

Your Next Breakthrough

Celebrating 100 Newsletters  

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Why are we here?

In 2022, I gave my newsletter a total overhaul with the intent to evolve it into something that would add more value to the lives of those who read it.

It transformed from a one-way deliberation of my ideas, into an interactive community of people inspiring each other's growth every single week.

Two years and 100 newsletters later, I can say this newsletter has been one of the proudest achievements of my career. To celebrate this incredible milestone, I had my team compile all the life advice, reflection questions, and exercises for the week that made up the first 100 newsletters into this collection that you can use as a journaling prompt, tape to your fridge, or rub for good luck every morning.

This is for *you*. Enjoy.

Joining the Community

If you love the concept for this newsletter, and you're not already part of the community, then you can [sign up to it here](#).

If you're already a member and you think the collection of my advice in this ebook is the best thing since the industrial revolution, then I ask that you share this ebook with people who you know will love it.

The more people we can get on board, the more impactful the experience will continue to be for all of us.

[Share this ebook](#).

Does Fear Control You?

December 19, 2022

Two things for you to think about

Fear doesn't control us by dominating our emotions. It controls us by quietly convincing us that our comfort is more important than happiness.

The only real risk is taking no risks. The only real failure is having no failures. The only real pain is the avoidance of pain.

Two things for you to ask yourself

When in your life have you chosen comfort over happiness? Are you choosing comfort over happiness right now? What have been the repercussions of that choice?

Who would you be if you felt no need to stay comfortable and safe? How would your life be different today?

One thing for you to try this week

What is something you can do this week that is both uncomfortable yet good for you? Try it and see what happens. It could be something as big as ending a bad relationship or as small as getting yourself to exercise for twenty minutes. But do it and note how it makes you feel about yourself—not how it makes you feel, but how it makes you feel about how you feel.

Ideally, it feels bad but makes you feel good about having felt bad. This is the sweet spot. This is where we want to live. This is who we want to be.

One Thing Has the Greatest Impact on Your Life

December 26, 2022

Two things for you to think about

Relationships are the multipliers of life. Good relationships make other good things even better. Bad relationships make other bad things even worse.

Who you choose to spend time with likely has a greater long-term impact on your health, wealth, and happiness than almost any other decision you make. Yet, most people will put more conscious thought into the color of their smartphone case.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Which relationships in your life are helping you? Which relationships in your life are hurting you? In the case of a relationship that is hurting you, what can you do to distance yourself from that person?

Two things for you to try this week

This holiday season, I want to challenge you to do two things. First, think of someone in your life who is a positive influence. Connect with them this week. Bonus points for expressing your gratitude directly to them.

Next, think of someone in your life who is bringing you down or holding you back. Create a rule for yourself with this person: "When they do X, I will/will not respond with Y."

Some examples:

When my ex calls me and tells me she misses me, I will not reciprocate.

When he asks me inappropriate questions, I will simply refuse to answer.

When she makes me uncomfortable, I will tell her to stop.

Hold to your rule. You might be surprised by the size of the impact it has.

How to Actually Achieve Your Goals This Year

January 2, 2023

One thing for you to think about

This new year, remember: A bunch of small easily-achievable goals are better than one big unachievable goal. Start small.

Better yet: keep that one big ambitious goal, but break it down into a bunch of small easily-achievable goals that gradually build up into the big goal.

One thing for you to ask yourself

Are you pursuing your goals for your benefit or for the benefit of others?

E.g., Are you losing weight for you? Or to impress others? Are you going back to school for you? Or because that's what others told you to do? Are you trying to build a business that you believe in? Or that you want others to believe in?

One thing for you to try this week

It's that time of year, where we all set goals for ourselves and give up on them by February. When you set your goals for the new year, here's something I want you to try: figure out a way to make it fun.

Humans are simple creatures: we keep doing things we enjoy and stop doing things we don't enjoy. So, if you want to get more exercise, or study a new subject, or take up a new hobby—*and stick to it*—the trick is to find a way to make it fun. This can be finding other people to do it with, turning it into a game of some sort, with scores and penalties, or finding a way to integrate it with something you already love doing.

Did You Decide Who You Are? (Or Did Someone Else?)

January 9, 2023

One thing for you to think about

When we fail to choose things for ourselves, we unwittingly outsource our lives to the world around us:

If you don't choose how to use your time, others will choose for you. If you don't choose what is important, others will choose for you. If you don't choose what to think or believe, others will choose for you.

There are only two possible outcomes in this life: Either you choose who you are—or it will be chosen for you.

Many things for you to ask yourself

What behaviors and beliefs have you allowed the world to dictate to you? What behaviors and beliefs are you confident you chose for yourself? How difficult was that choice?

What is the one thing that you are most likely to be wrong about yet unaware of? How can you find out?

One thing for you to try this week

Take your life back. Find something (or someone) in your life that has been dictating too much of your time or thoughts, and take some of it back. This could be as simple as uninstalling apps, taking a day off work, or asking someone else to drive the kids to school. It could be as big as quitting a job, a relationship, a religion.

How to Fix Your Life

January 16, 2023

Two things for you to think about

It is impossible to ruin your life.

If you are able to think then you are able to make different choices. If you are able to make different choices, you are able to improve. If you are able to improve, with enough time, you are able to overcome anything.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Is there something in your life that you have allowed yourself to believe is impossible to fix?

Often, the trick to dealing with an irreparable part of your life is to stop trying to repair it and instead focus on building something elsewhere.

Where else could you find happiness?

One thing for you to try this week

Shame is past-obsessed. One way of overcoming shame is to become future-obsessed.

Stop focusing on what's broken. Instead, focus on what can be built. For one week, focus on what you can add to your life: a new hobby, a new friend, a new skill. Then go make an effort to add it. Pay attention to how that feels. Then let me know how it goes.

How to Benefit From Bad Things

January 23, 2023

One thing for you to think about

The optimal amount of most “bad” things in life is usually greater than zero:

- A little bit of selfishness is better than none (it helps you care for yourself)
- A little bit of anxiety is often better than none (it shows it matters)
- A little bit of self-doubt is definitely better than none (see: Kanye)

What else?

Two things for you to ask yourself

Have you been frustrating yourself by trying to eliminate your negative experiences instead of simply better managing them? If so, how?

Where in your life could you actually benefit from a few more negative experiences? How have you been avoiding them?

Three things for you to try this week

Seek out a productive conflict. Seek out some productive anxiety. Seek out a little bit of productive selfishness. Did the world end? Probably not.

Is This the Cure to Anxiety?

January 30, 2023

Two things for you to think about

It's not people's job to show you what's interesting or great about themselves. It's your job to find it. This is life, not a sales convention.

Curiosity is the cure to social anxiety. When you're focused on discovering *who they are*, you will stop worrying about what they think about *who you are*.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Think of some people in your life that you've written off, felt judged by, or judged yourself—what is something you could learn about them? What could you try to find out about them? What might you have in common?

One thing for you to try this week

You guessed it: this week, go try to find one of those things out.

Does This One Thing Ruin Happiness?

February 6, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Comparison is inevitable. Instead of trying to stop comparing yourself to others, compare yourself to better people and for better reasons.

Comparison gets a bad rap. There's an old saying, "comparison is the thief of happiness." But comparison can be a good thing. Comparing ourselves to others can inspire us and motivate us to be better. What matters isn't the comparison. What matters is the meaning we derive from the comparison.

Three things for you to ask yourself

How have you been comparing yourself to others in a way that is unhelpful and makes you feel worse?

What are the narratives you've constructed around those comparisons (i.e., "I'll never be as good as him," or "She has life so easy," etc.?) How can you change these narratives?

Put another way, how can you compare yourself to others in a way that is helpful, that inspires you?

Three things for you to try this week

Find something admirable and inspiring in somebody. Bonus points if you tell that person that you find it admirable and inspiring. Double bonus points if the thing that you find admirable and inspiring is the same thing that used to make you feel bad about yourself.

How to Create a Healthy Relationship

February 13, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Learn to be happy alone. Then you will never have a reason to associate with people who make you feel worse.

If you set a boundary with someone and they leave. That's good. The boundary worked. The point of boundaries isn't to "fix" relationships. It's to protect your mental and emotional health from toxic relationships. Sometimes that happens by healing the relationship. Other times that happens by losing the relationship.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What relationships in your life are draining you rather than invigorating you?

Think about the dynamic in those relationships that are draining you. How much of it is because you feel that you are giving up too much and/or they are taking too much?

What can you do to stand up to that? What can you do to stand up for yourself?

One thing for you to try this week

Set a boundary in one of your relationships this week. The process is simple:

1. Decide what you will and will not accept in the relationship. Decide on the consequences if the person does not respect your decision.
2. Communicate the expectations clearly, without judgment.
3. If necessary, follow through.

Then email me and tell me how it went.

Life Is What Happens While You're Making Other Plans

February 20, 2023

Two things for you to think about

“Learning more” is the most seductive form of procrastination. “Planning more” is the second most.

Procrastination is merely the avoidance of unpleasant emotions. Get comfortable with unpleasant emotions and the issue of procrastination takes care of itself.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What have you been avoiding through over-planning or telling yourself that you're not ready yet? What would you lose by simply starting anyway? If the answer is “not much,” then guess what? Start anyway.

One thing for you to try this week

We like to imagine we can plan out everything. But usually it's impossible to know exactly what to do by simply sitting around and thinking about it. Sitting around and thinking about it can maybe get you 60-70% of the way there. Often much less.

The other 30-40% requires trying something, having it fail, then adjusting, iterating and improving upon it.

This week, I challenge you to act on something you feel only 60-70% ready for. Then adjust, iterate, and improve. Let me know how it goes.

Don't Try

February 27, 2023

One thing for you to think about

The best things in life are self-evident—i.e., if you have to ask if you have them, then it means you probably don't.

- If you have to ask if you feel happy, then you probably don't.
- If you have to ask if you feel loved, then you probably don't.
- If you have to ask if you are successful, then you're probably not.
- If you have to ask if you are healthy, then you're probably not.
- Etc.

And instead of accepting this simple truth, we avoid it by endlessly overcomplicating the definitions of love, happiness, success, etc.

Three things for you to ask yourself

In what ways have you defined success or happiness for yourself that weren't helpful? What are some simpler and more helpful ways you could define them?

At what points in your life did your constant pursuit of success/happiness/love move you further away from success/happiness/love?

One thing for you to try this week

Stop trying. In one area of your life where you're anxious to achieve success or love or happiness, try simply giving it up for a while.

This will likely terrify you at first. It will feel like a betrayal—as though you are somehow giving up on yourself. But it's often giving up on our deepest desires for love, success, or happiness that makes them more available to us than ever before.

Finding Meaning in the Struggle

March 6, 2023

Two things for you to think about

A happy life is not a life without struggle, it's a life of meaningful struggle.

Nietzsche once wrote, "He, who has a *why* to live for, can bear with almost any *how*."

Three things for you to ask yourself

What are the meaningful struggles in your life? What are the meaningless struggles in your life?

What can you do to convert the meaningless struggles into meaningful ones?

Two things for you to try this week

Choose a new meaningful struggle and engage in it. Then, reply and let me know how it went.

Choose a meaningless struggle and let it go. Just give it up. Then, reply and let me know how it went.

The Secret to Understanding Relationships

March 13, 2023

Two things for you to think about

What you hate in others is usually what you hate most in yourself. The people who drive you crazy do so because they reflect back at you the worst aspects of yourself that you have either tried to deny or overcome.

We judge others by the same standards which we judge ourselves. If we judge ourselves by how much money we make, we will judge others by how much money they make. The values we've adopted for ourselves are the same values we project onto others.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What metrics have you adopted to measure your own self-worth? How have those metrics affected your relationships with others? Have they affected them in a positive way? A negative way? Both?

One thing for you to try this week

Try forgiving someone for not living up to the metric you've established for yourself. Just because you believe you need to do something to deserve love, doesn't mean everyone else does too. The world requires all different types. Ask yourself, "What value can they provide that I cannot?"

"The Mind That Watches Itself"

March 20, 2023

Four things for you to think about

Albert Camus once said, "An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself."

In psychology, "meta-cognition" is a person's ability to be aware of their own thoughts and emotions and have thoughts/emotions about those thoughts and emotions in real time.

Meta-cognition is more casually known as "self-awareness" and is tied to all sorts of positive outcomes, from better emotional regulation to more focus and discipline and overall happiness and well-being.

Self-awareness is at the root of all personal improvement. Until you're aware of your problems, there is little you can do to improve them.

Three things for you to ask yourself

We generally are good at recognizing certain thoughts and emotions within us and bad at others—i.e., we naturally recognize when we feel sad or guilty but get caught off guard by our anger or are in denial about our anxiety.

So, ask yourself: In what circumstances are you good at knowing how you are thinking and feeling? What circumstances are you bad at it?

Another way to think about it: What triggers you?

Three things for you to try this week

There are three common ways to develop meta-cognition or better self-awareness. The first is meditation. Sit and simply observe what goes on inside your own head.

The second is journaling. Write about your thoughts and emotions and then go back and read them as if they were somebody else's. Chances are your own thought process will catch you a bit off guard.

The third is therapy or deep, honest discussion with a loved one. Talk through your emotions and feelings around a sensitive area in your life. This requires the ability to be vulnerable and can take some work.

All three practices are useful. Try them this week and see how it goes.

Why We Hurt Those We Love

March 27, 2023

Two things for you to think about

“People cling to their hates so stubbornly because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.” – James Baldwin

You have a responsibility to heal yourself so that you don't unintentionally harm others.

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what ways have your traumas and baggage harmed those around you? How would your relationships be different if you got a handle on those issues?

One thing for you to try this week

Think of one person you've hurt because of your own issues. Talk to them about it. Don't do it looking for forgiveness or validation or understanding. Simply show an awareness of your own issues. This alone should help the healing process.

Is Your Confidence Real?

April 3, 2023

Three things for you to think about

To unconfident people, narcissism in others looks like confidence. To confident people, narcissism in others looks like a lack of confidence.

A lot of what passes as “life advice” is simply narcissism dressed up like confidence and sold at a premium to unconfident people.

The way to tell the difference between narcissism and confidence is to see how it affects other people. Narcissism, by definition, needs to diminish others in order to maintain a sense of comfort and security. Confidence is a comfort and security regardless of what others say or do.

Two things for you to ask yourself

When in your life have you mistaken narcissism for confidence? What were the effects on your life and your relationships?

One thing for you to try this week

Confidence is not expressed through bravado but rather vulnerability. A confident person does not feel a need to prove that they are right—rather, they are simply comfortable in the fact that they may be wrong.

Find one area of your life that you’ve been terrified to admit the possibility that you may be wrong. Now, actively admit that possibility to others in some way.

Ideally, you will find that people will actually respect you more for admitting that you might be wrong, than they ever would if you demanded they know that you were right.

Why Some Relationships Can't Be Fixed

April 10, 2023

Two things for you to think about

All relationships require work. Good relationships get better with work. Bad relationships need constant work just to stay the same.

Sometimes it can be the constant desire to “fix things” that is breaking them in the first place.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Are you stuck in a bad relationship? It can be a friendship that's always in crisis, a family relationship that is always causing drama, or a romantic relationship that never seems to quite heal.

If so, what's the pattern? What's getting broken repeatedly and who is doing the fixing repeatedly?

One thing for you to try this week

Stop feeling compelled to fix other people or their problems. It may feel cold or heartless at first, but simply allow the people in your life to take responsibility for their own problems. Then see what happens.

How to Find Your Hidden Pain

April 17, 2023

Two things for you to think about

The excesses in our lives are rarely about the excesses—they're about what is being numbed and covered up by the excesses.

When we can't deal with a certain pain, we compensate by compulsively distracting ourselves from that pain. If we do this long enough, we eventually become aware only of the distraction, not the pain.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Instead of focusing on curbing the excess—willing yourself to eat less or gamble less or be less of a crazy stalker—ask yourself what the excess is compensating for. What are you lacking that you're trying to cover up or hide?

The best way to approach this question is to look at what is most excessive in your life. Let's call it 'X'. Now, ask yourself, "What pain would I feel without X?" That's the pain you are running from.

One thing for you to try this week

While the problems caused by excesses are obvious and notable, ask yourself, what can you do to address the underlying pain? Confront the pain and suddenly the excess becomes far more manageable.

Promise yourself that you will do something, no matter how small, to address that underlying pain this week. Then go do it.

The Simplest Fix Is the One Everyone Ignores

April 24, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Most of what we perceive as problems will magically go away after a walk outside and a good night's sleep.

One thing for you to ask yourself

Are you ignoring what's most obvious in your life? It's tempting to drown ourselves in books, videos, and newsletters in an effort to become happier, more productive, when the most obvious adjustments are often the most simple and straightforward.

If you don't sleep enough, it doesn't matter what else you do: your mood will suck and you will struggle with controlling your negative emotions. If you don't eat decently or exercise, you will lack energy and motivation. Ask yourself, what's the simplest thing I can improve?

One thing for you to try this week

Commit to improving that one simple thing this week. It can be as simple as going to bed an hour earlier each night, not drinking alcohol with dinner, not snacking in the afternoon, or just going for a 30-minute walk outside each day.

Commit to it. Do it. Then report the results. You'll probably be surprised.

Are Your Problems Real or Imagined?

May 1, 2023

Two things for you to think about

When we lack real problems in our lives, our mind quickly sets out to imagine some for us.

We invent threats to give ourselves a sense of purpose. We imagine obstacles to create a sense of meaning. We start conflicts with others in order to feel necessary.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What problem(s) in your life is self-invented? Why do you think you invented it? What were you trying to feel?

One thing for you to try this week

Take a problem you've been struggling with in your life and simply stop identifying it as a problem. In a roundabout way, this is a form of acceptance—realizing that something you were resisting and fighting against is actually not worth resisting or fighting over.

This is one of many ways to develop the skill of “letting go.”

The Only Thing You Own Is Your Time

May 8, 2023

Two things for you to think about

There's no such thing as, "I don't have enough time." You always have enough time. You don't have the right priorities.

Living well means spending more time on things that matter. Living poorly means spending more time on things that don't matter. Wisdom is knowing the difference.

A bajillion things for you to ask yourself

What are you spending your time on that doesn't matter? Why are you spending time on it? How can you stop?

What are you *not* spending time on that *does* matter? Why aren't you spending time on it? How can you start?

One thing for you to try this week

Choose one thing you waste time on. Stop doing it for the week. Similarly, choose one thing you value but don't do often enough—make sure to do it this week.

Are Your Limitations Self-Imposed?

May 15, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Whenever someone says you can't do something—what they really mean is that *they* can't do it.

People put limitations on themselves to protect themselves from the disappointment of failure. They then believe they're helping you by sharing those same limitations with you. Therefore, they will feel threatened when you challenge those limitations or prove them wrong.

One thing for you to ask yourself

How many limitations do you feel the people in your life put on you and your potential?

If the answer is anything other than “zero,” then you should think deeply about some of your relationships.

One thing for you to try this week

Think of one of the limitations you've bought into about yourself. Now ask yourself, “What if it's incorrect? What would that mean for my life?” If possible, act this week as though that limitation is wrong. See how it feels.

The Law of Avoidance

May 22, 2023

Three things for you to think about

Manson's Law of Avoidance: "The more something threatens your identity, the more you will avoid it."

You will avoid negative things that threaten your identity like failure, loss, and rejection. But you will also avoid positive things that threaten your identity—even things like success, love, and happiness.

The healthiest identity is a flexible identity. The best answer to the question, "Who am I?" is always "I don't know; let's find out."

One thing for you to ask yourself

In what areas of your life are you rigid about your identity? Chances are, these are the same areas in your life that generate the most stress and conflict.

One thing for you to try this week

Experiment with being wrong about yourself for a week. Maybe you actually do like to cook, even though you think you don't. Maybe you aren't such a good friend, even though you think you are. Maybe you actually would be good at learning a language, if you really tried.

We tend to be most rigid in our identities in areas that we've been hurt the most. People who grow up in poverty tend to have the most inflexible views on money and wealth. People who grow up unattractive tend to have the most rigid views about appearance. These rigid views about ourselves and the world helped us survive at one point, but when held onto for too long, they eventually hold us back.

The Most Important Thing in Your Life

May 29, 2023

Two things for you to think about

The most important things in life—trust, respect, love, happiness—must be painstakingly earned over time, but can be quickly and easily destroyed. As Warren Buffett once said, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.”

One of the simplest mindset shifts you can make to find greater success is simply to extend your time horizon. Measure your major decisions not in months or years but decades. Do that consistently and you will be amazed where you end up.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What if you were optimizing your life for 10 years in the future instead of this month or this year? How would your behaviors change? What new decisions would you make?

One thing for you to try this week

Take one area of your life that you’ve been optimizing for the short term and reorient your measurement of success for the long term.

For example, instead of thinking about losing a few pounds for your vacation next month, think about optimizing your health and well-being for twenty years from now. Instead of starving yourself or doing some crazy fad diet, you’d probably adopt slower-moving, but more sustainable habits that would be more likely to work in the long run.

How to Know What Works for You

June 5, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Approach life advice not like immutable laws but rather like trying on clothes. Some advice will fit you well and flatter you. Other advice will not. Advice that may work great on one person may work terribly on the next. Pick and choose your advice to suit your personality and the occasion. Feel free to discard old advice any time it stops working for you.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What piece of life advice have you repeatedly and desperately tried to make work for yourself but it has never “felt right?”

Did you try to force that advice upon yourself? Did you blame yourself when it didn't work?

One of the hazards of the personal development industry is that many of the people who come to it are insecure and unsure of themselves. So when they receive a piece of advice that doesn't work for them, instead of blaming the advice, they blame themselves.

One thing for you to try this week

Discard a piece of advice that you've tried on but hasn't quite fit. Give yourself permission to let it go.

The One Small Change That Can Change Everything

June 12, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Imagine there was a magic pill that eased anxiety and depression, improved focus and mood, helped you sleep, caused you to lose weight, have better sex, and guaranteed you lived longer. Oh, and it's free and has no known side effects.

That magic pill exists...

It's called "exercise."

Three things for you to ask yourself

Are you exercising enough? At least a little bit every day? If yes, great. Can you incorporate a bit more activity into your day? If not, then why the fuck not?

One thing for you to try this week

Go outside and exercise. No, like right now. Stop reading this email and go fucking do something. I'm serious... Why are you still here? Go walk around the block or something, then tell me how it felt.

What Is the Opposite of Happiness?

June 19, 2023

One thing for you to think about

People often mistake highs for happiness.

Highs are short-lived and intense. They leave you feeling empty afterward. Therefore highs often become addictive.

Happiness is long-lived and calming. It's like pleasant background music to everything else you do in life. Happiness is the side effect of wanting to chase nothing, change nothing.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What highs have you mistaken for happiness in your life? How can you get off the hamster wheel of highs you are currently on?

One thing for you to try this week

Opt out of one of your regular highs this week. Whether it's an obvious high like drinking or smoking, or a more subtle high like family drama or talking shit about a coworker. Simply opt out of it and observe how it affects your state.

Are You Bullsh*tting Yourself?

June 26, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Expertise makes something complex appear simple and intelligible. Bullshit makes something simple appear unnecessarily complex and unintelligible.

Expertise creates value for people who don't know better. Bullshit extracts value from people who don't know better.

One thing for you to ask yourself

In what area(s) of your life are you bullshitting yourself? That is, what areas of your life are you over-complicating and making unnecessarily complex?

One thing for you to try this week

Stop bullshitting yourself. We often over-complicate problems as a way of emotionally coping with the problem. It feels hard, so we convince ourselves that it must be really hard.

If someone breaks our trust, we assume it must be for 27 different reasons and we have to approach the person like a chess match, when really, we're just hiding from the painful fact that this person we care about broke our trust.

What's one way you can stop bullshitting yourself this week?

What If You Are the Asshole?

July 3, 2023

Three things for you to think about

“The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts.” – Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

“Evil people do not believe they are evil, they believe everyone else is evil.”
– David Foster Wallace

“Beware that, when fighting monsters, you yourself do not become a monster... for when you gaze long into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.” – Friedrich Nietzsche

One thing for you to ask yourself

Think of a moral cause you believe in. As a thought experiment: what if that cause was actually making you a worse person? What would that look like? Is that a possibility?

One thing for you to try this week

Perhaps the hardest mental exercise for any of us to do is to take a critical look at our own moral beliefs and question whether they are correct and/or helpful to us and the world. But today, I want to challenge you to do that. Not only is it healthy in a modern, diverse, and democratic society, but it is a necessity for our own mental health.

Think of some belief you hold (or held) as sacred. What if it was wrong? What would that mean? Write out your answer and see how it makes you feel.

How to Get Lucky

July 10, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Luck doesn't just happen, it's created. You can do things to increase the odds of serendipity. Meeting more people makes you lucky. Learning more skills makes you lucky. Being willing to fail makes you lucky. Offering to help others more often makes you lucky.

Two things for you to ask yourself

How often do you blame your circumstances on bad luck? What can you do to add more luck into your life?

One thing for you to try this week

Do something that increases the chances something good happens to you—this could be doing co-workers a favor, volunteering your time on the weekend, taking the time to meet other parents at your child's school, whatever. Think of something you can do, then go do it.

If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy?

July 17, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Intelligence is the ability to understand many ideas. Wisdom is the ability to identify the few ideas worth understanding.

Wisdom without intelligence can still lead to a good, simple life. Intelligence without wisdom is a special (and dangerous) form of stupidity.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Imagine there's a gun to your head—you are only allowed to care about three things in your life. What are they?

Then: why aren't you focusing all of your effort and attention on them already?

One thing for you to try this week

Take one dumb thing in your life that you give way too much attention to—cut it from your life this week. Whether it's alcohol, TikTok, that dumb neighbor who annoys you—whatever it is, cut it out for the week. Then see how you feel.

The Value of Sometimes Being Bored

July 24, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Get comfortable with silence. That way you will only feel the need to speak when you have something important to say.

Get comfortable with boredom. That way you will only feel the need to do something when it is actually worth doing.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Do you compulsively speak or do something to fill the void? Are you in a constant state of self-induced distraction? How does this compulsive behavior affect the other areas of your life?

One thing for you to try this week

Allow yourself to be bored and unstimulated for a while. Do it intentionally. Do it to see what thoughts and feelings come up. Are you anxious that you're wasting time? Are you frustrated that you can't sit still? Are you angry about that thing your mom said when you were seven? What is it? What are you avoiding?

3 Questions That Determine Your Happiness

July 31, 2023

Three things for you to think about

Three questions determine 99% of the happiness in your life:

1. What am I working on and why?
2. Who am I spending time with and why?
3. How well am I treating my body and why?

Everything else is noise.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Guess what, motherfucker? Ask yourself those three questions above. Be excruciatingly honest in your answers.

One thing for you to try this week

Of the three, what area of your life are you neglecting the most and what can you do to change that, today. Yes, find a small thing that you can actually go out and do this week to help remedy that weakness. Let me know how it goes.

The Secret to Your Success

August 7, 2023

Two things for you to think about

The only way to become more successful than most people is to be willing to do something most people aren't willing to do.

If you simply do what everyone else has already done, you will be rewarded with the same mediocre results everyone else has already gotten. The only model for success is to avoid most of the world's models for success.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What is something of value that you are willing to do that most people are not? What is something that you enjoy doing that most people do not? What is something you are naturally good at that most people are not?

One thing for you to try this week

Do something most people are unwilling/unable to do. Then, reap the benefits of it.

What to Do When Other People Aren't Happy for You

August 14, 2023

Two things for you to think about

If something great happens in your life and the people around you aren't happy for you—that's a problem. Find new people.

If something great happens for someone in your life and you aren't happy for them—that's a problem, too.

Two things for you to ask yourself

If there are people in your life who are not happy when good things happen to you, ask yourself why? And then ask yourself why you continue to keep those people in your life.

If you are not happy for the people in your life when good things happen to them, ask yourself why? What assumption or judgment is preventing you from being happy for them?

One thing for you to try this week

Challenge yourself to be happy for someone who you are not accustomed to being happy for. Figure out what it would mean if you were genuinely happy for them. How would you be different? How would your perception of them be different?

The Key to Love, Wealth, and Happiness

August 21, 2023

One thing for you to think about

You cannot negotiate friendship, barter for love, or buy a sense of purpose. Anything meaningful in life is done unconditionally—that is, it's done for its own sake.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Have you been approaching your relationships transactionally? (i.e., “I’ll do this for you but only if you do this for me.”)

Have you been approaching your work transactionally? (i.e., “I’ll do this just so I’ll get money/status/prestige.”)

Have you been dealing with your family transactionally? (i.e., “I sacrificed for you so now you have to do this thing for me in return.”)

If so, how’s that going for ya?

One thing for you to try this week

Challenge yourself to stop approaching something in your life transactionally. If that’s a relationship with a person, then relinquish expectations of ever getting something in return. If that’s your job or a hobby, that means doing it with no expectation of reward—it means doing it simply for the satisfaction of having done it.

The One Habit That Matters More Than Anything Else

August 28, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Curiosity cures: anxiety, ignorance, selfishness, extremism.

Curiosity creates: empathy, compassion, knowledge, growth.

Curiosity prevents: arrogance, judgment, stagnation.

Practice curiosity.

One thing for you to ask yourself

In what area of your life could you benefit from being more curious? It could be about the people around you—it could be about the world or society you live in. It could be about the person you spend the most time with. What would happen if you were more curious?

One thing for you to try this week

Practice curiosity. Practice asking interesting questions—of others, of yourself, of life and the world. Look for the answers. Then ask if those answers may be wrong.

Notice the changes that organically emerge around you.

Never Give This Up, No Matter What

September 4, 2023

Two things for you to think about

The person you have to spend the most time listening to in your life is yourself. Try not to lose their respect.

Validation is approval from others. Self-esteem is approval from yourself. Never sacrifice your self-esteem to gain validation. Validation is easily regained once lost. Self-esteem is not.

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what ways have you sacrificed your self-respect in favor of validation from others? What have the results in your life been?

One thing for you to try this week

What's one area of your life where you can stand up for yourself and prioritize your self-respect and values over the perception or judgment of others? Challenge yourself to do that once this week. What does it look like? What does it feel like?

Email me and let me know.

The Key to Understanding Ourselves (and Others)

September 11, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Listening *well* is not simply hearing the words being said, it's also feeling the emotions being felt. People usually don't want solutions as much as they just want to be understood.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What's one area of your life that you keep trying to "solve" instead of simply understanding? This doesn't have to necessarily be a relationship either. People try to "solve" their health problems with fad diets, when often they first need to develop an awareness of the emotions that enable the problems in the first place.

In my own life, I've often tried to "solve" my creativity by over-planning books and projects, when really I just needed to sit down and create and understand what I was feeling.

One thing for you to try this week

Try being a better listener this week—of others, but also of yourself. Don't just focus on the information, focus on the feeling. Then sit with that feeling. Don't try to fix it or push it away. Just let it be there and then simply seek to understand why it's there.

This is Emotional Intelligence 101 and most of us suck at it.

How You Can Learn From Any Situation

September 18, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Nobody is wrong 100% of the time. Always look for the nugget of truth in those you disagree with.

Nobody is right 100% of the time. Always look for the faults and mistakes in those you agree with.

A bajillion things for you to ask yourself

Are you caught in an “echo chamber?” By that, I mean, does your informational diet consist of the same three or four ideas, over and over and over?

Kevin Kelly says that to be an independent thinker, nobody should be able to guess your opinion about one particular thing based on your opinion of something else. Are you an independent thinker? (Spoiler: almost nobody is.)

How can you challenge your own ideas and assumptions regularly? How can you seek out and find viewpoints you disagree with, and then challenge yourself to find wisdom and truth in them? Why aren't you doing this more often?

One thing for you to try this week

Challenge your assumptions. Find someone or something that contradicts what you believe, then try to see if you can find some truth to it. Aristotle supposedly said, “The mark of an educated mind is the ability to hold two contradictory ideas without necessarily believing either of them.”

Can you hold two contradictory ideas in your mind? Can you withhold belief?

Try it and see. Let me know how it goes.

Emotions Are Overrated

September 25, 2023

Two things for you to think about

There's no such thing as a good or bad emotion—only good or bad reactions to an emotion.

Anger can be productive. Disappointment can be educational. Frustration can be transformative. Happiness can be misleading. Focus less on the emotion itself and more on how you choose to react to it.

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what ways have you overestimated your emotions and let them dictate how you behave and how you see the world? Where has this gotten you?

One thing for you to try this week

Think of a negative emotion you're dealing with right now or have dealt with lately. Now, ask yourself, how could that negative emotion be a good thing? What would it take to make it a good thing? What could you do to make it the best thing that ever happened to you?

Now go do that.

Rule #1: Don't Make Things Worse...

October 2, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Sometimes it's the constant desire to "fix things" that keeps breaking them in the first place.

Sometimes the most useful thing you can do... is nothing. Coincidentally, this is usually also the hardest thing to do.

One thing for you to ask yourself

What problem in your life would potentially improve if you stopped meddling with it? Like a scab that would heal if you stopped picking it, what problem can you stop picking at and see if it gets better on its own?

One thing for you to try this week

Pick an issue in your life and for the week commit to not making it worse. Simply decide that it's not your job to fix it. Try it for a week. Let me know what happens.

How to Deal With Haters

October 9, 2023

Three things for you to think about

Haters occur in proportion to admiration. Doing anything notable will generate both positive and negative reactions of similar intensity.

It's impossible to be a life-changing presence to some people without simultaneously being a complete joke to others.

The best response to hate is to simply improve yourself so much that the hater's criticisms become self-evidently false and empty. The best revenge is to be so undeniably good that there's no need to ever respond.

Two things for you to ask yourself

How many things are you doing in your life right now to get back at somebody or prove them wrong? What would happen if you stopped?

One thing for you to try this week

Let go of the desire for revenge, validation, or vindication. Try focusing on your goals simply for the sake of your goals. See what that feels like and let me know.

The One Skill for Life

October 16, 2023

Two things for you to think about

We must read because it is the only way to truly know what it feels like to be in someone else's mind.

"Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders read." – Harry S. Truman

Two things for you to ask yourself

Reading builds empathy. What have you read that has changed your perspective on life? What could you be reading that might change your perspective on life?

One thing for you to try this week

Read something this week you wouldn't normally read. Intentionally read something that could change your mind about something. Then let me know how it goes.

How to Develop Character

October 23, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Competence is how good you are when there is something to gain. Character is how good you are when there is nothing to gain.

People will reward you for competence. But people will only love you for your character.

Two things for you to ask yourself

It's hard enough to be competent. It's even harder to have character. Do you believe you're someone of character? Are you able to do the right thing or do something well when no one is looking or when there is nothing to gain?

(Don't worry, most of us struggle with this.)

One thing for you to try this week

Do something this week even though you won't be rewarded for it. Or, at least, not rewarded externally. You might be surprised at how rewarding it is internally. Then, let me know how it went.

The Problem With Being "Nice" All the Time...

October 30, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Sometimes being hard on someone is the most helpful thing you can do for them. Sometimes being nice to someone is the most unhelpful thing you can do for them.

Nice is not always the same as good.

Choosing to be nice is strength. Feeling compelled to always be nice is weakness.

Choosing when to be disagreeable, when required, is strength. Always being disagreeable is weakness.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Are you compulsively nice? What are some situations where being nice was unhelpful? What are some situations where being disagreeable would have been better?

One thing for you to try this week

Think of a situation in your life where it's probably helpful for everyone if you were a bit less nice. Try being a bit more confrontational. Bonus points if you don't apologize for it.

Why Comparing Yourself to Others Ruins Everything

November 6, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Don't make the mistake of comparing someone else's external life to your internal life. Each person's life appears coherent and certain from the outside and feels incoherent and uncertain on the inside.

Also, don't make the mistake of assuming somebody doesn't have a messy and uncertain internal life. We all fucking do.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Social comparison is inevitable—we can't help that. What we can help is the nature of that comparison. Are you making unrealistic assumptions about someone else? Are you fully aware of their internal struggles? Are you sure you're better/worse off than they are?

One thing for you to try this week

Think of someone you compare yourself to regularly. In what ways might you be wrong about them? How might they be struggling more than you suspect? What would that mean about you if it were true?

Suddenly that comparison isn't so upsetting, is it?

Where Your Best Opportunities Are Hidden

November 13, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Always question your first assumptions.

The best opportunities often appear to be huge mistakes on the surface. That's why they're opportunities.

The biggest mistakes often appear to be huge opportunities on the surface. That's why they're mistakes.

Four things for you to ask yourself

Think back to the biggest mistakes you've ever made. Did they seem like good ideas at the time? They probably did. Think back to the biggest opportunities you've ever had. Did they seem like risky/dumb moves at the time? They probably did.

Now think about your current life. What seems like an opportunity today that might actually be a mistake? What seems like a mistake today that might actually be an opportunity?

One thing for you to try this week

If you realize you're pursuing a mistake, put the brakes on this week. If you notice an opportunity, go for it this week. In both cases, let me know how it goes.

Thank You

November 20, 2023

One thing for you to think about

Gratitude is like a muscle. When strong, it makes us resilient. When weak, we are easily broken.

You strengthen gratitude through conscious practice. You lose it through unconscious laziness.

Two things for you to ask yourself

This week is Thanksgiving in the United States—a holiday designed to force us to all think about gratitude (and football). What are you grateful for (other than football)? What could/should you be more grateful for?

One thing for you to try this week

While I've got you here, let me express my gratitude to you. Thank you for reading my thoughts, caring enough to open these emails, being courageous enough to send in a response.

Now it's your turn: Express your gratitude to someone this week. Bonus points if it's someone whom you've never expressed it to before. Extra bonus points if there's turkey gravy involved.

The One Thing You Should Never Compromise

November 27, 2023

Two things for you to think about

It's impossible to be your best self without disappointing some people some of the time.

Unhappy people have a tendency to blame you for your happiness. Don't make the mistake of apologizing for it.

Three things for you to ask yourself

When have you apologized for your own happiness? When have you compromised your best self to prevent disappointing someone? How did that go?

One thing for you to try this week

This week, I want you to refuse to compromise on something that is good for your happiness and well-being. If you've been compromising on it for a long time, now is the time to stop. Email me and tell me how it goes.

The Only Way to Deal With Resentment

December 4, 2023

Three things for you to think about

Find a way to forgive your parents. If not for their sake, then for your own.

The Buddha once said that hatred was like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Let go of your resentments. Life is too short.

Forgiveness is refusing to allow past experiences to define how you feel in the present.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Anger and hatred can be powerful fuels in the short run, but are a significant drag on your mental health and happiness in the long run. What resentments have you been holding on to? Are they fueling you or holding you back (or both)? What would happen if you let them go?

One thing for you to try this week

Try forgiving someone! Bonus points if you do it explicitly and tell them so. People never like hearing this piece of advice, but the impact of forgiving those you resent is profound.

The Best Things in Life Are on the Other Side of This

December 11, 2023

Two things for you to think about

Your fear occurs in proportion to the importance of the task. The more something scares you, the more necessary it is to your growth.

The best things in life are found on the other side of your fear.

“Where your fear is, there is your task.” – Carl Jung

Three things for you to ask yourself

What are the things in your life you're most afraid of doing that would probably be good for you? What are the possibilities in your life that make you uncomfortable? What ideas are you avoiding or emotionally rejecting?

One thing for you to try this week

Dive into something that scares you. It could be a task—a difficult conversation, a new hobby or endeavor, a major lifestyle change. It could be reconsidering past judgments about people, ideas, or beliefs. It could be questioning something you absolutely hate the idea of questioning.

The Success Equation

December 18, 2023

Two things for you to think about

The equation for success at anything:

1. Try something and fail.
 2. Learn as much as possible from that failure.
 3. Speed up the feedback loop of useful failures.
 4. Repeat indefinitely.
-

If you want to be successful: find the failure that feels fun.

Most people don't succeed because they're either unwilling to fail or they get tired of failing before those failures pay off.

Four things for you to ask yourself

What do you have fun failing at? How has that paid off for you? What do you keep trying to excel but hate failing at? How has that held you back?

One thing for you to try this week

Give up something where the failure feels uninspiring. Instead, double your focus on something where failure feels fun.

The Paradox of Family

December 25, 2023

One thing for you to think about

The most important thing family teaches you is how to actively love a person you don't necessarily like.

Three things for you to ask yourself

How can you be more patient, empathetic, and graceful with someone close to you who maybe rubs you the wrong way? What would it look like if your relationship with someone close to you had no drama? What would that require?

One thing for you to try this week

Simply be with someone without any desire to change them or control the interaction. Accept who they are. Try to be drama-free.

Oh, and Merry fucking Christmas.

How to Achieve the Extraordinary

January 1, 2024

Two things for you to think about

"I was waiting for something extraordinary to happen, but as the years wasted on, nothing ever did unless I caused it." – Charles Bukowski

Extraordinary results are a matter of repeating ordinary actions over a long period of time. Start with ordinary.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What extraordinary thing are you going to make happen for yourself this year? What are the first small steps you can take towards making it happen this week? What are some realistic expectations for progress you can hold, to prevent yourself from getting discouraged and burning out (by February)?

One thing for you to try this week

Take that initial step towards something extraordinary. Share the goal with me and the list. Next week I'll compile some of the best/most common answers.

The Worst Thing You Could Ever Try to Be

January 8, 2024

One thing for you to think about

Statistically speaking, a “normal person” is physically unhealthy, emotionally anxious/depressed, socially lonely, and financially in debt. Fuck being normal.

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what areas of your life have you felt pressured to be “normal?” In which of these areas has that pressure caused problems for you?

One thing for you to try this week

Be weird. Unapologetically weird.

The Relationship Quality Test

January 15, 2024

One thing for you to think about

The quickest way to gauge the quality of your relationships is to make a positive change. The people who are with you for the right reasons will behave the same but the people with you for the wrong reasons will quickly make themselves known.

Two things for you to ask yourself

If harming yourself earns you approval from the people around you, what does that say about the people around you? If helping yourself upsets the people around you, again, what does that say about the people around you?

One thing for you to try this week

Distance yourself from someone who has issues with your positive efforts. Take tangible steps to remove their influence from your life.

The Root of Wisdom

January 22, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Never base your identity on politics—the world will eventually change, but you won't.

Wisdom is when you stop over-investing in every shiny new idea, feeling, or person that comes along.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Where have you gained wisdom throughout your life? Chances are the amount of wisdom you have in an area of your life is proportional to the depth of your failures and pain in that area, as well. Is that true?

Now, ask yourself: where in my life do I likely have the *least* amount of wisdom today?

One thing for you to try this week

Simply be aware of where in your life you've accumulated some wisdom and where in your life you lack it. Then adjust your behavior accordingly. This will not only make you more effective, but it has the side benefit of preventing you from coming across as an asshole.

Never Apologize for This...

January 29, 2024

Two things for you to think about

There's no such thing as a bad emotion—only bad reactions to emotions.

Unhappy people will often be upset by your happiness. Don't ever make the mistake of apologizing for it.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What emotions do you feel you must apologize for? How has that affected your life, your decisions, and your relationships?

One thing for you to try this week

Feel whatever you feel unapologetically. I give you permission—let it out. You're welcome.

The Paradox of Cringe

February 5, 2024

Two things for you to think about

If you cringe at your former self, that's good—it means you've grown. Never stop cringing.

It's impossible to be a life-changing presence to some without also being a complete joke to others.

One thing for you to ask yourself

What has your fear of embarrassment held you back from doing? What if you simply... well, didn't give a fuck?

One thing for you to try this week

Go be cringe this week. I give you permission. And I promise I won't post about it on TikTok...

Would You Date Yourself?

February 12, 2024

Two things for you to think about

The only real dating advice is self-improvement. The best way to meet an incredible person is to become an incredible person.

Would you date or marry yourself? If not, then that's a fucking problem.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Are your expectations of your partner in line with your expectations of yourself? Are those expectations realistic?

One thing for you to try this week

Here in the US, it's Valentine's Day this week, a (supposedly) romantic holiday. Use this week to reflect on your romantic relationships (or lack of them) and align your actions with your expectations. I've observed over the years that many people who are chronically single or struggling in relationships, it's because they inaccurately gauge what they're giving and what they're getting in return.

Achieving Success Is Boring

February 19, 2024

One thing for you to think about

The older I get, the more I realize that success at most things isn't about finding the one trick or secret nobody knows about.

It's consistently doing the boring, mundane things everyone knows about but is too unfocused/undisciplined to do.

Get good at boring.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Where in your life do you struggle because of a simple inability to be bored on occasion? Is the inability to be bored perhaps distracting you from something uncomfortable?

One thing for you to try this week

Go be boring. It's not so bad. I promise.

3 Critical Life Skills No One Teaches You

February 26, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Three critical life skills that nobody teaches you: how to ask for honest feedback, how to take honest feedback, and how to give honest feedback.

You can't make someone change if they don't want to change. All you can do is give feedback that you hope will one day spark change.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Who could you give better feedback to in your life? Who could you receive more feedback from in your life?

Two things for you to try this week

Give someone honest feedback. Ask someone (could be the same person) for feedback. Let me know how it goes.

Stop Letting People's Judgments Hold You Back

March 4, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Do the thing you have been avoiding. If you succeed, you will achieve something great. If you fail, you will learn something great. Either way, something great happens.

Never let yourself be held back by other people's fears. People criticize what they are afraid to do themselves. Because bold action reminds them of their own inaction.

Two things for you to ask yourself

If you're afraid to be criticized: why do you care about the opinions of those who are too timid to do it themselves?

If you are the criticizer: does tearing down someone who has the courage you lack make you better?

Three things for you to try this week

Stop criticizing. Stop being held back by criticism. Do something this week that you have let the fear of criticism hold you back from doing.

Do You Doubt Yourself? Good.

March 11, 2024

Two things for you to think about

There is no amount of money, love, or success that will permanently erase your insecurity or self-doubt—instead, it will just give it bigger stakes.

You don't remove self-doubt. You learn to act despite it.

Do you doubt yourself? Good. There's only one way to find out if your doubts are true—do it anyway.

Four things for you to ask yourself

Where in your life do you doubt yourself? Do you let it hold you back? Why? What's the worst thing that could happen?

One thing for you to try this week

Do something despite doubting you can do it. You might surprise yourself.

How to Stop Being Weak

March 18, 2024

One thing for you to think about

Being an asshole is a weak person's idea of strength. Complaining is their connection.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Do you overcompensate with negativity? If so, how's that working for you?

One thing for you to try this week

Stop complaining for the week. I know, it's fucking hard. But do it. No complaining. No talking shit about people. For one week. You can do it. I believe in you.

The One Competition Where Everyone Loses

March 25, 2024

Two things for you to think about

People incapable of connection see relationships as competitions.

But when you keep a scorecard, everyone loses.

The only way to win a power struggle in a relationship is to refuse to compete.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Are you viewing any of your relationships as power struggles or competition?
Are you keeping a scorecard? Is viewing the relationship that way actually making both of you happier?

One thing for you to try this week

Stop viewing a relationship in your life as a power struggle. See what happens.

Why Other People Will Try to Hold You Back

April 1, 2024

Two things for you to think about

People will try to put the same limitations on you that they put on themselves. Don't mistake their insecurities for your ceiling.

To prove people wrong, don't make a counterargument; *be* a counterargument.

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what ways have you allowed other people's limitations to hold you back? Why do you think you let it happen?

One thing for you to try this week

Say "fuck it" to one prior limitation you accepted for yourself. Then, let me know how it goes.

The Key to Self-Discipline

April 8, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Discipline is conditioning your brain to not give a shit if it's hard or it hurts or it sucks.

If it needs to get done, it gets done.

"Doing hard things" is a habit that must be practiced, or, like all habits, it will be lost.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What hard things have you practiced doing in your life? What areas of your life could you lean a bit more into doing hard things?

One thing for you to try this week

Do something difficult this week, simply for the sake that it's difficult and uncomfortable.

The Harsh Truth Everyone Needs to Hear

April 15, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Your anxiety lies to you. It tells you the world is going to laugh at you when in reality no one gives a shit.

“You’ll stop worrying what people think about you when you realize how seldom they do.” – David Foster Wallace

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what ways are you overestimating how much people care about something you do or don’t do? How has this inflation in your mind affected your life?

One thing for you to try this week

Ask people if they would care if you did something you’re nervous about doing, then, let me know when they don’t give a shit.

The Wisdom of Silence

April 22, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Wisdom isn't knowing exactly what to say. Wisdom is knowing when to shut up.

"Don't talk, unless you can improve upon the silence." – Jorge Luis Borges

Three things for you to ask yourself

When did you pretend to know something you didn't know? When have you spoken about something that you shouldn't have? When did you try to impress someone who didn't need to be impressed?

One thing for you to try this week

Try fighting the impulse to speak up and express something that doesn't necessarily need to be expressed. Observe. See how it feels.

Why Good People End Up in Bad Relationships

April 29, 2024

Two things for you to think about

We are often drawn to chaotic romantic partners because their chaos guarantees that we will feel needed.

We can become insecure around stable romantic partners because we worry that they'll never fully need us. And that's because: they won't.

Three things for you to ask yourself

How much unnecessary drama have you tolerated in your life, simply because it makes you feel needed? What would happen if you stopped tolerating that drama? How would it make you feel?

One thing for you to try this week

Set a boundary around drama or chaos in your life. Refuse to tolerate it. See what happens.

Be Impossible to Offend

May 6, 2024

Two things for you to think about

One of the most beneficial traits in love and in life: be nearly impossible to offend.

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what areas of your life have you allowed yourself to feel inferior? Why do you think you've let that happen?

One thing for you to try this week

Make a conscious choice to stop being upset or offended by something this week. Let me know how it goes.

These Changes Often Have the Greatest Impact

May 13, 2024

Two things for you to think about

When I was 20, I promised myself I'd never be a boring old person who never drank, went to bed at 9PM, and stayed home on weekends.

Now, at 40, I wonder why I waited so long to start.

We imagine our problems as impossibly complex, but really, a few simple changes—better sleep, modest exercise, less drinking—can help solve anything.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What simple lifestyle habits are potentially holding you back? What are your justifications for those habits? What are a few simple changes you can make to start undoing some of them?

One thing for you to try this week

Make one small lifestyle change this week. Note how much it affects everything else. Why did you wait so long to start?

Life's Most Important Skill

May 20, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Some people will love you for who you used to be. Others will love you for who they wish you to be. Few will love you for who you are.

Learn to see the difference.

A good romantic partner makes everything in life easier. A bad romantic partner makes everything more difficult. Therefore, relationship skills are some of the most important skills for life.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Are the people in your life there for the right reasons? If not, why are they there?

One thing for you to try this week

Take action this week to distance yourself from someone who is not in your life for the right reasons. It could be as simple as canceling plans, ignoring a text, or filling your day with other activities.

Why We Avoid Taking Action

May 27, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Speak as if you know what you're talking about. Listen as if you don't.

Act as a way to find out.

Most people wait until they are certain before they act. But you will never be certain of anything until you act.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What are you waiting around for certainty for before acting? Is that certainty ever realistically going to come without doing anything to find out?

One thing for you to try this week

Take action this week on something without being certain of the result. Let me know what you learn.

Do This and You'll Fail at Life

June 3, 2024

Two things for you to think about

If you're not failing, you're not learning. If you're not learning, you're not growing. If you're not growing, you're not living.

Living without failing is failing to live.

Improving your life is a matter of experiencing desirable failures.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What would you do with your life if you had zero risk of failure? In what ways have you short-changed yourself by avoiding failure in your life?

One thing for you to try this week

Go fail. Spectacularly, preferably. But any failure will do. Then let me know how it went.

The Biggest Waste of Time in Life

June 10, 2024

Two things for you to think about

The second biggest waste of time is to try helping someone who asked for help but doesn't actually want it.

The biggest is to be that person who asked.

The person who asks for help and doesn't want it, and the person who gives it even though it isn't wanted, both want the same thing: to feel *seen*.

Three things for you to ask yourself

Do you really want help or do you want attention and validation? Do you really want to help or do you also want attention and validation?

How much more time are you willing to waste?

Two things for you to try this week

Stop wasting time on people who don't actually want it. Stop wasting time waiting for someone to give you what you don't want to receive.

Why You're Not Motivated

June 17, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Motivation is not the cause of action, it is the result. You want to be motivated? Get up and go do something.

“Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work.”
– Chuck Close

Two things for you to ask yourself

What have you been putting off by waiting for inspiration? What can you do to create inspiration instead?

One thing for you to try this week

Do one thing that builds inspiration for yourself. Let me know how it goes.

This Gives You Power Over Your Life

June 24, 2024

One thing for you to think about

Responsibility is power.

When you decide someone else is responsible for your life—be it a person, a job, a government—you give them power over you.

When you decide you are responsible for your life, you empower yourself.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Where have you neglected to take responsibility in your life? What have the consequences of that lack of responsibility been?

One thing for you to try this week

Take responsibility for a problem in your life that you've been avoiding taking responsibility for. Let me know how it goes.

Would You Rather Be Right or Happy?

July 1, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Toxic people get all the attention. Healthy people get all the happiness.

Pessimists get to sound smart. Optimists get to actually change and grow.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Would you rather have attention than happiness? Does this explain any of the recurring problems within your life?

One thing for you to try this week

Give up the desire to be right, to be heard, to be appreciated. See what happens. You might be surprised.

Doing This Is Never Worth It...

July 8, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Don't ever tolerate disrespect because you want someone to like you. Not only will they not like you, but you will quickly stop liking yourself.

People unconsciously look to see how we feel about ourselves to know how they should feel about us. The best way to win respect is to respect yourself first.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Are you sacrificing your self-respect for the sake of someone else's approval? If so, how soon can you stop?

One thing for you to try this week

Act with self-respect as your highest priority. Don't apologize for it, either.

Shut Up and Be Grateful

July 15, 2024

One thing for you to think about

Your ancestors survived centuries of floods, wars, famine, slavery, and plagues for you to sit on the toilet and compare your life to people on the internet you've never met.

Be grateful.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What could you be more grateful for? How much worse could things be? Yes, there are problems, but what other time would you want to be alive, honestly?

One thing for you to try this week

Practice finding one thing to be grateful for each morning this week. Notice how it affects your mood and attitude. Let me know how it goes.

Your Life Will Be Chosen for You...

July 22, 2024

Four things for you to think about

If you don't choose your values, others will choose them for you.

If you don't choose your beliefs, others will choose them for you.

If you don't choose how to use your time, others will choose it for you.

When you choose what to watch or read, you are choosing your future thoughts and perspectives. Only consume what you'd like to become.

Two things for you to ask yourself

When have you neglected to choose for yourself who you want to be? What were the repercussions?

One thing for you to try this week

Challenge yourself to reject a belief that you hold that may not be yours. If it's not yours, where did it come from?

The Advice Nobody Wants But Everybody Needs

July 29, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Develop the ability to be disliked and free yourself from the prison of other people's opinions.

"You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, some time in your life." – Victor Hugo (often mistakenly attributed to Churchill)

One thing for you to ask yourself

What are three things in your life that you are willing to be disliked for? If you have trouble answering that question, that is a problem.

One thing for you to try this week

Lean into the willingness to be disliked for something. Notice the freedom it gives you. Let me know how it goes.

The Quickest Way to Improve Your Life

August 5, 2024

Two things for you to think about

A few pursuits will generate most of your happiness. A few people will meet most of your needs. A few projects will result in most of your success.

What if the answer to improving your life isn't to do more? What if the answer is to focus on less?

One thing for you to ask yourself

What can you cut out of your life that will immediately improve it?

One thing for you to try this week

Cut one thing out of your life that dramatically improves it. Let me know how it goes.

What Are You Waiting for?

August 12, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Most people tell themselves that if they felt better, they'd do the thing—when it's actually doing the thing that makes you feel better.

At some point, you realize that the permission you've been waiting for all along was your own.

Two things for you to ask yourself

What have you wasted time waiting for “the right” time before doing? What have you excused or neglected in your own life for no other reason than you felt undeserving of it?

One thing for you to try this week

Give yourself permission. Fuck it. Fuck everybody. It's your life. Go live it. Then let me know how it goes.

The Worst Metaphor for Life You've Ever Read

August 19, 2024

Too many things for you to think about

Life advice is like clothing. Try it on and if it doesn't fit, discard it and try something else. And when you grow, don't be surprised when the old advice needs to be changed out for the new.

Like clothing, when you finish with a piece of advice that no longer fits, don't throw it away, pass it on to someone else that it might fit.

We're just going to keep this clothing metaphor going. Like clothing, bad quality advice will only last a few weeks, while high quality advice will last a lifetime.

Like clothing, some advice quickly goes out of style, while other advice is timeless.

Is it over yet? Is it safe to come out? Is the clothing metaphor finally gone?

Like poorly-made clothing... even when you throw away bad advice, it just sits in the landfill and destroys the environment for everybody else.

Oh my god, I think it's finally over... or wait... like clothing, when you strip yourself of all prescriptive behaviors and norms, who are you really, but a naked soul, bared to the world?

One thing for you to ask yourself

I don't even remember what I was talking about. Do you?

Two things for you to try this week

Wear clothing. Please. And don't overuse bad metaphors.

This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things

August 26, 2024

Three things for you to think about

Worrying is a cheap replacement for caring. Complaining is a cheap replacement for fixing. Outrage is a cheap replacement for supporting.

It's easy to tear down. It's much harder to build up.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Where I grew up, we used to say someone was, "All sizzle, no steak." It meant they made a lot of noise but never actually did anything. Are you all sizzle and no steak? If so, why?

One thing for you to try this week

Try being constructive towards a problem you've made a lot of fuss but failed to do anything about. See how much further that gets you. Then let me know how it goes.

The Most Useful Trait in Life

September 2, 2024

Two things for you to think about

The trick to self-improvement is to make plenty of mistakes... but to never make the same one twice.

The most useful trait you can train within yourself: to stop seeing failure as a bad thing.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Where in your life have you been too afraid of failure? What has that fear prevented you from accomplishing?

One thing for you to try this week

Go fail at something. Spectacularly, preferably. Then let me know how it went.

How We Secretly Trap Ourselves

September 9, 2024

Two things for you to think about

The more stimulation you have, the more you will feel you need. Entertainment can become its own form of prison.

“If you are immune to boredom, there is literally nothing you cannot accomplish. It is the key to modern life.” – David Foster Wallace

Two things for you to ask yourself

Where are you most addicted to stimulation and entertainment? Is it harming you?

One thing for you to try this week

Challenge yourself to put away a piece of entertainment for the week. Unplug the video games. Block the social media site. Stop bingeing that show. See what happens.

Two Things You Are Not

September 16, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Beliefs are theories. Actions are experiments. Emotions are feedback. Life is a science and its objective is growth.

Some people are ruled by their beliefs—they will torture themselves for the sake of an idea. Others are ruled by their emotions—they will change their mind a thousand times in search of what feels good.

A healthy mind acknowledges both, but is ruled by neither.

Two things for you to ask yourself

When have you allowed your emotions to rule your life? What were the consequences?

When have you been held prisoner by a false belief? What were the consequences?

One thing for you to try this week

Challenge a ruling emotion or belief in your life. Refuse to be controlled by it. See what happens.

The Essence of Life

September 23, 2024

Two things for you to think about

No one is going to stand up at your funeral and say, "He fucked like a wildebeest and had the best golf swing I've ever seen."

Life is about loving people, not impressing them.

Acts of love are valid only if they're performed without conditions or expectations.

Three things for you to ask yourself

When was the last time you loved someone unconditionally, without expecting anything in return? It could be a partner, a family member, a friend, a colleague, someone you cared for.

If your answer is never, what is it you expect from the people you love? Why do you seek these things from them?

One thing for you to try this week

Let go of your expectations of a person you love. See how that changes your relationship.

The Morning Routine No One Told You About

September 30, 2024

One thing for you to think about

The real "morning routine" nobody tells you about:

1. Eat a reasonable dinner, no caffeine or alcohol.
2. Stop looking at screens around 9PM.
3. Get into bed by 10PM.
4. Relax, meditate, do some light reading.
5. Wake up early feeling fucking great and ready to go.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Think of the last time you woke up feeling refreshed. What had you done the night before? Now think of the last time you woke up feeling like a bag of ass—how many substances were involved?

One thing for you to try this week

Try a week of prioritizing sleep above everything else. Eat a reasonable dinner, no caffeine or alcohol. Stop looking at screens at 9PM, get into bed by 10PM. You'll feel lame at first, but try it and let me know how you feel afterward (you're welcome.)

This Question Means Everything

October 7, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Wanting to be happy and feel loved and have a great job means nothing—we all want that.

Knowing what you're willing to give up for those things means everything—it determines who you are.

The person you marry is the person you fight with. The house you buy is the house you repair. The dream job you take is the job you stress over.

Everything comes with an inherent sacrifice—whatever makes us feel good will also inevitably make us feel bad.

One thing for you to ask yourself

What pain do you want to sustain? What are you willing to struggle for?

One thing for you to try this week

Embrace the pain you want in your life this week. Let me know what difference it makes.

Read This If You Think the World Is Cheating You...

October 14, 2024

Two things for you to think about

“Someone who thinks the world is always cheating him is right. He is missing that wonderful feeling of trust in someone or something.” – Eric Hoffer

Trust people. Most of them are good and while you might get hurt occasionally, the alternative of distrusting everyone is far worse.

Two things for you to ask yourself

When have you paid the price of distrusting people? What have you missed out on?

One thing for you to try this week

Be a bit more trusting. Protect yourself just a little bit less. See what happens.

Are You Ruining Your Life?

October 21, 2024

Two things for you to think about

All the grit, persistence, and motivation in the world won't do you any good if you're working on the wrong thing. In fact, it will do the opposite.

Choosing what to pursue is more important than choosing how to pursue it. Make sure you're facing the right direction before you start running.

Three things for you to ask yourself

What are you putting most of your energy and focus into? Is that the best place to put it? Is it moving you towards your desired life or away from it?

One thing for you to try this week

Embrace the pain you want in your life this week. Let me know what difference it makes.

This Is Why Change Is So Hard

October 28, 2024

One thing for you to think about

Growth is usually painful to some degree. That's because growth requires loss—a loss of your old values, your old behaviors, your old loves, your old identity.

Therefore, growth often has a component of grief to it.

Two things for you to ask yourself

In what ways has growth been painful for you? Have you let yourself grieve the loss?

One thing for you to try this week

Honor and remember your former self, not with shame or judgment or embarrassment, but with compassion and dignity. Then let me know how it goes.

Friends Over Lovers

November 4, 2024

Two things for you to think about

Imagine this: You're single. Forever. The end.

Now imagine this: You have no friends. Forever. The end.

Many of us misinterpret our need for strong friendships as a need for a romantic relationship.

You can be happy without a partner. You cannot be happy without friends.

Recent studies have shown that the highest number of successful long-term romantic relationships begin... you guessed it, by meeting through friends.

Start with friends.

Two things for you to ask yourself

Have you been over-prioritizing romantic relationships over social relationships? If so, how has that worked out for you?

One thing for you to try this week

Go make a friend. No, I'm serious. Go invite someone to do something social. Then tell me how it went.

A Special Gift for You

November 11, 2024

Two things for you to think about

You can have community without accountability but you can't have accountability without community.

Surround yourself with the right people and change becomes inevitable.

This newsletter reaches over a million people in 221 countries.

This is one hell of a global community.

Three things for me to ask you

What is your favorite part about this newsletter? What is your least favorite part?

If I sent this newsletter twice a week, would you still read it? Daily?

One request for you this week

Share the biggest lesson or insight you've gained from receiving this email each week. I couldn't be more thrilled and grateful for the community we've built here and I want to continue to build it to become even better. Here's to the next 100!

Join the Community

Sign up for my newsletter, *Your Next Breakthrough*, and receive one idea, one question, and one exercise each week that could spark your next breakthrough. No fluff, no filler, no BS. Just five minutes each week that might change everything.

Thank you.

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