

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO

*MAXIMALLY
GOOD LIFE*

*IN
UNCERTAIN TIMES*

10 foundations & 140 lessons
from real life

BY
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PREFACE

I. WHY THIS GUIDE?

Since I was 13 years old (when I got struck by puberty) up to my 30th year, I hated myself and my body. I felt inferior to others, insecure, I was ashamed of how I looked (that I was fat) and what others thought of me (all the worst). I was a helpless prisoner of my own, utterly irrational fears.

In order to escape these fears and mental pain, I became more and more introverted and ran away from the real world to the maximum. I spent 90% of my time locked away in my room, hidden from the world - especially once I started college, where I didn't have to go to lectures. If it wasn't really necessary, I didn't venture outside. I got lost in the world of books, movies, the internet... Fiction. I dreamed about how I would succeed as a writer because I equated success in writing with not having to deal with the outside world.

If I had to go outside, I always wore at least three layers of clothing (even in the summer) to hide my body as much as possible, because I hated it and was ashamed of it. I had a huge problem looking other people in the eye because I convinced myself that I was less worthy than them. I was ashamed to see my reflection in their eyes. When I saw my photo in a swimsuit at the age of sixteen, I was so disgusted with myself that I didn't go to the seaside for the next fifteen years because I was terrified of exposing myself in front of others at the beach.

If I had to talk to others, I mostly resorted to my main defense mechanism: humor. I had a talent for making people laugh, which came in handy as I was able to keep them far enough away from me emotionally that way. I especially loved sarcasm, which is always the defense of deeply insecure people. Except for one or two, I never let anyone near, not even my parents (*especially* not my parents).

I threw more than fifteen years of my life away because of irrational fears, including my entire twenties. I will never get them back. When I turned thirty, I was still living at home with my parents, a virgin, unable to go out and meet other people or capable of living out on my own. I was increasingly burdened by the fact that I was not "normal". I felt more and more distant from "normalcy". I was no longer convinced that I would ever be able to *be* "normal".

To compensate for all this insecurity and feelings of inferiority, I convinced myself I was worth more than "normal", "average" people (my mantra was, "He, who is dissatisfied with little, is more than ready for a lot."). But that was a lie. In reality, I was just a sad, frightened, deeply wounded little boy who - locked in a room in his parents' apartment - found himself disgusting and unworthy of anyone ever loving him. Whatever bad things anyone else tells me in life, it won't be half as painful or toxic as what I was saying to myself back then.

It wasn't until I was in my late twenties that I slowly - *very* slowly - began to wake up and occasionally even manage to take a step in the right direction. Deep down, I began to realize that I needed to act, that if I didn't improve my situation soon, that I would also end up wasting my thirties and forties, and then it would be too late for a change. Today, I know that it is *never* too late to make positive changes in one's life and that years are just an arbitrary number - but I did not know that at the time.

Still, I didn't make any significant progress for a few years - until I was almost 31 years old. It was only then that it really hit me: if I wait for others to help me and save me (get me out of this hole I was sinking in), I won't see any change. No one will come to my rescue. Only I can save myself or get stuck in that hole forever. The first thing you need to do when you really realize you're in a deep hole is to stop digging.

Once that truth penetrated my hard skull, everything changed. I slowly but surely dug myself out of my hole and never went back. The process was long and arduous, but the results were worth a thousand times all the effort and sacrifice.

The key (most revolutionary) changes took me about three years because I consciously chose to improve things slowly, yet for good. Whatever I did had to lead to lasting results. During this first period, I lost weight slowly from 90+ kilos to 75-76 kilos, drastically improved my self-esteem (with intense work on myself - see Foundation 1), built rock-solid self-discipline, found the love of my life and became a fully functional, proactive, "normal" part of society. In the years that followed, I then consolidated and refined the structure I had built.

Today I am 42 years old (43 in May) and have been on this path of self-improvement altogether for over 12 years. I have been happily married for almost a decade, still weigh around 76 kilos and feel fit, lean and strong physically, mentally and spiritually.

I accept my body as it is (although this acceptance will always be a challenge because childhood scars run very deep), I accept myself and others as they are (although this acceptance will always be a challenge because childhood scars run very deep), I work regularly on myself and improving relationships with myself and others, (when there is no global pandemic) I go to the seaside regularly every year (often to a nudist beach) and have no problem exposing myself in front of others (although this will always be a challenge because childhood scars run very deep).

I feel equal to everyone and I can look everyone in the eye without a problem (although this will always be a challenge because the scars from childhood run very deep). For the most part, I don't bother with what others think of me and I'm not a prisoner of outside thinking/judgements (although it will always be a challenge because the childhood scars run very deep).

I live life on my own terms (and I work hard to make it work for me), the way it suits me best, with minimal stress and maximum well-being.

I can honestly and calmly say that I live a good life. My goal now is to share my lessons and experiences to help as many people as possible to live a "good" life. Hence this guide.

II. THE AIM OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is a total labor of love.

Its aim is to give as many people as possible a clear pathway to a good life, with the lessons I have learned and tested myself in practice and which I know work. Maybe not all the lessons for everyone, but definitely a lot of

lessons for a lot of people. I am convinced that just about *anyone* can find at least some lessons in the guide that can (significantly) improve their lives for the better.

This guide is a resource I wish I had when I began my path of self-improvement (that's why it is written as if I am talking to myself – my recommendations to myself for how to achieve a good life). It is not dogmatic or indoctrinated in any way. It is completely independent, 100% candid, with no holding back and set to be maximally useful and comprehensive, in a way that you don't need any additional outside help, mine or anyone else's if you don't want to. You just need your own determination, energy and self-initiative to improve and make your life "good". I still use this guide regularly.

The aim of the guide is also (and always has been) to be accessible to everyone free of charge and unconditionally. It took a lot of hours and a lot of thought to structure and prepare, but:

If this guide truly improves the life of just one person, its aim is achieved.

I am convinced, though, that the guide can and will improve the life of much more than just one person. It must therefore be freely accessible and as widespread as possible among the people.

Therefore, I ask everyone who reads it (yes, you) to share it further with at least one other person who you think could benefit from the guide. It may change their life – even if it doesn't change yours. Think of this guide as my way of paying forward. Now pay forward yourself, too, unconditionally. As Gandhi says:

Be the change you want to see in the world.

The guide you are reading is (God only knows) not the first or the only such book/resource or "voice" out there. There is a small sea of similar "voices". Some are more useful, others less so. What I am convinced of is that this guide is one of the few "voices" that is set truly comprehensively and that it is definitely worth "listening" to. As I said, a lot of work, knowledge and reflection went into its design to make it really maximally useful in practice.

As a developing, self-loving person, you have a duty to yourself to find and listen to as many different "voices" as possible - especially those that have already been successfully challenged in practice - to learn as much as possible from them and then decide for yourself what is useful for you and what isn't. The present guide is one such battle-hardened voices. **Use what works for you and ignore the rest.** Even if you can't see the whole forest for the trees (or the idea/size of the forest scares you), you can always use an individual tree to light a fire that will warm you and keep you alive on the darkest, coldest nights.

III. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE (for best results)

For maximum benefit and effect, I recommend the following order:

1. First, read the Guide from start to finish. It is written so that it can be read quickly and easily. Put time into understanding the whole picture it tries to paint. It is not meant for you to internalize »the whole« on this first try, but it will help a lot if you have »the whole« in front of you before you go to step 2.
2. Once you have the whole story in your head, focus on studying and regularly implementing in practice the foundations and lessons most relevant to you. There are 140 lessons in all, and I don't expect each one to be relevant to you. They are not and will never be all for everyone. Find the ones that are relevant to you now and work on them. Each lesson can be done independently, but of course it is better to do several of them at the same time. Every now and then, peruse the guide again, because the non-relevant lessons may (in time) become relevant to you (maybe you are not ready for them yet, etc.)

But beware: although all foundations and lessons are important (otherwise they would not be in the guide), Foundations 1-3 (at least initially) are by far the most important. Your primary goal is to become as "masterful" as possible in these three foundations. They are the basis on which you can build a truly "good" life.

3. Regularly/daily work on your selected foundations and lessons **in parallel, not one after the other!** What I mean is: it is not meant for you to first master Foundation 1 (and the lessons within it) and only *then* go to Foundation 2. It is imperative that you implement the chosen foundations (and the lessons within them) **simultaneously**.

Perform at least a few lessons from at least a few foundations consistently each day (devoting most of your time to Foundations 1-3 at least initially).

Key: do not give up if (or when) things get hard! This will be completely counter-productive as they are *meant* to get hard. You become stronger mainly through all challenges that you overcome on your way. **Exercise makes a master only if the master makes the exercise, so practice, practice, practice!** Every day as much as you can. As many days a week, month, year as you can. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. **It will only work if you work. The good life knows no shortcuts.**

Regularly implementing the lessons in practice will boost your self-confidence and acceptance of yourself and others, and drastically increase your personal and professional productivity. You will be like a small lump of snow at the top of a hill that starts to slowly roll down towards the bottom, becoming bigger and more unstoppable as it does.

4. The guide is intentionally written to be as short, concise and useful as possible on a daily basis. It's meant to be always at hand to help you cope with life's challenges when you need help the most. That is why it is so short. In its current form it contains (I hope) everything essential, but far from everything, of course, because otherwise it could easily be two hundred or even three hundred pages long.

Whatever you decide to do with this guide and its contents, never forget:

**It doesn't matter how old you are in years.
It is never too late for you to make positive changes in your life.
It is never too late for you to make your life better – and “good”.**

Damjan Struna
Ljubljana, 2021

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LIST OF ALL FOUNDATIONS AND LESSONS

FOUNDATION 1: LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF AS YOU ARE – BECOME AND REMAIN INDEPENDENT

- ✓ LESSON #1: Without a firm Foundation 1, all other foundations will only work in the short term.
- ✓ LESSON #2: Establishing and maintaining a healthy and loving relationship with yourself is the only right way to achieve lasting results.
- ✓ LESSON #3: The first step towards a good life is to figure out (know) exactly who you are at this moment.
- ✓ LESSON #4: Grieving for who you are at the moment (and who you are not) is a necessary step to successfully continue the process. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable.
- ✓ LESSON #5: There is no miracle cure, just hard work.
- ✓ LESSON #6: You can't (live) a good life until you know who you want to be. The second step in the direction of a good life is therefore to figure out (know) as clearly as possible who you want to be.
- ✓ LESSON #7: Don't be afraid to dream big!
- ✓ LESSON #8: When you know who you want to be (when you clearly see your “future self”), you have to do something in that direction every day.
- ✓ LESSON #9: The more your plans, goals, and activities align with your vision of the future, the better the end results will be – and more satisfying the process will be.
- ✓ LESSON #10: It will work, if you work.
- ✓ LESSON #11: Each of us has our own process, our own path.
- ✓ LESSON #12: The key activity that leads you toward independence from others and who you really want to be is constantly working on yourself (controlling your inner impulses).
- ✓ LESSON #13: A lot of us are damaged and “broken” deep inside - and that's OK.
- ✓ LESSON #14: It is imperative that you accept that you will have to work on yourself (on maintaining a loving relationship with yourself) for the rest of your life.
- ✓ LESSON #15: Regularly practice negative visualization and train yourself to be relaxed in silence and in your own company, away from others.
- ✓ LESSON #16: Consistency is the only real key to successfully establishing a solid Foundation 1.
- ✓ LESSON #17: If you really want to achieve a good life and control of yourself, you must first be firmly determined that you want to change for the better – and do it once and for all.
- ✓ LESSON #18: Your main task is not to make your life easy, simple and predictable. Your main task is to make your life good.

FOUNDATION 2: BECOME AND REMAIN FIT, LEAN AND STRONG PHYSICALLY

- ✓ LESSON #19: Do not neglect aerobic (cardio) fitness training – because it keeps your heart and blood vessels healthy.
- ✓ LESSON #20: Make sure to become as physically flexible as possible in all directions: up, down, left and right (rotational mobility).
- ✓ LESSON #21: Make sure you achieve and maintain a healthy weight – specifically, low enough and healthy percentage of body fat.
- ✓ LESSON #22: Forget about "six-pack" and excessively low body fat (10% or less). It is better to be healthy than beautiful.
- ✓ LESSON #23: Permanent body-fat loss (not weight loss!) is always a lengthy process.
- ✓ LESSON #24: If you do activities that increase your self-confidence and opinion of yourself, you will think much less about food and reduce emotional eating (which is often the main source of you being overweight and your lack of weight/fat loss).
- ✓ LESSON #25: It's not enough to just be fit and slim for a really good, healthy life. You also need to be strong enough.
- ✓ LESSON #26: If you are just starting strength training, train with your own weight first (pushups, bodyweight squats, pullups, etc.).
- ✓ LESSON #27: Never train without a well thought out training program that you run for at least 6-8 weeks before replacing it!
- ✓ LESSON #28: When choosing strength exercises, always focus on compound exercises.
- ✓ LESSON #29: Necessarily devote most of your time to strengthening your most important muscle groups and your weak points.
- ✓ LESSON #30: Always focus on performing the exercise correctly and not on the weight you are lifting.
- ✓ LESSON #31: The less workouts you miss, the better the results. Consistency of workouts is more important than the weights you lift.
- ✓ LESSON #32: Do something physical every day - without exception.
- ✓ LESSON #33: Never "play" with external hormones and various controversial (illegal) substances.
- ✓ LESSON #34: Get used to training early in the morning, as soon as possible (ideally on an empty stomach).
- ✓ LESSON #35: Weigh yourself no more than 2-3 times a week/month (or not at all). Avoid the tyranny of the scale as much as possible.
- ✓ LESSON #36: Ignore arbitrarily set "strength standards" on the Internet.
- ✓ LESSON #37: Accept the specifics of your body – especially the parts where you accumulate the most fat.

- ✓ LESSON #38: What you see in fitness magazines is almost never achievable with the directions written in them.
- ✓ LESSON #39: If you have chronic lower back pain, wear shoes with flat soles and never use insoles in your shoes.

FOUNDATION 3: BECOME NUTRITIONALLY »LITERATE« AND ESTABLISH A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

- ✓ LESSON #40: Be sure to become and remain a “present” eater and a “present” food shopper.
- ✓ LESSON #41: Learn the basics of energy balance and become nutritionally literate as soon as possible.
- ✓ LESSON #42: If you want to live a really long, healthy and good life in these times of lesser-quality over-abundance in your diet, you have to be as aware as possible about everything you put in your mouth.
- ✓ LESSON #43: Eating “boring” is an advanced virtue, not something to be ashamed of. Learn to eat to live (and not the other way around).
- ✓ LESSON #44: Avoid meals/foods high in both fat and carbohydrates as much as possible. It’s the most killer combination (literally).
- ✓ LESSON #45: Eat enough quality protein with maximum bioavailability.
- ✓ LESSON #46: Fats are critical to health. Don’t be afraid of fats, especially saturated ones.
- ✓ LESSON #47: It is imperative you learn to control insulin through controlling your carbohydrate intake.
- ✓ LESSON #48: Try a "real" ketogenic diet at least once (and as soon as possible) – for at least a month or two. It can change your life for the better.
- ✓ LESSON #49: Don't drink calories.
- ✓ LESSON #50: Regular/occasional fasting is healthy and great for your body. You won't die if you're a little hungry.
- ✓ LESSON #51: If you want to successfully control your weight and diet in the long run, you must learn to cook and prepare most meals yourself.
- ✓ LESSON #52: Be sure to avoid pre-planned cheat meals/days (especially on a diet).
- ✓ LESSON #53: Most supplements are completely unnecessary – but some are highly recommended.
- ✓ LESSON #54: Don't blindly trust nutritionists.
- ✓ LESSON #55: The less opportunities you miss to prepare and enjoy quality food, the more successful, healthy, and better your life will be. If anywhere, it doesn’t pay to be lazy here.

**FOUNDATION 4: ADOPT A »GOOD« PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND LIVE YOUR LIFE
IN ACCORDANCE WITH IT**

- ✓ LESSON #56: As soon as possible, find a good philosophy of life that best suits your values and practice it regularly.
- ✓ LESSON #57: Never take as a basis a philosophy that requires you to stick to it 100%, without possible change.
- ✓ LESSON #58: It is imperative you learn and regularly practice negative visualization – regardless of your chosen philosophy of life.
- ✓ LESSON #59: Internalize that nothing you have is eternal. It may all be over once.
- ✓ LESSON #60: Regularly practice gratitude for all you have.
- ✓ LESSON #61: Focus only on what you can control. Ignore the rest.
- ✓ LESSON #62: Whatever you do, always act according to your inner values and with a healthy dose of humility. Humility is not a bad thing, if you know your true worth.
- ✓ LESSON #63: Avoid conflicts where possible, but not at all costs.
- ✓ LESSON #64: Don't wait for old age to adopt philosophy of life. It is never too early to start living according to a "good" philosophy of life.
- ✓ LESSON #65: Always practice only one philosophy of life at a time - a philosophy that must be "good."
- ✓ LESSON #66: Stoicism can be not only good, but for many a great philosophy of life.
- ✓ LESSON #67: There are always multiple paths to the same amount of happiness – if you don't paralyze yourself with negative thoughts.
- ✓ LESSON #68: Learn to accept scarcity as a positive thing and regularly practice controlled scarcity – "voluntary discomfort".
- ✓ LESSON #69: Never be ashamed of what you have because of something you don't have. Being content with little is not a failure, but a virtue.

FOUNDATION 5: LEARN TO LIVE WITH »GOOD ENOUGH«

- ✓ LESSON #70: There is no perfection. Stop chasing it.
- ✓ LESSON #71: Pursuing perfectionism will always be a source of great frustration to you. You will never win.
- ✓ LESSON #72: Perfectionism is nothing more than attempt to control what you can't control (how others look at you).
- ✓ LESSON #73: You don't have to be a perfectionist to be successful. Aim rather for "good enough".

- ✓ LESSON #74: Always set a deadline by which something must be done – and do your best to stick to that deadline.
- ✓ LESSON #75: Always try to organize your work so that you finish at least one day before the deadline.
- ✓ LESSON #76: If you see that a thing can't be done "good enough" on time, don't even start it.
- ✓ LESSON #77: If you want to be happy, learn to actively want "mediocrity".
- ✓ LESSON #78: Accept your limitations as soon as possible and as much as possible.
- ✓ LESSON #79: Look at "failure" as something you actively want. Don't fear and don't avoid failure.
- ✓ LESSON #80: Always take possible failure as an opportunity for growth.
- ✓ LESSON #81: If you aim for nothing, you will definitely hit it.
- ✓ LESSON #82: Organize your time and life so that you always have enough time for yourself, your loved ones, and to enjoy life.

FOUNDATION 6: KEEP YOUR MIND ACTIVE – DEDICATE YOUR LIFE TO CONSTANTLY LEARNING NEW THINGS

- ✓ LESSON #83: Don't take anything for granted. If it sounds too good to be true, it almost certainly is.
- ✓ LESSON #84: We all want to be smart and know everything, but most don't want to put effort into actually learning something.
- ✓ LESSON #85: Use as many different approaches as possible to keep your mind active and agile.
- ✓ LESSON #86: Always try to listen to opposing opinions – but don't try to change them.
- ✓ LESSON #87: Always take enough time to make important decisions. If possible, sleep on them first.
- ✓ LESSON #88: Don't blindly believe (in) yourself.
- ✓ LESSON #89: Don't blindly believe science. Always take all studies (and their conclusions) with a large pinch of salt.
- ✓ LESSON #90: Don't blindly rely on experts and various official guidelines.
- ✓ LESSON #91: Don't rely blindly on what the (professional) media writes.
- ✓ LESSON #92: Be especially sceptical of those who are overly positive and enthusiastic about everything.
- ✓ LESSON #93: Spend at least one hour each day learning new things.
- ✓ LESSON #94: Seek and gather new information and knowledge, but don't accumulate junk in your mental attic.
- ✓ LESSON #95: Always test everything on yourself whether it works for you. What works for others may not work for you.

- ✓ LESSON #96: Do not be blindly led by various greedy and persuasive incompetents. Think with your own head.
- ✓ LESSON #97: Try to share the knowledge you gain with others as much as possible. By doing so, you will help them, and at the same time you will master it better.

FOUNDATION 7: BECOME AND REMAIN INTERDEPENDENT – AN ACTIVE PART OF COMMUNITY

- ✓ LESSON #98: Actively develop the ability to respect and accept others as they are – even if you disagree with them.
- ✓ LESSON #99: Always try to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Your solutions should be such that both sides win (win-win).
- ✓ LESSON #100: Accept the fact that you can lose your loved ones at any time – despite the effort you put into your relationship with them and the love you share.
- ✓ LESSON #101: Make regular efforts to practice volunteer activities and/or aim to do at least one good deed every day.
- ✓ LESSON #102: Build a solid social network. No one is better off if he is alone.
- ✓ LESSON #103: Find/create your “tribe” and your place in that tribe as soon as possible.
- ✓ LESSON #104: Surround yourself only with people who give you positive energy and who share your values.
- ✓ LESSON #105: Give a wide berth to anyone who does not treat people and animals with respect (unconditionally).
- ✓ LESSON #106: Quality interdependence is only possible when you achieve strong enough independence (in Foundation 1).
- ✓ LESSON #107: Don’t be afraid to be open and vulnerable to others. This is not a weakness.
- ✓ LESSON #108: Don’t be afraid to hug – and to ask another for a hug if/when you need one.
- ✓ LESSON #109: Even if you only help one person, your life will have meaning.
- ✓ LESSON #110: Don’t be afraid to stand up for those who are weaker.

FOUNDATION 8: FIND YOUR »ELEMENT« AND BECOME AND REMAIN FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

- ✓ LESSON #111: Ensure a steady and high enough income to avoid getting into liquidity problems.
- ✓ LESSON #112: If you ever get into financial distress when it comes to personal finances, take this as a good learning experience.
- ✓ LESSON #113: Always think and plan ahead – towards maximum employability in the long run.

- ✓ LESSON #114: Always have enough savings for larger sudden expenses (especially medical).
- ✓ LESSON #115: Insure yourself and your pets in a timely (life) manner.
- ✓ LESSON #116: Even if you're only in your 30s or 40s, make a will as soon as possible – and then update it from time to time.
- ✓ LESSON #117: Include funeral expenses in your savings and will. You don't want to be a burden to your loved ones after you die.
- ✓ LESSON #118: Find out how much money you really need monthly and spend only as much as you really need for a good and happy life.
- ✓ LESSON #119: Never get attached to things once you buy them.
- ✓ LESSON #120: Once or twice a year, pare your life down to basics.
- ✓ LESSON #121: Avoid as much as possible the use of credit, credit cards, and living on credit.
- ✓ LESSON #122: Always have at least enough savings (liquid assets) to easily get through a 6-month total loss of revenue.
- ✓ LESSON #123: Never take your income for granted.
- ✓ LESSON #124: Speculate with your money as little as possible.
- ✓ LESSON #125: Maintain (and possibly strengthen) your creditworthiness over time.
- ✓ LESSON #126: Always keep a “big picture” in your mind (the whole forest, not just a couple of trees).
- ✓ LESSON #127: If you find that you must go your own way (become an entrepreneur), do it – but prudently and thoughtfully, never in a hurry.
- ✓ LESSON #128: No work should be beneath you – because it can happen that you will have to do such work one day.
- ✓ LESSON #129: Money is a huge stressor – even if you have too much of it.

FOUNDATION 9: ESTABLISH AS MANY SOLID, CONSCIOUS ROUTINES AS POSSIBLE

- ✓ LESSON #130: Small things matter and add up. The more you repeat them and perform them consistently, the more they will add up.
- ✓ LESSON #131: Routine is not and should not be an ugly word to you.
- ✓ LESSON #132: Conscious routines are the ones that boost your self-confidence and strengthen your self-discipline.
- ✓ LESSON #133: Try to limit your options as much as possible in everything.
- ✓ LESSON #134: Aim for life, which is 80% routine, 20% spontaneity (or at least more routine than spontaneity).
- ✓ LESSON #135: Don't expect fast successes, without a lot of hard work.

- ✓ LESSON #136: Learn to enjoy the process, not the results. The process is the one that will give you most of the pleasure.
- ✓ LESSON #137: Your goal should be to be present in the moment as much and as often as possible.

FOUNDATION 10: PURSUE BALANCE IN ALL FOUNDATIONS, IN EVERY MOMENT

- ✓ LESSON #138: The meaning (goal) of a good life is to achieve and maintain balance in as many Foundations at the same time and as often as possible.
- ✓ LESSON #139: Define your balance in each of Foundations 1-9 and constantly and actively seek it out.
- ✓ LESSON #140: Everyone can have a different definition of the meaning of life. And that's OK. There's no one single true definition.

FOUNDATION 1
LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF AS YOU
ARE –
BECOME AND REMAIN
INDEPENDENT

*Your most important relationship is with yourself.
If your compassion does not include yourself, it is imperfect.*

FOUNDATION 1 IS THE FIRST AND BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL FOUNDATIONS IN THIS GUIDE!

Foundation 1 is the foundation of a good life which gives all other foundations opportunity to really make a difference in your life. This is the foundation on which the “house of you« truly stands and is built on.

LESSON #1: Without a firm Foundation 1, all other foundations will only work in the short term.

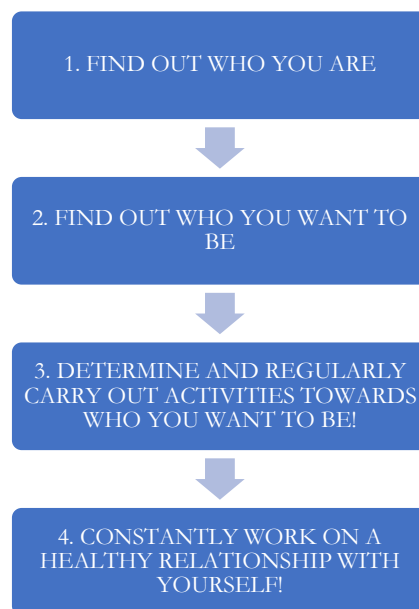
In other words: without hard, regular and serious work within Foundation 1, you will be (in all other areas) like an anchorless boat sailing wherever the fickle wind blows. You will have no real control over your own life. You will be completely at the mercy of external influences, powerless to say no and unable to sail where you think you should. Dependence on others is the price you will pay for laziness under Foundation 1.

If you really want to achieve a truly good life, you urgently need to establish and maintain a healthy relationship with yourself. If not, you will most likely find at least some (or all) of the following in the end:

- ✓ That you achieved much less than you could have (that you spent a lot of time unproductively).
- ✓ That many (or all) of your results were short-term (non-permanent) and anything but comprehensive.
- ✓ That you did not enjoy most of your “journey” (that you were disappointed or dissatisfied most of the time - and that the end results were not worth your effort and time).

LESSON #2: Establishing and maintaining a healthy and loving relationship with yourself is the only right way to achieve lasting results.

How to establish a healthy and loving relationship with yourself (or correct a bad relationship with yourself)?



STEP #1: FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE!

LESSON #3: The first step towards a good life is to figure out (know) exactly who you are at this moment.

The biggest problem for many people is that they don't know themselves. They don't know who they are, what their strengths, weaknesses, values are, why they react to external impulses the way they react, and so on. An identity crisis is everywhere, and many people are wandering around without knowing a clear answer to a very simple question: Who am I?

Many people are even actively running away from this issue. They don't want to deal with it and look for an answer because they are subconsciously afraid that they won't like the answer at all. Therefore, they prefer to be distracted by various activities, excuses, tie their existence to children or work, get lost in drugs, alcohol, sex, etc.

You can't live a full, good life and get the most out of it if you don't know who you are, what drives you and who you really want to be (ie. if you don't get yourself, your impulses and thoughts under control). Until you do, your time, your emotions, your efforts will always be wasted sub-optimally – and you will usually only realize this when it is too late.

How do you find out who you are?

First of all, you have to honestly analyze yourself and get to know yourself as well as possible (who you are at this moment: your values, desires, strengths, weaknesses, etc.), then accept yourself as you are (unconditionally, with all your deficiencies and weaknesses) and take personal responsibility for not being who you think you should be (or want to be).

You can do the analysis yourself or with the help of an expert in this field. I advise you to do the self-analysis by yourself first. It's not that hard. You just have to know where and how to start. My suggestion is to start by reading the following two books (search online: Amazon, etc.):

- **Karen Horney¹: *Neurosis and human growth***
- **Karen Horney: *Our Inner Conflicts***

These books are a great starting point for your self-analysis, because they very clearly and vividly present different ways of how people run away from themselves, how we deceive ourselves and prevent ourselves from really getting to know each other and living in accordance with ourselves.

As you read, you will quickly learn that you are nothing special – that you are no different from others (neither in good nor in bad way). Most of us think we are different from others, that we are not like the others (that we

¹ Karen Horney je bila nemška psihoanalitičarka v prvi polovici 20. stoletja. Njena dela naj bodo temelj tvoje samo-analize in samo-izboljševanja. Obstaja tudi njena knjiga v slovenščini z naslovom ***Kdo sem?*** (je nisem prebral, lahko pa ti seveda tudi pomaga).

are better or worse). The content of these books clearly proves otherwise. No matter who you are, in some places you will inevitably feel like the author is describing you. And that's OK. It is essential that you understand and accept that:

- a. you are nothing special (which also means that you can be "corrected") and that
- b. there are tons of ways you lie to and deceive yourself (and why – where does it all originate from).

Without this step, you will not be able to do quality self-analysis. Therefore, I strongly recommend that you **first study at least** *Neurosis and human growth* and only then start with your self-analysis.

Additionally, I warmly recommend the following two books (the last one is necessary for later step #4, but it is also very welcome here in step #1):

➤ *Karen Horney: Self analysis*

I recommend this book to you because it presents the basics of how to undertake a systematic self-analysis of your fears, reactions, impulses, and so on. You don't have to read it, but it's recommended.

➤ *John Bradshaw: Homecoming*

<https://www.amazon.com/Homecoming-Reclaiming-Championing-Inner-Child/dp/0553353896>

John Bradshaw is one of the main authorities in the field of so-called "Inner child healing" – the one I can definitely recommend. "Inner child healing" is a method of self-improvement that argues that you must first identify your inner impulses that make you react inappropriately to different situations (and which you do not know how to control) and *then* develop a healthy, "parental" relationship with them (where you are the one who controls your reactions, not your inner impulses).

Bradshaw calls these impulses "inner children," but they are the emotionally wounded parts of you when others (parents, friends, relatives, acquaintances) have negatively affected you during adolescence and you never got over it. Now (as an adult) these wounded parts of you subconsciously react to the various external situations you face on a daily basis – but you cannot control these reactions. You have to learn to identify and then (lovingly) control (and gradually try to heal) these inner wounded parts. They are a part of you, so this relationship must be as loving as possible.

Before you start the self-analysis, read Part One of this book. You can read and study the other parts later when you are actively working on yourself.

Once you study the proposed literature (nowhere did I say the process will be quick! 😊), you can embark on an actual search for the answer to the question "Who am I?".

To get started, I recommend that you fill out the questionnaire at the end of this guide (in Appendix 1). Then, based on your answers, fill in the left column of the table, which you can also find in Appendix 1. The answers to the questions will give you a much clearer picture of you at a given moment.

In addition, I recommend that you find and use one of the techniques of confronting yourself, where you make yourself to say out loud (or write down on paper) things that you may already know deep down but are afraid to say out loud. There are several options (I will just name three):

- One technique is to **put an empty chair in the middle of the room**, imagine that the person who did you an (unforgettable) injustice in the past (mom, dad, friend, ...) and then tell this empty chair everything that weighs on you (as openly and directly as possible), which you dare not (or cannot) say to this person into their face (cursing is completely acceptable).
- The second technique is written: **imagine, that you are at the end of your life when you have nothing left to lose (you will die anyway) and with everyone who has damaged already dead.** Now, imagine that a journalist comes to you who wants to write your biography: about you and the life you have lived (from your first childhood memories), the relationships you had with your parents and the people around you., the injustices done to you, bad and good experiences, etc.

Focus first on the analysis of your childhood and growing up (you will find the most problems there), then on the analysis of your parents (their growing up and family dynamics with their parents and the environment in which they grew up – this last part is vital as you are their creation and whatever neurosis they imparted on you most likely came from their parents, so you need to understand their origins as much as possible, too).

- Go through exercises in *Homecoming* by John Bradshaw.
- Etc.

Find the technique that works best for you. You can develop your own technique of confronting yourself (or, find some other existing one). Whatever will give you results.

Mourning

It is highly likely that – once you fill in the left column of the table with your self-analysis – you will have to go through a period of mourning, accepting yourself as you are at that moment. There is nothing wrong with that. If you've really been honest with yourself, what is written in the left column will likely shock your system – as the description of you now will probably be quite different from who you would like to be (or, from who you thought you were or should be).

LESSON #4: Grieving for who you are at the moment (and who you are not) is a necessary step to successfully continue the process. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable.

You urgently need to accept who you are, internalize what is written, and take full responsibility for who you are at the moment. It is not (only) your fault for who you are. No way. But **if you don't take full responsibility for your current situation, you won't be able to take real control of the incoming change later on.**

Find a description of the Kübler-Ross model of the five stages of grief² online (denial, anger, negotiation, depression and acceptance) and allow yourself time to go through all these five stages – to achieve real and true acceptance of yourself as you are then and there.

Do this urgently before you go to the second step. Accept the fact that improvements will not happen overnight. Nothing that has been built over the years (excess weight, negative relationship with yourself and others, financial problems, etc.) will be successfully repaired or mitigated long-term in just a few weeks or months. It sucks but that's how it is.

LESSON #5: There is no miracle cure, just hard work.

Your goal is to achieve long-term self-improvement, a long-term transformation into your “future self,” which you will work on and maintain for the rest of your long life, for years and decades to come. Please believe that nothing is so ruined that it cannot be repaired with time and effort. You just have to try and do the work. If you don't try to fix things, they will stay broken forever.

STEP #2: FIND OUT WHO YOU WANT TO BE

In this step, you must articulate a clear picture of how you see yourself in 5, 10, 20 years – define your "future self" (who you really want to be).

LESSON #6: You can't (live) a good life until you know who you want to be. The second step in the direction of a good life is therefore to figure out (know) as clearly as possible who you want to be.

While it will likely take a lot of effort (and tears and frustration) to figure out who you are and to accept it through mourning, this is only the first, initial step. It is a necessary but not a sufficient condition and it is by no means enough by itself. It's just a picture of your current state, and life ahead is still long. If you want to make the most of it, you will have to constantly evolve and grow. Putting in a single effort will never be enough.

To keep developing optimally, you must define who you want to develop into – who you want to be in the future. It is best to start by setting a vision of yourself 5 years in the future (medium-term goal)³.

The more clearly you define and adopt this future vision of yourself (**and you must really like it!**), the more internally motivated you will be to achieve it as soon as possible (with greater discipline in nutrition, training, working on yourself, in social, mental and spiritual fields). You will be much less burdened with present pleasures and you will be more concerned about your future self will not suffering (even if you sometimes deprive your present self of something).

² K-R model is not perfect, but it definitely works in real life situations.

³ Later, when you already have a 5-year vision of you set, set also a vision of you in 20-30 years.

LESSON #7: Don't be afraid to dream big!

It is imperative that you are not shy and overly modest in posting a picture of yourself in the future. Be maximally ambitious, even if it scares you (and most of us are scared of it). You are capable of achieving much more than you can currently imagine!

Your future goals should be ambitious enough (but still fairly realistic), set at least medium-term, and set quite broadly (focus on more general ideas, not measurable goals) – to allow you enough room to maneuver in order to achieve them. Ideally, each goal should cover as many components of working-on-yourself as possible.

An example of a future goal:

"I am a confident human being. I feel equal to everyone. I like myself and accept myself unconditionally. I accept others as they are, and I do not try to change them."

Write down all your future goals into the right column of the matrix in Appendix 1 and **set a date** by which you intend to achieve them (say within 5 years).

The contrast between who you are now (left column) and who you want to be (right column) can often be terrifying and the gap between the two seemingly too big, especially if you stick to recommendations and dream ambitiously.

Don't let your inner doubts/fears rob you of the energy to start working on achieving these goals in the right column. Ignore them. Realize that everything you achieve will be better than your present state. **The status quo is no longer acceptable**, no matter how afraid you are of what will be.

Once your goals are set and written in the matrix, **it is imperative that you take full responsibility for them** – for who you want to become. Accept the fact that only you are the one who can achieve this and no one else instead of you. If you achieve nothing (or don't try at all), you will be to blame for the failure.

Never forget that no one owes you anything and nothing belongs to you in itself. Not a beautiful life, not happiness in love, not money... Nothing. You are not destined to be anything. If you fail, it's your own fault. Define your success and constantly strive in the direction of achieving it. Don't blame others or some phantom injustice if you fail.

**STEP #3:
DETERMINE AND REGULARLY CARRY OUT ACTIVITIES TOWARDS
WHO YOU WANT TO BE!**

LESSON #8: When you know who you want to be (when you clearly see your “future self”), you have to do something in that direction every day.

A comparative picture of who you are and who you want to be is of no help, if it remains just a picture. For a long, good life, you need to turn this picture into reality as much as possible.

In this third step, you must start carrying out daily activities that will lead you – step by step – in the direction of realizing your vision of your future self. Consider and determine as many activities as possible that can help you achieve your goals within 5 years (also help yourself with the scheme in Appendix 1)⁴:

- 1) The starting point are your long-term (five-year) general goals – the goals in the right column of the matrix.
- 2) Based on these goals, first make a **special annual plan of goals and activities** for year 1 (that is, just for the year ahead; then at the end of year 1, you will make a plan for year 2, etc.).
- 3) Based on the annual plan, make a **special quarterly plan of goals and activities** for each quarter (how you will try to achieve these annual goals quarter by quarter).
- 4) Based on the quarterly plan, make a **special monthly plan of goals and activities** for each month (how you will try to achieve these annual goals month by month).
- 5) Based on the monthly plan for the current month, make a **special weekly plan of goals and activities** for each week (how you will achieve the monthly goals week by week).
- 6) Based on the weekly plan for the current week, make a **special daily plan of activities** daily (how you will achieve the weekly goals day by day). Then **rank these activities by importance** (from most important to least important) and always do the ones that have the greatest importance for you that day first.

Your goal here is that as much of what you do in a given day is related to achieving your weekly/monthly/annual plan (and consequently realizing yourself into who you want to be). If an activity does not lead to the realization of your "future self", then it is probably not worth your time and you should ignore it⁵.

LESSON #9: The more your plans, goals, and activities align with your vision of the future, the better the end results will be – and more satisfying the process will be.

You want to achieve that you truly value your time – by spending it only on things that are worth something to you. Don't waste time stupidly. Even if you have a great plan to live well until old age, you may be hit by a car tomorrow or the roof may collapse on you. You never know when this life will end, so spend your time productively and proactively in finding a balance between today's happiness and happiness in the future.

⁴ You can help yourself also with Brian Tracy's book: Eat That Frog!: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time (and with similar books in Time management field).

⁵ Examples of activities (for working on yourself): reading "inner child healing" literature, performing "inner child healing" exercises, constantly observing how you respond to different external situations/impulses, working on setting boundaries for your inner impulses, working on maintaining eye contact with people, writing down positive things in your life and repeating positive affirmations (nurturing positive speech with yourself), actively socializing with people - practice being relaxed in their company (especially if it doesn't come naturally to you), and so on.

In your daily life, try to include as many identified activities as possible and carry them out as much as possible day after day, week after week, year after year. **Repeat, repeat, repeat.** The more you implement them, the better the results will be. It's not science – but it works.

LESSON #10: It will work, if you work.

Make sure you give yourself enough time and arm yourself with a great deal of patience. Don't focus on the end results, but on the process itself. Control what you can (regularly implementing your key activities) and be as present in the moment as possible at all times. Act as much as possible within yourself and your abilities and compare yourself as little as possible to others.

LESSON #11: Each of us has our own process, our own path.

Focus on walking your path each day the way you set out to do. Good things will not allude you. And it will be worth every effort. Everything you put in will be repaid to you many times over.

**STEP #4:
CONSTANTLY WORK ON A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH
YOURSELF!**

In the last, but extremely important step, you need to regularly (ideally every day) carry out activities that make you as immune as possible to your internal impulses (learned commandments/teachings/values/fears that come from your childhood and were imposed on you by others).

The more you are immune to internal impulses, the less you will depend on external opinions (influences) of people around you and the less you will be burdened with what others think of you.

LESSON #12: The key activity that leads you toward independence from others and who you really want to be is constantly working on yourself (controlling your inner impulses).

Many of us have a broken relationship with ourselves (since childhood), so working on ourselves will always include first repairing that “broken” relationship with ourselves and establishing an improved relationship with ourselves on a healthier foundation.

LESSON #13: A lot of us are damaged and “broken” deep inside - and that's OK.

It's OK to admit to yourself that you're damaged deep inside. It's OK to admit to yourself that you're not to blame for these injuries and for all that you are in the moment. It's OK and healthy to be angry at your parents and everyone else who damaged you in one way or another – if/when your self-analysis shows that they damaged you.

There are many ways they could have damaged you: with excessive love/attention, with too little love/attention, with mental and/or physical violence, and so on. Many, *many* ways. **If you do anything, you inevitably make mistakes – even if you have the best intentions.** Parents, friends, acquaintances... It doesn't matter. Same goes for you, too.

Your goal in step #4 is to start actively correcting these errors. There are at least **5 key components** to actively correcting past mistakes that you need to include in your daily/weekly activities:

A. »Inner child healing« training

This training includes analysis and work on controlling your inner impulses (inner children) – and actively mourning for everything that has been done to you, or for what you have been deprived of as a child.

Of the five components, this one is the most important as it includes so-called “pain work”. To begin, read/study parts 2-4 of Bradshaw's book "Homecoming" and do as many recommended exercises as you can (the more, the better).

By doing so, you will actively develop an understanding and a more loving relationship with the emotionally wounded parts of yourself (your wounded and affected inner children) and, at the same time, set clear boundaries for these inner children *and* the critical parental voices in your head that are constantly criticizing you for seemingly everything you do “wrong”⁶.

The goal of working on yourself is to stop reacting uncontrollably to various external impulses ("triggers") by learning to immediately recognize and control your internal reactions to them (which now largely dictate your life, while you just helplessly observe them).

But beware (warning #1): controlling them does not mean rejecting them or trying to delete them. They are part of you. If you try to erase them, you will try to erase parts of yourself. If you try to deny them, you will try to deny parts of yourself. **When you act hostile to (parts of) yourself, it will *always* be counter-productive.**

"Controlling" here simply means learning to understand all these different impulses (inner children) as well as possible, setting clear boundaries for them, and learning to "talk" to them lovingly. Learn to live with them and (as an adult that you are) take full responsibility for your life and become the one who controls and actively lives your life.

It sounds pretty abstract until you read the literature and start doing this “inner child healing”. Then, for most people, it all becomes quite clear and self-evident. You just have to gather enough courage to start this work. The rest will come by itself. And it will be repaid a hundred (a thousand!) times over.

⁶ For example: if you had a parent who criticized you for every little thing or constantly corrected you (letting you know you weren't good enough) when you were a child, you may still have these critical parental voices in your head that still criticize you for similar little things and lower your self-esteem. It is up to you to identify them (where they come from) and to let them know – in the vernacular – that they should fuck off! Because you are old enough to take care of yourself.

But beware (warning #2): any “pain work” and dealing with many past bad things that have happened to you will bring you back to the grieving process over and over again. When necessary, allow yourself to go through all the steps of grieving and eventually learn to accept and forgive – yourself and others.

LESSON #14: It is imperative that you accept that you will have to work on yourself (on maintaining a loving relationship with yourself) for the rest of your life.

Inner children and critical voices are something you can't erase and or silence once and for all. You can just learn to manage them as effectively as possible. But they will always be a part of you as long as you live. They are and will remain a part of you. "Inner child healing" is thus a **lifelong work**. It is not something you will do once, and it will be done. **And if you don't work on yourself regularly, you'll fall back into old (bad) habits.**

B. Minimizing your weaknesses

You are only as strong as your weakest part. It is therefore necessary that you systematically work on minimizing or strengthening the weaknesses that you have identified during self-analysis and active work on yourself.

C. Regular proactivity and »throwing« yourself out of your comfort zone

Your proactivity should be reflected in the fact that you regularly (every day) perform activities that are in line with your values and that you have identified as those that will lead you to achieve “future you” the way you want to be.

It should also be reflected in your willingness to regularly (as many times as possible) face your fears and weaknesses and work on minimizing them.

Such proactivity will throw you out of your comfort zone every now and then – and that's OK. Only outside the comfort zone do we truly grow and progress. It is not always pleasant, and it often hurts, but it is a necessary part of growth and personal development, so come to terms with it as an inevitable (and constructive) part of your life.

D. Training awareness and gratitude for everything positive in your life

It is imperative that you regularly (every day) actively focus on all that is good in your life:

- Make a list of **5-10 of your positive qualities** and read it every day so you don't forget all the good things about you. Be thankful for those positive qualities you have.
- Make a list of **5-10 things in your life that you are most grateful for** and read it every day so you don't forget all the good things in your life.
- Make a **regular inventory of what good happened to you** during the day or week – and be thankful for it.
- Make a list of **3-5 positive affirmations** and repeat them regularly (or better yet: write each one down on paper at least 10 times a day; it will be even more effective). **Just beware of this:** positive affirmations (and positive thoughts) may work, but they are in and of themselves superficial and

limited. They will really only work if you “clear things up with yourself deeply” beforehand and if you do the inner child healing exercises in parallel on a regular basis.

- Find **wise thoughts (sayings)** that touch and motivate you and stick (and/or write) them on walls, mirrors, etc. – wherever you can see them daily, and you can't avoid them.

E. Active confrontation with negative thoughts and with yourself (in solitude)

LESSON #15: Regularly practice negative visualization and train yourself to be relaxed in silence and in your own company, away from others.

Don't run away from negativity. Every once in a while, (controlled) confrontation with negativity – negative visualization training – can be extremely positive for your perception of yourself and everything you have. See Foundation 4 (Lesson #58) for more.

Additionally, learn to be relaxed in your own company. Lock yourself in a room and practice being with yourself for as long as possible. First at least a few minutes, then 10, 20, 30 minutes, and so on. Practice time with yourself, try to enjoy who you are, how far you have come, where you are going... Learn to enjoy your own company, without other people and distractions.

LESSON #16: Consistency is the only real key to successfully establishing a solid Foundation 1.

Achieving the goals of Foundation 1 requires dedicated, consistent work on yourself throughout your life, and especially in the beginning. Accept that Foundation 1 will require the greatest initial effort from you at the very beginning, and don't give up at the very start. At first it will be the hardest, but then it will become easier and easier, and like a small lump of snow, you will start rolling uncontrollably down towards the bottom and get bigger and better and more and more unstoppable.

The fewer opportunities to work on yourself you miss, the more successful you will be and the better your life will be. Consistency in performing the assigned activities will – with each activity performed – strengthen your positive feelings towards yourself (self-confidence because you have carried out what you said you would), your self-confidence and self-discipline.

When you have a clear picture of yourself in the future (at least in 5 years' time, and ideally in 20-30+ years) and you like this picture, it will be much easier for you to be consistent – because you will be aware that with every missed activity, there is a greater chance your “future self” will be at a disadvantage, and you will not want that for yourself. Even if that means giving up something you want today (you say no to sweets because you know it's not healthy; you put money in the bank rather than buy something you don't actually need; etc.). Always strive to balance your long-term interests with short-term satisfaction.

LESSON #17: If you really want to achieve a good life and control of yourself, you must first be firmly determined that you want to change for the better – and do it once and for all.

You need to consciously determine that you have had enough of others controlling your behaviour (with their opinions, criticisms, etc.). You also must make a conscious decision that you will no longer wait for others to save you (and create a good life for you), but that you will do it yourself.

Be aware that results will *absolutely* be worth any effort you put in. **If you manage to become your best friend and the biggest "cheerleader" who is immune to external impulses, nothing will be able to get to you. Nothing.**

LESSON #18: Your main task is not to make your life easy, simple and predictable. Your main task is to make your life good.

Life can be good even if it is difficult, full of ups and downs and unpredictable. Never forget that.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

1. Victor Frankl: Man's search for meaning
https://www.amazon.com/Mans-Search-Meaning-classic-Holocaust-ebook/dp/B00EKOC0HI/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=
2. Alex Loder: 6 Stages of Transformation (članek)
<https://www.t-nation.com/powerful-words/the-6-stages-of-transformation>

APPENDIX TO FOUNDATION 1

SOME STARTING QUESTIONS FOR SELF-ANALYSIS (answer the questions as honestly and extensively as possible!):

My goals and obstacles:

1. What is the most important goal in my life today – which will have the greatest positive impact on my life?
2. What are my goals for the future? Personal, professional? What do I want from life? Where/how do I see myself in 5 years?
3. What are the things that hold me back? Why am I not achieving important goals in my life?
4. What things in my life am I grateful for – what do I have already (list at least 10)?
5. Which activities can I reduce or even abandon without any real loss? Which (unimportant) activities do I waste the most time on?

My special talents:

1. What am I doing especially well (excel in)? What am I really good at?
2. What do I do easily that others don't do as easily or can't do at all?
3. What important "frogs"⁷ have I eaten in the past?
4. What types of "frogs" do I like to eat?
5. What types of "frogs" do I like to eat the least?
6. What do I get the most compliments for (physical, personal, professional)?
7. What do I get the most criticism for?
8. What are my strengths? How can I improve them?
9. What are my weaknesses? How can I minimize/strengthen them?
10. What are my key skills with which I can achieve better and faster results?
11. What key skills and abilities will I need to continue my career – but do not yet have?
12. What are my key competences? What do I learn easily and do easily?
13. What are my positive attributes (list at least 10)?
14. What are my bad habits in relationships with other people?
15. What are my hobbies? Why? What positives do they bring into my life?
16. What do I do, but should do less (less often)?
17. What am I not doing, but should be doing to be at my best?

My body:

1. What are the main advantages of my body?
2. What are the main weaknesses of my body?
3. What do I like about me physically (list at least 8-10 positives)?
4. What bothers me about myself physically? What do I want to change?
5. What am I doing that affects my health and must stop doing?
6. What do I do (or don't do) physically that I should do more (more often)?

⁷ Frog = an especially important, but also unpleasant/annoying thing that I would like to avoid doing, but I must do as soon as possible (once it is done, I will feel much better).

RECOMMENDED PROCESS OF SETTING YOUR GOALS

ANSWERS TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

(they give you a realistic picture of yourself in that particular moment)



SETTING MEDIUM-TERM OR LONG-TERM GOALS

(the desired image of yourself - based on your real present image; focus on setting ambitious overall goals without quantifying them)



SETTING SHORT-TERM GOALS

(annual and quarterly goals - focus on setting conservative short-term goals that focus on the process, not the results)



SETTING ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE SHORT-TERM GOALS

(daily, weekly, monthly activities; always rank them according to their importance)



CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES, WITH FOCUS ON THE PROCESS

(always do the most important activities (especially »frogs«) first)

COMPARISON TABLE: REAL VS. DESIRED STATE

(complete the table according to the results of your self-analysis)

Example (you can add as many rows as you want):

MY REAL STATE (April 2021; age 30)	MY DESIRED STATE (December 2025; age 34)
<p><i>Observation 1</i></p> <p>I hate how I look (my body disgusts me and I'm not able to accept myself the way I am). I am overweight (approx. 93 kg at 1.82 m) and full of fat (men's breasts), with a completely non-functional body (neither strong, nor fit, nor lean) - I do not exercise at all and I am not physically active, and I spend my afternoons in my room watching television and surfing the internet.</p> <p>As a result, I haven't gone to seaside in a long time because I don't dare undress in front of others. Even in the summer, no matter the heat, I always wear a T-shirt and even a jeans vest over it to hide my body to the maximum, no matter how hot I feel.</p> <p>I am a pure emotional eater - if I feel vulnerable or lonely, I eat, mostly sweets. I'm a total chocoholic. Sugar is my best friend (carbs in general). As a result, my energy level is shit most of the day.</p> <p>Etc.</p>	<p>I am fit, lean and strong. I'm in great shape. I exercise regularly and I am happy with my body.</p> <p>I accept myself as I am. I don't care what others think of me. I feel confident and equal to anyone.</p> <p>I eat to live. I don't live to eat. I'm not emotionally addicted to food. I eat sugar minimally and I don't depend on it.</p> <p>Etc.</p>

FOUNDATION 2
***BECOME AND REMAIN FIT, LEAN AND
STRONG PHYSICALLY***

A healthy mind in a healthy (strong) body.

STEP #1: BECOME AND REMAIN PHYSICALLY FIT!⁸

LESSON #19: Do not neglect aerobic (cardio) fitness training – because it keeps your heart and blood vessels healthy.

Perform 2-3 aerobic workouts every week for 20-60 minutes. You can walk faster (enough that you breathe harder), run slowly, cycle, dance, run after a ball, etc. Find what suits you best and interests you. You can also simply go out and alternate slow running and walking for 30-60 minutes. There are many options.

Occasionally, replace one weekly aerobic workout with a more intense and shorter (approx. 20 minutes) high intensity interval training (sprints on a bike, running sprints, etc.).

Caution: whatever you do, don't overdo it. Excessive aerobic training will bring you more negative than positive consequences in the long run (injuries, unnecessary depletion of the body and immune system, lack of energy/time for other foundations) - and thus loss of balance in life.

LESSON #20: Make sure to become as physically flexible as possible in all directions: up, down, left and right (rotational mobility).

In addition to further strengthening the cardiovascular system, these flexibility/mobility exercises will provide great injury prevention and much better overall functionality for your body. There are many options (see Youtube, etc.):

- **Practice yoga** at least once a week (approx. 45-90 minutes). You can also replace some of the aerobic workouts with yoga. Do yoga at home with the help of the Internet or enroll in a course.
- **Perform general mobility exercises** every (second) day for 10-15 minutes.
- **Perform various stretching exercises** during and/or after each aerobic/HIIT workout (and weight training) or every day.
- **Perform dynamic stretching** 10-15 minutes before each weight training.
- Etc.

STEP #2: BECOME AND REMAIN PHYSICALLY LEAN!

LESSON #21: Make sure you achieve and maintain a healthy weight – specifically, low enough and healthy percentage of body fat.

A low enough (and still healthy) body fat percentage is much more important to your overall health than your body weight (in kilograms). The only problem is in the definition of what is a "sufficiently low and healthy percentage of body fat".

⁸ Always carry out the activities within step #1 at the same time as the activities within steps #2 and #3 (presented below)! This is the key to successfully establishing a solid Foundation 2.

There is a ton of opinions on this topic. Don't complicate things and aim for "good enough": **achieve and maintain a BMI⁹ between 22 and 23 in the long term.**

BMI isn't perfect, but it's a good enough indicator of leanness for anyone who doesn't take "special supplements" (see below).

Why are you targeting a BMI of 22-23? Because BMI considers healthy weight to be in the range of index values between 19 and 25. From this follows that **a healthy mean** is somewhere between 22 and 24¹⁰.

In this range of BMI, you will almost certainly achieve a sufficiently low and healthy percentage of body fat, or rather, you will get very close to it. If your weight is not yet in the recommended range, aim to get to that range as soon as possible, but gradually (aim for gradual (step-like) weight reduction, not a weight free fall). Then, maintain your weight in this range – with regular exercise (weights and aerobic training) and proper nutrition (see Foundation 3).

BMI on steroids

In recent times, the BMI index has come under attack as unsuitable because more and more people (both pure amateurs and more or less all fitness models in the fitness industry) are on "special supplements" (testosterone, insulin, growth hormone, various oral and injectable steroids, special weight loss substances without muscle loss (clenbuterol, DNP, T3, etc.) that increase muscle mass and or reduce body fat to levels that you cannot achieve without them.

This in turn drastically increases their BMI and all of a sudden you have a lot of examples of very fit people with little body fat who have a BMI over 25 and are consequently classified as obese. The latter are also the loudest in objecting that BMI sucks, yet none of them will admit why they really have such an "obese" BMI at such low body fat (and high muscular) levels. Because of illicit substances. But they must not and cannot admit it. To others anyway, but often not to themselves either.

Two additional indicators of healthy weight (body fat)

- a) Waist circumference and waist circumference-to-hip circumference ratio

Your goal is to keep these numbers or ratios as small as possible, because they signal a smaller amount of "visceral" fat (located inside the abdominal cavity and around vital organs; it promotes inflammation and chronic diseases in the body). **The less of this fat you have, the better it is for your health.**

- **If you're a man**, aim for a waist circumference under 95 centimetres and a "waist: hips" ratio under 1.

⁹ Body Mass Index (BMI). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_mass_index

¹⁰ It is better to have a little more fat than a little less (in case of illness, etc.). My example: at a height of 182 cm, my target BMI is between 73 and 79 kilograms (and I currently weigh around 76 kilos).

- **If you're a woman**, aim for a waist circumference under 85 centimetres and a "waist: hips" ratio under 0.8.

More than this can lead to the risk of developing diseases such as type 2 diabetes, various cardiovascular diseases, etc.

b) RFM (Relative Fat Mass) index

- **Formula for men:** $RFM = 64 - (20 * (\text{body height} / \text{waist circumference}))^{11}$
- **Formula for women:** $RFM = 76 - (20 * (\text{body height} / \text{waist circumference}))$

Here, the approximate healthy body fat levels are:

- **For men** ages 20-60: 8-22% (with golden mean around 15-16%)
- **For women** ages 20-60: 15-30% (with golden mean around 22-23%)

LESSON #22: Forget about "six-pack" and excessively low body fat (10% or less). It is better to be healthy than beautiful.

It is always better to have a little »healthy« fat on you (15-20% for men) in case of any disease, etc. In addition, the pursuit of a "six-pack" often requires manipulating hormones through the use of external substances (see Lesson #33), which can easily lead to a disruption of your internal hormonal balance and unnecessary illness. **A healthier interior is much more important than a more beautiful, aesthetic exterior.**

LESSON #23: Permanent body-fat loss (not weight loss!) is always a lengthy process.

From personal experience, I can confirm that the body's "set points" *definitely* exist – and that they can be damn annoying, especially when you're trying to lose weight without (excessive) loss of muscle mass. There are certain points in your body weight where weight loss simply stops, as if the body has decided not to go lower. This is especially true for those who are not naturally lean (we tend to gain weight quickly).

These "set points" are the reason why rapid weight loss is almost never permanent – because we can't just force our bodies to function in a completely different way than before. The body likes its routine, which it has become accustomed to over months/years and resists any changes to that routine (especially major ones). The "will-power" approach doesn't work and won't work (not for long anyway), especially, if you have at least 5-10 pounds to lose and if you've carried those extra pounds with you for years or even decades.

Any lasting change therefore requires a different, more thoughtful, gradual and, above all, more patient approach. Moving each of the body's "set point" is a lengthy process, especially downhill. We are talking about months, if not years. But it's worth the effort.

¹¹ Na primer: moški visok 180 cm in z obsegom pasu 84 cm, bi imel $RFM = 64 - (20 * 180/84) = 64 - (20 * 2,14) = 64 - 42,8 = 21,2\%$ telesne maščobe.

If you have, say, 10 kilos too much and have been (too) fat for years or even most of your life, I recommend the following approach (for a recommendation regarding calorie reduction – ie. how much to safely reduce – see Lesson #45 in Foundation 3):

- ✓ first – with the right combination of a better diet and physical activity – focus on slowly losing 3-4 kilos (1-1.5 kg per month – the first kilograms are always the easiest to lose) → then maintain this new weight for at least 1 month (staying at this new weight)
- ✓ then – with the right combination of better diet and physical activity – focus on losing additional 2-3 kilos (say 0.5-1kg per month) → then maintain this new weight again for at least 1 month
- ✓ then – with the right combination of a better diet and physical activity – focus on losing further 1-2 kilos (say 0.5kg a month) → then maintain this new weight again for at least 1 month
- ✓ etc.

In short, slowly but surely goes a long way when it comes to losing body fat. Be sure to be prepared for the occasional hunger, the occasional lack of energy, and the attempts of your body (or should that be your head?) to try to convince you to give up. Don't let it. You can do this!

At the same time, work regularly on the activities of Foundation 1, because:

LESSON #24: If you do activities that increase your self-confidence and opinion of yourself, you will think much less about food and reduce emotional eating (which is often the main source of you being overweight and your lack of weight/fat loss).

But watch out for the double-edged sword: in the process of losing kilos and body fat, you can fall into a “positive trap” when, with the right approach, you reach a level of body weight (and physical appearance) that you didn't think was possible at all (with me, my psychological limit was 78 kilos).

Once you achieve this, you suddenly become "greedy", especially because at "ideal" weight you will often not look like you thought you would (we always have more fat to lose than we thought at the beginning). Here you have to be careful that you **know how to stop at a reasonable level** and that you do not go too far in losing more and more kilos, which can quickly lead to eating disorders, physical dysmorphia, etc. **Regular work on Foundation 1 will help you set a healthy limit** to where you are really willing to go in losing weight/fat without harming yourself.

In short, I know from my own experience that with the right approach it is possible to move "set points" in body weight *permanently* and that it is worth every effort. Just be careful not to get too far into the extremes.

STEP #3: BECOME AND REMAIN PHYSICALLY STRONG!

LESSON #25: It's not enough to just be fit and slim for a really good, healthy life. You also need to be strong enough.

For longevity, you urgently need a certain amount of muscle mass and physical strength. If you are physically as soft as a noodle, you will not be hardy enough for a long, good life. Weak body = weak mind. Or, as they say, a healthy mind in a healthy (strong) body.

How do you become strong enough? Gradually.

LESSON #26: If you are just starting strength training, train with your own weight first (pushups, bodyweight squats, pullups, etc.).

Until you are able to do together 10 correct pushups, 30 at least parallel squats (but go deeper, ideally until your hamstrings touch your calves) and at least 5 pullups from a dead hang, you should stay away from weights.

LESSON #27: Never train without a well thought out training program that you run for at least 6-8 weeks before replacing it!

Structure an appropriate training program, in which you train all the main muscles of the body about 2-3 times a week – every week. You can train the whole body (full body programs) each time, or alternate upper and lower part of the body (so-called upper/lower programs), or alternate push exercises and pull exercises (push/pull programs)¹².

LESSON #28: When choosing strength exercises, always focus on compound exercises.

These are exercises in which the whole body or at least a large part of the body works together at the same time (push-ups, any kind of rowing, pullups, squats, lunges, deadlifts, etc.). These are the exercises that give you the most added value (maximum results) in the shortest time.

Perform most exercises (at least initially) in the range of 6-12 repetitions (70-85% of your one-rep maximum). In practice, this is the most effective range for the combination of strength and endurance you are looking for. Stick to this range and try to increase your weight and/or number of repetitions and/or time under load (perform repetitions more slowly) over time.

Once you have obtained a basic level of strength and technique of performing individual exercises, experiment with higher weights and a lower number of repetitions (3-5 repetitions, 85-90+% of your one-rep maximum). Do this with just a few major exercises, such as weighted squats (or lunges), deadlifts, chest pressing, and/or overhead pressing.

LESSON #29: Necessarily devote most of your time to strengthening your most important muscle groups and your weak points.

In order of importance, these muscle groups follow each other as follows:

1. Legs

¹²To structure a solid training program, you can use the examples in Appendix to Foundation 2 of this guide. Additionally, you have tons of free resources on the Internet that can help you structure or hone your training program. Educate yourself constantly on this topic. Finally, you can also hire a trainer at the gym (if you are a member) to help you or contact me for help. The options are many.

Strong legs are one of the keys to a good, long and healthy life. First, you need strong legs to maintain optimal balance and reduce the likelihood of falls and injuries. The older you get, the more reduced strength in your legs can lead to dangerous falls and injuries that can lead to chronic pain and/or permanent disability.

Second, the lack of strength in the legs (also due to poor blood circulation, which is the result of both a lack of active movement and improper diet) inevitably leads to reduced movement or reduced physical exercise. This further increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and premature death.

Increase/maintain strength in your legs by regularly performing squats, lunges and deadlifts, by walking uphill, walking up the stairs, running (sprints), cycling, etc.¹³

2. »Posterior chain« and back

The "posterior chain" keeps you upright and affects your upright posture. It is the most important set of muscles in our body, which is also unfortunately criminally neglected by most.



(source: <https://liftingtimes.co.uk/posterior-chain-development/>)

The key problem is sitting. The more you sit (office work), the more your "posterior chain" suffers - and the more you have to work on strengthening those muscles (preferably with deadlifts, Romanian deadlifts, reverse hyperextensions, kettlebell swings, glute bridges, back extensions, farmer walks, etc.).

Although the back is (almost) completely covered as part of posterior chain exercises, it is such a large and important part of the body that you must further strengthen it with additional exercises (such as various rowing variations, pullups, bird dogs, supermans, etc.). With these additional exercises, you will also further strengthen the posterior chain, which is an additional plus.

Always perform all these exercises with great care: with perfect focus on performing the exercise and with complete control of lifting and lowering the weights (which means that you must choose a weight that you can absolutely control – don't go too heavy). One single mistake here can very quickly mean an injury (to the lower back) and a long recovery (with a lot of pain).

¹³ Bonus tip: before each (weighted) leg workout, do 30-50 leg curls with a Swiss ball (or hip raises lying on the floor) to warm up the back of the legs (hamstrings) and thus drastically reduce lower back injuries.

LESSON #30: Always focus on performing the exercise correctly and not on the weight you are lifting.

3. Core

Core strength and stability are another key to long-term vitality. It is necessary to train the core regularly and in all directions (including the left-right direction, which is often neglected). Here your best friends are various variations of planks, dead bugs, hollow body holds, hanging leg raises, ab roller and various rotational exercises. for lateral abdominal muscles (Russian twists, lateral planks, band pall-of press, etc.).

It is best to do core exercises when you have the most energy (that is, before training or on days when you are not training with a load). Do the exercises mostly with your own body weight (10-20 repetitions, or, 30-60 seconds for planks, dead bugs, etc.), without additional loads (except occasionally some medicine ball use for rotational exercises).

4. Rotator cuffs

The rotator cuff is a very small group of muscles and tendons that are responsible for stabilizing the shoulder joint:



(source: <https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/rotator-cuff-tear#1>)

These muscles are **very easy to injure** when using excessive loads (weights) and when improperly performing exercises. The problem is that once the rotator cuffs are damaged, they usually cause a lot of problems (you can't raise your arm above your head, you feel constant pain when you move your arm, you find it very difficult to lift anything heavier, etc.) – even after weeks and months, but it can also take years if you need surgery.

In short, **keep your rotator cuffs as healthy as possible**. Perform the exercises in a controlled manner (with loads you can actually control). Regularly also perform special exercises to strengthen the rotator cuff (face pulls, external/internal rotations, scapions, band dislocations, etc.).

Perform these exercises only with the help of elastic bands, or with small loads (weights), and repetitions should be at least between 10 and 20 repetitions.

It really is a very small muscle group that doesn't need big weights to strengthen it (as long as you do the exercises in a controlled and correct way).

LESSON #31: The less workouts you miss, the better the results. Consistency of workouts is more important than the weights you lift.

Your goal is to achieve long-term and sustainable physical activity – to find ways of training that motivate you and that you can do in the long run without getting tired and giving up. It definitely has to be something where you can progress, or rather, you have the feeling that you have room to improve and grow along with the training. It is also important to change your training program every now and again so that your training does not become boring (usually every 6-8 weeks, but it can also be less frequent).

Consistency in performing the assigned workouts will (with each workout performed) strengthen your positive feelings towards yourself (self-confidence because you accomplished what you said you would), your self-confidence, and your self-discipline. **Very soon, with each missed workout, you will realize that there is a greater chance that the "future you" will be at a disadvantage** (unnecessary pain, illness, surgery, physical dependence on others, etc.) – and you will not want that for yourself. Even, if it means doing something today (for eg. training) that you would rather not do because you don't feel like it, etc.

Once you get to that level, you have already won. Your inner motivation will be unwavering.

LESSON #32: Do something physical every day - without exception.

Make sure you are physically active every day – even if it's "just" a normal 20-30 minute walk or "stretching" for 10-15 minutes. Always at least start, even if you are not motivated. It is usually the case that once you start and get through those first few difficult minutes (when your inner child/resistance, which is struggling with physical exertion and pain, comes to terms with not winning), everything becomes much easier and sometimes even pleasure.

It will always be better to do at least something than to do nothing. We all started from scratch once. There is no shame in that. A journey of a thousand steps always begins with one.

LESSON #33: Never "play" with external hormones and various controversial (illegal) substances.

Stay natural – even if that means you'll never look like models in magazines. **Your main goal is a healthy interior** – and this should always take precedence over a beautiful, aesthetic exterior (if you are too burdened with your physique and appearance, work more on that insecurity under Foundation 1). Any substances that will compete with the production of hormones in your body will inevitably destroy the functioning of your body from within and lead to the risk of cardiovascular kidney, liver, thyroid disease, etc. All in all, it's not worth to look good (and no, you are not that special or superior that you can get away with it and have your cake and eat it, too).

Come to terms with the fact that without “special supplements” you will never be both muscular *and* lean with visible abs (like models in magazines). That's the »curse« of training as a “natural”.

Do not throw away long-term benefits for short-term (visual) successes and victories. For long-term health, you need to go in the opposite direction: manage/lower your insulin, IGF-1 and growth hormones and try to keep them to a minimum (through fasting, lower protein intake, low carbohydrate intake, less muscle mass than you'd like, etc.).

LESSON #34: Get used to training early in the morning, as soon as possible (ideally on an empty stomach).

Training in the morning on an empty stomach is **probably the most sustainable in the long run** (especially if you go to a normal job that starts at 8 or 9am). Sounds awful, getting up at 5 or 6am to exercise, but it works. Why?

- At that time in the morning, you will almost never be disturbed by any meetings or commitments. You can easily finish your workout before your daily commitments start. The chances that your workouts will be disrupted are minimal, thus increasing the chances that your workouts will be consistent.
- Once you learn to burn fat efficiently for energy (see Foundation 3 for more), your energy will be most consistent in the morning – even without breakfast. It often happens that in the afternoon you are completely beat after a long day at work and/or family obligations – too tired to work out. By training in the morning, you completely avoid this.

You may occasionally (or regularly) need some extra pick-me-up to really wake up. Early morning coffee or pre-workouts with caffeine help a lot here.

LESSON #35: Weigh yourself no more than 2-3 times a week/month (or not at all). Avoid the tyranny of the scale as much as possible.

The tyranny of the scale is very insidious and can happen quickly. If you're going to weigh yourself every day, at least in the beginning, there's a tendency to start adjusting to what the scale shows you. If it shows more than you thought it would, you are more careful during the day (eat less). If it shows less, you give yourself a little more leeway. Basically, you react again to external impulses (especially if you do too little work on Foundation 1). With less regular weighing, you can significantly reduce the tyranny of the scale. Use your clothes or belt holes instead to test your weight. Have one garment and/or belt just for that purpose.

But beware: you still need occasional weighing to control your weight. The mirror *always* lies when it comes to your body weight. Because we want it to.

LESSON #36: Ignore arbitrarily set “strength standards” on the Internet.

There is a lot written on the internet and various forums about what kind of weight a person should lift according to their body weight. Ignore it all.

Such a comparison with others is counterproductive, irrelevant and only leads to injuries and a “hamster effect” (i.e., you lift more and more weight until you overdo it, you get injured, you don’t lift anything for a while, then you start lifting much lower weights again, you come to the previous level or a little further, then overdo it again, injure yourself, etc.). One step forward, one/two steps back, and most of the time you’re in a bad mood because you’re not lifting as much as others tell you that you should.

Never forget: you are working out for a long, good life, not to compare yourself to other insecure children. You are your own biggest competitor. Ignore others. Rather work consistently on Foundation 1 and don’t let these inferiority-plagued specimens feast on your fears. Most of the time, they are emotional vampires who are better avoided – even if they present themselves as (unnaturally) positive and optimistic.

LESSON #37: Accept the specifics of your body – especially the parts where you accumulate the most fat.

Each of us is a little different hormonally and consequently "stores" body fat in a different way: one on the chest, the other on the hips, the third on the legs. It is what it is.

Come to terms with the fact that you have parts of your body (which probably get on your nerves the most) that you won't be able to completely get rid of fat – unless you go to extremes and lose weight to the point of sickness. You can try to go to such extremes, but it is better to come to terms with the fact that your body has its own specifics as well as shortcomings (which probably seem ugly and/or embarrassing to you). This is the essence of accepting yourself unconditionally. It's better you spend this time and energy working on establishing a solid Foundation 1.

LESSON #38: What you see in fitness magazines is almost never achievable with the directions written in them.

These fitness magazines (and often also more general health magazines) are *toxic* because they propagate physiques that in 9 out of 10 cases are certainly not reachable naturally (without steroids and various external substances). They are completely fabricated and false, made primarily to sell nutritional supplements, and they only serve to make you feel less about yourself. You will never look like they look in fitness magazines because in 99% of cases their results are not achieved in a natural way.

The same goes for fitness trainers. Your personal trainer looks the way he does because of the artificial substances he takes and NOT because of his training and/or nutrition mastery or his super “genetics”. Guaranteed. Training and nutrition are a necessary but not sufficient condition to look like they look. And they are *guaranteed* not the reason behind their current appearance.

That doesn’t mean your coach doesn’t know what he’s doing when it comes to training. It just means that without similar substances you will never look even close to him/her and that sometimes these coaches (if they

are especially ignorant) peddle workout programs that are not suitable for someone who is not on artificial substances – so beware. Following such programs and coaches blindly can lead to over-exertion or injuries.

LESSON #39: If you have chronic lower back pain, wear shoes with flat soles and never use insoles in your shoes.

I learned this the hard way. I have naturally flat feet, plus chronic lower back pain problems (which I injured as a teenager). Ever since I was about 15 years old, I have been injuring my lower back at least 1-2 times a year (sometimes just making a wrong move when bending down) in a way, that required a week of lying in bed in terrible pain.

This condition only improved in my 30s when I began to systematically do exercises for the “posterior chain,” stopped using insoles in my shoes, and began wearing almost exclusively flat-soled shoes (Converse All-Stars, Vans, and the like). Today, I have a lot less problems and back pain as a result.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

If there is something that is not missing on the internet are articles/posts about training (and nutrition). There are tons of them, many of which are idiotic and/or poorly written. Below are some tried-and-tested resources I can recommend as a starting point (in addition to everything you find in this guide; **especially resources 7-10 are great for training with minimal equipment**):

1. Turbulence training (mainly for beginners):
http://www.healsa.co.za/PDF%20Files/Sample_Fat_Burning_Workout.pdf
2. Set/rep bible (article):
<https://www.t-nation.com/training/set-rep-bible>
3. ATHLEAN-X (more advanced training knowledge, especially useful for injury prevention) –
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe0TLA0EsQbE-MjuHXevj2A>
4. <http://nattyornot.com/> (website with a lot of insights regarding realities of staying »natural« and how to spot a non-natty in the fitness world)
5. <https://www.bodybuilding.com/exercises/> (tons of exercise presentations for all body parts)
6. <https://exrx.net/Lists/Directory> (similar as 5)
7. Paul Wade: Convict Conditioning: How to Bust Free of All Weakness ”Using the Lost Secrets of Supreme Survival Strength (bodyweight exercise with levels from beginner to advanced)
<https://www.amazon.com/Convict-Conditioning-Weakness-Using-Survival-Strength/dp/0938045768>
8. Al Kavadlo: Pushing the Limits! Total Body Strength with No Equipment
https://www.amazon.com/Pushing-Limits-Total-Strength-Equipment/dp/0938045865/ref=sr_1_5?keywords=al+kavadlo&qid=1579692749&s=books&sr=1-5
9. Al Kavadlo: Raising the Bar: The Definitive Guide to Bar Calisthenics
https://www.amazon.com/Raising-Bar-Definitive-Guide-Calisthenics-ebook/dp/B0097AN3HQ/ref=sr_1_7?keywords=al+kavadlo&qid=1579692813&s=books&sr=1-7
10. Al Kavadlo: Get Strong
<https://www.amazon.com/Get-Strong-Transformation-Strength-Using-Calisthenics-ebook/dp/B071VM4FZD>

11. Jim Wendler: 5/3/1: The Simplest and Most Effective Training System for Raw Strength
https://www.amazon.com/Simplest-Effective-Training-System-Strength/dp/B00686OYGQ/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=5%2F3%2F1&qid=1579692861&s=books&sr=1-1

APPENDIX TO FOUNDATION 2

A. TRAINING EXAMPLES¹⁴

Bodyweight training

- <http://www.startbodyweight.com/p/start-bodyweight-basic-routine.html>
- http://docmartin.org/fitness/Convict_Conditioning-Paul_Wade_Web4.pdf
- Al Kavadlo workouts (see his books above)

Training with weights

a) Beginners

- Fierce 5:
<https://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=162916931&page=1>
- Stronglifts 5*5:
<https://stronglifts.com/5x5/>
- All Pro programs (with questions and answers):
 - Part 1: <https://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=4195843>
 - Part 2: <https://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=133395553>
 - Part 3: <https://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=147447933>
 - Part 4: <https://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=155009423>
 - Part 5: <https://forum.bodybuilding.com/showthread.php?t=160947761>

b) For intermediates (my absolutely favourite program out there)

- 5/3/1 strength program:
<https://www.t-nation.com/workouts/531-how-to-build-pure-strength>
<https://www.t-nation.com/training/8-6-3-for-size-and-strength> (variation on 5/3/1)

B. RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT – IF WORKING OUT AT HOME

For bodyweight training:

- Pull-up bar
- TRX
- Rubber bands (from light to heavy; have a selection on hand)
- Swiss ball (optional)
- Stop-watch or timer
- Dip bar

¹⁴ Par primerov kot izhodiščna točka. Optimiziraj po želji.

For weight training:

- Bench (incline)
- Adjustable dumbbells (at least up to 60-70 pounds)
- Barbell
- Barbell/squat stand
- Kettlebells (adjustable are best; if not, one or all of the following: 12/16/20/24 kg)
- Weightlifting gloves and belt

C. EXAMPLES OF HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL (CIRCUIT) TRAINING (EMOM¹⁵ 20-40 min)

EMOM FULL BODY A (5-8 rounds) – 8 different trainings
EMOM 1: 10 pushups or dips/10 jump or KB squats/10 kb swings/10 renegade rows
EMOM 2: 10 pushups or dips/10 jump lunges/10 kb swings/10 renegade rows/10 plate raises
EMOM 3: 5 burpees/10 swings/10 DB snatches/10 jumps/10 renegade rows
EMOM 4: 5 pullups/10 swings/10 plate raises/10 jumps or squats/10 renegade rows
EMOM 5: 5 plyo pushups/10 swings/10 plate raises/10 jumps or squats/10 renegade rows
EMOM 6: 10 pushups or dips/10 jump squats/10 KB swings/10 snatches or slam balls
EMOM 7: 5 burpees/10 swings/10 snatches or slam balls/10 renegade rows
EMOM 8: 10 dips/10 swings/10 snatches/10 hanging knee raises/10 renegade rows
EMOM FULL BODY B (3-4 rounds)
Pullups (5 repetitions)
Dips (10)
Jump squats or jump lunges (10)
KB swings (12)
Renegade rows (12)
pushups (10) or plyo pushups (5)
DB snatches (10)
Band rows (12)
Bike sprints (15s)/bear crawls 15s/ RKC planks (30s)
Hanging knee raises (10)
EMOM FULL BODY C (5 rounds)
Pushups/dips (10)
Inverted row/band row (10) / chin-ups (6)
KB swings (10) / reverse hypers (10)
jump squats (10)
Hanging knee raises (10) / plate raises (10)
Renegade rows (10) / RKC planks (30s)

¹⁵ EMOM = every minute on minute (you do the reps at the start of each minute, then rest until minute is over).

FOUNDATION 3
BECOME NUTRITIONALLY
»LITERATE« AND ESTABLISH A
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

Eat to live. Don't live to eat.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF FOUNDATION 3 IS TO BECOME A MAXIMALLY “PRESENT” (“MINDFUL”) EATER WHO IS NUTRITIONALLY LITERATE AND WHO EATS TO LIVE.

LESSON #40: Be sure to become and remain a “present” eater and a “present” food shopper.

Today, the vast majority of us eat too fast and not thoughtfully enough. We eat in front of screens, even when we’re not really hungry (emotional eaters) and chew food far too little before swallowing it. By doing so, we unnecessarily burden our body (hormones, enzymes in the digestive tract, etc.) and harm our health.

It is thus imperative you become as »mindful« an eater as possible:

- Eat slowly: take at least 15-20 minutes for each meal; be mentally present when you eat; eat as many meals as possible in company and not alone, in front of the screen.
- Always chew each bite carefully so that the body uses the minimum amount of energy for digestion (ideally chew each bite until it becomes almost liquid).
- Eat only when you are really hungry (when you feel hungry, always drink a large glass of water first and wait to see if the hunger passes – often, "hunger" is simply a signal that you are not drinking enough, or an emotional reaction to a strong external impulse).

When food shopping, take care of the following:

- Always go to the store with a written-down shopping list (which includes things you know exactly why you want to buy).
- In the store, try to mainly buy only things that are on the list (keep non-list items to a minimum).
- **Never** go to the store hungry.
- Shop mostly **on the fringes of the store**: food stores (supermarkets) are usually laid-out so that the most attractive (and most harmful to health) things are placed in the middle of the store (sweets, snacks, sugary drinks, etc.) and the more boring (but healthier) ones on the fringes (fruits, vegetables, meat, etc.).

LESSON #41: Learn the basics of energy balance and become nutritionally literate as soon as possible.

Being nutritionally literate means that you know as precisely as possible **how much, what and why you put into your body** on a macro and micro level (especially the micro level is often neglected – don't ignore it!):

- ✓ At the “macro” level, you know as precisely as possible how many calories and macro nutrients (protein, carbohydrates, fats) you are consuming, both on a daily level and on individual meal level.
- ✓ At the “micro” level, you know as precisely as possible how many vitamins and minerals you take in with the food you eat (the goal is to consume as many micronutrients as possible with food and as little as possible with food supplements).

To know all this, you need to know the content/structure of the food and drink you eat in each meal and on a daily basis:

- i. **You need to know what the individual foods you eat are made up of** (how many ingredients they have, how many macro and micronutrients they have, how many calories they contain, etc.).

- ii. **You should always read the nutrition labels on the packaged food carefully** before putting it in your shopping cart. Find information on the nutrition label about how many calories this food has, how much protein (P), fat (F), carbohydrates (C) and fibre/sugar (usually given per 100g or serving; **if per serving, it is imperative you know what this “serving” means as it can vary a lot**). Also focus on how many ingredients a packaged food has – if it has more than 5 ingredients, don't buy it.
- iii. At least at a basic level, **you need to know/understand what happens to a particular food when you eat it** – how your body will use it for energy, how many calories and individual macro/micronutrients your body needs to function normally (so-called “maintenance level”), when it needs them, etc. These are the basics of biochemistry. You can start with Wikipedia and then upgrade your knowledge (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biochemistry>).
- iv. **You must constantly educate yourself on the topic of nutrition:** read as many books, magazines, various forums as possible. There is a huge amount of information online (a lot of it free). When doing so, **be sure to always think critically about everything you read** in the field of nutrition. Never take anything for granted, or rather, as the truth. Find another (and third) opinion.

LESSON #42: If you want to live a really long, healthy and good life in these times of lesser-quality over-abundance in your diet, you have to be as aware as possible about everything you put in your mouth.

The easiest way is to find an app online for entering everything you eat on a daily basis (I have been using Myfitnesspal for almost 10 years). **Start inputting everything you eat into it.** This way, you will very quickly (and easily) see what you are putting into yourself on a daily basis: how many calories, macro and micronutrients, etc.

Be as precise as possible with your entries and enter everything you eat into the app for at least 1 week (or even better: 1month) – preferably every day.

At first, doing this input will undoubtedly be difficult and annoying (each learning curve is the steepest at the beginning), but trust me: it will be very worthwhile. It will give you a very clear picture of how much you eat, what exactly you eat, what you eat too much/too little of and, consequently, help you to start eating better, healthier, more balanced meals that will be better aligned with your long-term goals.

You will also quickly see how hard it is to keep track of calories if others are preparing meals for you because you have no idea what exactly is inside (and whether it contains quality ingredients at all). This will (I hope) give you an extra impulse to prepare/cook more things yourself, because then you will know more precisely what and how much is in what you put into your body. You will become (more) nutritionally literate. **And being literate in anything is always a plus.**

It all may sound complicated, but it's not. It only requires a little bit of work and application, especially in the beginning. With all the information available to you today, you have no excuse for not being nutritionally literate.

As a responsible person who wants only the best for yourself and others, it should not be superfluous for you to invest the necessary time and effort into becoming nutritionally literate.

LESSON #43: Eating “boring” is an advanced virtue, not something to be ashamed of. Learn to eat to live (and not the other way around).

You urgently need to learn to **eliminate emotions from food** as much as possible – that is, to eat as “boring” and functional as possible. Always repeat to yourself that you are eating to live (and not the other way around). You need to be aware that your emotional reactions to food (excessive joy/enthusiasm, resistance, ...) are actually reactions of your inner "child" (or children) that associate certain foods with emotional (un) fulfilment.

Emotional eaters often eat when they are sad, scared, when they feel lonely, worthless, unloved, unworthy of love, and so on. Then they need food to comfort them, to fill emotional holes, to give them the feeling of security and love they so desperately need – usually in excessive amounts because emotional wounds are usually very deep.

Food is not here to fill you emotionally! This is not and should not be a function of food in your life!

Your goal is to create a life that is so exciting, so full of activities which fulfil you, that you barely have time to eat during the day – but when you do eat, you eat to obtain as much energy and nutrition as possible so that you can successfully perform many more of these fulfilling activities.

The more you work on yourself and your "inner children" in Foundation 1 – and the more you become a nutritionally literate, "present" eater – the less food will control you and the easier and happier you will be to eat more "boringly".

How to eat more »boringly« - without losing your mind?

- 1) **Make 2-3 daily menus with minimal variety** (enough to cover all your micro and macro needs – variety can come from using different vegetables and different spices), with as few ingredients as possible (target 1-5 ingredients) and as short as possible preparation time (max 30 minutes).
- 2) **Make your own menus** – instead of getting some generic menus from others which are not adapted to you. Don't pay for them because **no one will ever work as hard for your well-being as you will**. Plus, you'll learn a lot more if you make them yourself. It's not that hard if you just try.
- 3) **Eat 2-3 meals a day** (with a maximum of 1-2 snacks in between): cook at least 2 meals yourself with a maximum of 3-5 ingredients. There should always be at least 2-4 hours of "fasting" between meals/snacks to give your body time to digest what is being eaten and not to burden it with food every few hours (digestion = stress for the body).
- 4) **80-90% of everything you eat should be from minimally processed foods composed from single ingredients**¹⁶ (i.e.. egg, tomato, fruit, ...) or foods with up to 3-5 ingredients. Have the other 10-20% to enjoy when you really need it (some don't need anything; try it for yourself).

¹⁶ Example: a nutritious frittata can be made from a few single ingredients, such as eggs and vegetables + spices.

- 5) **Practice 10-16 hours of intermittent fasting each day** between two of your meals (any of them; what suits you best). Give your body as much time as possible to rest and not be burdened with digesting food so that it can focus on rejuvenation and restoring balance within.
- 6) **Cycle calories (and/or carbs):** on days when you are more physically active, eat more; on days when you are less active, eat less.
- 7) **Ingest the following as little as possible:**
 - sugar in all its forms (including fibre-free fruit, especially dried fruit),
 - calories in liquid form (juices, milk, alcohol; kefir is OK) – drink water, tea, coffee; if it needs to be sweetened, use erythritol, sucralose or stevia – in small amounts it will always be better than sugar.
 - non-essential medications (painkillers, etc.) that will destroy your intestinal flora, impair digestion, etc.
 - pre-planned "cheat" meals/days (when you allow yourself to eat whatever suits you without limits – see lesson #52 for more).

It may sound depressing at first glance, but I assure you that eating “boring” does not mean you will not enjoy the food you eat.

I am sure that you will find out for yourself that the more you invest in eating “boring” food (preferably the one you prepared yourself), the more you will enjoy it because you will have a much greater sense of control. With each bite, you will know exactly why you are putting it into your body, that you are the one controlling it, and what the positive effects of this will be. No fast-food or ready-made food will give you this pleasure.

LESSON #44: Avoid meals/foods high in both fat and carbohydrates as much as possible. It's the most killer combination (literally).

When it comes to diet, it is wise to strive for an extreme *imbalance* of two key macronutrients: fat (F) and carbohydrates (C). The "balanced" mix of the two is a killer, especially if you eat too many calories – which is very difficult to avoid, because the combination of C and F is by far the most delicious and addictive (fun mind game: try to find 100% natural foods high in C and F at the same time; there aren't many; vast majority are either high in C or high in F, but not both).

Both are sources of energy, but the body as a whole works best on either one of them as primary energy source (either C or F – don't fall for the accepted mantra that body only works well/best on carbs as primary energy source; that's BS).

What does this mean in practice? Choose a diet with either:

- a. low intake of F (below 20-25% of calories) and a high intake of C (over 50% of calories, but often 60-70+%) – an example is a vegan / vegetarian diet OR
- b. low C intake (below 20-25% of calories) and high F intake (over 50% of calories, but often 60-70+%) – examples are ketogenic/paleo/low-carb diets.

In both cases, your ingested protein (P) should be in the range of 1-2g of P per kilogram of body weight per day.

LESSON #45: Eat enough quality protein with maximum bioavailability.

Bioavailability means how well the ingested protein is used in the body once eaten. From this point of view, the following sources of protein are most recommended:

- ✓ of animal origin: eggs, lean/fatty white and red meat, white/fatty fish, cheese, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, whey powder, etc.
- ✓ of plant origin: quinoa, lentils, peas, beans, tofu, vegan protein powders, etc.

Protein is the creator of the growth of everything in your body (muscles, organs, tissues, etc.) and is essential. However, it can also be creator of the growth of deformed cells in the body (such as cancer cells) – so too much P can be counter-productive. **It's better you have less muscle than more cancer.**

Your goal is to consume 1-2 grams of P per kilogram of body weight per day (at a weight of 75 kilos this comes to between 75 and 150 grams of protein per day). That's more than enough. Ignore the advice of various fitness enthusiasts who are “gaga” for high protein intakes because they live in a constant irrational fear that they will lose their muscle mass (and their livelihood) if they do not eat enough P.

The only exception to this rule of 1-2 grams of P per kilogram of body weight would be a period of more serious weight loss. It's a shorter period (maximum 2-3 months, say) when you lower your calories to the point that you need a larger amount of protein to achieve a greater feeling of satiety (greater feeling of satiety = more chance of sticking to a diet). In this case, it is wise to increase the amount of P to about 40-55% of daily calories (but still keep carbs to no more than 100g per day).

And speaking of which: just about anyone can lose weight if they approach the challenge correctly. As far as I'm concerned (and from my own experience + logic itself), the state where the body stops losing weight (even if it's on low enough calories) doesn't exist. It can be slowed down and partially stopped, but in 99.9% of cases the culprit is an insufficient reduction in calories (incorrect (too optimistic) estimate of how many calories a person really needs per day). If you are mostly sedentary/static, you will often be shocked by how few calories you burn during the day – and how much you need to reduce your calorie intake to lose weight successfully.

My example: when I walked daily to the office and therefore was more active through the day, I was able to lose weight easily at 1900-2000 calories a day. Once I started working from home (with a similar amount of weight training), I had to drop the calories to about 1700 calories a day (very reluctantly because I couldn't understand why such low calories were needed) to really move my weight down. As I said, sometimes the (low) number of calories you will need to lose weight will shock you. But it is what it is.

**Formula that works in practice for weight loss (number of calories) =
your current body weight in kg * 2.2 * 10.**

As you lose weight, you adjust (lower) the required number of calories accordingly until you reach your desired (target) weight.

LESSON #46: Fats are critical to health. Don't be afraid of fats, especially saturated ones.

If you consume zero or too little F, the hormonal balance in your body will be disrupted. Eating too little F is life-threatening – it is usually recommended to have at least about 0.4-0.5 grams of F per kilogram of body weight.

On the other hand, the body easily survives even with little or no carbs. If you are not physically active, you do not need carbs at all, as the body is fully capable of obtaining all the necessary energy from the ingested fats and fat stores in your body. The carbs it urgently needs (for the brain and some organs), the body will easily convert from some of the ingested protein.

Regardless of generally accepted "theoretical guidelines", healthy fats are your friend, especially:

- **saturated fats** (butter, eggs, fatty meat, hard cheeses, coconut oil, coconut, lard and cracklings, etc.),
- **mono-unsaturated fats** (avocado and avocado oil, olive oil, olives) and
- **omega-3 polyunsaturated fats** (sardines, salmon and other fatty fish, fish oil, even some nuts or seeds – but less of it because plant sources of omega-3 are much less effective).

That you must be afraid and limit/eliminate your use of saturated fat is complete BS. Enjoy them as much as you want – with two conditions:

1. **Minimally mix F and C** (if you eat a lot of F, eat zero or little C) – both at the level of each meal and on a daily basis.
2. **Eat as little omega-6 polyunsaturated fat as possible** (vegetable oils, margarine, nuts, seeds, grains, etc.).

When it comes to omega-6 fats, pursue the goal of even (1:1) ratio between omega-6 and omega-3 fats. **Omega-6 fats increase inflammatory conditions** in your body (which lead to various diseases), while **omega-3s reduce them**.

The problem with the modern "moderate" diet is that this ratio is often 10+:1 to the "benefit" of omega-6 fats. Without realizing it, we consume far too much omega-6 fats and too little omega-3 fats. Aim to bring this ratio as close as possible to 1:1 with the food you eat (and nutritional supplements). This will significantly reduce the chances of inflammatory conditions in your body and ensure better health in the long run.

LESSON #47: It is imperative you learn to control insulin through controlling your carbohydrate intake.

Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar levels in the body. Every time you eat something (especially carbohydrates, but also protein), your blood sugar (glucose) level rises. This triggers the secretion of insulin, which helps this glucose to be absorbed into the cells, thereby lowering blood sugar levels.

The problem is that over time, cells become less sensitive to insulin – they absorb glucose less well. The less insulin-sensitive the cells, the more insulin the body needs to produce to regulate blood sugar levels. What makes cells insulin resistant? Too frequent triggering of too much insulin. And what triggers too frequent triggering of

too much insulin? Too frequent feeding with large amounts of carbohydrates (especially simple carbs) in a single meal.

The more carbohydrates we eat, and the more often we eat these carbohydrates, the more likely it is that our cells will become less and less sensitive to insulin. And because our body has limits on how much insulin it can produce (not an unlimited amount), we are more likely to end up with too much blood sugar in the blood (because we don't have enough insulin to shuttle that sugar into cells). And what is the result of chronic high blood sugar? Type 2 diabetes.

So how can you control your insulin and reduce your chances of getting type 2 diabetes? With as little and as little carbohydrate intake as possible. My suggestion is to **limit yourself to 50-150g of carbs a day (ideally up to 100g a day), most of it at coming from vegetables and some from fruits** (especially ones with few carbs and a lot of fibre, like berries). Eat as little sugar (and sweets) and other simple carbohydrates as possible (white rice, white flour, bread, pasta, etc. – they are all sugar in disguise). Do not eat large amounts of carbs at once. Eat a maximum of 2-4 larger meals a day, with limited C in all of them. Practice also daily fasting for at least 10-16 hours (intermittent fasting).

LESSON #48: Try a "real" ketogenic diet at least once (and as soon as possible) – for at least a month or two. It can change your life for the better.

As far as I'm concerned, everyone (with very few exceptions, which almost certainly don't apply to you) should try at least once to function on a **properly designed ketogenic diet**¹⁷. I know quite a few people who have tried the true ketogenic diet (even after years of resistance) and now don't want to go back to the previous high-carb regime. Me neither.

The key to a true ketogenic diet is that through it you can teach your body in just a few months (ideally at least 2-3 months) to use fat as the primary source of energy, instead of carbs. Once the body learns this, it is much easier to manage your energy, body weight, appetite, etc. throughout the day. **It is much easier to manage your weight long term.** Please, educate yourself on this topic and try it for yourself. You will not regret it.

What does a properly designed ketogenic diet look like? Something like this:

1. At least in the first two weeks when you start, be sure to eat enough calories (eat calories where you do not gain/lose weight; if you do not count calories, eat to satiety, but do not overeat)
2. Eat only unprocessed or minimally processed, high-fat foods (eggs, fatty meats, fatty fish, butter, avocados, coconut, nuts, olive oil, coconut, olives, etc.).
3. At least for the first two weeks, don't make substitutes for the food you're used to (keto versions of pastries, pizzas, sweets, etc.)! Eat as simply as possible.
4. Every day **you should consume at least 70% of your calories in the form of fat** (preferably 75+%): most should be from saturated fats (eggs, butter, cheese, coconut), because saturated fats are the real source of energy on keto (unsaturated fats much less so).

¹⁷ Most versions of "ketogenic" diet out there have nothing to do with the true ketogenic diet and only lead to nausea and disappointment over the "promised" positive effects of the ketogenic diet. If you're serious of trying a ketogenic diet, do it the proper way, as described in this Guide.

5. Eat enough, but relatively little protein: no more than 1-1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight (if you eat too much P, your body will just convert the excess of them to carbs and your adaptation will be slower than it could be).
6. Don't eat more than 30-50 grams of carbs per day (I'm talking about **the total amount of C consumed**, not "net" C, where you do not count grams from fibre; all most of your daily carb intake should be from vegetables). Avoid fruits (except some forest fruits), all grains, legumes, etc.
7. Eat no more than 2-3 times a day, with at least 3-4 hours between meals.
8. Don't have any snacks between meals (if/when you *really* need a snack, eat a handful of nuts).
9. **Eat enough salt (up to 2 grams a day)**: ketogenic diet dehydrates you, so it is necessary to add extra salt to each dish (it should be at least a little saltier than you are used to).
 - Recommended: drink 300-500ml of salty broth once a day (dissolve one broth cube in boiling water and drink it as tea) to provide extra salt in the body.
10. Drink minimal alcohol because it dehydrates the body.
11. Don't drink any calorie drinks. Only water, tea, coffee... Use erythritol, stevia or sucralose to sweeten these drinks.
12. Drink enough water – at least 2-3 litres a day; ideally even more (this applies regardless of whether you are on ketogenic diet or not).

If you stick to all of this, you won't have any problems. After two, three weeks, analyse your condition and adjust the diet plan accordingly, if necessary (according to your goals). Even if you – after a month or two – don't stay on ketogenic diet, your body will be able to utilize fats much better as a source of energy – while likely also repairing certain inflammatory conditions that you weren't even aware of you had.

LESSON #49: Don't drink calories.

Drinking calories (juices, alcohol, coffee with cream and sugar, sweetened flavoured water, etc.) is often one of the most insidious reasons of gaining weight (or not being able to lose it). Many people simply do not consider calorie drinks as food, but unfortunately **everything counts**. If you drink 200ml of juice that has, say, 100 calories, it's like eating a banana. No difference. And worst of all, drinking calories is usually the same as drinking pure sugar, because most calorie drinks are loaded with sugar and/or simple carbohydrates, without having any fibre to mitigate the insulin spike. The effect is the same as eating pure sugar.

Don't be naive. Either count the calories you drink in your daily caloric intake (if you really can't give up such drinks) – and consequently eat less actual food to compensate for these additional calories – or minimize calories you drink (drink only healthy drinks, such as traditional kefir, vegetable juices, kombucha, etc.). As far as I'm concerned, the second option is much better and healthier. But you decide for yourself.

LESSON #50: Regular/occasional fasting is healthy and great for your body. You won't die if you're a little hungry.

Every now and then, the body needs to be given a break from digestion and time to self-renew (autophagy). Fasting comes in very handy for this. Don't be afraid of hunger. You will not die if you are hungry, but you *will* live longer!

It doesn't have to be some ultra-long fast. You will do a lot of good to your body just by practicing some form of IF (intermittent fasting). These are shorter fasts – approx. 14-16 hours (men) or 10-12 hours (women) – which you do once a day, giving your body a fairly long window to use the energy it would otherwise use to digest and regulate all the glucose in your blood on self-renewal (especially mending any damaged cells in the body).

If you are not a manual worker, skip breakfast and break your fast with the first meal somewhere between 11am and 1pm (when it suits you). Then eat all the meals up to and including 8pm or 9pm (say 3 meals altogether) and fast between 9pm in the evening and at least 11am the next day. This equates to at least a 14-hour fast, with you sleeping 6-8 hours during it. In the meantime, maximally hydrate yourself with water, drink some coffee, soup, etc.

- Alternative: if you are determined to eat a meal in the morning, eat breakfast at 6am-8am and then do not eat anything until dinner 10-14 hours later. This is also an option if you do not have a problem being hungry during the day, or if you do not become very hungry during the day. Try different ways and find out what works best for you.

LESSON #51: If you want to successfully control your weight and diet in the long run, you must learn to cook and prepare most meals yourself.

Your goal should be to **eat minimally outside (in canteens, restaurants, any pre-prepared food you buy at supermarket, etc.)**. Today, a lot of people claim that they are too busy or that they have more important things to do than to cook for themselves. Total and utter BS. Time preparing meals is never wasted and should take precedence over 99% of other things.

In addition to water, food is the main thing you must put into your body to survive. **Eating/preparing quality food that benefits your body to the maximum should therefore be your top priority.** Do your best as you know how. No one is ever so busy that they cannot (in advance) prepare a quality meal. Nothing is ever so important that you can't prepare a meal. If you don't have time, fast. You will not die.

LESSON #52: Be sure to avoid pre-planned cheat meals/days (especially on a diet).

"Cheat" meals/days can become relevant especially when you are on a diet. The idea that at some point your weight will only decrease if you occasionally indulge in a meal/day when you eat whatever you want (while on other days you are in a severe deficit) has really become mainstream. This occasional shock to the system is supposed to prevent a slowdown in metabolism (and a consequent slowdown in weight loss).

The problem is not that this isn't necessarily correct. The problem is when you fall into the trap of actively planning when you will have a "cheat" – and actively dream/plan about all you will be able to eat at that time.

Once you start planning “cheat” meals in advance, you need to be aware that you are starting to develop some form of eating disorder. There can be several reasons, but usually the main reasons for the uncontrollable desire to "cheat" are mainly excessive calorie deficit (you are trying to lose weight too quickly)

and/or lack of internal motivation to mentally cope with the deficit. Permanently successful weight loss is always a marathon, not a sprint.

LESSON #53: Most supplements are completely unnecessary – but some are highly recommended.

Even if you eat the highest quality food, it is wise to supplement your diet daily or occasionally with quality nutritional supplements.

The problem is that at least 95% of dietary supplements are almost certainly without any noteworthy effect. Supplements that can potentially add some value to your health are mainly **vitamin D, vitamin C, magnesium, zinc, iron (for women), various probiotics and digestive enzymes (for regular, healthy digestion), etc.** All of these supplements are both cheap and easily available. Find the best possible form of each supplement (the one that is best absorbed). Determine how many individual supplements you need and choose the highest quality provider/manufacturer of each supplement.

Also, keep an eye out for any new supplements that might be worth taking. Things are evolving. Stay up to date. **But try not to take anything that is hidden in some proprietary blends** (in which the individual ingredients are not fully disclosed).

LESSON #54: Don't blindly trust nutritionists.

The fact that someone looks like a sculpted fitness model and/or has a degree in nutrition/dietetics is no guarantee that they know what they are talking about.

It is often just the opposite. Fitness models/bodybuilders just repeat the same things they learned when they were starting out. In doing so, they think very little about the potential long-term consequences of a diet they are promoting, or that what works for them may not work for others who do not take all the »other« things they take (steroids, diuretics, various hormonal manipulations, means for faster loss of body fat). Particularly ludicrous are their frequent recommendations to eat excessive amounts of protein (2-3+ grams per kilogram of body weight) and to eat every 2-3 hours.

On the other hand, you have a mountain of registered dieticians and nutritionists with a variety of degrees who also peddle learned (and officially recognized) things that often turn out to be pure nonsense in practice (such as don't eat saturated fats, don't eat more than a couple of eggs a week (fear cholesterol!), eat very little fat (and mostly just unsaturated fat), don't eat more than 30 grams of protein at once because the body cannot absorb it, do not eat in the evening, always eat breakfast because it is the most important meal of the day, etc. They are like repetitive robots that blindly cling to official guidelines that are completely outdated – but, in this way, they have a guaranteed business and secure themselves from potential lawsuits.

Don't follow them blindly. Rather, teach yourself about different dietary approaches (with a great deal of scepticism), become maximally nutritionally literate, try different approaches on yourself and find the way that suits you best. It's just nutrition. It's not freaking rocket science!

In the field of nutrition and nutritional supplements you need to have a clear, sceptical head on your shoulders and should not take anyone at their word right away. All of them will try to sell you something, but there are only a few that are/will be worth the investment.

LESSON #55: The less opportunities you miss to prepare and enjoy quality food, the more successful, healthy, and better your life will be. If anywhere, it doesn't pay to be lazy here.

Consistency in performing these activities will (with each repetition performed) strengthen your positive feelings towards yourself (self-confidence because you have accomplished what you said you would), your self-confidence and self-discipline.

If/when you have a clear picture of yourself in the future (at least in 5 years' time, and ideally in 20-30+ years) and you **like** this picture, it will be easier for you to be consistent, because with every mistake you will be aware that it increases the possibility that the "future you" will be at a disadvantage (illness, medication, pain, obesity, physical dependence on others, etc.). You will not want this for yourself, even if it means giving up something you want to do today (not eating sweets because you know it's not healthy, investing 20 minutes of effort into preparing a meal for yourself, suffering occasional feelings of hunger while fasting, etc.).

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

In the field of nutrition (similarly as in the field of training) there is a lot out there that's said and written, but little of it of really high quality or worth reading. Below are some books that have changed my life and/or my view of the world of nutrition and which I can highly recommend.

Most of them are inclined towards a low carb diet because this is the diet that works for me and that I think is most appropriate and will work for most people – very likely for you too, if you give it a chance. Take this as a starting point going forward, then explore further:

1. Gary Taubes: Good calories, bad calories
https://www.amazon.com/Good-Calories-Bad-Gary-Taubes-ebook/dp/B000UZNSC2/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=taubes&qid=1612523193&s=digital-text&sr=1-4
2. Gary Taubes: Why we get fat
https://www.amazon.com/Why-We-Get-Fat-About-ebook/dp/B003WUYOQ6/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=taubes&qid=1612523225&s=digital-text&sr=1-2
3. Gary Taubes: The case against sugar
https://www.amazon.com/Case-Against-Sugar-Gary-Taubes-ebook/dp/B01DRXCPJ0/ref=pd_sbs_2?pd_rd_w=nTDbv&pf_rd_p=3ec6a47e-bf65-49f8-80f7-0d7c7c7ce2ca&pf_rd_r=XNW1ZXKRD0VW925BFQZ&pd_rd_r=02fbe474-8327-41d4-9efc-59d3185fc679&pd_rd_wg=UQT4w&pd_rd_i=B01DRXCPJ0&pvc=1
4. Jimmy Moore: Keto clarity (+ website of Jimmy Moora: <http://www.livinlavidalowcarb.com/>)
https://www.amazon.com/Keto-Clarity-Definitive-Benefits-Low-Carb-ebook/dp/B00MEX9B4C/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=volek&qid=1612523312&s=digital-text&sr=1-4
5. Stephen Phinney, Jeff Volek: The Art and Science of Low Carbohydrate Living
https://www.amazon.com/Art-Science-Low-Carbohydrate-Living/dp/0983490708/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1ZHMP1BF4FOYX&dchild=1&keywords=volek+phinney+art+of+low+carb&qid=1612523346&s=digital-text&prefix=volek%2Cdigital-text%2C238&sr=1-1-catcorr
6. Valter Longo: The Longevity diet (about vegan diet)
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B073XY7CHW/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_i0
7. Michael Moss: Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us
https://www.amazon.com/Salt-Sugar-Fat-Giants-Hooked-ebook/dp/B00BFTV09K/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=moss+salt+sugar&qid=1612523423&s=digital-text&sr=1-1
8. Mark Sisson: Primal blueprint
https://www.amazon.com/Primal-Blueprint-Reprogramme-effortless-boundless-ebook/dp/B008KYWGLE/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=primal+blueprint&qid=1612523443&s=digital-text&sr=1-2
9. Jan Kwasniewski: Optimal Nutrition (a rare, expensive book, but worth the investment)
<https://www.amazon.com/Optimal-Nutrition-Jan-Kwasniewski/dp/8387534137>

10. Jan Kwasniewski: Homo Optimus
11. Richard Feinman: The World Turned Upside Down: The Second Low-Carbohydrate Revolution
12. William Banting: Letter on Corpulence (one of the first proponents of low-carb diet from 1864!)
<http://www.thefitblog.net/ebooks/LetterOnCorpulence/LetteronCorpulence.pdf>

FOUNDATION 4
***ADOPT A »GOOD« PHILOSOPHY OF
LIFE AND LIVE YOUR LIFE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH IT***

*Better to find and practice a philosophy of life that is not ideal
than to have no philosophy of life at all.*

THE KEY GOAL OF FOUNDATION 4 IS TO BECOME AND REMAIN FIT, LEAN AND STRONG SPIRITUALLY!!

STEP #1: BECOME AND REMAIN SPIRITUALLY FIT!

LESSON #56: As soon as possible, find a good philosophy of life that best suits your values and practice it regularly.

Before choosing the right one, I recommend trying at least a few different philosophies of life¹⁸. Test them on yourself in practice to see which one is best for you. In the end, you're sure to find the right one – or you will create your own mix that suits you best¹⁹.

There are many philosophies of life and none is the “only” or the “right” one. Everyone needs to find the one that suits them best in terms of their values and beliefs and vision of how they want to live their lives. It can also be a combination of several philosophies of life. There are no (and shouldn't be any) rules.

No matter which philosophy of life you choose, it must allow you to – through regular practice – learn **at least the following**:

- ✓ How best to live your life on a daily basis.
- ✓ How best to respond to daily events, loss of property, to insults, anger attacks, etc.
- ✓ How to overcome negative emotions – it gives you the tools to deal with them better.
- ✓ How to enjoy the good things in your life – without emotional attachment to them.
- ✓ How to establish and maintain quality relationships with others (those with similar values).
- ✓ How to eliminate the sources of unhappiness from your life as much as possible (greed, insatiability, worry about things over which you have no control, etc.).
- ✓ How to want things you already have (and not the ones you don't).
- ✓ How to take nothing in your life for granted or as if it belongs to you.

Once you find such a philosophy of life, **practice the techniques and teachings it contains on a regular basis**. Don't be afraid to change/adapt your philosophy as you learn through life.

LESSON #57: Never take as a basis a philosophy that requires you to stick to it 100%, without possible change.

Such a philosophy is not a "good" philosophy of life, but a dogma – and **no dogma is positive**. Growth and change (and adaptation) are the basis of life, so **don't be rigid**. If at some point you find that the chosen philosophy does not suit you (that it limits you), change it, or adapt it.

¹⁸ These can be the teachings of Zen Buddhism or Christianity or Islam or nihilism or existentialism or whatever you find suitable in this vast, diverse, and often incomprehensible world. For starters, you can find a very extensive list of philosophies here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_philosophies.

¹⁹ It is crucial that you first focus thoroughly on your independence under Foundation 1 – so that *you* will use the philosophy of life, and not vice versa.

LESSON #58: It is imperative you learn and regularly practice negative visualization – regardless of your chosen philosophy of life.

Practice negative visualization²⁰ every day (a couple of minutes per day). This habit alone will significantly improve your life (your perception of your life).

Regularly performing negative visualization will allow you to stop taking things and people around you for granted, to stop bothering with what you don't have, and to find as much satisfaction as possible in what you already have – while you still have it. Most of us have a lot of good things in our lives that we are not even aware of – until we lose them. Then, we regret the loss and that we didn't appreciate them more before²¹.

LESSON #59: Internalize that nothing you have is eternal. It may all be over once.

Everything is fleeting and whatever you have, you can lose tomorrow. So don't wait for a catastrophe to happen to start appreciating what you already have (your loved ones, health, body functionality, regular job, financial stability, etc.).

LESSON #60: Regularly practice gratitude for all you have.

Constantly remind yourself of all that you have (and all you can lose tomorrow or the very next moment). Make lists of positive things in your life about yourself, your body, your loved ones, and so on – and remember them.

LESSON #61: Focus only on what you can control. Ignore the rest.

There are **three types of situations** in your life:

- a) Those you can 100% control: your goals, values, your character, ... (all of which you have identified and are working on in Foundation 1).
- b) Those you can control partially:
 - i. e.g., when you tackle something, you usually can't completely control the end result (because you can't control all the variables), but you can always fully control the effort you put into the work;
 - ii. you cannot completely control who will rule you, but you can completely control that you go to the polls and vote (and if you or others are denied this right, you can completely control how you stand up for yourself or them);
 - iii. etc.

²⁰ Google »negative visualisation«.

²¹ If you have problems with visualization, observe the people around you – especially the bad things that happen to them. This could be you. What if it was you? What if this happened to you and you lost all you now take for granted?

- c) Those you can't control (things that are "bigger" than you): natural forces, financial and economic crises, outbreaks of wars, etc.

Focus only on the situations under a) and b). At the same time, accept situations under c) as unchanging fact and try to worry about them as little as possible (because you can't change them anyway). This way, your life will be much happier, fulfilled, and productive.

LESSON #62: Whatever you do, always act according to your inner values and with a healthy dose of humility. Humility is not a bad thing, if you know your true worth.

Lose your sense of self-importance. No one is irreplaceable or indispensable. In nothing. Whoever you are (even if you're new Newton, Einstein, or Steve Jobs), this world will easily miss you, or rather, it will quickly find someone to replace you.

LESSON #63: Avoid conflicts where possible, but not at all costs.

Some things will always be worth fighting for (if they are aligned with your values). If/when you find one, do not hide your tail between your legs, but stand up to injustice, even if it hurts (see Foundation 7 for more).

Nothing will hurt you more and do you more harm than acting contrary to your core values and not standing up to injustices, especially those you can (at least partially) influence (instead of ignoring them for the sake of a peaceful/easier life). Your subconscious will not forget it. Guaranteed.

LESSON #64: Don't wait for old age to adopt philosophy of life. It is never too early to start living according to a "good" philosophy of life.

Try to find your philosophy of life as soon as possible. The longer you practice it regularly, the better you will prepare for old age. Age usually brings with it wisdom and gives greater value to inner peace and contentment. Your philosophy of life will only get better over the years – the longer you practice it, the more it will give you back.

The fewer opportunities to implement the chosen philosophy of life you will miss, the more successful you will be and the better your life will be. Consistency in performing the assigned activities will (with each activity performed) strengthen your positive feelings towards yourself (self-confidence because you carried out what you said you would), your self-confidence and self-discipline.

STEP #2: BECOME AND REMAIN SPIRITUALLY LEAN!

LESSON #65: Always practice only one philosophy of life at a time - a philosophy that must be "good."

Good philosophy of life:

- ✓ Will tell you which things in life are truly worth pursuing (and which are not worth pursuing).
- ✓ Will teach you how to gain things worth pursuing (inner peace, happiness, etc.).

- ✓ Will allow you to develop fully and holistically as a human being.
- ✓ Will give you the freedom to supplement/upgrade it with elements of other philosophies as needed.

By practicing a good philosophy of life, you will eventually:

- ✓ Become a better person.
- ✓ Experience fewer negative emotions (anger, fear, disappointment, anger).
- ✓ Be able to achieve your inner peace more often and more easily.
- ✓ Enjoy and appreciate the world around you much more and much more often.
- ✓ Enjoy the things that no one can take away from you much more (your personal character, your values, etc.).
- ✓ Understand that there are multiple paths to the same amount of happiness.
- ✓ Be more aware of how lucky you are to be alive – feel happy just to be alive.

LESSON #66: Stoicism can be not only good, but for many a great philosophy of life.

Stoicism is a philosophy of life that dates to ancient Greece. It was immensely popular in ancient Greece and then in ancient Rome until it died out around the second century AD. It is therefore more than two thousand years old and is more useful today than ever before.

Stoicism is my philosophy of life. It is a proven “good” philosophy of life that really works in real life. It is the opposite of today’s search for momentary pleasures and enjoyment. It is a very concrete, simple, flexible, and practical philosophy of life²².

Is it for everyone? Almost certainly not. However, in my opinion (especially today) it can be a very appropriate philosophy of life for many people (including you), especially if:

- ✓ It is important for you to seek and find inner peace in life (inner peace is either your greatest or one of your greatest values).
- ✓ You are by nature optimistic person (your glass is half-full) who can enjoy the world around you (and you are aware that you and how you perceive the world are the biggest source of your dissatisfaction, not others around you).
- ✓ You think analytically/logically about things and people (you like and often ask yourself questions such as why, how, what... about things/people/world around you).

LESSON #67: There are always multiple paths to the same amount of happiness – if you don’t paralyze yourself with negative thoughts.

It’s crucial you understand that **there are always several different solutions that will give you equally good or almost equally good result.** If one path doesn’t work, there are always others that may do. Therefore, do not cling to just one path and do not convince yourself that this path is the only one, or the only right one. It is not.

²² What Stoicism is **not** – although such an understanding has spread over the last centuries – is focusing on indifference or the inability to feel pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, and so on. Stoicism does not mean dead passivity without emotions!

Example: you find your soulmate and convince yourself that it is your only soulmate in this world and that (if you lose it) you will never find a similar one again (that you will never experience the same or greater amount of happiness again).

You will. There are many more similar soulmates in this world. Never forget that.

By blindly and stubbornly clinging to an existing path (or, the existing state), you will shut yourself off from other possibilities and live in constant fear that this path will end (that you will lose this happiness).

Such thinking is completely irrational and can (unnecessarily) completely paralyze you. Life is not a movie. There is a good chance that you will eventually lose your soulmate (or existing happiness) and must find a new one. The good news is that there are undoubtedly several potential soulmates for you out there. The bad news, though, is that you'll almost certainly have to work hard for it (and must have some luck) to find one of them. Therefore, once again, quality, and regular work within Foundation 1 is important, because it forces you into confident proactivity.

STEP #3: BECOME AND REMAIN SPIRITUALLY STRONG!

LESSON #68: Learn to accept scarcity as a positive thing and regularly practice controlled scarcity – “voluntary discomfort”.

Lack of things (food, money, love, security...) is not something you must necessarily fear or actively avoid. Lack of them can strengthen your spirit and helps you focus on the things that really matter to you – it can help you increase the enjoyment of life *you already have*.

Actively reduce the fear of scarcity by exercising "voluntary" discomfort. The more immune you are to scarcity in all its forms, the stronger you will be spiritually:

- ✓ Consciously postpone your current satisfaction: even if you're hungry, don't eat that donut in front of you; even if you see on sale the things you want, don't buy them; instead of wasting money, save it for the hard days that will inevitably come, etc.
- ✓ Occasionally perform a one-day or multi-day fast.
- ✓ Give things to someone else, even if that means you don't have them.
- ✓ Vote for something that may not be for your good but is for the good of the wider society (others).
- ✓ Practice humility in front of others (and confess out loud when you are wrong).
- ✓ Deliberately expose yourself to physical discomfort (go out during the winter not dressed enough to appreciate a warm apartment more; train with weights or do longer cardio training, etc.).

By practicing occasional voluntary discomfort, you will **appreciate everything you have (even the little things) much more**. Training self-denial will also quickly **reveal your true view of the world** and how much control you really have over yourself: whether you are truly able to look at life positively, regardless of the "terrible" situation.

A lot of people believe they're a "glass half-full" type, and then a temporary shortage shows that their glass is actually always half empty as they start complaining as soon as things aren't quite "OK" (mostly because they don't work on themselves in Foundation 1).

Self-denial is **causally related to one of the key goals under Foundation 1**, where you must necessarily teach your spoiled "inner children (those who need to have things NOW!) something called **deferred satisfaction** as soon as possible. The training of self-denial is at the same time excellent training of your control over such spoiled "inner children" and the development of immunity to external influences and opinions.

LESSON #69: Never be ashamed of what you have because of something you don't have. Being content with little is not a failure, but a virtue.

Scarcity is the key to longevity. Those who have less are usually also happier and more satisfied. And what is more desirable than a sense of contentment and happiness?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

1. William B. Irvine: A Guide to the Good Life (terrific book on Stoicism and how to practice it today)
https://www.amazon.com/Guide-Good-Life-Ancient-Stoic-ebook/dp/B0040JHNQG/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=guide+to+the+good+life&qid=1612523659&s=books&sr=1-1
2. Shunryū Suzuki: Zen mind, Beginner's mind
<https://www.amazon.com/Zen-Mind-Beginners-Informal-Meditation/dp/1590308492>
3. Jonas Salzgeber: The little Book of Stoicism

FOUNDATION 5
***LEARN TO LIVE WITH »GOOD
ENOUGH«***

Better to be consistently imperfect than never perfect.

LESSON #70: There is no perfection. Stop chasing it.

Perfection is only possible in theory – **if you never do anything in practice**. If you pursue perfection in practice, you will most likely **achieve or do much less than you could**, and you will certainly be significantly less happy. Therefore, do not pursue perfection and do not fall into the trap of perfectionism.

LESSON #71: Pursuing perfectionism will always be a source of great frustration to you. You will never win.

Perfectionism paralyzes you (many times, you don't tackle things at all, if you're not sure you can make them "perfect") and/or makes you overly obsessive (in constant panic over the mistakes you could potentially make). It leads you to indecision, to tinkering, to unnecessarily detailed precision, to constant and unnecessary micro-improvements (and consequently wasting time), to a lot of extra work and unnecessary stress for you to obtain few concrete results in the end (few end results will be good enough to pass your overly critical sieve).

LESSON #72: Perfectionism is nothing more than attempt to control what you can't control (how others look at you).

The obsession with perfection and the consequent perfectionism is **a sign of an unfulfilled (unbalanced) personality – a neurotic personality**. It is a quest for external confirmation that is really out of your control. With perfectionism, you try to actually control others – through being unforgiving to yourself.

The more insecure you are (the more you doubt yourself), the more you will strive for perfectionism.

Here, working on Foundation 1 will help you a lot to break the vicious circle of unforgiveness towards yourself. The more you work on yourself, the more you will be lenient with yourself, the easier it will be to accept yourself as you are, your imperfection, and come to terms with "good enough". It is a very close connection that will never be loosened.

LESSON #73: You don't have to be a perfectionist to be successful. Aim rather for "good enough".

"Good enough" is what most often drives the world forward and, in real life, is more than enough for monumental successes and achievements (which anyway depend on many different factors, inside and outside the individual's control). What you most need is:

- ✓ **Courage** to decide on something,
- ✓ **Personal integrity** (to be able to decide when it is "good enough") and
- ✓ **Developed self-discipline** to make the thing as good as possible in the end.

“Good enough” doesn't mean the thing isn't expertly done. It just means it's not *perfectly* done.

LESSON #74: Always set a deadline by which something must be done – and do your best to stick to that deadline.

Be as precise as possible and work to the best of your ability (always do your best), while at the same time willing/forcing yourself to finish the thing (deadlines!). No matter how long you perfect something, it will never be perfect. But it will almost always be "good enough" at some point. Then, let it go from your grip.

Once you have set specific deadlines by which you have to do the thing, organize your time so that you will do "good enough" on time, with as little stress as possible towards the end. Always try 100% to reach every individual deadline, but if you at times don't succeed, don't beat yourself up about it. Rather, try to finish the thing as soon as possible, with as little delay as possible.

Always organize your work in such a way that in the beginning you work with maximum intensity and "stress" (even if you must work overtime), and then with less and less intensity and stress, the closer you get to the deadline. This is **exactly the opposite way of how most choose to work**: they prefer to procrastinate at the beginning because there is still a lot of time left and then "suffer" under ever-mounting stress, the closer they get to the deadline. And then they're even *proud* of how well they work under pressure when they finish the thing (but in reality, they just don't know how to organize themselves well).

Don't be a hero-idiot unnecessarily. Be a master planner-organizer instead.

LESSON #75: Always try to organize your work so that you finish at least one day before the deadline.

This way, you will always have some "leeway" to absorb any potential delays and/or complications without excessive stress. Be sure to set internal intermediate deadlines (milestones on the way to the final deadline) that only you know about – and stick to them! Here, too, it is true that more effort at the beginning will be of great help in the end.

LESSON #76: If you see that a thing can't be done "good enough" on time, don't even start it.

It's always an option for you to say no – and it's always better not to start things at all than to do them half-heartedly, with a lot of mistakes, or, with unnecessary mental/physical exertion (which again, only immature, poorly organized, masochistic personalities enjoy).

Such decisions are usually made when you want to please someone outside yourself and in the long run they usually lead to self-harm. Occasionally (rarely) it may be OK to do it, but in general avoid it like the devil avoids the cross.

Your main focus should be on not making major/fatal mistakes in anything you do. **If/when you ever make a mistake (this will happen too, of course), always and immediately admit it** (don't blame others)! Try to fix it as best you can and learn as much as you can from the mistakes you make.

LESSON #77: If you want to be happy, learn to actively want "mediocrity".

Mediocrity is not and should not represent a negative word to you. "Average" doesn't mean you're not or can't be great. You can be distinctly average on the outside (to the wider outside world), yet great within yourself

and a great father, friend, expert to people close to you. How others (who don't know you) perceive you, doesn't matter.

Not every one of us can be a Newton or Mozart or Steve Jobs. We cannot all change the world. We can't all be "big". And that's OK. Changing the world or the tendency to "be great" often leads to self-denial at the expense of external confirmation – and to a much smaller total amount of happiness in life. Which of the “great ones” was really happy in private life? Very few of them. For the most part, their lives were one constant (often self-inflicted) suffering – for them, and often for others around them.

Always have a “big picture” in mind: from perspective of the vastness of the universe, the achievements of an Einstein or Steve Jobs are just as important and worthwhile as yours. They are not. It may suck for some to hear it, but it's the objective truth. In the end, we will all land in exact same place, no matter who we are or what we have achieved. Don't put yourself and your “mediocrity” down if it helps you live a good life.

LESSON #78: Accept your limitations as soon as possible and as much as possible.

We all have limitations. Don't be ashamed of yours. Train yourself so that you don't care how you look to others outside yourself and **focus on working on maximizing yourself:**

- ✓ strengthen both your strengths and weaknesses (but above all your weaknesses),
- ✓ focus on actively wanting what you already have,
- ✓ focus on the process, not on the final (external) results, and
- ✓ adopt the mantra of “good enough”.

If you really are a "glass half-full" type, such thinking will not be the least bit depressing or defeatist. Because deep down, you know that even if you are not worth anything by external standards, you can still be worth a lot to yourself²³.

LESSON #79: Look at “failure” as something you actively want. Don't fear and don't avoid failure.

The one who tries will sometimes fail. You can only avoid failure if you never do anything (risky) or try to do it. But **if you never try, you've already failed** (if you don't ask, the answer will always be “No”). This truth is indisputable, and you have to accept and internalize it.

Fear of failure can be one of the main culprits for why you don't make more out of your life. It paralyzes you and distracts you (in conjunction with fear of rejection and fear of success) from trying at all.

Fear of failure is often a mixture of:

- a. fear of rejection (they don't like me!) and
- b. fear of success, which brings with it (a lot of) responsibility most don't want to deal with because it can be very stressful.

²³ If you are still burdened with a “glass half-empty” mentality, put more effort into the activities in Foundation 1.

Success always brings with it responsibility. The more successful you are, the greater the responsibility will be.

Many people do not tolerate this fact well and prefer to decide in advance not to even try. So, they always have the option of an excuse, saying "*I would probably succeed if I tried, but I haven't tried not for this and that reason.*" So, they never lose and are never rejected – but they do not develop either. They prefer to choose the “present self” to the detriment of the “future self”.

Be sure to start thinking about failure in a way that you actively want and actively seek it – because you know that even if you fail, you will at least learn something new from it which will enable you to develop further.

LESSON #80: Always take possible failure as an opportunity for growth.

The more you want and actively seek failure, the more chances you will have to succeed/grow in the end. Maybe not exactly how you imagined it, but still. If you fail at first, try and try again and again.

Without constantly challenging failure, you will not evolve. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger – and 99.9% of failures are **guaranteed** not to kill you.

LESSON #81: If you aim for nothing, you will definitely hit it.

The more you strengthen Foundation 1, the more confident you will be, the less sensitive you will be to external impulses, and the more clearly you will see (and have a more loving attitude toward) your “future self”. You will understand that every time you do not do something because you are afraid of failure, you are irrationally defending your “present self” and at the same time – much more crucially – are **potentially harming your “future self”**.

Once you understand this better, you will definitely try many more things, even if you risk failure. You'll never try all things (because sometimes it's not safe or rational), but you'll certainly try many more of them – and often more daring ones than you've been used to so far. And then you will wonder what all you're capable of achieving in real life (and how much of your fear of failure was unfounded).

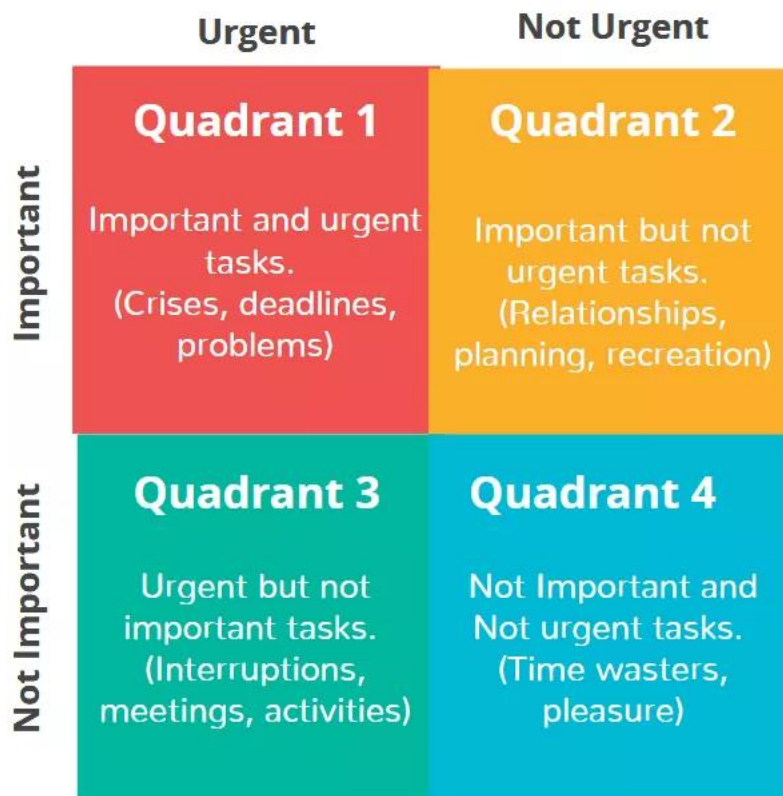
LESSON #82: Organize your time and life so that you always have enough time for yourself, your loved ones, and to enjoy life.

Keep your time under control. **Take time to play every day.** Keep the child inside curious (about the world, etc.): read, have sex, masturbate, sing, play a musical instrument, listen to music, play some sport for fun, etc.

Have children (if you can, or if you really have a desire to have them; *don't have them because you think you should have them*; there are enough miserable people on this planet), get a pet, do volunteer/charity work, etc. – something to which you can give at least part of the love you have within you. There will be a lot of extra work and responsibility with all of this, but it will help you grow personally, reduce selfish impulses, and enjoy life more.

Every now and then **do something fun that you're afraid of** that throws you out of your comfort zone (but not something so risky that you risk losing your life or some serious disability – your primary goal is still to get to a healthy, old age).

Your goal should be to spend most of your time in the “second quadrant,” where things are important, but not necessary:



Source: <https://isaacsesi.com/prioritize-tasks-eisenhower-matrix/>

FOUNDATION 6
***KEEP YOUR MIND ACTIVE – DEDICATE
YOUR LIFE TO CONSTANTLY
LEARNING NEW THINGS***

*Knowledge is a problem only if you have too little of it -
or if you do not apply it constructively.*

THE MAIN GOAL OF FOUNDATION 6 IS TO BECOME AND REMAIN FIT, LEAN AND STRONG MENTALLY!

STEP #1: BECOME AND REMAIN MENTALLY FIT!

LESSON #83: Don't take anything for granted. If it sounds too good to be true, it almost certainly is.

Actively acquire as much knowledge as possible, but never be a “passive” researcher. Always think critically about what you have read/heard/seen ("Is it true? Why is it true?"). Actively look for connections between information and always and everywhere ask yourself "how" and "why". **Especially on social media.** Try to actively extract the truth from what you have learned/read and pro-actively build your view of the world.

The more we become connected through a variety of information technologies, the more you must be sceptical and critically evaluate everything you hear and read. A lot of people lie and deceive – especially when there is monetary or other kind of potential benefit to them. The more money and “status” there is in the game, the more likely it is that the information available to you is fabricated or at least distorted/modified to increase the benefits of some.

Therefore, any information that seems important to you, you should always at least double-check before you take it as true. “I think it is so” or “Probably it is really so,” **is not good enough.** Try to make sure they really are true.

But don’t get paralyzed in your search for the ultimate truth. Your goal must still be "good enough."

LESSON #84: We all want to be smart and know everything, but most don't want to put effort into actually learning something.

Knowledge does not come by itself. You need to make **a constant effort** to acquire knowledge in areas that are important to you and that interest you.

Practice curiosity regularly and increase awareness of your near and far surroundings – while not letting the complexity of the world depress you. No one will ever know the whole world, see, and experience everything. You won’t either. And that's OK. The point of a "good" life is not to see and experience as much as possible. The point is in **perspective.**

The more you know about the world, the easier it will be to keep things in perspective: the more you will realize that your life is actually genuinely nice and that you have **enough**, no matter where you are or what you’re doing. The more you become aware of the world (and the more you become a part of it – see foundation 7 for more), the less you will focus just on yourself and your situation and the less you will be burdened with yourself and your situation.

LESSON #85: Use as many different approaches as possible to keep your mind active and agile.

Read, write, draw, play and listen to music (including lyrics!), create new stuff, learn new languages and skills. Learn a craft, and/or try to do as many things as you can by yourself (various crafts, etc.). The more things you know and know how to do on your own, the less you will depend on other people and situations.

LESSON #86: Always try to listen to opposing opinions – but don't try to change them.

Changing the opinions of others that you disagree with is like chasing and fighting windmills. Most of the time, it's a complete waste of time – a thing you can't control (even if you're sure you can).

But don't be afraid to listen to these opposing opinions and consider whether there is any truth in them (or that maybe you're wrong). Don't be afraid to change your mind or belief. You can control that.

LESSON #87: Always take enough time to make important decisions. If possible, sleep on them first.

Do not rush. Weigh (better yet: sleep on) each decision. There is almost never such a hurry to decide that it cannot wait until the next day. Don't let others convince you that there is no time for an (important) decision. You decide for yourself, not for them, and **you owe it to yourself to weigh the decision well enough before you make it.**

Speed in decision-making is **not a virtue**, because it makes you much more exposed to various cognitive prejudices that can critically affect the quality of your decisions. Your mind can quickly trick you into making unwise/wrong decisions.

LESSON #88: Don't blindly believe (in) yourself.

Be aware that your brain is riddled with many prejudices (there are more than 100 of them²⁴) and that you can be affected by 5-10 different inner "children" at any given time. How you react to external impulses is often not at all in your conscious control. We humans are programmed to lie to ourselves (deceive ourselves), to make our lives easier, and to reduce stress. To survive.

It all has an evolutionary basis and meaning – but it can be dangerous if you convince yourself that your view of a certain thing is automatically the most correct and authentically yours. This will lead you to jump to conclusions too quickly (and often incorrectly) and to react too quickly (potentially incorrectly). Therefore:

- a. First: work on “inner child healing” in Foundation 1. This will largely neutralize and better control your toxic inner voices/impulses.
- b. Second: because prejudices are deeply rooted in all of us, don't judge too quickly because you will almost certainly judge through your prejudices. When deciding, it's better to take more time than less (think carefully and/or sleep on the decision). Before you decide, imagine in your mind that it all went horribly wrong and identify 2-3 reasons why it went so horribly wrong.

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cognitive_biases

LESSON #89: Don't blindly believe science. Always take all studies (and their conclusions) with a large pinch of salt.

Science is generally great. But in science, too, the same is true as everywhere else (politics, sports, etc.): the more money/benefits/status there is in the game, the greater the tendency to lie and/or deceive and/or falsify. **Believe in science but don't be naive.**

Many researchers have a conflict of interest, even if it is often not prominently stated. Many (too many!) studies end up being – if you delve deeper into them – either poorly designed, or biased (either in conclusions or execution), or funded by those who benefit from the results of the study²⁵.

The role of (even the best) studies is not to solve a problem or puzzle on their own. Their role is to **add one new piece to potential solution** of a problem or a puzzle – to help guide future research and shape our understanding of a particular issue. Take them as such (and practice patience with them).

Problems with meta studies

The meta-studies are statistical analyses of the results of several different individual studies. Based on arbitrary selected criteria/conditions, those performing them select as many existing studies as possible and analyse them statistically.

It logically follows that the only way for the meta-study to be of good quality is if all or the vast majority of the selected individual studies were impartial and well-conducted in the first place (which is a rarity) and that the choice of studies (choice of selection criteria) was impartial and well done (also not a given).

If this is not met (and mostly is not), the probability of quality meta-studies is lower than the probability of quality individual studies. Therefore, **be especially sceptical/critical of the results of meta studies.**

LESSON #90: Don't blindly rely on experts and various official guidelines.

Experts (in various fields) can be years behind in knowledge, be superficial, overburdened, biased, driven by their own interests and selfishness, and so on. Don't rely blindly on them knowing what they're doing, or that they're working in your best interest.

Wherever you can, obtain as much information and different opinions as possible in the relevant field, which a supposed expert is covering (look for another opinion, educate yourself on this topic, etc.).

And never forget: official guidelines are often (in the end) made by non-expert public officials, and are usually compromises combining various interests of different lobbies (where the scientific basis is only one part of the mosaic). Often, current official guidelines are not in the real interest of the people who are supposed to follow them.

²⁵ To obtain funding for their research, researchers are often under pressure to obtain results that are in line with existing findings or officially accepted guidelines. As soon as their studies and/or results are not in line with the *status quo*, the risk of not receiving funding in the future increases.

LESSON #91: Don't rely blindly on what the (professional) media writes.

Read as few “quasi” professional articles on various media sites as possible, because you will be completely confused. They usually just repeat officially accepted "truths" and criticize everything that is not in line with them – even if most of the time they are not always know (or not at all) what they are talking about.

Be especially sceptical of all the 24-hour news media (CNN, Sky News, Fox News, etc.) and especially 24-hour news media with a distinct agenda. As soon as someone is under pressure to supply people with news 24 hours a day (for profit), objectivity will soon “fly out the window” and sensationalism will become more or less the “norm”.

LESSON #92: Be especially sceptical of those who are overly positive and enthusiastic about everything.

This doctrine falls under the old adage of "*If it looks too good to be true, then it usually is.*" Especially in the areas of nutrition, fitness and self-improvement, there are more and more of them – because there are more and more young opportunists (wanna-be "influencers" and "life coaches") who see this as a quick and easy source of income. People like to be told lovely, positive things way more than the hard truth. Hard work is becoming increasingly neglected in the search for earning a quick buck or a better life ASAP.

Don't fall prey to their forced positivism. Many times, it is a pretence that they may not even be aware of themselves (because they run away from their own traumas by forcing the joy). It is very unlikely that someone is positively and happily "on" all the time. This is not natural.

Life is full of ups and downs, and no one is naturally happy and positive all the time. It is purely natural – and even healthy – to be negative and angry and in a bad mood sometimes. External motivation (sold by overly positive “motivators”) doesn't last. **What's important is your own internal motivation.** But you can also obtain this yourself, without these false motivators.

LESSON #93: Spend at least one hour each day learning new things.

During this hour, learn at least one new thing and try to use it in practice (in conversation, in your actions, etc.). Use the following to help you learn:

- a. **Buy a Kindle or similar e-book reader** (ideally a version with a backlit screen so you can read even at night without lights)²⁶.
- b. In addition to the e-book reader, **buy at least a medium-capacity tablet and join an online magazine store** (I use Magzter). For the price you would normally pay for 5-10 magazines per month (approx. 50-100 EUR), you can gain **annual access** to 50+ very useful magazines from various fields.

²⁶ In case you are buying »old-school« books (sometimes you can't get something for Kindle), I would suggest that Book Depository is a better option than Amazon because they have cheap books + always free worldwide delivery (and they are not Amazon which I'm not very fond of due to predatory ways of how they conduct business).

In addition, you can order The Week magazine online, where you then have condensed news from English and European newspapers every week, and you will also be up to date on world politics. Many of these magazines can also be found for free in PDF format on the internet.

- c. **Watch more documentaries** (instead of movies). They can be just as fun and interesting as movies, but also much more informative.
- d. **Use the internet wisely and productively:** you can easily get lost online and become completely unproductive by wasting time on nonsense (especially on social media). Do not read/search information blindly (relying on feeling and inspiration) but **always try to ask yourself a specific research question and then try to find answers with a critical mind** (there is a lot of information on the Internet, but an exceedingly small percentage of this is actually good quality).
- e. **Check/read the news regularly every day** – but only for about an hour a day. More than that is superfluous and will negatively affect your psyche (especially if you watch 24-hour TV stations like CNN, Sky News, Fox News, etc. that make a living from artificially creating (negative) drama).
- f. **Find websites with quotes from famous historical “sages”.** Most of the smart stuff has already been said. Find these sayings, think about them (how they apply to you today) and try to apply their wisdom regularly in your everyday life.
- g. **Read and study history** (books, magazines, internet) and learn from it. The same mistakes are always repeated (one way or another). Study and understand historical trends/cycles. Don't just settle for knowing the facts – try to understand how these events came about and what exactly they led to. Based on historical events, try to predict the development of future events. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

STEP #2: BECOME AND REMAIN MENTALLY LEAN!

LESSON #94: Seek and gather new information and knowledge, but don't accumulate junk in your mental attic.

“Explore your experience. Absorb what is beneficial. Reject what is useless. Add what is essentially yours.” – Bruce Lee

A lot of information you find will be completely irrelevant and will only slow down your thought processes and mental agility if you cling to it unnecessarily.

You don't have to keep most of the information and facts in your head. Forget about them without a problem, without feeling guilty. Keep only the most important information that you really believe to be relevant and useful to you. **Follow the “jeet kune do” approach to knowledge acquisition.**

Martial arts actor and master Bruce Lee named his own version of martial arts “jeet kune do”. The guiding principles of the "jeet kune do" approach are **simplicity, directness, and freedom** (a form that does not have an organized form). It is an approach that is also extremely useful in general, especially in maintaining mental leanness. Practice it daily.

Behave like a scavenger. Keep your head as open as possible for new knowledge and pick the brains of as many smart people as you can. Take from them what is useful and internalize only what is closest to you, or what is most in harmony with you and your values.

Never become too smart for your own good (as in: *I already know all that*). You can always learn new things, or you find a way to learn new things (even through a new interpretation of the old ones). **Your goal should be to preserve the most important information/knowledge and (eventually) turn it into wisdom.**

LESSON #95: Always test everything on yourself whether it works for you. What works for others may not work for you.

Consider yourself an ongoing experiment. We are all different and react differently to things. So, be sure to test everything on yourself to see how it works for you and then either adjust it to suit you or discard it as useless to you.

Just make sure you test each thing exactly as it was originally intended – and give it enough time to work. Only then will you know if it really works or not. And always test things wisely – never be reckless. Before you test the thing on yourself, first research it well (do your homework) and only then start testing on yourself **in the way it was intended** (don't invent your own ways) **and conservatively.**

If you don't experiment on yourself, you live and know things only halfway (the way others tell you is true). **Knowledge without practical application has no chance of ever becoming wisdom.**

STEP #3: BECOME AND REMAIN MENTALLY STRONG!

LESSON #96: Do not be blindly led by various greedy and persuasive incompetents. Think with your own head.

Don't be a sheep. Never blindly follow anyone or anything. Everything that is human is fallible, perishable and/or potentially full of prejudice – including you and your thoughts.

With regular and quality work in Foundation 1, you get a clear picture of who you are, what your values are and who you want to be (your desired "future self"). Through regular work in Foundation 4, adopt and regularly implement a philosophy of life that is aligned with you and your values. Through regular work in Foundation 6, constantly expand the base of your knowledge, knowledge of the world, and your wisdom.

All of this will give you enough discipline, courage, confidence, knowledge, and mental fortitude that you will not allow yourself to be manipulated and deceived by others. It will also reduce the chances of you misleading

yourself. You will think with your head and **have enough personal integrity to say no**. The more knowledge you have, the easier it will be for you to see through others' deception. You will be guided by logic and reason.

LESSON #97: Try to share the knowledge you gain with others as much as possible. By doing so, you will help them, and at the same time you will master it better.

Knowledge that you do not share (and/or internalize) is just **dead information** and has no function: you can just forget it. If you do not know how to summarize information and/or knowledge and pass it on to others in a simple and understandable way, you do not understand it yourself and it has little to no value.

Build a positive spiral of obtaining and imparting knowledge and wisdom – when you read and master something, let it lead you to another new thing. As you continue the process, pass the knowledge you have mastered on to others in various ways, as many times as possible and to as many people as possible.

Also, **pass on this guide to as many others as you think could potentially benefit from** – or pass on to them (in your own way) the lessons you have learned from it.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

1. Daniel Kahneman: Thinking Fast and Slow
https://www.amazon.com/Thinking-Fast-Slow-Daniel-Kahneman-ebook/dp/B005MJFA2W/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Thinking+Fast+and+Slow&qid=1612523796&s=books&sr=1-1
2. Richard Nisbett: *Mindware: Tools for Smart Thinking* (there is also Coursera class online)
https://www.amazon.com/Mindware-Tools-Thinking-Richard-Nisbett-ebook/dp/B00XKHA96K/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=%3A+Mindware%3A+Tools+for+Smart+Thinking&qid=1612523817&s=books&sr=1-1

FOUNDATION 7
BECOME AND REMAIN
INTERDEPENDENT –
AN ACTIVE PART OF COMMUNITY

*Quality inter-dependence is one of the main conditions
for a long and good life.*

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF FOUNDATION 7 IS TO BECOME AND REMAIN FIT, LEAN AND STRONG SOCIALLY!

STEP #1: BECOME AND REMAIN SOCIALLY FIT!

LESSON #98: Actively develop the ability to respect and accept others as they are – even if you disagree with them.

Respect and accept all living beings that surround you (including animals) in a healthy way, without addiction and without any conditions. If at all possible, **help them grow and develop and live a good life. Don't try to change them** according to some pattern in your head (as they are supposed to be).

Always try to understand them, their motivation, their feelings, and reactions using maximum empathy.

Always keep your promises and commitments to others and **always be punctual** (never be late!). Being late is a sign of disrespect to others.

Always treat others the way you want them to treat you. Even if because of this you sometimes find yourself in a "subordinate position" towards others.

Always try to think the best of people. Know that you have the power to (with regular work in Foundation 1) always say "No" to people and/or actions that could harm you.

Always keep your nerves calm when communicating with others – even if sometimes it's not easy. Insulting another is never acceptable, so avoid it at all costs.

LESSON #99: Always try to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Your solutions should be such that both sides win (win-win).

Criticizing something without offering an alternative (a potentially better solution) is pointless and not a sign of an adult. **If you criticize something (saying it's not good enough), always offer another, better solution.** If you don't have a better solution (where necessarily everyone wins), be quiet. **Every idiot knows how to criticize**, but only smart people know how to come up with better solutions that are positive for everyone.

"It's better to be quiet and let others think you're an idiot than to talk and remove all doubts about it."

Too few people today stick to this. Be the exception here, not the rule.

LESSON #100: Accept the fact that you can lose your loved ones at any time – despite the effort you put into your relationship with them and the love you share.

As a result, value them to the maximum as long as you have them. Don't take them for granted but **let them know as often as possible how much they mean to you** (if though that can be hard to express sometimes).

Invest as much energy as possible in strengthening the closest ties: in regular, healthy social contacts with your closest family (partner, children, parents, etc.) and best friends. Keep these bonds as strong and alive as possible. Try to forgive old grudges. Help them when/if they ask you for help²⁷.

In addition, invest energy in strengthening other important ties with extended family, friends, acquaintances, business partners, as well as in finding/developing new acquaintances and friendships.

LESSON #101: Make regular efforts to practice volunteer activities and/or aim to do at least one good deed every day.

It can be a small thing. The weight of the action or the size of the effect doesn't matter. It is just important that you do this consistently:

- ✓ Give money to the homeless – or just give them a smile to let them know they are still worthy as people.
- ✓ Practice volunteering for at least 1-2 hours a week for free for the good of others, without asking/expecting anything in return (money or counter-favour).
- ✓ Regularly donate money to charity if you can (even if it's only a couple of euros/dollars).
- ✓ Visit your parents and hug them.
- ✓ Help a friend if he/she needs help.
- ✓ Always pick up trash behind you, poop after your dog, separate different kinds of waste, etc.
- ✓ Listen to a fellow human being – *really* listen to him/her.
- ✓ Take old clothes and shoes to the Re-use Centre, Red Cross, etc. The things you no longer need, give as much as you can to the people who need them.
- ✓ Give up a seat on the bus to the elderly.
- ✓ Respect other drivers and road users when out driving a car or cycling (or e-scootering, nowadays). Don't be impatient and **never cut off other drivers on the road and put them in danger** (no matter how good a driver you think you are)!
- ✓ Etc.

STEP #2: BECOME AND REMAIN SOCIALLY LEAN!

LESSON #102: Build a solid social network. No one is better off if he is alone.

Your goal should be to have a rock-solid social network consisting of at least:

- ✓ 2-3 people you can completely trust and confide in (closest friends, partner, family members).
- ✓ 5-10 people you can trust when needed and talk to them about most things.
- ✓ 10-20 additional friends or acquaintances for occasional socializing and interaction (do not underestimate these interactions; these interactions will also bring you a better life and well-being).

²⁷ I know - it's not really "fair" that we can't choose family members ourselves, like we can choose friends, but this is one of the things you can't control (see Foundation 4). What you *can* control is how strong these bonds are. Do not neglect them intentionally or out of pure laziness. Sometimes it takes a lot of effort but let that be your goal.

LESSON #103: Find/create your “tribe” and your place in that tribe as soon as possible.

"Tribe" is a group of people with whom you share key values, opinions and with whom you actively communicate and exchange your opinions, experiences, etc. In short, a group of people who “understand” you and accept you for who you are.

There is nothing wrong if this tribe is small. You can also have multiple tribes.

Just **make sure at least one tribe exists in physical form.** Today, there is a tendency to form tribes that are exclusively virtual. It's not a problem if you have a few tribes online as well but have at least one tribe that is in your geographical proximity and also in physical form (so you can meet tribe members in person).

LESSON #104: Surround yourself only with people who give you positive energy and who share your values.

Actively and maximally avoid "emotional vampires" who suck your energy to keep themselves alive. You don't have to surround yourself with "positive" people, but they must share your values, interests, etc. Positivity can often be only acted out (surface-deep), sometimes even quite unconsciously. True positivity is seen from actions in times of distress, not in empty words when everything is going swimmingly.

No person who has different values than yours can be a true friend to you, even if they really want to be. They will only do you harm. It's better to (at least temporarily) remove them from your life or limit contact with them as much as possible – even if it hurts. If you don't, it will only hurt even more. Don't try to change them because that's not possible. They can only change themselves if/when they really want to.

LESSON #105: Give a wide berth to anyone who does not treat people and animals with respect (unconditionally).

You do not want to be in contact with such people, either in business or in person. If someone does not treat animals with respect, they will not treat humans with respect either. Have enough self-esteem to say no to all of them and avoid their toxicity, even if it is wrapped in intoxicating charm. If necessary, also stand up to them and let them know that their behaviour is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

STEP #3: BECOME AND REMAIN SOCIALLY STRONG!

LESSON #106: Quality interdependence is only possible when you achieve strong enough independence (in Foundation 1).

Foundation 7 is next to Foundation 1 the hardest to master. The main reason for this is that you must first be largely independent (to a large extent mastering Foundation 1) to be able to truly surrender to a larger group in a quality and efficient way and become as inter-dependent as possible.

So, **first build as strong an independence as possible before you go into (too much) inter-dependence.** Until you are firm in your independence, do not venture too much and too into fast inter-dependence, because there is a high chance that you will be exploited, feel inferior, or that you will not be able to achieve a "win-win" situation (because you will be over-burdened with external opinions). Quality before quantity. And **quality takes time.**

If you work regularly and seriously in Foundation 1 to become as independent as you can, no one will be able to exploit you, because what you do (even giving yourself to others) will be fully in line with your values and desires – even if you look like you are being exploited and put in a subordinate position. You really won't be. This will allow you to work much better in Foundation 7, especially in the long run.

LESSON #107: Don't be afraid to be open and vulnerable to others. This is not a weakness.

Don't be afraid to admit that you need closeness to another, that you need an emotional connection to another. We all need it, some more, some less. The more open you are, the freer you will be and the less scared you will be. The more you hide yourself from others, the more you will be locked in a cage you have built for yourself.

Don't be afraid that others will hurt you, take advantage of you, or try to make fun of you if you open up to them. This fear is a recipe for isolation. If you work on yourself regularly in Foundation 1, you will slowly become almost invulnerable to what others do.

Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Be maximally self-sufficient (you control your life, not others), but still open to synergies with others. Accept the fact that each of us sometimes needs the help of the other. This is nothing to be ashamed of. And **if others ask you for help, help unconditionally.**

LESSON #108: Don't be afraid to hug – and to ask another for a hug if/when you need one.

If you don't ask, the answer will always be "no". Genuine hugs are one of the main sources of healthy emotional life. **We chronically lack genuine, loving hugs!** So always have at least 2-3 people you can hug and who can hug you. **Be/become a hugger!**

LESSON #109: Even if you only help one person, your life will have meaning.

Always focus on quality. It is not your goal to be a worldwide "influencer" with thousands and millions of followers on various social media platforms, whose lives you change with your influence and example. The vast majority of these "influencers" come and go as fast as they came because they have no substance behind them. Everything is superficial, just a convincing image. Even followers quickly forget, lose interest and go to a next great thing – without really visible and lasting results.

Emphasize content over form as much as possible. Work with a long-term, genuine vision, with maximum quality and greatest possible content. The goal is to help at least some to improve their life, with lasting positive consequences.

Give without expecting to get anything in return (as unconditionally as possible). Never forget that the value of what you give is not measured by how much you get back (money, fame, media exposure, etc.).

LESSON #110: Don't be afraid to stand up for those who are weaker.

When weaker are attacked and unable to defend themselves (i.e.. they are being bullied by someone stronger than them), defends them to the best of your ability (and intelligence) – even if it sometimes hurts.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

1. Abraham Maslow – hierarchy of needs summary: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
<http://sps70.org/SelfActualization050612.pdf>
2. Albert Bernstein: Emotional Vampires: Dealing with People Who Drain You Dry
<https://www.amazon.com/Emotional-Vampires-Dealing-Revised-Expanded-ebook/dp/B0087OUI6>

FOUNDATION 8
***FIND YOUR »ELEMENT« AND BECOME
AND REMAIN FINANCIALLY
INDEPENDENT***

*Money is a great servant but a bad master.
(Thomas Bacon)*

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF FOUNDATION 8 IS TWOFOLD:

A. To find out what your “element” is and turn it into a long-term career as much as possible.

Your element = what you are good at and what you enjoy.

Identify as many activities as possible in which you are naturally talented (things which are easy to learn and easy to do for you) and which you do with pleasure and passion – to try and make the most of your unique talents. To get started, use the questionnaire in Appendix to Foundation 1 of this guide. Also, read Ken Robinson’s book *Finding your element*.

Everyone has their own unique talents. Find these talents of yours and do what comes naturally to you because you will be the best and most fulfilled in this state. Then find and carry out work that is in line with your talents, that makes you happy, satisfies you, and that brings you the best possible relationship between earnings and free time.

B. To become and remain fit, lean and strong financially through implementing your element.

STEP #1: BECOME AND REMAIN FINANCIALLY FIT!

LESSON #111: Ensure a steady and high enough income to avoid getting into liquidity problems.

Liquidity problems (inability to pay bills, food, drowning in loans, etc.) always equal a lot of stress. Your goal is to avoid this as much as possible. Your monthly/annual income must be so regular and so high that you **always have enough at least for all basic necessities** (quality healthy food, roof over your head, car, regular loan repayments, etc.) and for **the little joys of life** (for little things/experiences that brighten your life and the life of people around you).

At the same time, you must make sure that you achieve this with an acceptable amount of work and work stress, which allows you enough time to play, regenerate and relax.

LESSON #112: If you ever get into financial distress when it comes to personal finances, take this as a good learning experience.

When you run out of money, you see best what you actually need and what you don’t need (and how much money you throw away for unnecessary things that don’t even give you genuine pleasure and satisfaction). Learn from this and apply this new knowledge when you have larger and more regular inflows again.

Accept that things will turn around more than once in your life, from good to bad, then from bad to good again, and so on.

LESSON #113: Always think and plan ahead – towards maximum employability in the long run.

Save regularly, invest wisely and above all do everything to consolidate/improve your earning potential for making money – not in the direction of earning a lot of money, but in the direction of maximizing your employability in the long run.

Continue to educate yourself constantly, apply to courses, obtain certificates, network, gain new knowledge, skills and/or formal awards that will ensure that you will be maximally employable in the long run (even at the age of 50+, when you become the least employable). This increases the chances that you will not have major/critical income losses in the long run.

When times are good, prepare for bad times.
(that bad times will not be as bad as they could be)

LESSON #114: Always have enough savings for larger sudden expenses (especially medical).

Do your best to need a doctor as little as possible. However, when you need medical help, prepare in advance so that you can afford it if necessary. It can cost a *lot*. Count on this possibility and **calculate it all into your savings**. Don't overlook this because it can literally kill you.

LESSON #115: Insure yourself and your pets in a timely (life) manner.

A lot of money can go to health bills once problems start. You need to insure yourself and them **as long as you are healthy**. It won't work later.

LESSON #116: Even if you're only in your 30s or 40s, make a will as soon as possible – and then update it from time to time.

Divide your property in advance so that your children and/or family members do not quarrel with each other after your death. There is nothing more common and sad than people quarrelling over money and/or material things after the death of a parent or relative. It humiliates a person, even the ones who end up coming out as “winners”. If you don't make a will (something you can control), things will be governed by applicable laws and other people's whims (something you can't control).

LESSON #117: Include funeral expenses in your savings and will. You don't want to be a burden to your loved ones after you die.

Death is an inevitable part of life, and not burdening your loved ones with the costs of your burial is one of the things you can control. By doing so, you also show respect for them. It will be unimaginably horrible for them to lose you. Do not cause them additional (unnecessary) worries and stress.

STEP #2: BECOME AND REMAIN FINANCIALLY LEAN!

LESSON #118: Find out how much money you really need monthly and spend only as much as you really need for a good and happy life.

Don't throw away money stupidly. **Learn to need as little as possible.** Reduce the need for luxury products that do not bring you real happiness (instead, they mostly bring you stress and comparisons with others). **If you don't, you will always want more than you have.**

To help you, I recommend the following procedure (tested and proven to work in real life):

1. First, **regularly write down all your daily expenses for 2-3 months** – everything you spend each day and on what.
2. **At the end of each month, analyze on what you were spending your money.** Identify all necessary expenses which you cannot avoid (loans, food, etc.) and »not necessary« expenses (which you could live without, if you had to).
3. **Determine how much money you need at a minimum on a monthly basis to be able to survive** (for only the most basic things) and how much you would need if you add to these basic things some non-essential expenses that make you happy and allow you a simple but still good/happy life.
4. **Minimize all unnecessary expenses.** Find cheaper substitutes that are almost as good or even as good (food, clothing, footwear, etc.). Stop throwing away money on things you can buy cheaper elsewhere:
 - Don't throw money away on well-known brands (you can get a lot of similar quality stuff for a fraction of the amount these brands charge you).
 - Don't throw money away on luxury things you don't need: look at things primarily in terms of usability, not prestige/luxury and always try to buy at the best quality/price ratio.
 - Always think carefully (ideally: sleep on the decision) before you purchase something (more expensive).

LESSON #119: Never get attached to things once you buy them.

Whatever thing you own, you need to be able to give it away without a problem, anytime. Get attached to people, not material things. If you are constantly chasing things, you think you want/need, you will miss important details of life. **Things (what you have) should never define you.**

In general, **set your life up to be as minimalist as possible.** The less you have and the less you need, the less you will depend on material things, on others, and on what others think of you. The less you are burdened with material things, the less you are a slave to material things and other people, and the less stress it all causes you. **The goal is to stop associating personal happiness with buying material things.**

LESSON #120: Once or twice a year, pare your life down to basics.

It's not enough to simply better organize things and your life – actually remove all that's superfluous. You will feel much better.

LESSON #121: Avoid as much as possible the use of credit, credit cards, and living on credit.

Always live in accordance with your current ability to make money: when you are earning less, spend less; when you start earning more, spend more, but also always put aside some of it for the bad days that will inevitably come.

If you have loans, make sure that they **together amount to a maximum of 15-30% of your average monthly income**. If you live on more credit than that, you will be much more exposed to stress and your life will be of poorer quality than it could have been (even if you have a lot of material things). **Rather have fewer things than more (too much) debt.**

STEP #3: BECOME AND REMAIN FINANCIALLY STRONG!

LESSON #122: Always have at least enough savings (liquid assets) to easily get through a 6-month total loss of revenue.

If you calculate that you (for example) need 1000-1200 EUR per month for a stress-free life, then have savings/liquid assets **at least six times** that amount at all times (6,000-7,500 EUR; ideally aim for 10,000+ EUR). If you don't have them, make sure you get to that level as soon as possible.

You must necessarily have this amount in a form that is either money or can be converted into actual money within a month. Don't even think about simply borrowing more if you really had to. **The last thing you want in times of prolonged financial downtime is extra debt – if you really want to live a good life.**

LESSON #123: Never take your income for granted.

They can always fire you, something can happen to your employer, you can get sick, and so on. **Be prepared for anything!** Always have a battle plan (but don't be afraid to back away from it sometimes if the need or opportunity arises).

LESSON #124: Speculate with your money as little as possible.

Don't invest in (too) risky investments. Don't be too daring with your money (invest, but prudently). In the long run, stick mostly to the real, not fictitious sector (stock market, cryptocurrencies, etc.). Your goal is maximum financial robustness, not maximum profitability.

LESSON #125: Maintain (and possibly strengthen) your creditworthiness over time.

Your goal is to be able to borrow at least 5,000-10,000 EUR at any time on regular banking terms (and not through any kind of dodgy loan shark, etc.). If you can help it, don't get more loan. But you must have this option open, if possible.

LESSON #126: Always keep a “big picture” in your mind (the whole forest, not just a couple of trees).

Whatever happens to you (even if you live in poverty for a while), **always be aware that you will live a long(er) life** and that a few bad months/years in this long life will not leave long-lasting effects if you don't allow it. It all ends once, good, and bad, so never give up when you're doing badly, nor get complacent when you're doing well.

LESSON #127: If you find that you must go your own way (become an entrepreneur), do it – but prudently and thoughtfully, never in a hurry.

A lot of people don't like their job, but not everyone can go on their own and do business as an entrepreneur. A lot of people are made to work for others. There is nothing wrong with that.

However, if after all the work on yourself you conclude that you are made for independent work and that you simply have to try to go at it on your own, then do it. **But thoughtfully.** You really don't want to rush headlong into any bad decisions here. If decisions were made impulsively, a huge number of people would simply give up every day and go on their own. Yet also, most of these people would very quickly find out that they have made a big mistake.

Life is not a movie. Things don't happen from today to tomorrow, especially when it comes to building your career. Here, in particular, you have to be maximally prudent, have a clear vision and a plan to realize that vision.

To be successful on your own, you need at least three things in my opinion (from owning my own business):

- 1) Belief in yourself that you can succeed.
- 2) A lot of fight in you so you don't give up when it looks as if you're not going to make it.
- 3) A vision of where you are going and what you want to achieve (why you are doing it and what sets you apart from others in your field).

But the key starting point, however, is figuring out what your element is. This is the first and most important step.

LESSON #128: No work should be beneath you – because it can happen that you will have to do such work one day.

No work is dishonourable if you are noble and confident in yourself deep inside. If you are OK with yourself, you can do even the most miserable things and you will not care what others think of you. You will just focus on doing the job to the best of your ability and earning enough to survive – because you have personal responsibility and integrity.

LESSON #129: Money is a huge stressor – even if you have too much of it.

The more money you have, the more you will want to have it (it will never be enough). **Don't be greedy.** Rather work on yourself (Foundation 1) and live in harmony with yourself. This way, you will become much more immune to external impulses (what others think of you). Greed will always come back at you like a boomerang – to your detriment, one way or another (especially through hedonic adaptation).

Learn to be satisfied with as little as possible (small, simple pleasures) and avoid hedonic adaptation (also learn about this adaptation²⁸ and how to prevent it).

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

1. Ken Robinson: Finding Your Element: How to Discover Your Talents and Passions and Transform Your Life <https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Your-Element-Discover-Transform/dp/0143125516>
2. Ken Robinson: The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything https://www.amazon.com/Element-Finding-Passion-Changes-Everything/dp/0143116738/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=the+element&qid=1579693735&s=books&sr=1-1

²⁸ You can start here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedonic_treadmill

FOUNDATION 9
***ESTABLISH AS MANY SOLID,
CONSCIOUS ROUTINES AS POSSIBLE***

*We are what we do regularly.
Excellence is thus a habit, not an act.
(Aristotle)*

*»Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. «
(Zen budhism)*

LESSON #130: Small things matter and add up. The more you repeat them and perform them consistently, the more they will add up.

Wherever people live extremely long, healthy, and happy lives, you will see the same story repeated: **routine is the mother of happy longevity**. Constantly doing small, seemingly pointless, and boring things is one of the main keys to a long and good life – the thing that ultimately makes the biggest difference.

LESSON #131: Routine is not and should not be an ugly word to you.

All nature is one giant routine. And if it is good enough for nature, it should be good enough for you who are the product of that nature.

Be aware that even those who actively shun routines (because it's not "cool", etc.) still cultivate many routines that they are often not even aware of (these can be especially destructive). There is no one who does not have at least one solid routine in his or her life, conscious or unconscious.

LESSON #132: Conscious routines are the ones that boost your self-confidence and strengthen your self-discipline.

Focus on building solid conscious routines. The more conscious your routines are, the more positive they will be for you and the better your life will be. Whatever you do, **develop and consolidate conscious routines in your life**.

Solid conscious routines that you can return to during major upheavals will minimize the shock to your body and psyche and help you get back on track much faster (into your balance). Whatever happens to you, be it awful or fantastically great, with conscious routines you will always have an anchor and be able to put your head down and »chop wood and carry water«.

LESSON #133: Try to limit your options as much as possible in everything.

The fewer different options you have, the happier you will be (you will find it easier to balance yourself because you will find it easier to decide on something, focus on it and get the most out of it). **Too many options only bring with them stress**. If you know yourself well and know what you want, you don't need a lot of options. There will always be an option out there that will be at least as good or better than the one you chose. So **don't waste your life always looking for better options**. Because in that way, you will never be truly happy.

LESSON #134: Aim for life, which is 80% routine, 20% spontaneity (or at least more routine than spontaneity).

Spontaneity can **absolutely** be part of a routine. There is a perfectly rational argument that routine even encourages spontaneity – because it gives you a solid framework (starting point) within which you can freely improvise when it "grabs" you. In any case, routine and spontaneity can coexist very well together – especially once you achieve a greater degree of independence under Foundation 1.

Here are some small but crucial routines that I recommend you adopt into your life:

- ✓ Make your bed every morning before you leave for work (or before you start to work, if working from home). Don't leave home before you make your bed. A simple little trick that contributes a lot to how you look at yourself (positively).
- ✓ Always clean after yourself after you are done (was dirty dishes, clothes, put away dirty laundry, etc.). Your surroundings will immediately look nicer and more organized, tidy and more under control. This will immediately give you a greater sense of self-confidence and trust in yourself (that you have yourself and your life under control) and will calm your mind.
- ✓ Have a solid bedtime routine (one that gives you a good night's sleep) and stick to it. Perform this routine as regularly as possible and always at as similar a time as possible. Don't have one routine during the week (when you have to, because of work) and then another routine (or no routine) over the weekend. Routine is a routine, so do it as similarly as possible, as many days a week as possible. If you can't do this without feeling deprived (like you're trapped or missing something), then focus more on work in Foundation 1.
- ✓ Always plan your meals in advance, at least for the next day. Always have a plan in your head in the evening for what you will eat the next day: make a meal plan, what will be in it and prepare what you can in advance. This includes being a "present" eater and controlling what you can (and cooking most of your meals yourself), not being meekly carried by the wind whichever way it blows at that moment.

LESSON #135: Don't expect fast successes, without a lot of hard work.

Don't rush things and never expect quick results. Take your life like a marathon, not a sprint. Internalize that we don't usually appreciate things we get easily and/or quickly. What we value most are the things we had to work hard for the most. This is no coincidence. The most valuable things in your life will almost certainly be a lifelong work that most of the time won't be or feel glamorous. And that's perfectly OK – **as long as you realize it will work if you work.**

LESSON #136: Learn to enjoy the process, not the results. The process is the one that will give you most of the pleasure.

The results come or they don't. Sometimes you will toil like a dog, but in the end achieve no real (tangible) result. Therefore, it is imperative that you start enjoying the process that leads to potential results. Most of the growth you will experience in your life will come out of the process, not out of achieving the end result. If you focus too much just on the end result, you will miss out on a lot.

You will enjoy the process much more when you learn to be more present in the moment (see lesson #137 below). Here, practicing meditation for at least 10-15 minutes a day can help you a lot. There are many ways to meditate. Find a way that is easy for you to implement, or rather, to learn.

You can also meditate in a Stoic way: every night before going to sleep, go over the things you are grateful for that day, practice negative visualization, etc. The more you meditate (the more you practice meditation), the more you will be present in the moment.

LESSON #137: Your goal should be to be present in the moment as much and as often as possible.

Every time you are not present in the moment, there is a danger that something will happen to you or that you will do something to others.

Be attentive and present at all times, because **a single moment of inattention can completely ruin your whole life!** Pay attention to detail and don't be superficial in anything you do.

It can be purely banal things: not talking on the phone when driving the car or riding a bike, being attentive when you are walking (being aware of the path in front of you and the people/things around you), not forcing advantage on the road, giving a signal when you turn left or right with a car or a bike, not walking around lost in thoughts, etc.

It's not worth not being present in the moment. A single second of inattention can lead to weeks or months or years of emotional/physical pain. You can cut yourself, twist your ankle when/if you step awkwardly, bump into or run over a pedestrian/cyclist if you are not paying attention behind the wheel, etc.

Don't be one of those people who regret and/or lament a single stupid moment of inattention or bad judgment for the rest of their lives. Don't be one of those who subsequently regret not appreciating things/people while they still had them. There is nothing worse than that.

FOUNDATION 10
PURSUE BALANCE IN ALL
FOUNDATIONS, IN EVERY MOMENT

*Happiness is not a matter of intensity, but of balance, order,
rhythm, and harmony.*

(Thomas Merton)

LESSON #138: The meaning (goal) of a good life is to achieve and maintain balance in as many Foundations at the same time and as often as possible.

Everything in Nature seeks balance. Your body seeks internal balance (homeostasis): everything that keeps you alive and healthy must be in balance to function optimally (hormones, organs, heart rate, etc.). To stand and stay upright, you must be in (external) body balance. To be able to successfully deal with life's problems, you need to be in emotional balance. **Natural balance is always a good, positive thing.**

Why "natural"? Because you have both natural and artificial (human-defined) balances. Follow natural balances and at the same time avoid artificial balances (or attempts at balancing) as much as possible, because the attempts at the latter usually end badly.

LESSON #139: Define your balance in each of Foundations 1-9 and constantly and actively seek it out.

The ideal is to be balanced every moment of your life in all areas of your life. Like any perfection, this one is not achievable, and the goal is to strive as much as possible in this direction.

Achieving balance in foundations 1-9 will lead you to establishing a solid foundation 10 and (with some luck) to the maximally good, happy, healthy, and long life. **Foundation 10 is the horizontal Foundation that cuts across and connects all other Foundations.**

LESSON #140: Everyone can have a different definition of the meaning of life. And that's OK. There's no one single true definition.

We are all looking for meaning in our lives and each of us will be able to have a different definition of the meaning of life. There is nothing wrong with that, as there are multiple paths to the same amount of happiness. There is no single, one, true definition of the meaning of life. Just try to find one that suits you best.