

SUCCESS

isn't ahead of you
it is within you

a personal guide

**THE SCRIPT
FOR DVD DISCS
One, Two & Three**

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DVD DISC ONE

CHAPTER 1:

WELCOME

“The first step to becoming a better anything is working on becoming a better person.”

What you are about to see is a series of Video Monologues that have taken me a lifetime to learn and almost as long to be able to pass along as a writer and speaker.

My aim in this effort is straight forward. It is to help you make your life better, sooner. And in doing so honoring my mission statement is to be a source of strength to others.

While none of us ever became a better anything who wasn't working on being a better human being, this is not another course in self-help or inspiration, although, hopefully you will find a little of both in our time together.

Additionally and fundamentally, what I hope you will also come away with is the understanding that the bottom line in life isn't about our net worth but our self worth and one doesn't necessarily need to be accomplished at the expense of the other.

Most of us don't lack for the information to get where we want to go in life but for the character to act on the information at hand.

Consequently this is an effort to be an ally in your character development as much as to lend you the information lent to me, so your life's journey might be great. Where is the wisdom in wanting less?

Now I invite your company, your courage, your character, your humility, your time, your heart, and your sense of humor to join me going forward.

And I pray that God's grace will watch over us, so we might together go from strength to strength and be a source of strength to others.

Onward!

CHAPTER 2:

ALL BEGINNINGS ARE FRAGILE

“Every great adventure begins with a farewell.”

My name is Noah benShea and I have been waiting for you. I've been waiting for you because we have a journey to take, a journey to take together.

It's taken me a lifetime of learning and life to be your ally on this journey and my single hope is to be of service. Perhaps consider what I'm going to share with you, the rules of the road.

While we all count and count on each other, on this journey you matter a great deal more than I do.

Thanks for taking this time, this moment with me. Time is precious. We are like the dew drying on the morning grass.

Unfortunately too many of us live our lives as if we had another one in the bank, I wouldn't bank on it.

The journey to greatness is not a public journey. While others may come to perceive you as great, getting there is a private matter.

The journey to greatness is a contract between you and you. A contract you have long promised yourself, to make your life better.

And every great adventure begins with a farewell. So as we begin, be prepared to say goodbye to being less than you might yet be.

The journey to greatness is an ancient and sacred pilgrimage. You are neither the first to arrive nor the last to set out. Many have come before and many will follow.

And though the journey to greatness is a path for everyone, on the path you will be alone. Even as this is a path that opens to all and

invites all, it remains individuated in its experience.

My friend your experience on this journey belongs to you and is unique to you, because greatness is never an act of imitation.

Greatness is not someplace you get to, but how you travel.
Greatness is not something that is achieved and accomplished and put away like a well read book on a distant shelf.
Greatness is a dynamic pulsing process in a dynamic pulsing world.

Great men and women can at the drop of a hat achieve failure, just as any of us in our darkest hour can wake to discover ourselves a glorious reflection of a divine light.

The journey to greatness is the journey of a lifetime. And is a 24-7 365 no holds barred experience of a lifetime. On our journey together we will pass through many doors of perception and understanding. Each door we will pass through is a reflective opportunity and a living workbook tailored to you.

The integrity of this effort is marked only by the integrity of your reflection. If you face these ideas with courage and answer your inner questions with honesty and humility, you will make yourself a better ally to yourself. And that's as good as any of us can do.

Until we meet again and each time after we meet I will leave you with a question that I'd like you to think about. Here's the question I pose to you now: "Does the idea of changing your life for the better scare you in some way about what you may be leaving behind?"

Remember there's no right answer. And no one else need know or judge your answer. This however is the abiding truth. All self transformation requires self witnessing and while life is not a trial, like all witnesses, self witnessing also requires us to tell ourselves the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Honor that and you will honor you.

CHAPTER 3:

THE RULES OF THE ROAD

“The pursuit of success is its own success.”

I am glad to have your company on the journey to greatness. The rules of the road continue

Most of us have been raised to believe that greatness is a race to someplace always just ahead of us. Greatness however is not ahead of you but within you and asks only that you bring the character to reach for it.

Greatness asks only to be appreciated and pursued, and it will fall into your grasp. The pursuit of greatness is its own victory, and if you feel that either the courage or the wisdom to do this has eluded you until now, do not worry. Your time is at hand.

Greatness is not measured by your influence on history or on the masses, or even how many people are following you or are “friends” in a variety of social media. That is a reflection of power and popularity, not greatness, and gets confused only in a society or among historians sold on presuming that power and popularity are a measure of greatness.

People without power still have the power to be great, even as those with power can be a long day’s journey from great. Indeed, true greatness is how those with power treat those without power. And the bottom line on popularity is learning the power of “one.” Any one who makes peace with themselves has triumphed over the anguish of feeling less.

During our time together, greatness, you will discover, is not an alien planet. It is your home planet. The discomfort we feel when we are less than our best is our discomfort at the dissonance from the natural greatness of who we are.

Envision the journey to greatness as a welcome-home party where **you** have been waiting for **you**. This is your ride, your victory parade, your triumph of you. So stick around. And oh yeah, we're going to have some fun, because nothing, absolutely nothing feels better than feeling better.

By the way, if you're wondering what to wear on this journey, why not wear a warm heart and an open mind.

Each time after we meet, I will have something I'd like you to think about and this question is for you:

"Does the prospect of seeing yourself as great frighten you or invite you?"

There is no right answer to the question I leave you with, and no one else is to know or judge. Honor that and you will honor you.

CHAPTER 4:

YOU MATTER!

“A window is also a mirror.

It allows us to look at the world

and see ourselves.”

Nice to see you. And even though we aren't exactly sitting next to each other, it's also true that: A friend is someone who allows you distance but is never far away.

On our journey to greatness, while many people will be accessing these messages, no two of you will have the same experience. The reason for this has less to do with the learning and everything to do with the receptor: you. Our view of the world is always through our lens of who we are. To get a better view of the world, we have to clean our windows, and remember that a window is also a mirror. It allows us to look at the world and see ourselves.

During our time together I hope you will know me as your guide through way stations of understanding, and as a friend reminding you that while we are all alone, we are all alone together. But a word of warning on the journey to greatness: If you snooze you lose. You can't buy greatness. But you will pay for being less. And what is always true is that you either you pay attention or you will pay later.

A good excuse is just that. Too many of us suffer from “could be” or “would be” paralysis.” Many of us are convinced that if only we could, we would be great. Now, right now it is time to set aside this self-contagion. Excuses enslave rather than emancipate us.

If you are ready to set aside the elixir of excuses here is the truth: There is nothing more challenging in life than daring to be who you are no greater opportunity than daring to be who we might yet become.

If you will not be self-liberating, odds are some part of you is self-enslaving.

Now is the time to spend less time focusing on achieving something and more time on becoming someone.

Here's another way to think about that. In all of us there are three us. The you, you want others to see. The you, of how you think others see you. And the you, you are. But, only the last you is you. And that's who I hope I am talking to. That's who I hope is listening.

Your capacity to be great may be bruised by time, events, and the opinion of others but is bounded only by your spirit's intention.

Spirit to spirit I invite you to continue with me on this journey. And by the way, since we live on a planet spinning in space at 1070 miles an hour there's no way to get off. So let us carry on, let us go from strength to strength, and be a source of strength to others.

Little serves our strength like being honest with ourselves. And to that end, I have a question for you think on until we meet again: Our ability to love another is premised on our ability to love ourselves. Have you made peace with this or does some part of you still hold this truth to be selfish?"

CHAPTER 5:

BE A DREAMER

BUT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

FOR WHAT YOU ARE DREAMING

“Of all the things you can make in life

remember you make a difference.”

The great philosophers remind us that life is lived forwards and understood backwards. Mark Twain liked to say that good judgment comes from experience and experience is what comes from bad judgment. Unfortunately while experience can be a great teacher the tuition is your life. This means that the challenge for all of us in a life is to cut the tuition on the learning curve not only for ourselves, but also for our children, and as an act of civilized caring for the world we live in. To that end, this series on success is intended to make your life better sooner.

What I am sharing with you has taken me a lifetime to learn. Some I have come to through study and observation, and just as much through life and living and life's inevitable hard knocks. But John Wayne got it right, life is tough and tougher when you're stupid. So again, my purpose here and now and in our series of meetings is to pass along to you information and understandings to make your life better sooner.

As we target what we want from our lives, some of us are habitually ready, fire, aim. Some of us never get past ready, ready, ready.

Without a target, our chances of successfully missing what we want in life dramatically increases.

General Eisenhower liked to say, “Plans almost never work, but planning always helps.”

On the journey to success you are the archer, the arrow, and the arrow. Draw your bow and aim you to be what you want.

Of all the things you can make in life, remember you make a difference.

Some day is no day.

Even a calendar knows its days are numbered.

Refuse to any longer put off on the promises you made to your self under a summer moon when you were young and life was full of promise.

Whatever work is in your life, your full time work now is the work of pre-visioning reality into reality.

If you are a dreamer your work now is to be a dreamer taking responsibility for what you are dreaming.

And if you will open your mind, if you will unlock your heart's passion, I promise you, you will take you there.

Before we leave, I have a question for you think on until we meet again. Remember, this question is for you. There is no right answer, and no one else is to know or judge.

Henry Kissinger wrote that a problem avoided is a crisis invented. Is there something, no matter how small, that you have on the back burner that threatens to boil over in your life for lack of attention?

CHAPTER 6:

BEATING YOURSELF UP

IS NOT AN ACT OF CHARACTER

“Don’t let the past

kidnap your future.”

It’s good to be here with you. I hope you have been good to you.

Some of us were raised to think that beating ourselves up for something we have done or failed to do is an act of character. I want to repeat this because it is as sad as it is true. Some of us were raised to think that beating ourselves up for something we have done or failed to do is an act of character.

Holding ourselves accountable is very different from holding ourselves back. Thinking you will amount to nothing is best way to achieve just that. What people think they can and can’t do usually and dramatically influences the result. You don’t have to be a social scientist to know that negatively reinforcing yourself is not the best way to achieve the positive.

Some of us never achieve greatness because we have, or feel we have, previously let ourselves or others down. What a downer. What a sadness it is to remain down because we have fallen down. What sadness it is, not only for our own lives but also for the lives we are passing to our children as their emotional inheritance or infectiously handing to others.

I once asked a friend of mine named Ram Dass, who had been a colleague of Timothy Leary’s and the Turn On Drop Out 60’, if he still did drugs. He answered, “You don’t have to get high, you just have to stop doing the things that bring you down. “

We have all at some point been less than we might be. Those of us with an absolutely clear conscience are most likely those of us with a bad memory. What is worth remembering is that we all have the capacity to be better than we have been—and have no right to be in denial of this truth or think that it diminishes us. The actor Paul Muni liked to say, “A man who never made a mistake never made anything.”

Hope for the best and make peace with the rest.

Embrace your best and peace will come to rest in you.

Those who always need to be right are usually wrong.
Those who cannot forgive themselves cannot forgive others.
Do not allow your past to kidnap your future.

Before we leave, here is my going away question present.
There is no right answer, and no one else is to know or judge your answer but the question is yours.

“What is something that is, in some way, emotionally holding you up in the past and robbing you of your present? What is a stumbling block in the past that you keep tripping over?”

Think about it. Promise me that. Promise yourself.

CHAPTER 7:

BABY STEPS, BABY STEPS

“In seeds there are orchards.”

There's a story in the news about a man with terrible eating habits who lost 250 pounds. How did he do it? He began by simply taking one French-fry a day off his plate. Taking small steps can be a great leap forward.

There is an old story about a king who wanted to reward a trusted servant with anything the man might request. The servant did not ask for gold or diamonds but only that one grain of rice be put on the first square of a chess board, two on the second square, four on the third square, and so on, doubling the number of grains on each square of the board. This simple request, readily accepted by the king, gave the servant all the rice in the kingdom.

In every moment is the seed of orchards but too often we dismiss the opportunity of a moment. Scientifically the reason we do this is because neuroscientists in studying the human brain have witnessed that we are inclined to think in generalities even as we live in the now's emotional moments. Generalities may give us a handle but life is digested in the details, one moment at a time. Do not dismiss any moment as the moment that cannot change your life. An eternity is any moment opened with patience. Life is an orchard and every moment is filled with the seeds of opportunity.

Any of us can look at a moment and laugh at ourselves for thinking this fleeting instant can be the catalyst to greatness. And yet, any of us can move mountains if we move one rock at a time.

Any of us can achieve greatness, not by diminishing the challenge of this opportunity, but by taking one step at a time, one day at a time.

The average child will fall 300 times before he or she learns to walk. In order to run after greatness you have to learn to stand on your own two feet.

Here is a meditation for getting wherever you want to go. Imagine, and imagination is its own magic, imagine that we live on a ball spinning in space. Amazingly enough, as it turns out that is where we live.

To make progress you don't have to walk uphill. All you have to do is lift your feet and keep your balance and let the ball move forward under you feet.

As the Taoist masters would teach: "Ride the horse in the direction it is going."

Before we leave, here is today's question stepping up to meet you. It is your question, your learning.

Learning to jog is about learning to find your pace in life. Have you found your pace, or are you still chasing someone who looks to be beating you, or running from something that seems to be gaining on you?

Think about it. Be honest with yourself. The truth of self-witnessing is a key.

CHAPTER 8:

STRESS

***“If you check your baggage
but are still holding claim checks
it’s still your baggage.”***

The number 1 illness in the world is depression.
The number 1 reason for depression is stress.
The number 1 stress is when we try to control what is out of our control.
We are not in control of what the world delivers to our door.
We are in control of our response.
Respond don’t react.

Unfortunately for too many of us, when we’re in an insecure place anger is the first emotion we pull from our closet. Anger is insecurity worn inside out. When we get insecure on the inside, we quite often become angry on the outside.

Every disease has its basis in a state of dis-ease. If your life is in a state of dis-ease, a disease is being nurtured.

The difference between neurosis and psychosis is that neurotic dream of castles in the sky and psychotics move in. Neurosis is choosing to do what is familiar but negative over what is healthy but new. Put aside any habits for the night or a week, and they are not gone. They are merely resting from their labors, waiting for us to slack in our new habits.

In all of our closets are emotional hand me downs that have been passed between generations and previous relationships. On any day of the week, at any moment in the day, check to see what emotions you are wearing.

And here's a warning fellow travelers:

If you check your baggage but are holding claim checks it's still your baggage.

Though our journey is more beginning than over, there will come a time when you feel you have finished our journey together and are about to begin a new journey in your personal or professional life. At precisely that time take the time to take another look at our steps along the way. See this as a way of reviewing—even as you think you have moved on—what baggage you still might be carrying, what baggage you are still holding claim checks for, and what baggage, at this time in your life, you might want to finally leave behind in order to, finally, more effectively move ahead.

You've only been given two arms.

If you're still hugging the past you can't embrace the future.

Think of greatness as a lover waiting for your arrival and wondering what's been keeping you. Keep in mind that the most profound sadness in life is not for great love lost but for great love not yet found.

When your courage faces trials or fails, remember this:

None of us has ever found our way who has not felt lost.

And when despair threatens hold close to this truth to find cheer:

All of us are people with lanterns who too frequently spend our days going in search of the light.

And here is a question for your take away from our time today. It is for you, about you, and hopefully asking yourself this question will ring a bell in your sacred soul's valley:

The next time someone or something does something or says something that makes you crazy angry, confused, or hurt, ask yourself if you are going to react or respond.

Our journey together is now ready to move into another gear. Plan that from this point in our work together we will be picking up both focus and speed. But you are ready. You were born ready because at your core you are great.

CHAPTER 9:

DOORS

“Doors are holes we cut in our walls.”

The journey to greatness is just that, a journey. To achieve your aims on this journey, you will pass through the many doors of awareness or as Huxley called them “doors of perception.”

Each door leads into a new chapter in our conversation and a new chapter in your life because you will have a clearer understanding on the fundamental issues in life that play behind the scenes in your drama no matter what you are doing in your life.

From here on, each conversation we have on this journey will lead into another and another and into you. The doors you pass through will also offer you a path past the previous emotional and intellectual boundaries of who you were and where you were perhaps trapped without your knowledge or intention.

Some of the things you hear me say, you will process with great familiarity, facility and velocity and yet on the other side of some of these doors you will want to or need to pause and stop and think, think about who you are where you are in your life.

I have long said that you better like your strengths because you are going to pay for them. And since every strength in our lives has a shadow side, and every weakness is a strength waiting to be discovered, the perceptions you pass through will play different roles at different times in your life. The role of honesty, love, and faith, for example, can certainly have different meanings to us at different times in our life.

As we take this journey, I will also stop from time to time and ask you, as I have in the past, to stop for a moment and think on a question because all self-transformation requires self-witnessing.

Greatness isn't a life absent of obstacles but how we deal with them, how we perhaps created them.

Greatness is when we turn our stumbling blocks into building blocks.

Strength is not the absence of weakness but how you wrestle with your weaknesses.

Do not be confused by where anyone else might think you are on your journey to greatness. Everyone is on their own journey, and their stuff is not your stuff.

No matter where you stop on your journey, the first person you will meet will be yourself. Though all beginnings are fragile it matters less where you begin and more that you begin.

The only difference between a house and a coffin is a door. A door is a hole we cut in our walls.

Cut doors in your walls and greatness will find you. Greatness is not in hiding. Your ability to access greatness is Omni-present, it is everywhere, available at any moment.

Greatness will knock on your door. When it does, make sure you are listening, and make sure to answer your door, and invite greatness in. In doing so you will be inviting the best in you into you.

The only truth you find on the tops of mountains is the honesty you bring with you.

Have patience, what is great in you isn't done with you yet, and has never given up hope in you. Find hope and hope will find you.

Hurry back, slowly, the best is yet to come.

CHAPTER 10:

FAITH

“Put your faith and not your fears in charge.”

In all of our lives there inevitably comes a time, at any age, when we are riddled with self doubt and fears about “making it” or the anxiety of “losing it” or worse yet, “losing our way” after we’ve made it. For some of us this is the malaise of every day for others this it is as simple as waking up some morning convinced we’ve blown it. This is just as true for people who run huge corporations as it is for entrepreneurs, just as true in our 5-9 lives as it is in our 9-5 lives, and just as true in our 20’s as it is after 60.

The challenge of KEEPING THE FAITH is a challenge:

- With your work
- With your self
- With your employees
- With your partner
- With your children
- With your parents
- With your spirit.
- With your dream!

So, here are 3 action insight notes for keeping the faith.

- 1) Fears have only the power we give them.
- 2) When we refuse to address our fears, we give them our address.
- 3) A great person is anyone who is making an effort to be a better person.

Doubt and fear are not to be denied. They are the sacred soil where the heroism of humility finds seed.

And while our work together may lend you a hand on the journey to greatness, in the end it is you who are going to have to lend yourself a hand—and give yourself a hand when you deserve it.

Remember this, if you can put yourself down, you can lift yourself up.

Great men and women experience doubt all the time and are greater for it. If you want to know how they cope with these doubts and fears, perhaps think about it this way:

Imagine your life as a wagon filled with everything you represent. To pull that wagon through life, you are going to need horses. Now imagine that your fears and your faith are the horses you can call on. Of course, all of us have more fears than faith, so let us say we have eleven horses of fear and only one horse of faith. If we put any of the horses of fear at the head of the team, they will be hesitant to lead, unsure of their capacity, afraid they will not be able to do what is expected of them. And your wagon won't go anywhere. But if you put the one single horse of faith at the head of the team, the horses of fear will follow. In fact, our fears, when led by our faith, will provide the strength to pull our wagon. The challenge for all of us is to put our faith and not our fears in charge.

What we assume we can do is often conditioned by what others have convinced us we can do—and not do. Achieving greatness is no different.

Dr. Roger Bannister was the first man to break the four-minute-mile barrier and had this to say of his great achievement: “Doctors and scientists said that breaking the four-minute mile was impossible, that one would die in the attempt. Thus, when I got up from the track after collapsing at the finish line, I figured I was dead.”

The challenge in all of our lives is put our faith and not our fears in charge. The challenge question I leave you with today requires you to have the faith to ask yourself this:

When you were a kid, what did you most doubt about yourself?

How did you come to this doubt?

Has this doubt served you, or have you served it?

And how would you counsel or advise someone else you saw exhibiting this same kind of doubt?

Faith is a verb. Keep the faith.

And remember this old adage: An army of sheep led by a lion will defeat an army of lions led by a sheep.

DVD DISC TWO

CHAPTER 11:

OBSERVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

“All self-transformation requires self-witnessing.”

The door we are going to pass through today on the Journey to Greatness is: Observation and Self-Witnessing.

The next time you look yourself over; think about what you are overlooking.

To see wisdom we have only to go in search of our blindness.

To see the path ahead on the journey to greatness requires that we observe the world and ourselves but not in that order.

“There ain’t no way to find out why a snorer can’t hear himself snore,” said Mark Twain.

No matter what we think we are looking at, what we are watching is our mind.

We don’t see the world as it is but as we are.

Churchill once said, “When you find yourself going through hell, keep going.”

But a fool is someone who when they don’t know where they are going redoubles their effort.

What we see in life usually has a lot to do with what we’ve been looking at. Or need to see. Or want to see. Or presume to see. Charlie Chaplin once won third prize in a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest.

Past ideas, feelings, and ways of looking at the world color what we see. But if we take the time to learn from how we've looked at things in the past, the past does not have to be a prologue to the future.

Until we are prepared to take a real look at ourselves, what we see when we're looking at others is our avoidance. And sometimes the only thing worse than a bad mirror is a good one.

Every season in every department store window they change the clothing on the mannequins but underneath the same dummies remain.

Don't be confused that you've changed just because you've changed how you look

It isn't that the acceptance and opinions of others doesn't matter, but what matters most is self-acceptance. Until we are self-accepting, we cannot be other-accepting. If you are chasing the carrot at the end of someone else's stick, you will eventually discover you've been wasting a lot of your life because the bigger the carrot, the longer that stick.

Wherever you are on your journey, observe what is the best in you because the best in you is hoping to get your attention and intention.

Wherever you are on your journey to greatness, witness that small, still voice that is calling to you, has been calling to you, has been hoping to get your attention even as the shouts of momentary lust threaten to seduce your call to greatness.

Greatness is less often fireworks in your life and more often about quieting yourself. Only a quiet pond paints an honest picture. The commitment to greatness is most often made in the quiet of one's being. The writer Virginia Woolf got it right: If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people.

Here is something for you to think about, quietly honestly :

When you look at things, what is the general perspective (for example: caution, doubt, or hope) you are coming from? What is the mind-set you most often bring to your way of looking at the world?

Where did you get this? From your parents? From your church? From your fears? From your experience? How does this perspective serve you? Or you serve it?

Most of us don't look at things honestly because we are afraid we won't like what we see. Sadly that also means that too often we don't see the best in us. See you soon.

CHAPTER 12:

HABITS

***“Don’t assume that old habits
are necessarily old friends.”***

Habits are a sword that cut both ways. If you’re not in the habit of making progress in your life then it’s a pretty good bet that in some way your habits are holding you back.

At the same time, the most curious thing about habits is that as much as they drive us crazy, they also drive us, and allow us to shortcut our mind’s decision-making process.

Often in life, what serves us can also enslave us. And habits are a little of both.

Some of us, either by nature or nurture are much more committed to habits than others. Some of us have a habituated personality and are especially vulnerable to alcoholism, drug addiction, overeating, over-functioning, or betting that we have no bad habits.

We, as a species, have habits because we are biologically wired to need habits. And just as the best way to take out a thorn can be with another thorn, because we are habit driven the best way to replace a habit is with a new habit. And once you get into the habit of making your life better, you will find it habit forming.

Getting rid of habits can be as tough as acknowledging them. And even when dramatic action is called for constancy of effort is required. As Mark Twain wryly noted, “Habits can’t be flung out the window but must be coaxed downstairs one step at a time.”

To help you in dealing with your relationship with habits, perhaps have this conversation with yourself:

What is a habit that doesn’t serve you but that you serve?

How does this impact your life?

What would be a positive habit you could choose to replace this habit? And when will you begin?

Our habits can serve us but can also leave us locked out of our future by jailing us in our past. Habits can imprison us from what we might become by what has been our habit of being. Habits, like neurosis, are often a reflection of our choosing what's familiar but negative over what's positive but new.

The human brain likes to run information down the same canals in our mind that we ran the information earlier.

The longer we put off facing and dealing with our habits, the longer we will be in a bind and blind sided in life.

And oh, by the way, this isn't just true for bad habits. It is no less true for good habits. Why? Well because: You better like your strengths because you are going to pay for them

Reducing the impact of habits in our lives requires us to come to each moment anew.

Reducing habits in our lives requires us not to presume the moment, or the person we are in the moment.

The lessening of habits in our lives requires us not to presume what is on the basis of what has been.

Of all things you can make in life, think about making a difference in your life.

Make achieving greatness a habit, and doing less will become a discomfort.

CHAPTER 13:

RESPONSIBILITY

“Responsibility is accountability.”

If you acknowledge that having a great life is your birth right then it is also a responsibility for which you are accountable.

Responsibility is accountability. Accountability reminds us that before we can count on anyone, we have to count on ourselves.

A young man asked an old man, “What is life’s greatest burden?”

And the old man answered sadly, “To have nothing to carry.”

People who take no responsibility stand in their own way and complain about others blocking the way.

“Things turn out best,” said Coach John Wooden, “for those who make the best of how things turn out.”

At its root, being a responsible person simply means you are responsible for the person you are or might yet become. And in this line of work, we are all self-employed.

Responsibility is like working out with weights. You need to work out regularly but never lift to over- exhaustion. And exercising responsibility works in our favor. For muscles to weaken takes twice the time it takes to build them.

Responsibility is not a public display;

It is the private courage to be great.

Be privately responsible.

Be a hero to you

There's an old proverb in West Virginia that reminds us, "Some people grow with responsibility others just swell up."

Acting responsibly is flattering, but it is not vain. It is not make up; it is simply making up your mind to be better, better than who you were, even better than you have an excuse to be.

Responsibility is a state of trust that you have with and within yourself. In an uncertain world self-responsibility isn't the only thing we can count on, but it is something we need to count on.

The journey to greatness requires us to trust ourselves to make an effort, even when it requires a real effort. And until you can trust yourself you will not be able to trust others.

In work and love, we often hear about our responsibilities. But our obligations to others begin with committing to self-responsibility.

Signing up for self-responsibility is self-defining. It isn't that we don't have a sense of responsibility to others. It is, rather, that our responsibility to others is dependent on who we feel responsible for being. Without a sense of self-responsibility, all "other-responsibility" rings hollow.

Some will talk about all the ways they feel responsible to others, to countries, or to the environment, and will use this talk as a way to confuse the issues they have not addressed. Responsibility always begins at home. Inside you is your real living room—where your "you" lives. You are your rocket's launching pad.

You are responsible for igniting and honoring the person you might yet become and for making the journey to greatness. Yes, you will get tired along the way, and be frightened because the way is new, but responsibly acknowledging your exhaustion and your fears does not mean submitting to them.

As you think on the role responsibility plays in your life, think on this:

Do you think of yourself as a responsible person?

When was a time when you were not responsible?

What have you learned from that?

How would you guard against it in the future?

On your life journey think of responsibility as your vehicle.

How you drive this vehicle, has more influence in your life than what you think is driving you.

CHAPTER 14:

FUN

“Anyone who has lost their sense of humor has also lost their way.”

When we think about making our life better, sooner, a lot of us forget to have fun along the way. Unfortunately, forgetting to have fun is not a laughing matter.

My friends, we're not here for long; we're here for fun.

And any one who has lost their sense of humor has also lost their way.

I know there are some who feel that having fun cannot serve them.

But no one grows up until they have their first real laugh at themselves.

And the ability to laugh at our self requires humility, honesty, and faith. And if you are absent of one or more of these character traits, you will be missing in action.

Having fun on the journey to greatness is a great way to travel, and by far the wisest way to travel. Life we all eventually discover provides all the opportunity for all the sorrow that we can bear.

On the journey to greatness, the weather sometimes grows foul. But there is little more that will help us weather our lives than a willingness to have fun in the face of that which challenges us.

Find the courage to suffer happiness. Tears falling on our cheeks can sometimes cause us to bloom.

Allow yourself to laugh at yourself, and your life will never fail to be entertaining

Fun is like a Zen master's wake-up call. It uses the unexpected to smack us awake from what we expected—or assumed. Fun's weaponry is the ability to foil the pain of the unexpected by not assuming the expected.

“Humor,” said Kenneth Bird, “is falling down the stairs if you do it while in the act of warning your wife not to.”

We all have work to do in this life. What you don't find funny may not be funny. But it also may be just the place for you to begin your work.

People who are afraid to laugh are afraid of something other than laughing.

“Life in a close up is a tragedy”, said Charlie Chaplin, “and in a long shot is a comedy.”

Having fun sometimes takes little more than choosing to see what is comedic in what otherwise might be sad or despairing. At the end of the day, laughter can be a welcome, and personal, relief when we are simply too tired to cry.

There is nothing ridiculous about the need to have fun. So, when you're packing your bag for the journey to make your life better, make sure to pack a commitment to having fun. It will not add to your load; it will lighten it.

And in your pack, perhaps also pack these questions for yourself:

Do you like laughing?

Do you laugh as easily at yourself as you do at others?

What was a painful moment in your life when you turned to laughter as an ally?

Who is a friend who needs to laugh more often, and how can you help him or her get there?

The old song goes, “Laugh and the world laughs with you.” If you ever heard me sing, you would definitely laugh. Or cry. So the next time you’re feeling alone and throwing a pity party for your self, laugh at yourself and enjoy the excellent company.

CHAPTER 15:

COMMUNICATION

“Listening is more than waiting to talk.

And having something to say

is more than having to say something.”

It may sound funny to talk about the role of talking in achieving greatness, but the truth is that we often don't know what we're saying until we know what we have failed to say or discover what we have no intention of saying. And often what we haven't the courage to say to others or ourselves echoes loudly and sadly through our lives.

What isn't said is also heard. Listen to what you are not saying

Greatness is the ability and the courage to communicate one's failings as much as one's strengths. Most of us think that if we can order dinner, we are good communicators. We seldom stop to think about what else we're saying about ourselves when we're busy giving the waiter our order.

Don't worry about talking to yourself. Worry when you're not talking to yourself...or listening.

We cannot really communicate with others when we have not learned to communicate with ourselves. It is hard for any of us to hear what we don't want to listen to, or how we listen. And nothing takes as much labor as patching up failed communication. If you doubt this for a moment, ask parents, lovers, and children who have been on the receiving end of failed communications.

Most of the things we are telling others they should think about are text messages we are sending to ourselves.

Read your texts. Hear the messages you are sending.

Too often too many of us feel hurt when we're on the receiving end of what people say.

But people don't do things to us. They do things for them. Remember that.

Telling others what we think they should know is often less about their best interest and more about our needs.

While communication is supposed to be a two-way street, most people aren't listening but just WAITING for their turn to talk.

How you communicate has much to do with whether you are living life in the fast lane or in the past lane.

Much of what passes for our communication skills are in fact communication habits that have been passed on to us or are reaction patterns to those hand-me-downs.

Think about what communication hand me downs are in your closet. Think about how your parents spoke to each other, or didn't say to each other, and if this is communication clothing you have unconsciously borrowed and didn't serve them also doesn't fit you.

Addressing the future requires us to address the past. If we don't, don't worry...the past has our forwarding address

Greatness is not just loudly telling people where you stand but quietly telling yourself who you want to be.

A great educator once said, "There is a world of difference between having something to say and having to say something."

The prospect of silence in society is so daunting that we often don't dare welcome it and hope to scare it off by talking.

"The good thing about children" said Mark Twain, "is that they tell you what they know and then they stop."

A gentleman of 85 feared his wife was getting hard of hearing. So he called her doctor to make an appointment to have her hearing checked.

The doctor made an appointment to test the wife's hearing in two weeks, but the doctor suggested an informal test in the meantime so as to have a better idea of the problem.

"Here's what you do," said the doctor. "Start out about 40 feet away from her, and while speaking in a normal conversational tone, see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response."

That evening, the wife is in the kitchen cooking dinner, and the husband's in the living room. "I'm about 40 feet away," he says to himself, "so let's see what happens." Then in a normal tone he asks, "Honey, what's for supper?" No response.

So the husband moves to the other end of the room, about 30 feet from his wife, and repeats, "Honey, what's for supper?" Still no response.

Next he moves into the dining room, where he is about 20 feet from his wife, and asks, "Honey, what's for supper?" Again he gets no response, so he walks up to the kitchen door, only 10 feet away. "Honey, what's for supper?"

Again there is no response, so finally he walks right up behind her and asks, "Honey, what's for supper?"

"Damn it, Phil," shouts the wife, "for the fifth time, we're having CHICKEN!"

"Far more crucial than what we know or do not know," said Eric Hoffer, "is what we do not want to know."

Now, I would like you to pause and think on how you communicate:

When was the last time you sat down and had a heart-to-heart with yourself? What would you not like to hear from anyone about yourself?

If we have been purposely deaf to ourselves for a long time, the thought of hearing can be frightening. But there is nothing noble in being superior to others. True nobility is in being superior to our previous self.

Make sure your phone lines to you are now open.

Make sure you are online with yourself.

CHAPTER 16:

CHANGE AND RESILIENCY

*“In the face of profound change
if you think you won’t be confused
you’re not thinking clearly.”*

In a world where change is the foreground, backdrop, and foundation to everything, feeling confused is a reflection of clarity, or to put it another way, in the face of change if you’re thinking you won’t be confused you’re not thinking.

In the face of change, being great is the difference between holding on and holding back, between letting go and giving up

During an era of great change, two currents run through us at the same time. One river calls us to join in with the change, take the ride on the river, be part of what is rushing ahead and washing away much of what needs to be washed away. Simultaneously, another urge yearns for a time when the river was a stream and the slow meandering of days and ways calling us to the moment of what was.

When actor Tom Hanks was asked what he learned, in character and out of character, from his experience making the film *Cast Away*, he said, “I learned that there is always another wave.”

The lesson if you want to star in your life?

Don’t get too attached to your current emotional state because another one is soon arriving and this one is soon leaving.

When my daughter was a teenager, I discovered that adolescents, or the adolescent in us at any age, can be busy trying on emotional states the way teenage girls try on clothes.

Here is my truth teller's message.

Life is change, there is no choice. Growth is optional, the choice is yours.

For every warrior facing change here is what should be written on your coat of arms:

Hope for the best; And make peace with the rest.

And the sooner we can integrate this policy into our operating system, the sooner our life will get better.

The strength in a bow comes from the strength of the bough that forms it and the bough's capacity to bend. From such a weapon's dual strengths comes greatness. What does not bend...breaks.

Defeat is temporary. Accepting defeat makes it permanent.

Giving up, seals the deal.

Welcoming change and surviving change does not mean that we have to assume that all the things that come our way are great but things don't have to be good for us to be great.

There is a story of a man who decides to help a butterfly slip out of its cocoon. As a result, the butterfly's wings never fully develop, and because of the man's help, the butterfly will never fly. Resilience is important to survival, but a resilience to change can cripple us.

Change doesn't wait for you to finish your makeup. Or have one more drink. Greatness is not how you live the life you intended but how you live the life destiny intends.

A friend recently told me of a man who was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Now, with the man, fighting for his life, he says: "The worst day in my life was the day I heard my diagnosis. The best day in my life is every day since."

The nature of all relationships in both your private and public life are subject to change. Whining about it doesn't change anything. In a changing world don't make, "Ahhh, do I have to," your favorite whine.

Change is the only constant. Only a partner willing to change can love a partner who is changing. The resiliency in any relationship, with your employee, your boss, your coworker, or your waiter is dependent on granting the other party as much right to change their mood as you can be assured your mood of the moment is a moment by moment affair.

The Taoist masters remind us that the best way to ride life is to ride without holding on and the only way to ride without holding on is to ride the horse in the direction it is going.

When you were growing up what was your mother's or father's reaction to unexpected change, and to what extent do you own the same attitude?

What is a situation when you were dragged kicking and screaming to a better place?

What couldn't happen, what we have given up any hope of happening, and what we dream of happening can all happen.

If you are looking to change your life for the better, you better make a friend of change.

Nothing changes until you do.

Everything changes when you do.

Do it!

CHAPTER 17:

MANAGING ADVERSITY

“The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is how we use them.”

Here is the adult truth. Adversity will be the inevitable companion on your journey in life.

Adversity may be the act of a stranger, someone masking as a friend, an act of nature, or life’s draw of the cards, and yet, no one ever trekked their path without learning that often we face nothing more adverse than ourselves.

Self-adversity is the most common form of adversity. And while adversity can come from getting in our own way, or failing to get out of our way, denial is often the form of adversity we most often have to face.

Your first job on any job is making sure you’re not working against yourself.

Adversity will show up in your private and your public life, but wherever adversity rears its head don’t presume you’re in charge of anything other than you, and don’t become reaction-syndrome road kill. Don’t react to adversity—respond!

When adversity strikes, take a moment and you will find yourself less run over in the moment.

Life isn’t easy, but how we take things, respond to things, in life has much to do with what we get.

No one knows their own strength until they've met adversity. How we come to deal with adversity can be a gift we give ourselves. Unfortunately, most of us take personal affront when we confront adversity when the affront is actually only to our ego's plans. Do not confuse your ego's intentions with your best intentions. "Life," quoting John Lennon, "is what happens while we're making plans."

Sometimes, when things are great, people are convinced this is just a sign, and that something will soon go wrong. And if you are looking to be wrong or wronged you will find it. Don't confuse being a realist with being a failure-junkie.

Adversity can be a kick in the pants, But sometimes it is something that also kicks us in the direction we need to be going.

"When it comes right down to it," said Dr. Joyce Brothers, "the secret of having it all is loving it all."

Adversity is a soul sister to brotherhood of success. And on the journey to greatness, our willingness to befriend this set of twins and know them as one, will have much to do with our greatness. Yes, roses have thorns, but thorns also have roses.

In whatever adversity you may be facing perhaps ask yourself this.

What is an example of any adversity that can set you off emotionally or fearfully, almost without warning, and why do you think this is so?

Who is someone you know or have met who handles adversity in a way you admire, and what can you learn from them?

Adversity can be worth a fortune if we take the time to mine what we find ourselves facing. An error only becomes a mistake when we don't do something about it.

The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is how we use them. Its time to step up.

Now's the time to turn your stumbling blocks into building blocks.

CHAPTER 18:

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY and OPTIMISM

“Attitude is Altitude.”

On our journey in life to master adversity without embracing optimism is to trudge ahead on the road to greatness, coping but resigned to a life without joy. “There is not security on this earth,” said Gen MacArthur, “there is only opportunity.”

I know that there are those who feel that the excitement of embracing opportunity, or an optimistic attitude, is naive, but one has to wonder about the wisdom of despair.

Life is not always great, but it is a percentage game and a willingness to believe that greatness is just around the corner or that you can turn an event into an opportunity certainly heightens our odds of achieving greatness.

Conversely, opportunity seldom wants the company of someone who is convinced nothing good is coming. Bottom line, negative people invite negative outcomes.

One of the essentials to achieving greatness is not to be deceived by the appearance of things. Events in our life wear masks. The skill to unveiling opportunity begins with peeling back the negative appearance of things to see what lies beneath.

“Security,” said Helen Keller, “is mostly superstition.” So, if you are looking for a guarantee in life, buy a vacuum cleaner.

The map to opportunity does not come with a money-back promise. Embracing opportunity and optimism means that when your boat comes in you may have to swim out to meet it.

Many of us take a daily vitamin but ignore another health tip. There is no better mood elevator on the journey to greatness than a large daily

dose of self-administered hope.

It may not sound politically correct, but the best dope is hope.

One who has health has hope, and one who had hope has everything.

If you're looking for hope, be hopeful.

A good attitude is always the best way to gain altitude.

The journey to greatness is the journey of a lifetime. If we look at our progress each day as a marker of our progress, we will inevitably see small setbacks and we can use this as an argument for achieving failure. But while any day can defeat any of us, it can also fuel us to reach for our greater self in the next day, at the next curve, or in the face of the next challenge.

Embracing opportunity and waking and walking with optimism serves and honors not just our lives but also those lives with which we connect. We infect others with our emotions, and whether it is optimism or pessimism, we are infectious. Be optimistically infectious.

Opportunity is a hotel. People are checking in and checking out all the time. When we shut our eyes and hang out the "do not disturb" sign on our door in life, it is tough to hear opportunity's knock. Opportunity is looking for people who hang out the "welcome" sign. Think about the sign you have left hanging on your door.

Greatness is looking for people who are looking to be great. Ask any sailor in any port and here is the tale they will tell you: Opportunity is like the wind. What you make of it is more or less what you make of yourself.

Here is something for you to ask yourself about opportunity and optimism in your life:

When something you didn't expect happens to you, what is generally your first reaction? Why do you think you react this way?

Be open to making the most of opportunity.

When you hear opportunity singing in your ears, sail on and on into the great blue of greatness.

Welcome opportunity's embrace and it will welcome you.

Life tends to smile on those who smile back.

CHAPTER 19:

COMPROMISE

“Giving way is not the same as giving in or giving up.”

The art of compromise has sometimes been described as the art of dividing a pie so everybody believes they've gotten the biggest piece.

There are many who believe that success on the road to greatness is not achieved by compromising but by being uncompromising in one's pursuit of greatness. The truth of compromise of course is that of all the things you need in your life, the need to be right is not a need.

There is nothing wrong with our having a disagreement with others. But giving way is not the same as giving in. And being compromising is very different from being compromised.

Being compromising is the blessing of living in a mansion where every room has a point of view

On the road to greatness no one has the right-of-way.

Everyone has the right to make the journey

Some of us were raised to think that any compromise is dishonesty with self. However, Nobel Prize winning chemist Linus Pauling discovered that when things hold together at the molecular level, they are each in a dynamic state with the other and bonded together by their coming and going, by the resonance between them. Indeed, it is their “argument” that in the end bonds them. And holds them strong.

Be wary of people who tell you they don't compromise and consider that a strength.

The opposite of love is not hate but indifference

People are held together as often by hate as they are by love

Think about what is the compromise in your different relationships

Thinking about how you are bonded to others is as important as who you are bonded to

Indeed, "There is nothing more likely to start disagreement among people or countries," said E.B. White, "than agreement."

To achieve greatness in your life, you will often have to compromise with yourself on things you thought you had decided long ago. On this point it is rare to find an insight more profound than that of Marcel Proust who wrote, "All of our final decisions are made in states of mind that do not last."

Most often our refusal to compromise finds its ground in pride and not in wisdom. Too often when we think about compromising, we feel it leaves us with a bad taste in our mouth, that we've been forced to swallow something for which we have no appetite. But, what serves our appetite does not always serve our body.

When you compromise with yourself because it serves your higher, longer-range interest, you have made an ally of yourself. When you compromise with your mate because it serves the higher, longer-range goals in your relationship, you have served yourself in serving the other. When you compromise with your children because it serves the higher, longer-range goals for you as a parent and for the next generation you are taking the high road with the long view.

Sometimes making a deal with the moment is the best way to assure a great future. Compromise doesn't have to feel great to be a great help.

The word "conciliatory" comes from the Latin for "meeting."
Compromise is meeting someone halfway, a third of the way, or anywhere along the way.

Meet others with the goal of achieving peace and you are already

bringing peace to the meeting.

As you think on compromise, perhaps ask yourself this:

When you don't get to have things your way, how do you usually feel, and how does it spill over into the next thing you do?

Everything in creation is in compromise with everything else.
Everything has to give to get.

Life's greatest gifts arrive embedded with the joy of giving something back. That is a secret from the operating manual for the planet Earth because that's just the way things are hard wired to work best. And knowing this, and remembering this, and passing this truth along is among great gifts to get and give.

Be compromising.

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CHAPTER 20:

PASSION

“Don’t confuse lust with love.

More than you hate evil, love good.”

This conversation is about passion’s role in achieving greatness in your life.

Being passionate is necessary for empowering your purpose, every purpose in your life. “Nothing great,” said the philosopher Hegel, “has ever been accomplished without passion.”

Passions need to be sought, embraced, nurtured, and watched like a hawk. And even as you are nodding yes while I am saying this, take this to heart.

Passions are intoxicants. There should be a drinking age for passions. And a two drink limit.

Passions are like fashions; they have seasons

Your relationship with your passions will fall in and out of fashion and deserve caution so you don’t confuse lust with love.

Compassion comes from the Latin meaning, literally, “with passion.” Compassion is caring with passion.

By definition, people without passions do not have the passion to be great.

Most of us understand passion less as something we possess than as something we are looking for. For many of us the way we know

passion is by its absence and the absence of passion is the malaise of modern life.

People in long-term relationships often feel that passion has fled, but that is usually because we expect others to be the source of our passion. Others, however, are not hiding the passion we're seeking. We're usually the ones who have lost what we're trying to find in others. Searching for passion is sacred work. As in so many other areas, the search, as much as the solution, transforms us.

People with passion tend to magnetize the rest of us. We like to be in the proximity of passion. We want to warm our hearts from its glow.

To find our passion doesn't mean we have to start a fire. We have only to find our fire. To find your passion simply lean toward what warms you. Inside each of us is the kindling to stoke our own fire. Go ahead, light your fire, and draw warmth from it.

Children can have passions just as parents can lose them. It's never too early to be in pursuit of one's passions and never too late to guard them. We should nurture our children's passion. Teach them to tend their inner fire. Fan the flames of their interest and curiosity.

To go fishing for your passion, you have to troll with your heart. We can find reasons to be passionate, but reason is not passion's bait. Even failing can be successful if the effort has been passionate.

Passions come and go when they like. Passions do not like curfews. Passion requires special handling and is passionate about how it's handled. Passions are sensitive but not fragile.

Passions are vulnerable and invincible.

Passions are wounded easily and die hard.

Passions are contradictions

And you are a bundle of contradictions that you should love passionately

All fires must be tended. Unattended fires start forest fires. Passions

can set us ablaze. Passion has built cathedrals, and passions unattended have burnt down worlds.

People without passion sometimes resent those who have found theirs. People who appear to have found their way often leave others of us feeling lost. Feeling lost, we often turn our absent passion for something into a passion against something. We don't know what we love, but we know what we hate. Hate is a passion, but one that sets our own house on fire.

More than you hate evil, love good.

Passion is the driving force that has every prince wanting a glimpse of the princess in the tower. Finding our passion is the first step to scaling the tower where we are hiding what is truly beautiful within us.

I have found my passion. And lost it. I have found it again. And lost it once again. I have found myself being passionate about things that don't matter and guilty of assuming that now absent, ignored passions would always grace my company. Passions are more than something you want, or must have. They are something that has you.

As you think about passion and your life ask yourself this:

What is something you care about passionately these days but haven't told anyone else or prefer to keep to yourself? And how does it feel to have a passion locked away?

Ask your passion for a date, and be passionate in your request

It may turn into the affair of a lifetime, or simply good company on your journey to greatness.

CHAPTER 21:

LEADERSHIP OF SELF and OTHERS

***“A leader isn’t someone who rules over
but someone who lifts up.”***

All leadership begins with self-leadership. Great leaders are first of all people who make greatness their own destination—and take responsibility for leading themselves there.

Greatness is not acting superior to others but to your previous self. “You don’t manage people;” said Admiral Grace Hooper, “you manage things. You lead people.”

“A leader,” said Napoleon, “is a dealer in hope.” Leadership is acknowledging and helping others to achieve what they can only hope for.

Great leaders don’t presume their own importance but assume instead that everyone they are leading is important.

A leader isn’t someone who rules over but someone who lifts up.

Many years ago I cautioned my daughter to be wary not of strong men in her life but of weak men. Weak leaders will need to dominate others to convince themselves that they are the leader. Strong leaders are those who know we all have weaknesses and herein our strength of opportunity.

Some of us are prepared to take the risk of leadership only when there is no risk.

A leader isn’t someone who wants to risk the lives of others, or their quality of life, but someone who understands that living is a state of risk requiring leadership to cope with life’s risks.

Whether we are leading ourselves or others, courage will be called for. It does not mean that leaders are people without fears, but it does mean that leaders are people who will put their faith and not their fears in charge. If we can lead ourselves out of our fears, we can remind others that we know their trembling as our own.

Leaders who won't acknowledge the fears often hide behind anger and aggression as a leadership style. And many of us in leadership roles have been trained to think that anger or aggression are normative leadership modes when at the root it is a refusal of leaders who don't witness and honor – and move on – from their fears.

A great leader is often someone who knows that forgiving is more important than forgetting because it is forgiving while still remembering.

A leader is someone who remembers that greatness is an opportunity to be more when power gives us an opportunity to be less...and get away with it.

A leader who fails to plan has a plan to fail.

A leader makes a plan, commits to it, and then adjusts. Plan on it.

Timeless wisdom acknowledges that while a leader honors equality there is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of un-equals. Individualize your leadership and you will honor the individuals you lead.

No two people can be most effectively led in the same way. Great leaders are those who come up with a plan that is molded to those they are leading, and to the moment, and to the situation. Taking the time to be a great leader begins with taking the time to learn about who you are leading, not just requiring that they learn your plans. "The star of any team," wrote Coach John Wooden, "is the team."

Leadership is more than a lot of people running around following your orders.

Who was the first leader you ever admired, and what was it about that person that you admired?

Who was a leader you once admired—a parent or president—but who has lost your admiration? Why?

A great leader isn't someone who finds the time to be a great leader but someone who makes the time. There is always time to make a mistake in life, even if that mistake is simply missing the opportunity to become all we might become in this life.

A great leader isn't always a great person. Often great leaders have great flaws. That doesn't mean that being flawed will make us great. It does mean that even when we are less than we might be, we can still lead ourselves and others to higher ground—to a place where we will be better still. Lead on!

CHAPTER 22:

CHARACTER

“Character is a game changer.”

The best way to think about character’s role in achieving success in your life may be revealed in this simple metaphor:

Wherever you are heading or think you are heading, if the road you’re driving on is crooked, you can’t drive straight.

Without character, you cannot find your way to greatness. Without character, no turn on your path in life will have the integrity of your intention. Without character, you will not only lose your way; you will start out lost.

Character is not something you are born with or without. It is what you make of yourself after you’re born. Character is not a wardrobe change. It is not something someone without character can slip into at the end of the day.

The key to achieving character is what we do—not what we intend to do when time and events go our way.

Character can wear us out, but it is not something that is worn outside in. Character is always worn inside out.

We cannot plan to get to greatness and then work on our character. Character is always a work in progress and about process. It is how we work at anything. And with everyone. All the time.

The integrity of character is who you are when you’re not busy trying to be someone else

Character - accepting responsibility for how you conduct yourself - is the source of all self-respect. But character doesn’t simply impact our self-estimation; it impacts our capacity to hold others in esteem—and finally, to be held in esteem by God or to whomever or whatever we decide we owe our cosmic accountability.

Two thousand plus years ago Heraclitus reminded whoever would listen, that a man's character is his fate. The role of character in our lives is an end game. And more. It not only has everything to do with where we will go in our life. It also has absolutely everything to do with how we will get there and who we will be when we get there. With character as an end goal, the end does more than justify the means; it is both end and means.

Character finds expression in every culture. The Spanish say, "Every cask smells of the wine it contains."

The truth is, character is not odor free. Others will always inevitably get a whiff of who you are

Character is not something others can achieve for us. Others have their own work, just like we do. And we cannot presume to tell others what their work is. More importantly our work is not only in front of us, it is inside of us, if only by knowing something is lacking.

Too many of us are looking for a wishbone when what we need is a backbone. And the will to get up off our tailbone.

One of the names for early humans was Homo Erectus. It literally means "man standing straight." Character doesn't necessarily mean living the straight and narrow, but standing straight does mean being straight with ourselves.

Of all the things we have been sold on in life, little could have been sold to us until we sold ourselves. Character makes us responsible not only for what we want but for what we'll trade to get it.

As you consider the role of character in your life, perhaps ask yourself this:

What was an experience growing up when you did the right thing and caught yourself by surprise? And how did it make you feel?

As we try to achieve greatness in our lives, certainly there will be times when we're feeling tired or beat up. There will be times when we'll wonder whether being a great person is worth the isolation and exhaustion that sometimes accompany it. But at those points we will not be alone. We will be in the company of our character. And we won't truly know how alone we can be until we forfeit it.

All social deceit begins with personal deceit.

Deceive yourself, and you will need to deceive others

To find your character index think about how you treat people who can't help you and can't fight back.

CHAPTER 23:

KINDNESS

***“Be cautious of people
who confuse kindness with weakness.”***

No one ever made the journey to greatness without needing the kindness of others. And being kind to others begins with being kind to ourselves. Doing right by you is the first step in doing the right thing.

Henry James said there are three things in life that are important:

The first is to be kind.

The second is to be kind.

The third is to be kind.

There is an old tale that in both heaven and hell there is a large table laden with food and people on both sides of the table with stiff arms. What makes hell into hell is that the people at the table are trying to feed themselves, and they are starving even as they sit at a banquet. And what makes heaven into heaven is that all those at the table are using their stiff arms to advantage and feeding those on the other side. Kindness transforms our predicament as vulnerable human beings.

Be cautious of those who confuse kindness with weakness. The mark of a civilized society is not classical music, for terrible things have been done while fine music played. And the mark of a civilized society is not fine china, for terrible things have been done while people drank tea. The mark of a civilized society is how people with power treat people without power.

There is an old saying that a giant is anyone who knows we are all standing on someone else's shoulders. Unfortunately, sometimes the

kindness we need to show is to someone who has shown us no kindness. But if want to move up from the minor leagues to the majors then this is the info. If someone can make you angry then you have already made them your master.

Some of us were born on 3rd base and think we hit a triple.

Some of us are members of the lucky sperm bank and confuse having a rich life with being a great person.

Kindness is not an accident of birth. If life has been kind to you then no matter how much money you have in the bank you are born owing.

Being great is your right.

But it is a right that is more often given away than taken away.

A lack of kindness is a life lacking.

“When you cease to make a contribution,” said Eleanor Roosevelt, “you begin to die.” Giving a damn tends to make the world a damn sight better. People who feel they’ve run out of kindness will too often find they’ve run out of time to do anything about it.

As you think about kindness ask yourself this:

What is the nicest thing someone did for you for which you had no expectation?

What have you told yourself you would do if you had the resources?

Giving gives us an open hand.

Only an open hand can receive

Kindness is a reciprocal trade agreement with life.

Don’t make your kindness dependent on the state of the moment or the person who is needy. “No saint without a past,” said Chekov, “no sinner without a future.”

We are all here for only a short while, we are all on a wild ride, and to borrow from Blanche Dubois, “We all count on the kindness of strangers.”

Open your hand to others and abundance will have a place to land.

A little girl was late arriving home from school, so the mother began to scold her daughter but stopped and asked, “Why are you so late?”

“I had to help another girl. She was in trouble,” replied the daughter.

“And what did you do to help her?”

“Oh, I sat down and helped her cry.”

CHAPTER 24:

WELLNESS

***“Life isn’t a walk in the park
so don’t forget to take one.”***

Life is a gift. Health is how we live with the gift. Unfortunately, most of us get so wrapped up in living that we forget about what we came wrapped in until it is too late.

Health is wealth, and if we aren’t taking care of ourselves we are giving away a fortune even as we go in search of what in life can enrich us.

Up until very recently, mental health was not held in the same regard as bodily health. Now we know that it is not only a question of a sound mind in a sound body but also that a sound mind has implications body and soul.

Our bodies and minds are our mortal vehicles. If taking care of ourselves is one of those things we keep deferring, we will also be deferring our arrival at greatness and perhaps trashing the vehicle that can get us there.

In western society we think that if we are not doing something we are not doing something. But don’t confuse who you are with what you do

Too many of us think relaxing reflects a lack of character, or a lack of industry. But being busy isn’t always the road to being better or getting better.

Inner beauty always looks good and looking good begins with feeling good about who you are.

When we don’t take care of our physical health or our emotional health, our health will not only take its own journey it will also infect others with the same disregard for health.

The famed psychoanalyst Carl Jung wrote, “Nothing weighs heavier on children than the un-lived lives of parents.”

All of us know people who have weighed heavily and harshly on the lives of others because of what was not well in their own lives.

Your health should matter to you and does matter to those around you.

What you fail to take care of in you does not end with you. We all leave footprints in time, sometimes from walking over others, sometimes from simply walking away. What we fail to take care of in ourselves inevitably leaves a trail.

From child abuse, to alcoholism, to obesity, to racial hatred, to the inability to love....any of these illnesses can, and often do, impact generation after generation, making future greatness a troubling challenge, and heart aching pain an everyday reality.

Some of us are not well because we are busy binding all our healing strength to some past injury we won't let rest. Trapped in a neurotic need to pick at old scabs, to form and live in wound societies, to keep replaying the past, we are over and over again injured by the present and crippled in the future.

We may not be able to think ourselves into wellness, but what our mind is thinking about does matter.

Giving our mind a rest gives us rest and rest is often essential to cure. Taking time off for recreation does not necessarily deter us from our goal of achieving greatness.

Use your recreation time as a time for re-creation.

Life isn't a walk in the park, so don't forget to take one.

Too many of us feel that until we have worked ourselves to exhaustion we haven't exhausted every option, done all we could. What we need to remember is that what we don't do can be the most

important thing we do. On life's journey, putting our foot on the brakes is sometimes more important than stepping on the gas.

It's one thing to be on time. It's another thing if being on time is like being on drugs. Sometimes the only thing worse than being late is arriving too early to the rest of your life.

Think about this:

When was the first time you remember being really sick and promising yourself what you would do if you could only feel better? Did you do it? Why or why not?

Our body and mind need time off, time to relax. Greatness is not something we need to pursue as if it were leaving town. Greatness is a place to luxuriate—a place to take a nap in the pleasure of being alive.

King Solomon, arguably one of the wisest men who ever lived, wrote that there was nothing wiser than to sit under your vineyard with your face in the sun.

Take the time to take care of you before time takes you.

CHAPTER 25:

DO IT NOW

“Some day is no day.”

The moment in front of you right now will never come again.

On life’s remote control, take your hand off the Pause button.

“Procrastination,” wrote Don Marquis, “is the art of keeping up with yesterday.” Do it now, is more than an advertising slogan. Do it now, keeps us from selling ourselves out.

Make less excuses and more progress. Make greatness your destination not your plan.

Some day is no day.

It doesn’t matter how many videos filled with good advice you watch if you don’t do something with the advice.

Don’t confuse being stable with being stuck.

As the Chinese say, “Talking doesn’t cook rice.”

Whether we’re young or old or getting older, we’ve all got to deal with deferred maintenance. We’ve all got stuff we said we would do, crossed our hearts, promised under a summer moon, and still have not done, and summer turns to fall.

Deferred maintenance for some of us is finally getting around to cutting the grass, or cutting out cigarettes, or washing the car, or scrubbing away an old attitude. For some it is finding something that was lost, and for some it is losing an old grudge. For some it is dealing with a stack of bills, and for all of us, it’s about time we dealt with ourselves.

What you ignore doesn't necessarily ignore you.

A man wakes up for years with hair on his pillow and then one morning is surprised to wake up bald.

Defer what you need to deal with emotionally, intellectually, physically, financially, or spiritually, and eventually you don't have maintenance; you have a mess.

Every time history repeats itself in your life, the price for ignoring it goes up.

Try to run out of excuses before you run out of time.

Defer the lube job on your Chevy, your fears, your plans, your heart, or your hopes for too long, and it's too bad, too late.

Yes, greatness is waiting for you. But there is no telling how long it will wait.

Self-maintenance doesn't give one iota about your IQ. Smart people get caught deferring maintenance in life just like dumb people.

Too often in life, crisis is the invention of avoidance.

Deal with what you are avoiding in your life and you will have less crisis in your life

Defer dealing with love, lovers, and how you love, and the question isn't what you will learn but how much it will hurt when you do.

To fuel passion, you have to chop wood.

The best way to be loved now is to do something loving now.

If you're lucky, you'll love your work. If you're smart, you'll work at love.

We all do different work, but all work is sacred. Some of us put all our maintenance into complaining and none into changing. And little changes until we do. Do it now.

The pursuit of greatness is not a part-time job unless you want to get only partway there.

Take a moment to watch the shades of sky. Take a moment to enjoy a stranger's passing smile. Take a moment because that is the moment that is given. "Do not wait for leaders," said Mother Teresa, "do it alone, person to person." Do it now.

Person to person, ask yourself this: What is one thing you have been promising yourself for years that you would get around to doing but have never done? Why? How does that feel?

Take a moment to cool down when things heat up.

Take a moment to hold on, and take a moment to let go.

Take a moment to make something that doesn't matter, matter more.

Take a moment to listen when someone tells you that you matter.

But don't defer living, and loving, and pursuing greatness a moment longer.

Life is over in a moment, and Mae West got it right, "He who hesitates is a damned fool."

CHAPTER 26:

PEACE

“Any blessing that does not bring you peace is no blessing.”

On the journey to greatness, there will be dragons to slay and castle walls to scale, but put aside the anger or fury usually associated with combat for few of us will be more successful than the peaceful warrior.

If the idea of being a peaceful warrior sounds contradictory, think about this: Anger clouds the mind, fury loses its way, and a state of peace is the kingdom at hand, in your hand.

Peace is less about what you will find in life and more about how you are living your life

Any peace you find in life is its own blessing.

And any blessing that does not bring you peace is no blessing.

If we are not at peace with ourselves, then no matter what conflict we are facing we are fighting a war on two fronts—something every military tacticians tell us to avoid at all costs. And on the journey to greatness, our challenge is not only to accomplish our mission but to make peace with the effort.

We need to have peace in our home front if we hope to encourage peace in the world beyond. If our home life—our life with our family, our partners, our children and/or our self—is combative, we will bring the bias of this veiled view to our workplace, our community, our world.

Making peace at home or in the office begins with not needing to be victorious over others. If we need to triumph over others in the boardroom, it is very difficult not to bring that warrior to the dining

room. If we need to dominate our partner or our children, it is very difficult not to bring that commander in chief to what should be a team effort in the workplace. Yes, there is a place for generals, but any leader whose aim is to win without hoping to win the peace has a strategy that will fail for winning.

Achieving any end that does not bring you peace will leave you wanting.

Choose your battles in life or you will spend your life making war.

Spend less time winning the wars in your life and more time winning the peace. Be a hero in your life. Wage peace.

Wars between nations often have a history of hurts at the root. And it is similar for the individual. For too many of us, hating ourselves over something from the past - when we've hurt or been hurt - is also often an excuse to make war on ourselves. Unfortunately in this emotional whipping we feel so vented that we never do anything to heal what turned us on ourselves. But self-abuse is very different from self-accountability. And without self-forgiveness we will think too little of ourselves to think that we can do anything to improve ourselves.

Peace isn't incidental; it is in the incidents. Any of us wanting to wage inner peace have to stop acting like drama queens or kings of complaints who think our day is ruined because we can't we can't find our socks, our dry cleaning isn't ready or someone took our parking space and we have to walk one aisle further to the Pilates class.

If you are tired of looking for a little peace in your life, think about what you are overlooking.

Often, nations arrive at peace only when they've exhausted all the alternatives. Peace however is more than the cessation of hostilities between neighbors or between aspects of our inner self. Inner peace is a vibrant, living thing and not the negative of any other thing.

Waging inner peace does not mean running up the white flag and surrendering who we are.

As you think about peace, perhaps ask yourself this:

Would you consider yourself a peaceful person in your inner life?
Why or why not? How does that feel?

Of all the things we are free to do, we are free to be in a state of peace with ourselves and with others.

Peace of mind is a state of mind. And this is a freedom that no one else take from us if we refuse to give it away.

CHAPTER 27:

LOVE

“Love is a ladder;

It allows us to climb out of ourselves.”

When we think about what we have to do to get a great life we usually think first about accomplishing and doing and think of love as something you may or may not get along the way.

Ironically, love is the first among equals because love is a miracle. Love is the marveled magic carpet that can carry us anywhere. And achieving greatness without being loving isn't achieving the impossible—it is impossible.

Some truths in life are hidden in their nakedness. Thus, the secret to being loving is hidden in its obviousness. “We can only learn to love,” wrote Iris Murdock, “by being loving.”

The need to love and be loved is primal to our species. “One of the oldest human needs,” wrote Margaret Mead, “is having someone to wonder where you are when you don't come home at night.”

Love is a ladder; it allows us to climb out of ourselves.

At the same time, being self-loving is necessary to being other-loving. And both are necessary to achieving greatness.

Loving ourselves also requires us to guard our solitude.

Love requires us to guard each other's solitude and the sanctity of solitude in a relationship.

To achieve this and survive relationships, requires us to love others for who they are and love our selves for who they aren't

“There is no remedy for love,” wrote Thoreau, “but to love more.”

To love and be loved is life's most noble adventure.

Love your life's adventure

The reason for love is not reason. Love is more than passion and a person. Love is intimacy with life.

Love is a garden;

As you sow, so shall you reap.

Plant pride; reap anger.

Plant humility; reap laughter.

Love is a blessing.

It is like the gentle dew that falls on parched fields.

Lovers are quenched by each other.

Love requires us to love each other not because we must but because we can.

"Him that I love" wrote Anne Lindbergh, "I wish to be free—even from me."

Love requires us to be honest with each other and promise, first to ourselves, never to lie to each other out of the fear of being alone.

Love requires us to remember that even when we can't heal each other, patience is a poultice, acceptance an analgesic, and kindness its own cure.

Love requires us to remember that love opened our eyes, but to save our love we may have to close one eye, and to keep our love there may come times when we may have to close both eyes.

Love requires us to treasure what we have in common, but to remain in love with one or many will require us to cherish our differences.

Love requires us to remember that whom we loved once is less important than whom they might yet become—and us too.

Love requires us to remember that love can be a constant but that change is the only constant and that how we love will change too and that to embrace love requires the courage to embrace change.

As you think about love's role in your life, perhaps ask yourself this:

What is an aspect in yourself that you have the toughest time loving and why?

In the wisdom of the Little Prince, “Life teaches us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction.”

Love requires us to remember that falling in love is very different from landing and to be there to catch each other, because we all fall, because we all fail, because we all are frail, because we all need to be loved.

And because the experience of loving is what makes life great.

CHAPTER 28:

THE ROAD AHEAD IS ALWAYS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

“Over every finish line in life are the words:

Begin Here!”

Dear Fellow Human Being. Thanks for your company. I hope you had some laughter and learning along the way.

Congratulations for having the intention and courage to take the journey to greatness. When we began, I was reminding that at the end of the day life isn't about our net worth but our self worth and hopefully our time together has in some way added to both of these aspects in your life.

I'd say we've come to the end of the journey, but it is the journey that matters in the end. True greatness, like you, is a work in progress. Keep working at it. The road ahead is always under construction.

When all is said and done, what is life but an opportunity, albeit a fleeting opportunity.

For some, sadly, it is singularly an opportunity to survive.

For some it will be, for lack of creativity or courage, largely an opportunity to ignore.

But for those who are blessed and grateful, willful and humble, and to those for whom gratitude is more than an opportunity to become sated, this life is an opportunity to be good, to become better, and to pursue greatness.

When we die, we will not be asked why we weren't more like Moses or Gandhi or Mother Teresa. We will be asked why we were not all we could be. Now is the time to prepare that answer by the life we live, right now.

May the doors you have passed through in our time together help you learn and lead, may your heart and laughter be your triumphs over doubts and disaster, may you put your faith and not your fears in charge, may you be great, and may you not forget to tell someone else when you think they are great.

What we don't begin takes the longest to conclude.

Over every finish line in life are the words, "Begin here!"

Beginning right now...remember you matter and you are great!

Peace and blessings on your journey.

Noah