

If instead the manager had brought up the fact that the employee's actions would not only destroy the business, but the owner's hard earned reputation to boot, the owner would've seen the gravity of the situation and done something to fix it.

I'm going to treat *you* like the business owner in that story and try to appeal to *your* self-interest.

You're reading this book because you want to change, but you're in your own way.

I could tell you to follow your dreams because it's your duty as a human being, *or* I could shed light on the fact that you'll have to live with the results of your action or inaction.

Instead of telling you what you should or shouldn't do, I'll tell you what likely will or won't happen.

If you hate your job but fail to apply for a better one or start a business, you'll continue to hate your work.

If you don't change your situation in areas like your health and relationships, they'll continue to trend in the direction they're pointing at now.

You know this. You can extrapolate what'll happen if you stay the same. It just seems distant.

When the future isn't here yet, you can always put it off. But life moves in a way where you can find yourself looking back at the time spent and wonder what happened.

The process of reinventing yourself involves taking a hard look at what you *already know.* We all know *how* to get in shape, *how* to increase our knowledge, and *how* to make strides in pursuing something we love.

But knowing isn't enough.

When you take a serious look at what will or won't happen, *you start to feel the gravity of the situation.* When you truly see where your future is headed, you'll be inspired to change. It often takes continuous reflection—on your future *and* on your death—for your situation to hurt bad enough to want to change.

Throughout the book, I'll give you techniques for reinventing yourself, but anything I write is a just a suggestion.

I'll bring you to the water, but I won't force you to drink.

I Won’t Operate in Good or Bad People define good and bad based on their culture, experiences, and worldview.

For example, take procrastination and leisure. If you read a common self-help book, it’ll talk about how to be more efficient, productive, and how to tackle your goals with intensity.

They’ll also tell you that procrastination and laziness are evil and should be avoided at all costs.

Are procrastination and leisure bad? It depends on who you ask.

In a commencement speech to the University of Beirut, author and philosopher Nassim Taleb commented on his rejection of advice about what’s good and bad: *“I hesitate to give advice because every major single piece of advice I was given turned out to be wrong and I am glad I didn’t follow them. I was told to focus and I never did. I was told to never procrastinate and I waited 20 years [to write my first book]* The Black Swan *and it sold three million copies.”*

Nassim educated himself through voracious reading and only took with him what *he thought* was good. I encourage you to do the same.

People celebrate leisure in many cultures because it allows time to think, spend time with friends, and rest a tired body.

Americans prize productivity and efficiency because *the culture* promotes them.

Realize the relativity of opinion, and only take what you need with you.

Instead of operating in good or bad, I’m going to try to operate on what you want or don’t want to happen and provide suggestions to help you get where you want to go.

I’m going to talk about *patterns* most of us share. You can use these patterns to find what isn’t working in *your life* and start the type of life *you* want to live.

Not the one your spouse, parents, society, or even I want you to live.

I respect your dreams and ambitions. This book will be nothing more than a tool to get you closer to them. It will not define them for you.

I Won’t Blow Smoke and Sunshine up Your…You Know There’s a book called *The Secret*, which talks about manifesting the things you want to happen in your life through visualizing them.

I believe in the power of visualization, but I don’t take it as literally as the book does.

When you create a vision for your future, you start to see opportunities you would’ve missed, or you notice things you wouldn’t have without visualization.

But *The Secret*, in my opinion, preaches *literal manifestation.*

It says things like “put a picture of a Lamborghini on your wall, and you will soon have it.”

It’s a nice thought, but you and I can both guess at how well that strategy works.

Many people criticize self-help books for over-promising and under delivering.
The book touting its ability to “help you make six figures in six weeks,” doesn’t quite pan out the way you thought it would. The “Ten Simple Steps to Financial Freedom,” ends up being a bit more complicated.
I won’t guarantee a foolproof process for anything. I’ll share what I’ve learned and practiced in *my life* with the hope it makes an impact on you.
The truth about self-help books is that most people fail to use them and act.
When it comes to motivation, change, and success by several definitions, most people *don’t rise to the occasion.* I wrote this book for the few who will.
I don’t want to pretend like we live in an ideal world. Don’t get me wrong, we’re living in the *best possible time to be alive*, but it’s still not perfect.
The playing field has become more level—you have more opportunities now than ever—but nothing worth having comes easily.
The stoic philosophers said we had to *learn how to live*. This book is meant to aid you in doing that.
We don’t need any more books making false promises.
I promise this will be a book you can reference when you’re feeling stuck. I sincerely believe I can help you. I truly believe you can become anyone you want *and* do anything you want.
But I can’t do it *for you.* No one can.
How to Use This Book Suspend your judgment.
It’s in your nature to read books like this with your horns up, ready to pounce on any idea you think is flawed.
It’s easy to be a cynic. It requires no energy to be skeptical or negative.
Changing your life requires an open mind. You bought this book hoping there would be a few pieces of insight that would make it pass your b.s. detector, but I bet you’ll learn even more if you turn it off.
If you make it all the way through this book and found it wasn’t helpful, you can get your money back, write a one-star review, or do whatever you want.
Until then, take what I say to heart and let the ideas sink in.
If there’s an exercise at the end of the chapter, do it. If it doesn’t work for you that’s fine, but a lack of action is part of the reason you’re in your current position.
Give the book a chance. More importantly, give *yourself* a chance.
The first stage of reinventing yourself involves defining who “you,” are in the first place.

2

THE STORIES THAT SHAPE OUR LIVES

Have you ever had a moment in your life where you paused and thought to yourself “How the hell did I end up here?”
I have.
The thought popped into my head when I was living in a dorm room with less than a hundred dollars to my name at the age of 24. And again, when I woke up in a jail cell awaiting a court appearance. And when I looked in the mirror to discover that I had miraculously gained 20 pounds.
Each of these moments is a reminder of what happens when you “fall asleep at the wheel,” in terms of your own life. You end up in the ditch. You scratch your head because *surely you shouldn’t have allowed yourself to get here.*
It seems odd that we end up in ruts or situations we don’t want to be in, even though we have the power to change them. It seems like our own self-interest is overridden by something more powerful—something insidious.
You definitely weren’t born with the idea of pursuing work you don’t enjoy, chasing after materials that might be meaningless, and playing it safe.
These ideas *come from somewhere.* You cling to the idea of *you* so tightly, all the while failing to notice or remember that the idea of you is nothing more than a figment of your imagination.
Let me explain.
Why Your Personality is Like a Quilt My father was born in Nigeria, a country in West Africa. My mother was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but her parents were from the American Deep South.
My father came to America in his early 20s to go to school. He met my mom; they fell in love and got married.
Then they had my brother and me.

We grew up middle-class. My mom worked as an IT consultant and my dad owned a business. Each of my parents had their own values and idiosyncrasies.

My father has been an entrepreneur for most of his adult life. He never took a regular job. None of his businesses ever *took off*, but he still made enough to make ends meet, and for him, that was better than having to follow someone else's rules.

My mom was the prototypical company woman. She earned two master's degrees. The only class she ever got a C in was gym. She's sharp as a tack and has always prided herself on her education.

Both stressed the need for education in my life. They wanted me to go to a prestigious university and attend graduate school. Even though my father never had a corporate job, he wanted me to have one because he loved me and wanted me to be secure.

I had my parents' direction to guide me, but I had the entrepreneurial tendencies of my dad. Sure, he could *tell me* what I should do, but kids watch what their parents do more than they listen to what they say.

Deep down, I knew I wanted to have control over my own life, but I spent a lot of years "following the script."

It wasn't just my parents influencing me. It was my teachers, mainstream media, peers, and the zeitgeist in general.

Each little influence acts like a "patch" to the "quilt" that is you.

Believing in corporatism is a patch. Nationalism is a patch. Materialism, tendency to eat fast food, ambition, media addiction, and the list could go on forever; they're all patches.

Let's say instead of my parents being well educated, middle-class members of society, they were poor.

Let's say instead of having a nice home we lived in the ghetto, surrounded by violence, drugs, and crime.

The patches would be different. Maybe they'd be of the belief that hope was worthless, and that reliance on self-sufficiency, anger, street smarts, or survival instincts were more important.

If my parents were billionaires and I lived in the South of France, my patches would be different.

Some people like their "quilt." The experiences of your life *can* shape you into a person you're fond of looking at in the mirror, but what if they don't?

What if instead, your patchwork of stories and influences has led you to the "How the hell did I get here?" moment?

Chances are you feel this way to some degree, or else you wouldn't be reading this book.

So, what do you do from here?

You decide what pieces of the puzzle don't fit. You rebuild yourself from the ground up by using new pieces you *discover on your own.* That's what reinventing yourself is all about. It isn't about becoming someone else. *You're already someone else.*

Unless you've experienced the type of awareness that leads you to understand how much of a stranger you can be to yourself, you haven't begun the process yet.

I want to help you become a person who thinks for themselves. I don't want you to be what I want you to be. I want you to be what you want you to be. But first, let's figure out exactly *who that is.*

We'll start by asking smart questions about who you are right now.

What's Your Story?

Stories are powerful.

We use stories to share important information with each other. We learn best *through stories.*

The reality you're experiencing right now is nothing more than a set of stories you're telling yourself about the world.

When you're born, you're a blank slate. Had you been born in a different location, to different parents, and under different circumstances, *you* would be different.

These different factors play the storyteller role and help you form the script you now live by.

Some of the stories are helpful, but many of the stories you've learned about yourself and about the world are at best unhelpful and at worst causing harm.

What stories do you live by?

Look at the different types of stories below, and think about the impact they've had on your life.

First, let's start with the stories told by our culture.

Entrepreneur and author Derek Sivers equates culture to telling a fish it lives in water.

He says, "We're so surrounded by people who think like us that it's impossible to see that what we think are universal truths are just our local culture."

What cultural stories have you been told?

These stories influence you because they're subtle. You don't hear them once, but hundreds of times in slightly different ways.

The American Nightmare

I live in America. Odds are you do, too. If not, keep reading anyway, because there's a lesson to be learned from the story of the American dream.

The Industrial Revolution was a time of prosperity in our country. The postwar boom left an excess of work to be done and the need for compliant workers was high.

Contrary to popular belief, the school system was created not to educate our youth, but to prepare them to become obedient workers who could work in the factory for hours on end without moving.

Then, with the rise of corporatism, the idea of college being a safety net and guarantee of security rose up the ranks in the storytelling hierarchy.

After veterans came back from World War II and received their G.I. Bills, they bought nice homes, worked at safe and stable jobs for forty years, sent their kids to school to get good grades, and those kids went on to college and became corporate workers.

The story worked out well for a while. There was a time when job security was guaranteed. There was a time when having a college degree was a safe bet on your future.

Now, however, the economic landscape is different. Times have changed. The story doesn't work for everybody anymore.

I can't even begin to count how many of my friends and peers felt underwhelmed by their prospects after graduating college. While in school, they worked hard for their GPAs in the hopes that life would be smooth sailing after they walked across the stage.

Many of them have found the story didn't live up to the hype, and now they're stuck with a gigantic bill they'll have to pay off. They've been rewarded with a cubicle and an earpiece to make sales calls.

I don't know about you, but that doesn't seem like much of a dream to me.

If you'd asked eighteen-years-old me why I was going to college, I wouldn't have had a great answer for you. It'd be something along the lines of "because that's what you're supposed to do."

A decision that cost me tens of thousands of dollars was made for no other reason than it being the norm.

Something isn't right about that.

I'm not arguing whether college is good or not. I'm just noting the fact that college being a savior for your future isn't an absolute truth. The story our culture tells us sure makes it seem like one, though, doesn't it?

What's worse is the fact that even when the stories we're told don't come true, we have a difficult time facing the truth of this situation. Humans have an amazing ability to rationalize their situation and confirm what they already believe to be true.

Once you commit to a certain decision, belief, or way of thinking, it's hard to

change, because humans don’t like being inconsistent with what they’ve already committed to.

This is called the “confirmation bias.”

Confirmation bias explains why we’re tied to our beliefs. It’s why two people can argue both sides of a debate and truly both believe they’re right—even though that’s impossible.

Confirmation bias causes us to search only for information that confirms our beliefs and filters out anything that seeks to disconfirm it.

Let’s say someone spent $100,000 on college and is in debt. Let’s also say they’ve been working for a handful of years starting with entry-level work and an incremental salary increase.

Mathematically, it *may not have made sense* for them to go to school—after you factor in the amount of money they could’ve made while in school, interest paid on their loan, and other opportunity costs.

If you ask them why college was a good choice, they’d likely respond with one of the following answers: “Without an education, I’d be even worse off than I am now.”

“If you don’t get your degree, you end up flipping burgers.”

Neither of those of those statements is irrefutably true, but saying them *feels better* than admitting your choice may have been a bad one.

Years back, I would’ve said my goal was to find a great job and make a nice salary.

The idea of writing for a living never crossed my mind, because it didn’t fit the normal narrative. At eighteen, if I’d told my parents I wanted to try to become a full-time writer they would’ve just said, “No. You aren’t doing that.”

We don’t like what doesn’t fit the normal narrative—even if it’s something that might benefit us or make us happy.

Going against the narrative means being uncomfortable or facing embarrassment. But it also could mean a better future; a future where you get to live the life *you want to live.* By you, I mean the person you are deep inside who you lost sight of after hearing too many stories.

I’m not here to tell you what stories you *should* believe. I do, however, challenge you to question them.

The stories culture tells us impact us, but they pale in comparison to the stories we tell ourselves *about ourselves.*

The Two Most Powerful Words in the World I listened to a speech by the motivational speaker, Joel Olsteen, and he said something that stuck with me to this day. He said, “The words you put after ‘I am’ determine the quality of your life.”

It’s so simple and profound, yet many of us don’t realize how much of an impact our internal dialogue has on us.

Sometimes, even believing we have positive qualities can keep us from taking the action we need to build the type of life we want to live.

Growing up, my parents and teachers always complimented me on my intelligence.

“You’re bright.”

“You have so much potential.”

“You’re gifted.”

Wow—*I’m bright and gifted.*

You’d think hearing those compliments repeatedly would motivate me and lead to a life filled with accomplishment.

Everyone around me thought I’d breeze through elementary and high school, go to one of the top universities in the country, and get some cushy six-figure job as a lawyer or an engineer.

Being told how smart I was all the time caused the opposite to happen. I was so tied to my identity of being “the smart kid,” I never wanted to do anything to challenge it.

When it came to a situation that required effort—a situation where I faced the possibility of failure and loss of my identity—I never stepped up to the plate.

It was better to be the smart kid with potential than to find out whether the things people said about me were true.

Psychologist Carol Dweck tackles this phenomenon in her book *Mindset.*

She found that when kids are praised for their intelligence it, “give[s] them a boost, a special glow—but only for the moment.”

She also notes that “The minute they hit a snag, their confidence goes out the window and their motivation hits rock bottom. If success means they’re smart, then failure means they’re dumb. That’s the fixed mindset.”

The fixed mindset permeates many of our minds. If you weren’t praised for your intelligence, you may have been told the opposite. Studies also found that students who believe they aren’t intelligent underperform in school.

The way you’re taught to view yourself during childhood is just one of the many ways you can form either negative or positive traits after the words “I am.”

If you think you’re an underachiever, you’ll always be able to find examples to confirm your belief. If you think you’re shy, you’ll subconsciously act in a way that repels people through your body language and behavior.

Once you put a trait behind the words “I am,” and believe it firmly, everything that happens in your life becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Before I was a productive writer who woke up at 6 a.m. every day to write, I was

a stoner who didn’t do much but smoke weed and lay around to watch T.V.
During that time, the actions themselves weren’t the major problem; it was the idea that *I was lazy.*
See, there’s a big difference between saying you’re being lazy, and saying *you’re* lazy.
The latter weaves whatever negative trait you identify into the core of who you are as a person, and it feels more difficult to change something about who you are as a person than it is to change your behavior.
So, What Should You Do?
All this information is great, but you still don’t know what to *do* about any of this.
To let go of and reframe the stories you tell yourself about yourself and about the world, you can start with identifying them. It seems easy enough, but some of the harmful stories you tell yourself aren’t as apparent as others.
They hide in the dark. They’re almost invisible. They need to be dragged into the light.
So, drag yours into the light.
What are the stories you’ve been told about the way the world works? Here are some common ones: • Money is scarce/ the economy sucks • Only gifted people deserve success • Without an education, you’re screwed • The only way to make income is through a job • Entrepreneurship is risky • You can’t make money as an artist • Thin is beautiful • You must keep up with the Jones’s • All authority figures are trustworthy • The news is all true • Being different is bad Most of the stories you’re told by society are fear based. It has good reason to keep you believing the world is a scary place.
Next, let’s talk about the stories you tell yourself *about yourself.* These are stories you learned from other people and through your environment.
• I’m not talented • I’m lazy • I’m shy • I’m not artistic • I’m right/left brained only • I’m intelligent (fixed) • I’m stupid (fixed) • I’m not worthy of love • I’m a phony/fraud • I’m practical • I’m timid • I’m stuck/my position is cemented I’d take a day, or two, or even a week to *really think* about these. Take a pen and paper or use your end of chapter worksheet to write these stories down, because we’ll perform an exercise to help you deal with them.
The philosopher Blaise Pascal once said, “All of humanity’s problems stem from *man’s inability to sit* quietly in a *room* alone.”
It’s uncomfortable to be alone with yourself and think about what lies deep below the surface of your thinking.
You might find this process brings a rush of emotions, maybe even some unpleasant ones.

You might want to kick yourself—or kick someone else—because the influence of these stories is subtle, yet powerful enough to have led your life to the point you're at now. But in the end, knowing these stories gives you the power to change them.

How do you change them? By questioning them.

When you think about these stories, ask yourself, "Are they really true?"

Is the economy so bad no one can succeed? In the connection economy we're living in now, it's possible to succeed in ways that aren't tied to the economy like nine-to-five jobs are.

Are you lazy? I bet you can find examples where you've been *highly motivated.* Things you're interested in motivate you, and you've gone out of your way to satisfy at least *one desire* in your life. Finding that example disproves your theory.

Once you have all your stories identified on a sheet of paper or the provided end of chapter worksheet, I want you to find an example that disproves each statement.

After you've done that, we'll move onto the final phase and flip these stories on their head.

How to Rewrite the Script of Your Life What if I told you that a few subtle changes in phrases could completely change the way you feel about yourself?

As we discussed earlier, the phrase "I am," wields a lot of power. We can change those "I am," statements to "I'm working on," statements.

When I think about the times where I made *real changes*, it always came down to the decision to begin to *work on* whatever I once believed was set in stone.

I changed my mindset from believing *I was lazy* to believing I could work on becoming more motivated. It's subtle, but instead of my laziness being irrefutable, it became a challenge to overcome.

Here's what I want you to do. I want you to take all the "I am," statements you wrote earlier and change them to "I'm working on," statements.

For example, if you said, "I'm not creative." I'd like you to change it to something along the lines of "I'm working on finding creative outlets that suit me."

I'm a big believer in the power of writing things down. Writing has a way of ingraining what's on the paper into your mind.

Also, I'd like you to keep these notes somewhere prominent where you can look at them often.

You'll need them for later when we talk about exploring new avenues in your life to help you find meaning and purpose.

I know what it feels like to have little hope for the future. I know what it feels

like to look in the mirror and see nothing but a person who's destined for nowhere.

If I didn't experience such a change for myself, I wouldn't believe it was possible for you.

I know your circumstances feel inescapably real. I know you feel the traits you have *right now* are set in stone, but they're not.

"You" is just a concept—a patchwork of stories—that can be changed. Now, it's time to become the "you" that you were supposed to be, instead of the one you *thought you were supposed to be.*

How to Become the Real You What do we do when we try to improve?

We look to add. When we try to change our lives, we *seek*, because we think something is *missing.*

You're told you need to *find* passion like it's playing a game of hide and seek with you.

You're told to get "x" and feel "y". Get a new job and feel more accomplished. Get a new car and feel like you're wealthy. Get in shape and feel sexy.

We've gone over ideas and stories, but I saved the most important hidden message for last.

The most subtle and insidious idea in existence is that *you're not enough.*

We've all been led to believe that the key to a better life exists outside of us.

The process of reinventing yourself, building a better future, and starting over is realizing you already have everything you need.

Your gifts, your passion, and your genius are already in you.

Every human being has muscles to some degree, but some are just buried under layers of fat.

Just as getting healthy physically often deals with removal, getting healthy emotionally and spiritually is also about elimination.

There's nothing wrong with you, but there's something wrong with *you;* the *you* the world created; the you that was formed to serve everyone else *except for you.*

Just as a scientist succeeds by finding evidence on what doesn't work before getting to the answer, you'll examine the influences in your life and the decisions you've made that led you to a *life you don't want.*

Soon, we'll *let go* of the old you, but as Socrates said, "the unexamined life isn't worth living."

Let's examine. We'll open the wounds, clean them out, and patch them up for good so you can move on to the next phase in your life—the better one.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • You've been influenced to believe and behave a certain way based on stories you've learned about the world in your upbringing

• Some of these stories may have been beneficial, but others may have led to you

living a life you didn’t necessarily want to live • The words you place after “I am” have a direct impact on you because it’s harder to change what you believe is set in stone and wired into your personality • If you drag the subtle stories you tell yourself into the light, examine them, and question them, you can learn to see yourself and the world as they really are In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions: • What are some of the “patches” that led to the “quilt” of your current personality? How do you think these patches have affected you?

• What are some of the deep-seated stories you tell yourself about the world around you, circumstances, or “reality”? Can you find examples that disprove these statements?

• What are some of the deep-seated stories you tell yourself about yourself (your “I am” statements)? Can you find any examples to disprove these statements?

• Take the “I am” statements you just wrote and turn them into “I’m working on” statements. This will reframe the stories you tell yourself from set-it-stone traits to areas with room for growth Click here to download the chapter 2 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

3

HOW TO EXAMINE YOUR LIFE

How did you get here?

When I look back at my life and the things I did before I made a positive change, I realize how much of my own pain, anxiety, and problems came from two main sources.

First, there was my environment.

I grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Milwaukee is the most segregated city in the United States.

It has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the country and one of the highest high school dropout rates (a statistic I almost contributed to.) Although I had great guidance from my parents, I fell into the wrong crowd.

Most of the people I knew from back then are *still there* and they're still doing the same things—getting high, having too many kids, and getting in trouble.

I left Milwaukee to go to a small school in Minnesota. The environment was different, but I was still the same kid who was up to no good. I was a product of my environment, and the environment made an impression on me at an impressionable age.

Long story short, I got in a lot of trouble. I almost got kicked out of college for academic probation multiple times, there were some legal troubles, and at one point I almost packed everything up and went back home.

In a way, the situations I put myself in were my fault, but then again, they weren't.

That's the thing about the past and the decisions you made in it. They're your fault, but they're also *not your fault.*

We talked about the "quilt" of your personality earlier.

In a way, many of the things you're prone to do come from influences around

you.
You can't use that as an *excuse* for the mistakes you have made, but understanding those influences can at least help you understand *why* you did those things.
I could easily cast off my past as saying "I was a dumbass." That answer would suffice. *I was a dumbass.* But that explanation wouldn't do the past justice and it doesn't involve a high enough level of self-awareness to avoid repeating those mistakes.
If I hadn't first identified the influences around me that *helped* me act that way—bad friends, negative culture, proximity to harmful substances, etc.—I wouldn't have known what to avoid.
And sure, my situation may have been a bit cut and dried—stop hanging out with losers.
But what about you? What if you did everything right and still got the short end of the stick?
What if you followed the rules and now feel unfulfilled and unhappy?
Regardless of your circumstances or the way you feel, one word points to the reasons for both.
The Word That Decides Your Fate One word determines your future. It determined where you are right now.
It's not motivation, productivity, or mindset—although these three do play a role. The word that makes a world of difference in your life—for better or worse—is *decision.*
I remember when I was sitting on the front steps of the dormitory I lived in at age 24.
My eye was swollen shut from the fight the night before. I had a painful mixture of a headache and a concussion. I sat there, smoking my cigarette. My body was being punished in several ways at once.
Having such a horrible night made me reflect on what happened in my life up until that point.
How does a kid with *all the potential in the world* end up broke, basically homeless, and drowning in drugs and alcohol?
Decisions.
There was the decision to take my first hit of weed, the decision to skip classes and go out to the bar on school nights, the decision to live off my student loan money instead of holding a job throughout college.
At the time, I probably didn't look back at my life and realize it was *my decisions* that led to this outcome. I did what most of us do—blame the world or other people for my lot in life.

Earlier I talked about how our negative choices aren't necessarily our fault because of the circumstances and the environment we were brought up in, but at the same time, it's important to realize you're the common denominator in all your problems.

Regardless of what helped you get here, the responsibility lies with you now.

It's simultaneously depressing and liberating to know *you're responsible* for the type of life you want to live.

This isn't me telling you to "pull yourself up by the bootstraps and succeed no matter what." I'm aware that there may be things outside of your control that are *real obstacles* to the life you want to have.

You can't up and quit your job if you have a family to support. You can't drop fifty pounds overnight. You've spent years living, behaving, and believing a certain way, and that's not going to change in an instant.

You can do what I did. I started small and continued to build. But it started with a deep feeling of desperation—a point where staying the same hurt worse than changing.

True change doesn't happen until you decide to change. You won't decide to change unless not changing is worse.

How to Learn from Your Mistakes *"Further, my characterization of a loser is someone who, after making a mistake, doesn't introspect, doesn't exploit it, feels embarrassed and defensive rather than enriched with a new piece of information, and tries to explain why he made the mistake rather than moving on."* [1] *– Nassim Taleb.*

Life is like a maze with thousands of tiny little forks in the road. Circumstances influence your life, of course, but decision-making makes up a good portion of what happens to you.

Like I said before, these decisions aren't your entire fault, *per se*, in the way that you can't "blame" Pavlov's dog for salivating.

If you've been told thousands of times a certain way of living works and you make decisions based on what you're told and believe, the blame can be spread around a little bit, but now it's time to own up to what's happened so you can start over.

There's the decision you may have made about your career that wasn't based on what the true *you* wanted, but by the influence of society, your parents, and your peers.

There's the decision to take the route of certainty because you've been led to believe the world is a scary place and that security of any form exists. It doesn't —the financial collapse of 2008 proved that.

Take the same "you" and put yourself in several different scenarios where you

make different decisions in the same situations, and you have *completely different lives.*

The point in saying this is that although you can't take your regretful decisions back, you can learn from them.

Let's look at your decisions objectively and be honest about their role in your current life. Once you've faced them head-on, you can move out of the repetitive cycle of blame, rationalization, and avoidance.

Let's avoid the typical vanilla answers too—the ones you'd give in an end of chapter exercise of a book called *Unleash Your Bliss*.

Seriously, stare your fuck-ups directly in the face for once. It's hard. It's painful. You'll feel guilty for wasting so much time and wish you could change the past. Ruminating over the past is useless, but examining it in naked truth and moving on has value.

I'll go first.

I burned 70,000 dollars on a college education that I *didn't even complete.* Lessons learned: be wary of loans, examine the true value of what you're buying, and remember the cost of falling short of the finish line.

I almost ruined my life over drugs. Lessons learned: The people you associate yourself with are extremely important, drugs don't replace the hole inside of you, and value your time because years of it can go up in smoke—*literally up in smoke.*

I could go on forever. I've since let go of these mistakes, which we'll talk about next, but I've had enough uncomfortable dialogues with myself to the point where I feel very confident in avoiding repeating those dangerous mistakes in the future.

What are your lessons learned, the real ones?

Did you waste a decade of your life working behind a desk pushing papers? Admit it. Now you won't waste another decade.

Do you barely recognize the person you are today because you continually said no to new but scary opportunities? Admit it. Now you can start saying yes.

The mask of rationalizing blinds you from a better future.

Every time you say something like "I'm doing it for the kids," "I can't afford to take risks," or "I don't have enough time," you're putting a nail in your own coffin. I'm not saying that because *I want something different for you.* I'm saying that because *you do*, and you're not doing anything about it.

After you've taken the time to examine your life, own up to your mistakes, and face the truth, you can truly start over. If you don't, you'll continue to spin your wheels and live like a record on repeat.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • Until you own up to the mistakes you've made

in the past, you'll never be able to move forward as a new person • Circumstances dictate your life to a certain degree, but at some point, it's important to take responsibility for your role in them • Mistakes are only costly if you decide to never learn from them In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions: • What are some of the key mistakes you made in the past? What can you learn from them moving forward?

• What are some rationalizations you've made about your life that you need to own up to?

Click here to download the chapter 3 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

4

SURRENDER AND ACCEPTANCE - HOW TO LET GO OF YOUR NEGATIVE PAST

Think about what happens when you die.

Your body just *lets go*. Your heart stops beating, your lungs stop taking in air, even your bowels let loose and you poop on yourself (fun fact.) When you die, you have no problems. You have no anything. You're gone.

When I think of the changes I made in my life, they feel more like deaths of former versions of myself than changes to the same person.

"One has to kill a few of one's natural selves to let the rest grow—a very painful slaughter of innocents." – Henry Sidgwick.

It's in your nature as a human being to push, strive, and fix. You think to yourself, "if only I work harder, if only I patched up the holes in the ship, if only I try, then my situation will get better."

Sometimes, it's better to scrap everything altogether and start over.

Let's start with your identity.

Maybe you went to school for business. You graduated and worked in corporate America for ten years. You earned a nice salary, but you now feel like something's missing.

You want to write a book, start a non-profit organization, or just travel around the world, but you can't, because you can't let go of who you *think* you are.

You spent one hundred thousand dollars on your degree and have *just finished* paying off those student loans. You spent ten years climbing the ladder, gaining respect and admiration from your colleagues.

Do you really want to throw it all away?

You're not happy, but you also don't want to lose what you already have. You try to please yourself with promotions, toys, and whatever else, but the feeling still returns.

Most people aren't willing to throw away an identity they've spent a long time creating, but killing your identity gives you room to grow a new one.
Your situation could be the opposite end of the spectrum.
You've been working at the factory or the fast food joint for the past ten years.
You've wrapped your identity around the idea that you're only suited to do this type of work, and you don't have what it takes to do anything else.
There are "haves" and the "have not's." You've come to grips with the idea of being a have not for the rest of your life.
This seems like an identity you'd want to get rid of, *right?*
Even if the situation is far from ideal, it's easier to cope with.
If you believe you have no potential, then you're off the hook. You weren't smart enough or talented enough in the first place, so the results you've gotten are to be expected.
The thought that you, in fact, *do have the potential to succeed,* but have simply wasted it, can be too much to bear.
Practicing what I preach is no easy task, but if the identity you've created for yourself hasn't led to the type of life you want to live, perhaps you should kill it.
What if, for a little while, you let go of who you *thought you were* and who you're *supposed to be*.
Give yourself a chance to live, experiment, and see what happens without judgment.
When you're concerned about appearances, stuck in your head, and fretting over outcomes, it's hard to be creative.
Instead of saying "I need to do 'X' to feel 'Y'," like you've done your entire life, we're going to start focusing on doing simply for the sake of doing.
We grip the steering wheel of life and do our best to stay on course, but during a storm, a tight grip and a hard shift of the wheel can actually lead to a crash.
Sometimes you need to drift until you come to a complete stop so you can gather yourself.
We're going to drift, and then we're going to stop.
The Power of Surrender I do Yoga as part of my exercise routine.
In Yoga, the goal is to surrender to the postures. See, Yoga can be anything but relaxing *while you're doing it.* You must stretch your body in ways it's unaccustomed to, the positions will make your muscles hurt, and you may even feel like you're going to run out of breath.
During the tough postures and positions, you're supposed to remember to maintain your breathing and extend *into* the positions. You surrender your body to those moments during stress, for your body to feel good under normal conditions.

Yoga reminds me of life.

Sometimes, your life is going to be chaotic. You have your jobs, and your kids, and your spouse, and your bills, and your errands, and your issues, and your baggage, and your bullshit.

You're wound up tight like a rubber band stretched to the point it's going to snap.

You're wound up because you're fighting against the way of the world. You want your circumstances to be different, and you can't fully accept them as they are right now.

We're often told that doing *more* will cure our anxieties, but when you're *doing* in a frustrated and fixated state, you'll never enjoy the process *and* you'll make it harder than it should be.

Think about negative emotions and how easily they come. It takes no effort for us to create an insanely inaccurate negative story about ourselves. When you're worried about something or stuck in your head, your inner dialogue is *very convincing*, even though it isn't true.

If it's easy to conjure up negative feelings and stories about ourselves, why should it be harder to come up with positive ones? They come from the same mind. They're both a product of imagination.

We can cultivate the power to move forward in our lives in a relaxed stated, but like Yoga, it's difficult to "lean in," to chaos to find that ultimate relaxation.

What you're going to attempt to do is reinvent your life, without constantly beating yourself up throughout the process and gripping the "steering wheel of life" too hard.

I struggle when I grip too hard—when I consider the mistakes I made the week before, when I *wish* the climb was easier, and when I obsess over a future that may or may not come.

When I can let go, even for a little while, I can create. I write, and I only seem to do my best work when I'm *not* caught up in the storm of life. I know it's there, but I find my way to the "eye," of it, and work.

What are the storms in your life?

What do you wish was easier?

Negative circumstances will never vanish from your life completely. One of the main reasons it took me so long to change was the fact that I wanted things to be different. I kept fighting against the fact that they weren't different.

I wasn't able to say, "This is where I'm at now and I have to move forward." I couldn't surrender. *It's hard to surrender.*

It's hard to surrender because we build prisons of circumstance with our past. When you tear the walls down brick by brick, you can begin your escape and

will eventually live a new life.

The Power of Acceptance On one fateful night, I found myself in a jail cell. Long story short, I was in possession of plants that didn't belong in your typical garden.

I didn't spend much time in there—three days—but the experience made me *really think* about the decisions I made that led up to that point.

When you're in jail, you have nothing but time to think. I sat on my bunk for hours replaying everything.

I played the movie in my head where I made the right moves, didn't get caught up with a bad crowd, and walked the straight and narrow.

It was too late for all of that. No matter how desperate I was to change the past and live in a better present, it wasn't going to happen right then and there.

"Now what?" I thought.

Even after I got out, I wasn't heading out into the best of circumstances.

I accepted where I was at the moment, and made the decision to make something of myself—for a little while at least.

I fell back into the same patterns as before, because I listened to the stories in my head telling me I couldn't be anything more than a pot-smoking punk.

Eventually, my life got much better, but it happened through several starts and stops, ups and downs, and periods of cleanliness and relapses.

When it comes to failures and setbacks, I've learned to accept all of them.

It doesn't always feel *good*, but acceptance is all you have when you haven't been living right.

You could beat yourself up, rack your brain trying to rewrite a story written in stone, and get nowhere.

Or, you can admit you messed up, accept that you've done some things that are irreversible, and move on.

I'd like to say I've done that. I'm not immune to setbacks, but I'm no longer in that truly dark place I used to be in. Had I fought against my darkness, instead of accepting its existence during that time, I'd probably still be there.

Forgive yourself. Accept what you've done *and* what has happened to you. I know these are just words, but they are words to follow. Books can only point to a sign that says "Do This."

I've followed the same process over and over and over. Now, I look back at the older versions of me and they look *alien to who I am now.* I've become obsolete and updated myself more often than Windows software.

The point I'm trying to make is that change is hard when you think of yourself as a fixed entity with characteristics so hard wired they're inescapable.

When you think of yourself as the Phoenix rising from the ashes, the snake

shedding its skin, or the demolished building that gets reconstructed, you can climb up the mountain of success without the fifty-pound bag of baggage strapped to your back.

The forgiveness and acceptance process will happen again and again. This is your game, and you get to play the levels over and over until you win.

I wish I could wave a wand and change your situation this instant, but I can't.

This is where you are now. You have what you have, and you can only do what you can with what you have.

Time to Die

"Ooh, I've been travelin' on this road too long. Just trying to find, my way back home. The old me is dead and gone, dead and gone.*" – Justin Timberlake* I've told you much of my story. I reached the point of true acceptance – the point where I realized nothing but moving forward in a positive direction was going to help me change my circumstances.

You've learned to *start where you are,* instead of *wishing* you had a different starting point.

Now we've reached the most important phase. It's time for you to die.

The metaphor I'm using might seem trite or insignificant, but there's a large difference between trying to change your situation while remaining the same person and changing who you are.

You've spent your life to this point becoming someone, and if that person is incapable of making a change, you can become a new person.

The idea of killing the old you is ten times more powerful than the idea of "change" or "self-improvement."

Choke the life out of the person who continues to daydream and do nothing.

Put a knife through the heart of the person who believes they aren't talented and have no room to grow.

Take the person who believed they were a victim of circumstance and throw them off a bridge.

On top of your normal end of chapter exercises, I want you to try an additional one.

Write down all your insecurities, doubts, false beliefs about the world, mean things people said to you, the pain you've felt, setbacks you've encountered, things you've done to others, circumstances you feel trapped by, all of it. Write all your bullshit down on a piece of paper until your fingers feel like they're going to fall off.

Then burn it. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

The old you is dead now. Let the reinvention process begin.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • It's easy to fall into the trap of wishing things

were different. You can replay your life story with scenes you wish turned out differently, or you can accept where you are right now • Until you forgive yourself for what you've done and what has been done to you, you'll stay stuck • Instead of thinking in terms of change or self-improvement, think it terms of *death to your former self* In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions: • What parts of your identity are you clinging onto because of time invested, influences around you, or wanting to avoid the truth?

• What are some circumstances/situations you wish were different but can't change immediately? What actions will you choose to focus on instead?

• What do you need to forgive yourself for so you can start over?

• What beliefs, personality traits, and actions are you going to KILL so you can be born again?

Click here to download the chapter 4 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

5

THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

We all act out roles in the "movie of life." Some of us act like the star, and others like extras. It's just the truth. Every now and then, regular people like you and me decide they want to step out of the shadows.

You've seen it countless times in movies.

The protagonist is always unassuming at first—Cinderella washing floors, Katniss Everdeen minding her own business in district 12, Hillary Swank as a no-name boxer—and for a while things don't work out their way.

The protagonist is down and out.

She trudges along, until one day, the light bulb goes off in her head. When all seems lost, she has an idea, a dream, a new mission, and she decides *right then and there* she's going to pursue it without quitting.

When it comes to real life, the story usually doesn't work out *that way*, but you can reach a similar "fed up," moment and seek to change, even though the change isn't as dramatic as it is in a film.

See, movies have *one magic moment*, but real success stories come through hundreds or even thousands of "little magic moments."

My life reached a low point before I decided enough was enough. I lived in a dorm room at age 24 because it was all I could afford. I was working 12-hour shifts at an electronics factory.

This factory was the place where dreams went to die. All day, I'd sit on an assembly line and put the same piece into the same circuit board.

I worked with mostly older people in their late 30's and 40's. They all had the same look in their eyes—defeat. Regardless of what led them here, this is where they were going to be for the foreseeable future.

I figured I'd be doing this for a while too, because I fell short of finishing my degree and owed the school so much money I couldn't re-enroll.

To cope with it all, I would get as high as I possibly could during the day and drink as much as my stomach could handle at night.

One night, I got so drunk I decided to pick a fight with someone I shouldn't have picked a fight with. To this day, I don't even remember what the guy looks like, but I do remember my eye socket being the size of a tennis ball the next day.

I tried going back to work but the florescent lighting irritated my eye and gave me severe headaches. I took a few days off to recover.

Although I was in physical pain, I felt *relieved* to not be at the factory. I had no idea what I was going to do next, but I decided I was never going back to that place.

Getting beat up was a blessing in disguise, because it led to a series of events that helped change my life forever.

I started looking for a new job and found one as the manager of a local video store.

Although it doesn't sound like much *to you,* it was a pivotal moment in my life.

Before then, I'd been hired and fired at a string of menial jobs. I'd never been promoted. It's hard to get promoted when you don't make it past six months.

I applied to be a clerk at the video store, but they asked me to interview to be the store manager.

It was the first time anybody *trusted me* and gave me actual responsibility.

I wanted to live up to expectations.

I wanted to learn how to become a better leader and person so I could become a better manager.

This was one of the first magic little moments. Getting hired as the manager of the store inspired me to learn.

I read books on motivation and leadership after work. I watched TED Talks and interviews of successful people. For the first time in my life, I felt energized and hungry.

This motivation spilled over into new avenues, and led me to walk through the doors of opportunity when I spotted them.

At the time, I tended to write small essays as Facebook statuses. It was my mental and creative outlet. I'd post about what I was reading, insights I gained, and encouraging words I thought would help my friends.

One of my friends took notice and saw something in me. He was working on a startup—a news website—and he wanted me to write for it.

The first time I wrote was like the first time you hit a crack pipe. Finally, someone had given me the permission I was unable to give myself.

I took little leaps in the early stages of my writing career, like submitting my work to publications I didn't think my writing was qualified for.

I wrote every day. To date, I've written more than 300 blog posts and now two books. Each time I sat down and put words on the page was a magic moment. When you find "that thing," it's not hard to do.

Finding "that thing," inside you starts with a point of being desperate enough or inspired enough to take at least one step. It might not even be a step that's in the exact direction of your dreams—becoming a video store manager certainly isn't the first step in the "How to Become a Writer" handbook."—but any step where you decide you no longer want to go *backwards* is worthwhile.

Hundreds of decisions later, I'm here, doing something I always wanted, but *never thought* I'd be doing.

I didn't *know* what I wanted to begin with. I just knew I was fed up with my situation, and I said yes to anything I felt would move me in a new direction.

What's the point of the story? The point is that you are now in the same position as I was. You just want *something different.*

To make the transition, I suggest treating yourself like the hero in your own movie.

In the hero's journey, the protagonist accepts the call. It's time for you to accept the call and begin to experience the "little magic moments" that lead to your total reinvention.

Most people never reach the triumphant climax and come home victorious.

They just die, and they lived as if the remaining pieces of their life story were ripped out and discarded—never to be seen.

Look, I'm practical. I'm not going to pretend like your story *will* work out. It *can*, but no book in the world will *force you to accept the call.*

I was just like you at one point. I had to read book after book, blog post after blog post, and watch interview after interview before I truly rose to the occasion.

I wrote this book because if even just *one of you* accepts the call, it means I've used my time on this earth well.

See, our stories are intertwined. Helping you, helps me. I'm on a mission to open the eyes of as many people as possible. I know it's more than possible to turn your life around and start a rewarding journey.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss ideas to move you in the right direction. In the next chapter, we'll discuss the nuts and bolts of what it takes to change.

The Power of Yes In the next chapter, we're going to talk about how you can begin to think about what the new "you," wants. Maybe you have a bit of an idea. Maybe you're completely lost.

Either way, I want you to consider saying “yes” to everything you come across for a while.

Say yes to buying that new business book. Say yes to going to that conference without knowing anybody there. Say yes to taking those guitar lessons, starting the 30-day Yoga program, or taking an introductory class on computer programming.

Whatever it is, just say *yes*.

You can attract serendipity by saying yes. When you look at a successful person, you’re looking at someone who said yes to certain opportunities. Call it luck, but people who succeed all have one thing in common—they did *something.*

Per Tony Robbins, there are six drivers of human behavior. One of them is certainty. As humans, we crave stability and want to feel secure in our decision-making.

Uncertainty is also another driver. We like variety in our lives and get bored if things become too stale.

That’s where you’re at right now. Your life went stale.

Let your need for uncertainties trump your need for certainty.

Remember what I said earlier in the book. I’ll never tell you what you *must* do. I’ll only tell you what will or won’t happen.

If you don’t say yes to new people, new opportunities, and new ideas, your life will likely stay the same.

If you do say yes, however, *something* will happen, and oftentimes it’s positive. The idea that crosses your mind—the one that makes you think “Nah. It couldn’t happen.”—is the one that wants you to say yes to it. It’s begging and pleading for you to walk through the door of opportunity. Remember that when you spot it.

It’s also important to remember that *certainty doesn’t even exist.* I’ll explain.

The Myth of Certainty Changing yourself is a process that happens from the *inside out.* The process starts within because the things you value and believe drive your behavior.

Remember the examples I mentioned earlier in the book? The stories we tell ourselves? Everything you’ve done in your life is based on those stories. Those stories create values and those values determine the quality of your life.

The word “value” itself throws you off a little bit, doesn’t it? When you think of something *valuable*, it’s attributed to something rare or luxurious. If you’ve come to this book seeking change, there are obviously things happening in your life that you *don’t want to happen,* so how can they be equated with the word value?

The reason why your values have lead you astray is because they’re built on a

foundation of fear. Change happens only when you redefine your values. You can only redefine your values if you see how they're driven.

There are tons of different values we're driven by, but if there's one that stands above all others in terms of *keeping people stuck*, it's certainty.

The future both frightens and excites us. We spend time fantasizing about it often, yet it doesn't usually work out the way we want it to.

Why? We're afraid to "take risks."

I wrote this section specifically to debunk the myth of certainty and adjust your views on risk taking. Without this foundational value change—valuing freedom and autonomy over certainty—you'll never have the life *you want.*

I can confidently say that regardless of who's reading this. I don't know or particularly care *what your dreams are,* but I want you to reach them.

And to reach any *true dream,* valuing your freedom helps you get there.

A great step towards realizing certainty is a myth involves taking a hard look at what you already know.

The Most Obvious Yet Ignored Fact of Life My wife has a friend named Stephanie (changed for the book). Stephanie is a bubbly woman who always has a smile on her face. She was my wife's roommate for two years in college.

She liked to have fun—at times maybe a little *too much*—at the bar. But she was a normal kid with a bright future. She graduated school and got a job working at the Mayo Clinic, one of the best hospitals on the planet.

Everything was going great. She believed in the certainty of getting her degree and finding a great job, and she was rewarded for it.

She was at the peak of her life both professionally and personally. Little did she know, life was about to throw her a curveball.

One day, my wife mentioned her name and seemed pretty upset. It turns out after Stephanie went to the doctor for pain in her leg, they ran tests and found cancer in her femur.

She's undergoing treatment right now and is set to have surgery to hopefully rid her body of the cancer. She has an extremely high chance of survival, which is great. I'm guessing after her recovery, she'll have a different outlook on her life.

I don't know what her experience will do for her, but *I can be certain her sense of certainty is gone.*

You've heard stories like this before. Someone gets sick and recovers, suffers a terrible accident, and in one way or another stares death directly in the face.

Afterwards, they act in a polar opposite way of their former selves. They write books, climb mountains, jump out of planes, start businesses and foundations, run for office, and a myriad of bucket list items get crossed off their list.

Is this what it takes to snap out of the myth of certainty?

The philosopher Seneca said, “You act like mortals in all that you fear, and like immortals in all that you desire.”

We’re stingy with our finances, but generous with our time. Morbid as it sounds, death hangs over our heads every day, but we live as if it doesn’t.

I’m not here to look down on you for wasting time. I watch my fair share of Netflix, lie around on the couch at times, and have some beers with friends on occasion. All the while, however, I continue to remind myself that *nothing is guaranteed.*

You’ve driven past horrific accidents on the freeway, failing to realize someone has died on the same road you’re driving on and just happened to be the statistic you easily could’ve been.

You read a news story about someone *your age and gender* that gets sick, but you think it’ll ever happen to you.

While you’re meticulously planning for your future to find certainty by taking a job you don’t want to save money you may never use to fund a retirement you might never reach, the universe and our planet is causing mayhem and destruction in thousands of little instances per day in order to push evolution’s agenda forward.

Some say the universe was born out of uncertainty. If you believe in a creator, he put you here and gave you free will, so the options are *still endless*.

I keep my mortality in mind—not to be morbid—but to be reminded.

If the idea of death seems too distant, let’s explore some practical reasons why your belief in certainty is nothing more than your favorite flavor of Kool Aid.

The Turkey Problem – Why Your Goose Might be Cooked Without You Knowing It *“Consider a turkey that is fed every day. Every single feeding will firm up the bird’s belief that it is the general rule of life to be fed every day by friendly members of the human race ‘looking out for its best interests,’ as a politician would say. On the afternoon of the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, something unexpected will happen to the turkey. It will incur a revision of belief.” – Nassim Taleb* We all remember the recent financial crisis. The housing market, the world economy, and the people who depend on it all incurred a “revision of belief.”

Save for the few who predicted the collapse, there was *certainty* that nothing like this could ever happen. Yet it happened.

It was something Taleb refers to as a “black swan event.”

“A **black swan** is an **event** or occurrence that deviates beyond what is normally expected of a situation and is extremely difficult to predict.”

Although these events are rare, they have a disproportionate impact on people who aren’t prepared for them, e.g., people who staked most their money in their

homes on faulty mortgages and worked for susceptible companies without saving enough.

Would you rather change your belief in certainty before it's too late or feel the impact of it through something like a black swan?

"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." – Mike Tyson

Here's where the problem gets even worse. We've recovered. In fact, the stock market has *tripled* since the crash. I live in a city called Rochester, Minnesota. It has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and the people living in it are irrationally exuberant about the future.

The problem with overconfidence and presumptions about the future is that when things go wrong, *they go very wrong*.

We're lulled into a false sense of security while another crisis is making its way around the corner. What's worse, the people in power don't even account for the possibilities of these extremely rare events.

The financial crisis was an unprecedented event.

Do you think the powers that be are preparing for an *even more unprecedented event in the future?* Absolutely not. In fact, the people who were largely responsible *for the collapse* were put in charge of the recovery. Many of the unsound practices used pre- 2008 (when the crash happened) are being used again under different labels and monikers.

Call it anecdotal, but one way or another, it's coming. Uncertainty is the way of the world. It's how the world grows. The people equipped to handle an *uncertain world* will be the ones who survive and even thrive.

"Only when the tide goes out do you discover who's been swimming naked." – Warren Buffet Here's one inarguable point. Job security is an oxymoron. K-Mart was an industry giant for more than 100 years and now the company has collapsed. The ecosystem of entrepreneurship is impartial, and as an employee of a company, you're always at risk.

What hurts people most, I've noticed, is when they stake too much of their lives, well-beings, and futures on certainty.

When you live a dangerous check-to-check lifestyle because you're certain the next check will come in, you're at risk when it doesn't.

When you're certain that adjustable rate mortgage is iron clad, you'll be in for a rude awakening if it's not.

If you put off your present for a better future, you might die never having lived it.

So now we have the uncertainty of our own physical well-being combined with the uncertainty of the markets and institutions we put stake in.

We can deal with uncertainty in one of two ways. We can pretend it doesn't exist

and get blindsided, or we can set our lives up in a way that benefits from uncertainty.

So how do you set your life up in a way that benefits from uncertainty?

We'll discuss this idea in depth in the next chapter, but the formula for dealing with uncertainty is experimentation plus skill acquisition.

You use experiments to develop new skills. The new skills you acquire equip you to handle an uncertain future.

I've developed the skill of writing to a degree. My writing is decent enough that I can put money in my pocket with it. The freelance writing and publishing markets are booming.

If for some reason I was subject to a major setback and found my self homeless, I could go to the public library and find writing jobs to get myself back on my feet.

We all have the ability to develop skills, increase our passion, and give ourselves avenues of freedom. When you realize how much opportunity is available, you'll start to see escape routes from the prison of circumstance.

Why Every Human Being Has Won the Lottery *"The minute you were born, things got risky." – Jim Rohn* Think of the chances of being born. I won't even attempt to put an actual number to it but I'll say this—*it's small.*

You are the ultimate product of uncertainty. We live in a world that houses billions of agents of uncertainty, whose uncertain futures have created the society we live in and the infrastructure we benefit from.

As Nassim Taleb notes in *Antifragile*, innovation was created out of uncertainty, not out of a textbook. The inventors and tinkerers—often people without formal credentials—are responsible for most advances in technology.

If Edison, or anyone like him, wanted certainty in his inventions working, we'd be living in the dark.

Invention is uncertainty, and true reinvention *requires* uncertainty.

We live in an amazing world. The sheer scope of what's been accomplished and the opportunity available to us is downright ridiculous.

You are lucky.

Every time I focus on what I don't have, I lose my creativity and I'm filled with negativity. When I realize I'm lucky to even be here, and that I should be thankful to even be allowed to move forward with uncertainty, I do things like write books!

How many copies will this book sell? I don't know. But it'll be my second book. At one point in time writing *one book* would've been unimaginable.

I could've been like many "aspiring writers" and let my fear of uncertainty stop me. *I feel the fear* just as much as they do. The only difference is the fact that I

focus on the blessing of opportunity more than they do.
Whenever the conversation changes from, “what will happen if I try,” to “wow, I get to try!,” good things seem to happen.
To throw *even more icing on the cake*, you’re in a better position than *all your ancestors.*
Let’s dig all the way back.
You aren’t at risk of being mauled by a saber tooth tiger daily. Win.
You don’t have a one in three chance of dying from the Bubonic Plague. Awesome.
You don’t even have the traditional barriers to entrepreneurship and creative endeavors as your grandparents did. Ding-ding-ding!
Back then, if you wanted to be a singer or a radio host your chances were slim to none. Now there’s YouTube and Podcasts.
If you wanted to write and publish a book, good luck getting a publisher to notice.
Now, you can publish your own books *and* make good money from them.
Are the odds of finding massive success in any of these areas high? I wouldn’t say that. But they’re *much higher* than they’ve ever been before.
The chances of you living that crazy cool life you picture in your head are higher than your chance of *even being here*.
So, come off it would you! The world is an uncertain place, but it’s beautiful in a poetic and dangerous way. *Let’s live.*
Are you starting to value your freedom now? I hope so.
When you’re free, you realize your life is nothing more than a video game with chances to restart and reinvent, until the plug is pulled.
You don’t know how long you have either, so I’d say it’s in your best interest to get started.
Key Takeaways and Exercises • We all tell ourselves stories about life. Make yours the hero’s journey • Certainty of any form doesn’t exist. Why not put fate in your hands instead of someone else’s?
• The more you say yes to new opportunities, the more chances you have of attracting serendipity In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions: • What are some “myths of certainty” in your life that you cling to for a false sense of security?
• You’re the hero in the movie who says, “Enough is enough” and realize they have potential. Add a few statements to pump yourself up.
• What are some intriguing opportunities you’ve said “no” to in the past that you’re going to say yes to now?
Click here to download the chapter 5 worksheet including examples for answers

to each of the above questions and exercises

6

HOW TO REINVENT YOURSELF

I remember it like it was yesterday. I was driving in the car with my wife, and I started talking about my future.

"I think I want to start a blog and do some sort of writing. I love to write," I said.

"Well, *why don't you just write*?" she replied.

It wasn't the first time I mentioned wanting to write, and she always met me with the same reply. Looking back, it seemed simple. I should've just started writing.

It took *years* after those conversations before I began to write.

I made the idea of writing seem more daunting than it was. In my mind, I pictured having a popular blog or a finished book, and those two accomplishments seemed so daunting.

Instead, I should've started with a small experiment and followed a method to figure out if writing was for me.

That's what scientists do. They don't declare they're going to write *The Origin of Species* or discover a new type of medicine. They start with an observation.

My observation was, "Writing seems like it'd be fun."

Once I finally did follow through with my experiment, I wrote more and more. To date, I've written at least a half a million words and have finished two books. I never set out do to these things initially. I started small.

Whether you know it or not, you have these observations, too. Finding a new career, hobby, passion, or skill isn't mysterious. The signs are there if you look for them.

On your path to discovering what you should do with your future, don't get caught in the trap of thinking your path must go in a straight line.

The Passion Myth

I have a confession to make.

I once believed in the myth of the "one true calling," or "one true passion."

The idea of having one big, whopping, life-changing passion can make you feel bad if you haven't found it yet and put you under pressure to find it.

I now believe you can have *many passions.* You have seeds of interests waiting to sprout, but they won't grow without watering them with action.

I used to believe if you looked within yourself long enough, you'd determine your passion. I was half right. Finding passion *does involve* uncovering what's already inside of you, but you don't find it *solely* by looking inside.

You can't sit alone in a room and decide what your passion is. Passion comes from doing, testing, and seeing what happens.

On top of that, the idea of passion has been overstated. You've been told that anything less than pure happiness, joy, and contentment doesn't equal passion. You've also been told you should feel super passionate about your "calling," *right away.*

"Find something you love and you'll never have to work another day in your life."

The truth is you're more likely to feel passionate after you get good at something.

Instead of bliss, think competence.

In the book *So Good They Can't Ignore You,* Cal Newport argues that building up your "Career Capital," by accumulating and refining rare and valuable skills will lead to passion.

Success in a vocation happens when the things you're interested in intersect with something the market wants.

I was interested in writing, and I continued to work to get better at it. I'm learning how to become a speaker now. I'm developing skills in digital marketing and Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

I feel passionate when I become more certain that I have a handle on what I'm doing.

I'm building Career Capital.

Career Capital gives you the obvious benefit of money, but it also gives you autonomy.

When you're so good at what you do you can't be ignored, the work you provide becomes indispensable.

You can start to set your own terms in the workplace or break free on your own and make a living with your skills.

When it comes to reinventing yourself, many areas come to mind—career,

health, and relationships—but I chose career/vocation because it's central to the positivity or negativity of most of our lives.

The examples I'm about to show skew towards careers, vocations, or side projects, but the experiment framework can be used in any area of your life.

Life's Laboratory – How to Reinvent Yourself with Constant Experimentation *"Life doesn't promise you success, it promises a laboratory." – James Altucher* Have you ever watched a comedy special where every joke landed and made your stomach hurt with laughter?

It's hard to stand on stage and make people laugh for an entire hour. How do the world's best comedians come up with these amazing routines?

They do it through constant experimentation.

In the book, *Little Bets*, the author Peter Sims talks about the process famous comedian Chris Rock uses to come up with his routines.

He'll show up at a dive comedy club unannounced. He'll have a couple of jokes scribbled down on a notepad. Being Chris Rock, he's always let on stage, and he does a fifteen-minute to half an hour set where he does his jokes.

Most of the jokes bomb, but a few will make the crowd laugh. He ditches the jokes that don't work and tries the routine again at another club. If a handful of jokes get laughs at *every club,* he knows they're worthy of his routine.

Why am I telling you this?

I want to illustrate the idea of making "little bets" in your life. Reinvention on a grand scale comes with dozens of smaller reinventions, and those reinventions come through experiments.

Just like a scientist doesn't know his theory will work, and just like a comedian knows his jokes won't necessarily land, you won't know what will make your life more enjoyable and meaningful *until you test it out.*

Now, we're going to run your first experiment to help you discover the next step in your reinvention.

Guidelines for the Experiment We're going to follow the rules of science and go through all the steps in the scientific method to help you find out what you might be interested in doing.

Step one: Ask a question *The scientific method starts when you ask a question about something that you observe: How, What, When, Who, Which, Why, or Where?*

Before we get to the question for your experiment, let's dig into your interests to point you in the right direction.

Use your downloadable end of chapter worksheet or take out a pen and paper. Look at the following questions and come up with answers to help you come up with the main question for your experiment.

• What do you find easy that others find difficult?
• What seems obvious to you that isn't apparent to others?
• What do you find yourself talking about with friends to the point they won't get you to shut up?
• If you could only choose one section in the bookstore to read, what would it be?
• What do you remember being drawn to or interested in as a child?
• What kind of articles do you read and share online?
• What have you witnessed someone else doing that made you think "wow that would be cool?"

Once you have your list in front of you, look at it and think on it for a little while. Is there an answer that *pulls you*? I bet there is.

When you find an answer to one of those questions that stand out, you can use it to ask your observation question.

In my case, the question ended up being "How do I become a writer?"

Step 2: Do background research *Rather than starting from scratch in putting together a plan for answering your question, you want to be a savvy scientist using library and Internet research to help you find the best way to do things and insure that you don't repeat mistakes from the past.*

Now that you have a slight inkling into what you think you'd enjoy doing, you can take some time to explore and learn more about the subject.

If your interests lie in writing, you could start with a simple Google search, "how to become a writer."

That's what I did. I remember stumbling across articles about self-publishing books and making a full-time living from them. The idea excited me.

They said you had to build a writing habit, build up a following, write the book, and work with editors and designers to create the book.

Everything sounded *doable.*

Unfortunately, I lingered in the research phase much too long, and didn't move into the actual experiment for a while. But I did realize it was something I was interested in.

After you've done some research into your chosen subject—writing, online business, Yoga instructing, whatever it may be—you'll have an idea as to whether it seems *doable.* Not easy, but doable.

If you decide it's doable, you move into the hypothesis stage.

Step 3: Form a hypothesis *A hypothesis is an educated guess about how things work. It is an attempt to answer your question with an explanation that can be tested. A good hypothesis allows you to then make a prediction: If _____[I do this] _____, then _____[this]_____ will happen.*

The hypothesis that led me to where I am today was, “If I start writing, I’ll enjoy it.”
That’s it. Not, “If I start writing, I’m going to become a bestselling author.”
Most scientific experiments have a more complicated hypothesis.
But for people like you and me, who just want to become better versions of ourselves and have more interesting experiences, the experiment only has to test whether or not we’d find something enjoyable after trying it for a certain period of time.
Step 4: Run the experiment *Your experiment tests whether your prediction is accurate and thus your hypothesis is supported or not.*
If you don’t give yourself a decent amount of time for your trial run, it won’t be a good experiment.
Take writing for example. You’ve researched everything you need to know about starting your first blog.
You’re excited. You sit down to write your first post and hit publish. Nobody reads it. You call it a failed experiment and quit.
This is what most people do when they try anything new. The early period of incompetence is often too much to bear, so they quit before they even have a chance to get good at what they’re trying.
If you can, try to set a timeframe for your experiment that allows you to test yourself for an amount of time that *really shows* whether you enjoy it.
The first few posts I wrote weren’t great. Hell, the first *book* I wrote wasn’t great.
This one might not be either, but I have written enough to validate my hypothesis, and it’s all I need to keep writing.
So, how long do you set your timeframe?
In terms of how long it takes to get good enough to feel some sense of competence, some researchers say it takes at least 20 hours of practice. That’s just minimum amount of time to be decent, but how long should you run your test if you’re looking to see if your new skill is *viable enough* to be something worth pursuing long-term?
Thirty days seems like a nice round number, but I prefer 66. Why? Because it’s the research based timeframe it takes to create a habit that sticks.
Per a study done by University College London, it takes an average of 66 days to make a habit stick.
Daily practices, even if they’re short, form habits. If you’re working on a business idea, you can spend a half hour per day researching and making contacts. If you’re trying to write, you can write for a designated amount of time each day. Whatever you’re attempting, give it time to sink in.

It also gives you enough time to work through the phase where you're struggling to grasp what you're doing.

Before you begin the experiment, keep this in mind: You *will struggle in the beginning.*

There's a difference between something being difficult and having no interest in it.

You might find it *difficult* to play the guitar at first, but it doesn't mean you *won't enjoy playing it* once you know how.

When you start a new side career like writing or a form of online business, I guarantee you won't have much traction in the beginning.

The goal of your experiment is to see if it's a path *worth pursuing long-term*.

We're not actual scientists, so we don't have to use the same amount of rigor they do. You'll run your experiment, but while you're doing so, keep these things in mind.

We're not going to take statistics and analyze them—that's called *quantitative data.* Your experiment will be *qualitative*, meaning the results will be based on your experiences.

Here are some qualitative measures to look out for when you're trying your new venture/hobby/path: • How do the "little victories," feel? – When I wrote my first blog post it felt great. When I published my first post on a popular website it felt great. I didn't accomplish a ton in the beginning, but I had enough "wins," to let me know I was on the right track. That's what you're looking for.

• Do you find "flow?" – Flow happen when you become so immersed in what you're doing you lose your sense of self. It's also known as being "in the zone." I don't know of a specific measure for happiness that's universal, but many people who believe they've found their passion or calling describe feeling flow often in their work.

• Do you start to imagine a long-term route? – When I *started* writing, I simply wanted to get words on the page because I'd never done it. After I settled in, I thought to myself, "I might want to do this full-time."

You can create other measures for yourself, too. These are just a guideline to start.

The important thing to remember is that you're just giving you're new path a "test drive," and if you commit to a decent length of time to test it out, you'll have a good idea of whether it's right for you.

Maybe you'll try it out for two and a half months and find it *isn't right for you*, but in the long run you'll appreciate the fact that you tried.

People often regret the things they *didn't do,* not the things they did. When your experiment "fails," at least you *know*, but if you never try, you always have to

wonder if you let an opportunity slip by, and that can hurt even worse than failure.

Step 5: Come to a conclusion You started with your hypothesis, now it's time to see if you were right.

With a real experiment, there are all sorts of measures that must be hit in order to make a firm conclusion. You must present your findings to your peers and they have to approve them.

In your case, you'll just want to see if your experiment was *near the mark you set.*

Try not to measure your results in terms of factors you can't control. Try measuring them in terms of the amount of effort you could put forth, whether or not you enjoyed yourself, and if you can see yourself doing what you're doing long-term.

Don't let yourself off the hook either. Don't say the experiment was a failure because it was difficult and you didn't make enough progress.

You can conclude it was a failure if you truly didn't *feel* anything while you tried.

If you decided your experiment worked—you found satisfaction in your new venture—keep going.

Start another experiment where you add a bit of difficulty, say "If I write every day for two months I'll have a finished manuscript."

I gave you this framework to create a structured path toward experimentation and reinvention, but I use this process informally in many areas of my life.

I always look at new opportunities as a "test drive" and sometimes my experiments don't work out the way I hoped. Instead of getting discouraged, I continue to experiment, because I know the answers I'm looking for are out there.

The Subtle Difference Between Experimentation and Failure *"In business, to be a success, you only have to be right once." – Mark Cuban* If you decide to think of change in terms of experiments, you'll realize nothing you do can ever be labeled a failure, except quitting for good.

When a scientist starts an experiment, she just wants to find out if there's anything to the hunch she's having. There's no pressure to find "success," in the beginning because she doesn't even know exactly what she's looking for yet.

Her job is to stay aware, notice things, and take an inch of information and make it a mile. With that mindset, it's more difficult to get discouraged.

Any successful scientist has more "failed" experiments than successful ones. Many of the world's greatest discoveries happened while the scientist was looking for something else!

When a scientist fails, they continue, knowing that they've ruled out at least one conclusion. They feel *closer* to the truth, not further away from it.

If you embrace the scientist's mindset, I think you'll find the world will present new opportunities. Over time, you'll begin to enjoy testing different ideas. Some will succeed and some will fail, but you'll be en route to making discoveries about yourself you never could've imagined.

There's no book in the world that will say if you do x then y will happen. Actually, there are a lot of books like that, and they're all misleading.

I wish there was a better answer. I wish I could *believe in* the "foolproof," techniques to find happiness, contentment, success, meaning, freedom, and joy.

The truth is, we all lie on a spectrum. What will make *some of us* happy will make others unhappy. What *some of us* consider success others consider minor achievements or even failure.

I can't predict how your life will turn out.

What I can say for certain is that *nothing will happen* if you don't experiment.

Actually, something will happen. Your life will be guided without much of *your input.*

Things will kind of just…happen.

When Thoreau said, "The masses of men lead lives of quiet desperation," I think he's talking about people who say no to opportunities, who never experiment, who just *let* life happen to them.

What choice are you going to make? Feel the *gravity* of the fork in the road where you're standing. Look *long* into the future and imagine what will happen if you take either route.

It's *your life,* and I can't tell you what to do with it, but I can remind you that it's *yours*—not society's, not your parents', and it doesn't belong to the voice in your head that tries to trick you into thinking you can't do it.

Run experiments on every level. Try a two-week experiment where you wake up earlier. Change parts of your diet for 30 days to see how it makes your body feel. Test and track the attempts you make.

For me, success means you did the things you said you were going to do. It doesn't matter if they work out exactly the way you want them to.

We've talked about re-framing your self-image, accepting the past, and creating a new vision for your future, but you still have one menacing obstacle in your way.

Change is a fight, and we're about to talk about your worst enemy.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • Experiments help you acquire the skills you need to reinvent yourself.

• Passion doesn't come from introspection. It comes from action. Until you test

your theories, your “inner passions” will remain untested assumptions.
• If you adopt the mind of someone conducting experiments with their life, you’ll never truly fail.
In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions: • What do you find easy that others find difficult?
• What seems obvious to you that isn’t apparent to others?
• What do you find yourself talking about with friends to the point they won’t get you to shut up?
• If you could only choose one section in the bookstore to read, what would it be?
• What do you remember being drawn to or interested in as a child?
• What kind of articles do you read and share online?
• What have you witnessed someone else doing that made you think “wow that would be cool?”
Follow these steps to conduct your experiment: • Ask a central question • Conduct background research • Form a hypothesis • Run the experiment • Draw a conclusion Click here to download the chapter 6 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

7

KNOW YOUR ENEMY - HOW TO FIGHT THE RESISTANCE

Every single morning I wake up with a pit in my stomach. I know I have to write.

The second I wake up a voice immediately welcomes me with negativity.

“Why are you even writing this book? It sucks.”

“You have so long to go in your writing career. Give up.”

“Who do you think you are to tell anyone what to do with their life? You’re a nobody, a loser, a fraud!”

I hear this voice every morning. He whispers in my ear while I drink my coffee. He seems to be sitting right next to me when I sit down to write.

Every day I think, “Would you just go away, please?!?!”

But I remember he never leaves, so I get on with it. I finish my work for the day and I win the battle; only to face this evil son of a bitch the next morning.

Steven Pressfield, in the now legendary book *The War of Art* calls this evil force *the Resistance.*

The Resistance is a silent killer, waiting to pounce on your hopes and smother your dreams. It’s the little voice in your head that says you can’t do it. It’s impartial to *you.* It has no other aim besides getting in your way and creating massive roadblocks to *anything worthwhile.*

Life is an everyday battle against the Resistance. No matter how much you succeed, you’ll wake up every morning with it there waiting for you.

It will be especially powerful when you’re in the beginning of a new journey like you are now.

If you’ve decided you want to start over and live a new life, it cues the Resistance to go full throttle, because if there’s one thing resistance hates, *it’s*

change.

You've had this feeling before. You've probably called it "self-doubt."

Self-doubt doesn't do the soul-crushing force of the Resistance justice.

When you think you are just suffering through self-doubt, you won't make much effort to overcome it. Why? Self-doubt seems like a minor annoyance.

A minor annoyance can be dealt with "later," or "eventually."

When you flip your mindset to becoming a warrior fighting against the Resistance, the situation becomes more serious. When you realize much of the life you *could have* is literally being stolen from you, you might be inclined to do the work it takes to change.

These are *your dreams* we're talking about. It's so easy to cast off dreams because people rarely reach their own, but that's just the Resistance talking.

See, the Resistance is clever and cunning. It doesn't always scream insults; sometimes it slips in subtle statements to lull you into a sense of complacency.

Not only does it speak to you through your own mind, but also you hear it from others around you who are also plagued by the Resistance.

Inner Resistance and Outer Resistance: How to Defend a Double-Flanked Attack When I first started writing and was gaining some real traction, many of my friends were happy for me, except for one.

Let's just call him 'T'.

T is one of those people who just can't seem to be positive. Regardless of the situation, he'll find a way to take a "woe is me" attitude.

You know the type. After you're with them you feel *sapped of energy.* He was my friend, so I stuck by him even though being around him at times could be depressing.

As I started to grow in my writing career as well as developing myself in other areas, I started to spend less time with T. I needed positivity in my life if I was going to change it, so I started to change my environment to reflect the type of life I wanted to live.

I started to hear rumors that T was talking negatively about my writing. He said things like, "Who does Ayo think he is to write about success?" He pointed out negative comments people made on my blog posts and laughed.

A mutual friend of ours once asked, "Isn't he supposed to be your friend? Why is he talking about you like this?"

I ignored him and continued to focus on my work.

One day, he sent me a series of text messages, explaining why I should stop writing.

According to him, the whole writing thing was a waste of time. He said I had changed and thought I was better than everybody else. He did everything he

could to try and *convince me to stop trying to become better* and go back to my old ways of drinking, getting high, and being a loser.

Looking back on it, I'm not even upset with him. When people act that way toward you, it's a sign of what's inside their own hearts. The sooner I realized people are going to be who they're going to be, I stopped blaming them for the way they are.

We're all plagued with the Resistance.

As if our own inner demons weren't enough, Resistance manifests itself in other people too.

A technique the Resistance uses within each of us is harnessing our own envy and using it to bring others down. It tricks you into making *you feel higher* even though you're just bringing someone lower.

You've done it. Either in your head or out loud you've casted off someone's success as luck, made a snide remark about them, or wished they'd stumble.

It's human nature.

People do it to you too. It ranges on the spectrum from "well intentioned" to downright mean.

Let's say you're the lovable, funny, overweight person. When you tell your friends you're going to try and lose weight they'll be happy for you—until you start losing it.

Then, you're no longer the one in the group they can look at to make *themselves feel better.* If you pass them up and get in *great shape*, they'll have to look in the mirror and question their own health.

Ramit Sethi, behavioral psychology expert and business owner, told a story on his blog about a woman who was *kicked out* of an exercise group for *losing too much weight.*

The woman was in an exercise group for mothers to lose weight post-pregnancy. When the woman in question started to look "too good," it shone a light on the lack of progress the other women had. Rather than seeing her progress as motivational, it made them feel insecure, so they banished her from the group.

There are many cases where *your success* makes people feel uncomfortable because they have to face the fact they're not doing anything.

Don't believe me?

Tell your friends and family you're going to do something "unusual," like start an online business.

I bet you'll get one of the following replies: "Oh. I don't know. That sounds *risky."*

"Be careful. There are a lot of scammers out there."

"You should feel lucky to have a good job in this economy."

And a few months into your new venture you'll hear something like: "So, how's that business thingy going?"

There will be no *real interest* in how it's going. They just want to hear you've been struggling, because it signals to them that they're choice of being "safe" was the right one.

You *can* have supportive people in your life. If you do, that's amazing.

If you have friends who are either unsupportive or feign concern, it might be a good idea to look at who's surrounding you.

Truth be told, if your friends and family aren't supportive of your change, it's not *their fault.* It's the world's fault.

We talked about culture earlier. When the culture itself doesn't support an individual's aspirations, individual change is inherently difficult.

I'm not here to judge the state of society. I'm simply pointing out the way it's built to operate and what it wants.

If every person in our society lived their lives exactly the way they wanted, society would implode. Fewer people would work at corporations, fast food joints, drive Uber, piece together circuit boards, and sell phones at mall kiosks.

I know what you're thinking.

Everyone can't just "follow their passion" and do whatever they want. Somebody has to do the grunt work.

Okay. I won't argue with that. But why does it have to be *you?*

I decided for better or worse to try and blaze my own path. You might feel differently than I do, and that's okay.

Your decisions rest with you, but ask yourself, "Do I want to grease the wheel that makes the world go round or do I want something different?"

The Resistance filled world wants you to take the first option. The minute you start to shine a light of promise, someone or something will come to snuff it out.

It's why I move in silence. I don't tell people I'm writing a book; I just write it. I don't share much about my plans with other people; I just make them and follow them.

If you want to make your process of changing your life ten times harder, run your mouth about it. Start telling everyone what you're *going to do*, even though you haven't done it yet.

If you want to stand a fighting chance at change, keep your mouth shut. This way you can struggle on your own without a spotlight on you, and you can reveal what you've been working on once you've gotten some traction.

So maybe the world and the people around you are "against you," but they're still pawns in the game.

Your own inner resistance is the Queen in chess. Like the Queen, it moves all

over the board and tries to hit you from every different direction.

It hits when it tells you to hit the snooze button instead of waking up early to work on your side project. It hits when it suggests you "take a day off" from your workout routine. It whispers doubtful thoughts in your mind constantly.

So how do you beat the Resistance? You use one of the main strategies in warfare.

Know your enemy and know yourself.

Develop self-awareness around your own feelings and find your weak spots. Know the Resistance is an energetic force of nature that doesn't quit fighting.

Fight the Resistance every day by *doing.* Don't try to defeat the Resistance with logic.

You can't. Only work defeats the Resistance.

The most worthwhile lessons in life are the most obvious. When it comes to success of any kind or real change, fear is the number one enemy.

Why put it in this book, too? I felt a reminder was necessary.

In my life, I've had periods where I falsely believed my fear would go away. All that false belief did was slow me down once I met resistance. Now I fight it every day.

You will either end up *fighting it* or *giving into it.*

Life itself can be summed up in terms of two words—fear and love. I want you to have more of the latter than the former.

In the next few chapters we're going to talk about habits and your environment. You'll see elements of resistance in both areas.

I wish this book, or any other book could provide a true formula for avoiding resistance, but resistance is unavoidable.

Anybody who tells you they don't feel fear is lying to you. I wouldn't be doing you justice if I sugarcoated this fact of life.

I've often looked for books to solve my problems for me *by taking the Resistance away.* I figured, if I read this book I'll be "cured."

Life doesn't work that way.

When you take something you have learned and apply it, you'll go uphill for a bit and slide backwards, repeatedly, until you make it to the top…or quit.

No book on earth can *make you* do anything.

I'll give you the tools, tactics, and strategies, but remember your enemy and realize change is quite literally a fight for your life.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • The Resistance is responsible for snuffing out the dreams of millions of people. Your path to the life you deserve involves waging war with the Resistance • The Resistance is cunning and will attack you in both overt and subtle ways • The Resistance never goes away. If you wait for

your fear to disappear before you act, you'll be waiting forever In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions: • What are some ways the Resistances likes to attack you specifically?
• What are some actions you can take to fight against the Resistance?
• Write down a statement to declare war against the Resistance. Talk about why it's important to defeat it and how you're going to do it.
Click here to download the chapter 7 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

8

THE KEY INGREDIENTS TO CHANGE

What makes certain people follow through with goals many of us find difficult?

How do others make it to the gym three times per week when we sit on the couch?

How do others put in the time, patience, and effort to build a business while we stay on the sidelines *wishing* it would happen? Is it because they're simply blessed with will, or is the answer a little bit deeper than that?

There are certain things we *always do* without fail—shower, brush our teeth, and go to work every day.

You don't *think* about brushing your teeth or showering when you wake up—you just do it. You don't debate if you're going to work—even if you don't like your job—because you *need* money to survive.

The combined power of habit and incentives make us do what we do a regular basis.

A strong enough reason with a repeated enough process will help you follow through with the daily tasks you need to accomplish to turn your aspirations into reality, but it's easier said than done.

Fortunately, there are some tricks you can use to help you stay the course.

In the book *The Power of Habit*, the author mentions a seemingly odd way to get yourself to go to the gym more—reward yourself with chocolate after your workout.

Why in the world would you give yourself something unhealthy *right after working out?* Because your brain will associate *the reward of eating chocolate* with the *habit of working out.*

The chocolate acts as an incentive or a reward, and even though it's arbitrary, it

works. Your brain makes associations like these all of the time, but oftentimes they help you form bad habits.

Your brain and body *know* that cheeseburger will taste delicious, so it will urge you to pull into the drive-thru. Your brain also *knows* your teeth need brushing else your breath will stink.

The trick is to teach your brain to know your *new habits.* The new habits are the tools you need to facilitate the reinvention process.

Why Rewards Trump Goals Every Time Why do advertisers create titles for workout videos like *Beach Body* or *Six Packs Abs in Six Weeks?* They could name the videos something like *Consistent Exercise Regiment for Your Core.*

It's because advertisers know people respond to rewards and benefits. They don't care much about *how to get the results.*

Now, when it's time to do the actual work of "getting ripped," there's no way around the exercise itself, but the idea of a reward gets your foot in the door and focusing on the reward helps you build the habit of exercising.

Even using rewards isn't foolproof, but I've found it to be the best strategy for following through with the things I set out to achieve.

When I don't feel like working out, I look at the before and after pictures of the exercise program I'm doing. It's enough to remind me of the end results I'm seeking.

I didn't use to be a morning person, but now I wake up every day at 6 a.m. to write. I do boring tasks to help grow my readership. I write thousands of words that will never see the light of day.

Why? I found a big enough prize to motivate me.

I, like you, was in the phase of experimentation and wandering for a while. I knew there was *something* I wanted, but I didn't know what it was. I tried to find *it* in many places and failed many times.

When I found it, I knew it was something worth working for. There came a point where I could see the reward of being a full-time writer *so clearly,* I knew I'd never quit. It's what I look to when I don't *feel like* doing the work. It's what I look to when I encounter setbacks.

When I'm struggling with writing a book, I picture *you reading it.* I think about having my name on the cover on another piece of work I created.

If I focused on my goals alone—write 1,000 words per day, send out five emails to influential people, and finish the first draft of my new book in 60 days—I'd burn out.

Goals are mechanical and robotic. Rewards are inspiring and human.

When you focus on the rewards of your actions, you'll repeat them enough to make them habits. Once your actions become habitual, they're easier to

maintain.
Earlier in the book, you took an inventory of your skills and came up with an experiment with something new you wanted to try in your life.
Eventually, one of your experiments will stick. You'll find something you want to do long-term. Habits inspired by rewards will help you stay the course.
I'm talking to you about rewards because oftentimes we're given an almost textbook idea of what human motivation is like.
You'll hear advice like: • Write your goals down • Make sure they're S.M.A.R.T. • Believe!
These ideas aren't bad in and of themselves; they just fail to take the often-fragile human psyche into account.
See, I don't think everyone who isn't doing what they want in life is just *mediocre, lazy, or doesn't want it bad enough.* We're human. As humans, we all deal with our own psychological barriers. We're perhaps the only animal that can *undermine our own needs and wants.*
That's a hell of a battle to fight, and I want to give you the tools you need to *win the war.* You're not going to win every battle—not even close—but if you continue to experiment and build better habits for the new versions of yourself, you'll become a brand-new person.
There's an exercise you can do to keep yourself motivated during the reinvention process. It's something I've used in my writing career and continue to use when I try something new.
On either a piece of paper, or your worksheet provided at the end of the chapter, I want you to come up with "prize statements" that relate to your experiments and future goals.
Let's say you decided your experiment involved becoming a show host for your own Podcast. The experiment went well. You had a few guests visit your show and have a small fan base established.
Now you want to get serious about turning your podcast into a business. You can use prize statements to compel you to do the habitual work it will take to turn your hobby into an empire.
In this scenario, you'd write down 3 prize statements that talk about the rewards you'll receive from having a successful podcast.
Some examples are: • Podcasting will give me the income I need to quit my job • Podcasting will help me meet and interview my idols • Podcasting will give me fame and fans Now you have compelling reasons to work. You'll need them to build habits that stick. Couple these compelling prizes with a realistic strategy, and you'll be well on your way to living a brand-new life.
The Power of Negativity *"The chains of habit are light until they're too heavy*

to be broken." Warren Buffet One of the reasons we don't make behavior change in the present is because we don't feel the weight of the consequences we'll experience in the future.

In the book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* Steven Covey tells us to "begin with the end in mind."

He tells us to imagine our funerals. How many people would attend and what would they say when called to speak?

I like this idea, but I think it needs a bit of a tweak. This exercise helps you think about who you *want to be*. You'll pace out your future a little bit—imagining what people will say if you continue to live this way—but soon you'll conjure up the idea of who you *think* you'll be, and you'll picture the funeral with rose-colored glasses.

I want you to picture your distant future and begin with the end in mind too, but I want you to put the full weight of your consequences into the forefront.

In other words, I want you to think as negatively as you can about how your life will turn out if you continue to live the way you're living right now.

Why?

Great scientists like Charles Darwin realized the power of negativity. In other words, they looked for *disconfirming evidence* for their theories. In science, there's more power in figuring out what doesn't work as opposed to what does. The same might be true for life itself.

The writer and philosopher, Nassim Taleb, referred to this way of living as *via negativa*, which means to live a life of subtraction. Billionaire business owner Charlie Munger calls this method inversion.

If you can't figure out what will help you live a better future, figure out what will make your future worse and avoid it.

Better yet, you don't even have to learn solely from *your experiences*. You can learn much of what you need to know by observing other people. Again, like other sections of this book, this seems obvious.

But living the good life is nothing more than following through with obvious actions.

That's the kicker.

What are some routes you observe other people living that you might want to avoid?

Perhaps it's seeing the elderly person working as a greeter at Wal-Mart. No disrespect to their position, but do *you* want to be in a situation where you have to take that sort of job to pay your bills at that age?

Maybe it's viewing people who have become overweight to the point it's affecting their health. These people were once *like you*, but the chains of habit

became unbearably heavy and now their fate is almost permanent.

These situations are painful for the people in them. I don't want to make light of their situations. The point is that closely tying feelings of pain to the circumstances you don't want can be as effective as tying feelings of pleasure to the situations you do want.

It's fun to imagine yourself driving a Lamborghini down a winding road with a pile of cash in the trunk, but it doesn't feel real to you.

Picturing yourself declaring bankruptcy after being swallowed by your debts, however, is something you picture with crystal clear vision.

Still, knowing habits are important, knowing the power of incentives, and knowing the power of avoiding bleak futures *still doesn't seem to be enough* for most people.

What is a struggling person to do?

If you can't change yourself on your own, you may need some assistance from your surroundings.

How Your Environment Influences Your Behavior I smoked cigarettes for eight years. It started innocently enough.

When I was 18, I worked as a cook at a seafood restaurant. When you work in the food service industry, you realize people who smoke get more breaks than people who don't.

Usually, the manager is a smoker, so they understand the need to get your fix. It's almost like *fresh air breaks* seem odd.

The first time I smoked a cigarette, I didn't have any intention to. I "pretended," like I was going out for a smoke with a couple people from the crew, but I figured I'd just stand there with them and enjoy a break while they inhaled tar and formaldehyde.

Then, one of them offered me a cigarette. Not wanting to look like the odd man out, I took it. That single moment was the beginning of a habit that at times seemed impossible to shake.

The nicotine in cigarettes hooks you—I get that—but the *social aspect* of smoking had a much greater influence on me.

I didn't smoke two packs a day constantly. I usually smoked when I was around *other people who smoked.* I'd smoke with co-workers on break. I'd smoke with friends on the front porch. I'd smoke outside the bar on a Friday night among the dozens of people outside smoking.

I tried to quit about a million times, just like every other smoker does, but nothing worked.

In the process of trying to better myself, I stopped hanging out at bars and I started hanging out with new people—who didn't smoke.

I didn’t gain more willpower, become stronger mentally, or make a huge decision to quit smoking. I stopped hanging around smokers, and I stopped smoking.

I didn’t use a patch or gum. I didn’t follow some 12-step quitting program. A simple change in my environment made a world of difference.

See, your environment can either set you up for success or make it difficult or impossible to change your situation.

Creating an environment that helps you change for good involves changing the way you think as well as changing your physical and social environment.

Signal vs. Noise – How to Decide What’s Important Throughout the day, your mind is getting input from thousands of different sources.

Part of reinventing yourself is changing the way you think. To change the way you think, you can begin to think of your mind as a fortress.

If you allow too much garbage into your brain, it will block you from being creative enough to make breakthroughs in your experiments and follow through with the reinvention process.

If you feed your brain with healthy information, you’re planting seeds that will grow into ideas and connections you’ll be able to make in the future.

You can’t control all of the input, not even close, but you can begin to seek out the right information, while at the same time learning to distinguish between *signal and noise.*

“Trust none of what you hear, some of what you read, and half of what you see.” – Nassim Taleb It’s a bit ironic for me to quote someone saying trust “some of what you read,” *in a book that I want you to read*, but you should treat me and every other person in a position of “teacher,” “storyteller,” or “expert” with the same level of skepticism.

Everybody who shares information with you has an agenda. The noisemakers want to keep you blind to what’s important. They fill newspapers with fear-instilling headlines and sensationalized pieces.

Why do you think the news has the same amount of content every day? Is every day *equally newsworthy?* Of course not, but they need to make their advertisers happy, so they have to put *something out there* regardless of what it is.

The “old you,” was influenced by everyone. You were influenced by your upbringing, society, your friends, and the media into perhaps becoming somebody you didn’t really *want to be.* Now, you’re in the process of becoming the new you—the real you—but if you jump right back into the same social environment without changing your mindset, do you think you’ll be suddenly immune to influence?

You can’t get rid of your family members. If most people around you are still

following “society’s playbook,” you can’t get rid of everyone and isolate yourself.
You can’t live your life without any media stimulus.
What do you do to combat a social environment that’s dead set on keeping you the same? You develop a filter.
In the book *The 48 Laws of Power* by Robert Greene, law 38 is “Think as you like, but behave like others.”
When I discovered I wanted to do something unique with my life and follow the road less traveled, it was tempting to want to spout my new ideas to anyone who would listen.
I would share my unusual thoughts with my like-minded friends, but I kept quiet about my ideas for the most part.
As Greene says in the book, *“If you make a show of going against the times, flaunting your unconventional ideas and unorthodox ways, people will think that you only want attention and that you look down upon them.”*
Greene suggests it’s “*far safer to blend in and nurture the common touch.”*
The next time you’re in conversation with a group of friends and they’re sharing something that comes from a conventional viewpoint—the viewpoint we discussed earlier that keeps people stuck—remember the source of that viewpoint, dismiss it as noise, and move on.
When you read something in the news that doesn’t align with your new values, dismiss it as noise, and move on.
When you hear information from anyone, think about *what’s in it for them.*
Biases aside, there are real financial incentives for institutions wanting you to work a 9 to 5, take on tons of debt through student loans and mortgages, and avoid a route of entrepreneurship.
There are financial incentives to shun individualism, control what’s said in the news, and promote a certain way of living.
The script created after the Industrial Revolution that says, “Go to school, get good grades, get a nice job, buy a house, and have 2.5 kids,” *was created for a reason.* The motive wasn’t altruism.
I have a motive. Obviously, I want to sell books. I also want to open people’s eyes to what’s possible and shed light on their core beliefs so they can see the foundation of them.
Should everybody ditch their old lives and do their own thing? I have no idea.
I just want you to be able to look at your life and your decisions from multiple angles.
Your filter can be built with the following: • Values – If the new you values freedom, filter out “noise” concerning certainty, safety, and security. If the new

you values contentment, filter out “noise” concerning materialism or outward signs of success.

• Trading places – A simple and easy method of filtering noise is asking yourself, “Would I trade places with the person giving me this information?” If the answer is a resounding no, don’t listen to them. That doesn’t mean in terms of money, but in the direction their life is heading.

• Agenda – Ask yourself if the agenda of the person giving you information outweighs their interest in *your well-being.* Nine times out of ten it does, and thus is “noise.”

Your filter will help you navigate the parts of your environment you can’t control, but you can also change or get rid of parts of your environment altogether to aid you in your personal transformation.

Your filter is the foundation that keeps your vision clear, but there are other parts of your environment to keep an eye on too.

When you’re told how to change your life, you’re often told to “tough it out,” and “will your way to winning,” but what if willpower isn’t enough?

To make better decisions in the future, remember that each decision you make counts more than you think.

The Curious Case of Decision-Making In the book, *Willpower,* by psychologist Roy Baumeister, he presents some shocking and life-changing findings of judges and the time of day they give sentences to defendants.

The study showed that judges often gave lighter sentences in the morning and right after lunch. The judges also gave much harsher sentences as time wore on through the morning and throughout the day after they’d eaten.

Could the time of your court appearance *really mean* a difference in years of your life being taken away?

We know judges aren’t making rash decisions about their cases on purpose. We know they care, but according to studies from the likes of Baumeister and others, their decision-making muscles are simply *worn out* after a long day of deliberating.

When you start the day, your willpower/decision-making tank is full. Each time you make a decision, the reserves go down. You expend energy when making decisions, which explains why the judges went back to more careful discernment *right after lunch.*

Their glucose levels were restored along with their decision-making tank. The reserve then gets depleted again throughout the day.

There are two important lessons to learn here. One, if you’re facing jail time, tell your lawyer to get a morning appointment. Two, setting your life up a certain way *does influence* how you’ll behave.

How to Create a Bulletproof Environment Let's say the experiment you're working on involves serious thought like writing, creating art, or planning a new business idea.

Your mental energy is finite, so if you spend the beginning of your day focusing on trivial matters instead of getting *right to work*, how much brain power did you leave on the table?

Maybe your new routine involves getting up an hour earlier to make time for your side project. To make this new routine more effective, you can change parts of your environment to make the transition easier.

You can move your alarm across the room so you *have to stand up* to turn it off.

You can buy a coffee pot with a timed release that pours coffee the same time your alarm goes off.

You can prepare your workspace the night before, so in the morning you'll have an open laptop with notes prepared on top of a neatly arranged desk.

These changes seem subtle and small, but they can be the difference between making the transition you want and giving up.

The goal is to remove as many barriers as possible between you and the change you want to make.

You *already* have the Resistance waging a lifelong war with you, so any changes to your physical or social environment can give you the extra edge you need.

Whenever you think, "I want to change x," consider what stands in the way.

Usually, you're dealing with a three-headed monster—the Resistance, physical, and social environment. Plan for all three, because they'll hit you from every direction.

You can use my story as an example of how to change your environment.

Let's recap what I've told you so far. I was a serious pothead, a borderline alcoholic, suffered through depression, and was flat broke.

I got fed up with my life as it was and made the decision that I had to do *something.* I started my self-education through books and online programs, plus I started writing around the same time.

Throughout the process, I had many barriers to change, and some of those barriers led to setbacks.

I had people like my friend T in my life who *blatantly* tried to discourage me from changing. In his case, I totally removed him from my life. We had been friends for years and gone through a lot together, but the moment he tried to discourage me from pursuing my dream wasn't his first time being extremely negative, and I knew it wouldn't be his last. He had to go.

There was also the physical environment that fed into my vices. I stopped hanging out at bars and consequently got healthier and stopped smoking tobacco.

Instead of continuing to hang out with people who smoked weed 24/7, I spent more time by myself learning, and eventually, I made new friends.

The more I read and learned, the stronger my filter became. I always knew there was something *off* about society, and learning different ways of thinking helped me develop my own values and philosophy on life. I'm not saying they're unbiased or even right, but *they're mine.* In conversations with people who believed differently than me, I didn't waste time trying to convert them. I played my part and worked on my writing in silence.

Even now, I have changes I try to make, new paths I want to follow, and I'm constantly working on reinventing myself.

I let my health slip for a while, and now I'm making the transformation back into being fit. I don't keep junk food in the house. I use a calendar to mark off each day that I work out in my new program. I mark each day with an x, and it turns into a chain of x's. Now the chain is so long I don't want to break it.

Think about what used to stop the old you from changing, and seek to remove those barriers from your life. Don't try to fight resistance with one hand tied behind your back.

You've learned a lot so far. You went back into your past experiences and discovered the subtle stories the world tells you about yourself and the stories you tell yourself about yourself.

You have examined your past, considered the common stumbling blocks you have always run in to, but you have also forgiven yourself and accepted the things you've done.

You made the decision to *kill your old self* because it's a stronger metaphor than simply trying to change.

You're now in the phase of experimenting and playing around with different avenues you can follow. You're equipped with tools to make you build better habits and make better decisions. You know yourself *and* you know your enemy —the Resistance.

I've given you everything I know about personal transformation.

In the next few chapters, I'm going to talk about why the world we live in is built for you to succeed and leave you with some thoughts about how to approach the future.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • Rewards foster change better than goals do • Your environment has a large impact on your behavior • Much of what you see and hear is useless noise. Be more discerning about what you choose to accept and believe In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions/perform the following exercises: • Create prize statements to motivate you towards pursuing your new path or venture.

• What are some obvious negative actions or decisions you're going to avoid in the future?
• What are some changes you can make to your environment to help you create lasting change in your life?
• What are some actions you can take to develop a filter to help you designate between signal and noise?

Click here to download the chapter 8 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

9

STOP WAITING TO BE PICKED

When I think about what I'm doing now, I'm amazed.

When I was in high school or college, I never imagined I'd be able to impact thousands of people with nothing more than words. The dream lingered deep in my mind, but it never seemed like a *possibility.*

I was on the same track many of us followed—go to school, get good grades, find a nice job, and wait for the world to hand your happiness to you.

Then came a point—rather a series of points—where I realized that route wasn't for me. I had to reinvent myself to get here. To reinvent myself, I had to *bet on myself.*

The success fairy won't sneak into your bedroom in the middle of the night, sprinkle some magic dust, and give you the income and contentment you deserve.

You could wait for a promotion, a hit on the Lotto ticket, or a gatekeeper to validate your ideas and worth.

Or you could just get started and rely on the person who truly knows you best.

I wrote this book because I want you to become whatever version of yourself suits *you.*

I wanted you to let go of whatever stories and patterns you've developed in your mind to expose you to new opportunities.

You, yes you, can do *anything* you want. It's also okay to be scared the entire time.

I know how you feel. Each week feels like a tape playing itself and rewinding. You're not even necessarily living a *bad life,* but it's like you're screaming and no sound comes out. The combination of monotony and dull pain lingers while you wait for the gods of success to draw your name from a hat.

I can’t give you the entire blueprint for building a better future, but I can tell you what might happen if you keep waiting to be picked.

You’ll wait for the government to fix the economy, raise wages, and lower taxes. All the while, *your income* won’t change much because you’ll continue to do the same work.

You’ll wait for the perfect moment to write that book or start that side project—when your kids move out of your home, when you’re a little less busy, when your finances are where you want them to be, when the green light stares you directly in the face—and that perfect time will *never come.*

You’ll blink and years will have gone by. No doubt, you’ll be a different version of yourself. Time does that to you. But the transformation might have the opposite effect—a hardened heart, resignation, desperation, and repetition to the point of insanity.

Maybe you’ll have your pension money and a red Corvette, but by then it’ll be too late.

You’ll wait until next week, next month, or next year to improve the areas of your life you’ve procrastinated on for weeks, months, and years.

Maybe I’m wrong. Maybe if you let the powers that be decide *your fate*, they’ll do a good job. Your employer and the government will live up to their promises and yield to your requests.

Maybe you’ll improve those areas of your life eventually—on a whim—and it’ll all work out.

You’re the only one who can look in the mirror and decide whether I’m right or wrong.

What a Time to Be Alive We can 3-D print houses and human organs. I’m typing on a machine that sends signals out into space and communicates with anyone I want to reach with a click of a button. Technology has empowered us all and is the ultimate reinvention tool.

Go back a few hundred years and your life was pre-determined—a smith, a mason, a farmer.

Go back fifty years and once you chose you were set—the company man or the housewife.

Now, you can switch careers like you do underwear.

I had a friend who went to school for biology. He graduated and decided he didn’t want to pursue anything related to his major. He could’ve just given up and waited for some job to come fall into his lap, but he tried something different.

He looked at his interests and skills like we talked about earlier. He formed the hypothesis around becoming a web developer. He practiced and learned how to

code.
Now he works at a startup developing apps and has many other business ventures on the side.
He didn’t have to go back to school. He used the power of the Internet to find *free information*. Once he was proficient enough, he had the guts to apply for a job he wasn’t qualified for by conventional standards—and got it.
I have many author friends who have taken their love of writing, combined it with technology, and have made healthy incomes from their words.
I’ve met business owners who, with nothing more than a laptop, a bit of seed money, and some hustle, have made enough money to quit their jobs and do what they want.
I call this time the “excuse-free era,” because there’s so much opportunity out there if you open your eyes to it.
In my past, I had to get rid of my excuses, stop complaining about my circumstances, and do something different.
Although working as a manager at the video store gave me a sense of importance, it didn’t exactly stuff my bank account.
I took the job because I wanted to learn, become a better person, and a better leader.
I tried my best to work hard for the wages *I accepted* without complaining, but eventually, I had enough.
There was a Mexican fast food restaurant right by the video store. I’d go there for lunch or for dinner after work. One day, as I walked into the restaurant I saw a sign on the door saying, “Now hiring crew members.”
I won’t divulge the amount they paid, but it was the same amount I was getting paid for being a manager at the video store.
“Really?” I thought. “I’m busting my ass working at the video store and I could *make tacos* for the same amount of money?”
It didn’t seem fair. I was upset.
So, like a genius, I wrote an email to my regional manager spelling out exactly why I *deserved* to make more money. Let’s just say it didn’t work out the way I’d hoped.
When the regional manager came to visit my store, he complimented me for “having the balls,” to write such a brash email, but informed me that I wouldn’t be getting the raise I requested.
I pressed on—renting out DVDs with an insincere smile on my face—until I decided I wanted a better position.
I ended up working as a project manager at a web design company. It was great for a while. I had more money and more responsibility.

But I couldn't shake the nagging feeling that I was under *someone else's control.* I made more money, but the wages were still controlled by someone else. I had responsibility, but ultimately the boss would have the final say.

I was "secure," unless something happened to the economy or the business. My fate was in someone else's hands, and I also had dreams of creating something *for myself.*

Now, I make money with words.

There are many different areas you can focus on when it comes to reshaping your life—health, relationships, and mindset—but to me one of the most important is who's dictating the terms of your life.

This isn't *The Four-Hour Work Week.* I'm not saying you have to quit your job and start your own business. I'm simply suggesting you think about who you want to have control over your income.

Several studies have shown that once you reach a certain level of income—usually above poverty—increasing your income doesn't make you any happier.

I buy the legitimacy of these studies, but my thinking about money is a little bit different.

The *amount* of money you make doesn't matter, but the *way you make it* does.

For example, would you rather make $100,000 a year at a corporate job you despise or $70,000 a year doing something you enjoy like writing or making art?

Would the loss of $30,000 be worth doing something that provides meaning *and* gives you free time to spend with your family?

For many, it would.

The new era we're in gives us the opportunity to make an impact and an income doing what we *want to do.*

I wanted to write books and create services to help writers. I've done that. Nobody gave me permission. The income has its ups and downs but I have the power to grow my business.

I'm still working at my 9 to 5 job, and I enjoy the income I make from my side hustles more than the income I make working for someone else.

At the pace I'm going, I know I'll be free sooner rather than later. Once you know it's possible to choose yourself and you see a glimpse of what *could be*, you'll stay motivated to find your freedom.

I value freedom, and I have a sneaking suspicion you do too.

This isn't a business book. There are plenty available that offer better advice than I can.

I created this section because the work you do matters. The reinvention process covers any and every area of your life, but work is one of the most important areas.

Don’t Be Insane I’m seeing life from a different perspective than many people now. Most books you read are from somebody who’s already well-established. I’m writing a book about reinvention *during my own reinvention.*

The other perspectives you’ll run into often are people who will never take the leap to change their situation, and they’ll probably only offer advice that limits your thinking.

So, I’m in the middle, and my experiences have taught me this: *If you continue to wake up and go to that same mediocre job for the rest of your life while avoiding choosing yourself, you’ll regret it.*

If insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly expecting different results, most people are insane.

Don’t be insane.

I’m not pretending this *one book* will solve all your problems, but I want you to come back to it and remind yourself. You can always start over. You don’t have to let someone else have control over your life.

Key Takeaways and Exercises • We’re living in the most prosperous time in human history • Technology has leveled the playing field in areas such as skill acquisition and entrepreneurship • You have no excuses for not living the life you want In your downloadable end of chapter worksheet, or on pen and paper, answer the following questions/perform the following exercises: • Provide a few examples that show how technology has made achieving success easier • Provide examples of people succeeding in the new economy that inspire you • What excuses can you no longer make given the times we’re living in?

Click here to download the chapter 9 worksheet including examples for answers to each of the above questions and exercises.

10

PIVOT, QUIT, OR START OVER

My favorite books are the ones I want to re-read. I think of a good book as a friend. A good book sits patiently while you live your life, and it's right there when you need it again.

That's what I want this book to be for you.

A book can only give you so much insight and advice. For the advice to work for you in your real life, you have to take it to heart and put it into action.

I said earlier in the book I'd never pressure you and tell you what to *have to do.* I'll hold to that promise. This book was meant to provide a door for you to walk through. You can take the advice or leave it.

The best part about this book and the reinvention process, in general, is that you always have the chance to revisit and start over.

Most books will attempt to give you the magic recipe for success—*5 easy steps for success.* I know and you know life doesn't work that way.

Life kicks you in the ass. Life hits crescendos of beauty and falls into somber tones.

Throughout your life, you'll be faced with the choice to change, resist change, or start over completely.

So what do you do?

You navigate the situation as best you can. There are subtle differences between when it's a good idea to persist, to pivot in a new direction, quit for good, or to go back to the drawing board.

Your tendency will be to quit. We often try new things and give up on them easily. I want to challenge you to recognize the right decision—not the one that makes you feel good and lets you off the hook—the one that gives you the best chance of living the way you want to live in the long-term.

How to Know If You Should Quit or Not This book shouldn't have been my second book. I was working on another one before I started writing this one.

The writing process was going well. I hit my daily word count and breezed through the chapters. But something didn't *feel right.* It felt too much like I was forcing the words to come out on the page. I didn't feel like I had a firm grasp on what I wanted the book to be about or if I had enough knowledge to write it at the time.

I wrote about two-thirds of what could've been a book and stopped. I was frustrated with it and wanted to go in a new direction.

Writing a book is *never easy*, but the process of writing this one was a better fit.

This situation perhaps would've turned out terrible for a lot of other writers. They would've hit the wall, figured they didn't have what it takes, and quit entirely.

Fortunately for me, I'm so committed to being a writer that quitting doesn't appear to be an option anymore.

Instead, when I hit a wall, I take a hard look at what's ahead of me and make my best decision at the time. I can't be certain I'm right, but none of us can. The only thing we can do is trust our decision, and more importantly, make one so that we can move in a direction—*any direction.*

For this situation, I decided to go back to the drawing board. I felt the project itself wasn't going anywhere, but I still believed in my writing ability and the idea that I could work on something else.

Earlier in the book, we talked about starting an experiment. I suggested 66 days based on the research of habit formation. If you give your experiment *that long* and it doesn't feel right at all—not because it's difficult or frustrating—then it's okay to quit.

The idea of quitting being okay is something that doesn't get mentioned often.

Oftentimes you're told to "push through no matter what!" Some scenarios aren't worth pushing through. Sometimes it's just better to start over.

I like to think of my life as a series of projects. I don't know what I'll work on next, but I do know there will be times when a project seems promising but I'll end up scratching it.

I've come to accept there's nothing wrong with that. The whole process of reinventing yourself is fluid. You can change your mind as many times as you want. I just suggest doing so under some careful consideration.

Don't Move Your Pivot Foot In basketball, you're allowed to move your body into different positions to try to get a good shot off, if you keep *one foot—your pivot foot*—stationary.

Usually the "big man," gets the ball in the post—near the basket—and will make

multiple post moves to get an open look at the basket.

My description of post moves don't do them justice. The most skilled players in the world can make *dozens* of different moves, without moving their pivot foot.

You, too, can make several "moves," in your life, but the longer you keep your metaphorical pivot foot planted, the higher your chances of success.

Let me explain.

Let's use the example of careers, vocations, and projects to illustrate. Once you've experimented to the point where you have a good idea of what you'd like to do, you have room to navigate within that area of expertise.

Robert Greene, the author of five mega-bestselling books, discussed this path in a TED Talk he gave.

He had the vague idea of wanting to be a writer, but he didn't know what to write about.

He was a journalist for a while. He wrote screenplays for Hollywood studios. He wrote novels and short stories that never got finished.

Robert bounced around in the field of writing for years before coming up with the idea for his first book, *The 48 Laws of Power.*

He was having a conversation with a book packager who asked him if he had any good ideas for a book.

Suddenly, he felt a flash of inspiration and everything seemed to click. He noticed the phenomenon of people around him trying to play games with one another to earn power and told the packager this would be the book he wanted to write.

The rest is history. The book went on to sell millions of copies and now Greene is known as one of the greatest living authors.

What's the moral of this story? *Pivoting allows you to accumulate skills over time.*

Robert worked dozens of odd jobs but always worked on his writing. His writing was his true experiment, and although he bounced around from subject to subject *within writing*, he always wrote.

Had he gone from writing to painting to play directing to brick and mortar business to inventing, he wouldn't have accumulated the skills he needed to write his bestselling book.

If you give yourself enough time to get good at something, you'll feel passionate about it *and* you'll have the skills you need to make a real impact.

You can *decide* you want to start an online business, but the process from a to z can take years. You can decide you want to be a writer, but you *will* go through headaches and hiccups along the way.

I pivot between subjects, ideas, and style all the time. But I write because I'm a

writer. Once you've found *that thing*, it's time to settle in and employ some patience.

Quitter!

Reinvention is about starting over and taking a new direction, right? So, what makes it any different from quitting?

I have forgotten where I have read it, but there's a quote that says something like, "There's a difference between being broke and being poor. Broke is a circumstance and poor is an identity."

There's nothing wrong with enduring setbacks and feeling like you *want to give up*.

My only fear for you—and for so many other people I've observed—is that you give up for good.

I've had times where I've needed a "siesta," from writing. I'll take a day, a week, or a month off if need be. I struggle with my own workout routines and eating right, but I know it's a battle worth fighting for repeatedly.

What I do my best to avoid is the state of *resignation*—where dreams go to die, and limiting beliefs get set in stone.

All judgment aside, I believe people who go to work at jobs they hate every day, run on life's treadmill of disappointment, and don't make steps to change their situation have *given up on life.*

They're alive. They breathe air. They might even consider themselves happy. But they are bored, the life they lead is repetitive.

Living this way doesn't seem *bad.* It just seems dull.

I believe we'd all try to change our lives if we believed it was possible. Some of us just don't. Some of us are so far gone we're unreachable.

Fortunately, *you're not one of those people.*

I know this because you're reading this book right now. You want change. You want to let go of your bullshit and become a better version of yourself.

You *can* and will. Just remember you can always go back to square one or change directions as long as you don't quit.

Key Takeaways

• It's important to know when to pursue further or when to quit. Oftentimes, the answer is pursuing further, but there are rare cases where a path leads to nowhere. Exhaust your options before calling it quits.

• The longer you remain in one general area of expertise, the higher your chances of success.

• The only absolute death to your dreams is quitting on your life altogether.

11

REINVENT FOR LIFE

Life has a way of turning stale. No matter your lot in life, there will come a time where you're stuck in a rut, losing your passion, and are in desperate need of change.

The power of reinvention *isn't just* important for when you're down and out. It also works well when you're simply bored or have conquered the challenges you wanted to conquer.

Throughout our lives, many of us cling to what's familiar. "The devil you know is often better than the one you don't," some would say. But others would say "familiarity breeds contempt," and the minute you start to feel *too comfortable* it's time for a change.

I'm not sure how you feel, but I don't believe we were put on this earth strictly to be happy and serve ourselves. I believe we were put here to be useful, contribute, and get the most out of whatever talents and skills we were gifted.

My goal in my life is to continue to reinvent myself when necessary to blaze new paths, do more cool stuff, and discard any version of myself that doesn't serve myself or the world.

Back when I was depressed, I could've resigned myself to living the same way forever. For a while, it seemed like the road of familiarity would be one I'd travel down for the rest of my life.

I was weak, tired, and *useless.*

I'm thankful for the people in my life that pointed me in the right direction.

For my friend who gave me an opportunity, believed in me, and helped me kick off my writing career. For my wife, who dealt with my neuroticism and obsession long enough to let me build something substantial.

If it wasn't for them, I don't know where I'd be right now or what I'd be doing. I

had people in my life to shine a light on what I *could be.* They saw in me what I couldn't see in myself.

Now, I want to be that person for *you.*

I don't pretend that my strategies are foolproof. I won't even pretend that my little book will do *everything* for you, but my story tells me that anybody can rid himself or herself of the person they once were and become a new and improved version.

We've covered techniques to help you reshape the negative stories you tell yourself *about yourself* and about the world.

We've talked about the importance of decision-making, willpower, and habits—how they're difficult to change but once changed will transform you.

We've talked about creating an environment—the right people, places, and systems—that lessens the friction of your transition.

Techniques, strategies, and tips are great, but none will work unless they're backed by something deep inside you.

It's time to listen to the little voice in your mind or your heart that's been telling you for *years* what it wants.

It's time to hit bottom, surrender, and *let go* of who you think you're supposed to be, what you're supposed to do, and what you're supposed to have. For the briefest of moments, you're dead—you have no job, you have no dreams, you're just blank.

Then you can start fresh and begin to put your inner voice's directions into action.

The Magic of Reinvention I still screw up *a lot.* I'm not always one hundred percent productive. I fall into ruts in my career, my health, my relationships, and all other areas.

My "trick" that keeps me going and allows me to keep stepping up to the plate to try again is the idea of reinvention.

When I fail to follow through with something, I reinvent. It sounds a lot like persistence, but it doesn't feel that way to me.

To me, the idea of persistence and grit come with an undertone of beating yourself up, pushing until you break, and carrying all your failures with you.

I want you to be light, agile, and come to each new challenge with a certain sense of freshness.

The difference between people who reinvent and those who keep setting goals, failing and repeating the cycle—all the while feeling pain—is simple.

People who reinvent *aren't keeping score of their past.* They genuinely believe they're a different person because the person they used to be couldn't possibly take a new path.

I wasn’t always a good person. I used to be a *bad person* in every sense of the word.

That person is dead and gone. His memory still resides in the back of my mind sometimes, but I carry none of his weight in my present.

The Moment After Closing This Book When you finish a book like this, you usually feel amped up. You tell yourself you’re going to follow all the advice to the tee, and your life will be changed forever.

Then it doesn’t.

I guarantee you’ll have multiple stops and starts along the way, which is why I want you to keep this book handy.

Go back to the chapter you need to read most. Use it as a reference to start your new experiments, ventures, and ideas.

Right now, before you close this book and get work, give yourself permission to fail and start over. If you don’t, you’ll end up kicking yourself for reading another self-help book and failing to use the advice.

It’s okay.

That’s why books like these exist.

Until next time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Since this is a self-published book, I'm not going to refer to myself in the third person like a weirdo.

I'm just a guy who likes to write—not a Nobel prize winning economist, PhD psychologist from Harvard, or a *New York Times* Journalist. As you've heard in my story, I discovered a passion for writing a few years ago, and I haven't looked back since.

I write because I feel like I was designed to write. It didn't feel like much of a choice once I discovered it. Am I a *great author* yet? I wouldn't say that. But I am not naturally better at anything else, so writing is what I'm going with.

I also have a lot to say. I believe in the power of seemingly ordinary people doing extraordinary things. I believe life is too short to not even try to make the dreams in your mind a reality.

I mean, seriously, you have nothing to lose. You're going to die soon and nothing you do technically matters because in a real relative sense you're already kind of dead when you put your life in the scope of an endless universe.

So, until I'm *really dead*, I will keep writing about what I'm interested and share my thoughts with anyone who's willing to read them.

I am honored that you not only chose to buy my book, but read it to the end. I feel like we have a bond now. Somewhere in your house or on your screen is a book with my name on it.

That's *pretty cool to me.*

Also, if you enjoyed the book, please consider heading to amazon.com, typing in the title of this book, and

leaving a review. I’d sincerely appreciate it.

 @Ayothewriter

www.ayothewriter.com
ayodejiawosika@gmail.com