

**THE LIFE
CHANGING
MAGIC
OF
DECLUTTERING**



YOUR WAY TO GREATER SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

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Introduction

Let's face it, most people play a losing game. To quote from Tyler Durden from the cult classic movie "Fight Club": We buy the stuff we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't even like.

That's the kind of life we're living. I know it sounds harsh. I know it sounds judgmental, but it's also the

truth. Unfortunately, for far too many of us, we equate having stuff with living worthy lives.

We equate the stuff that we wear, the stuff that we own, and the things we focus on with the quality of our lives. In fact, for far too many people, stuff or possessions are one and the same as self and self-worth.

This should not be a surprise because far too many people confuse price with value. We think that the more expensive something is, the more value it has, and we allow



ourselves to feel worthwhile, appreciated, and acknowledged depending on the price of the stuff we have access to.

What is wrong with this picture? We live our lives based on what is expected of us instead of what we actually want for ourselves. Too many people live their lives based on values they uncritically and unthinkingly "copy and pasted" from others.

In fact, a lot of adult children are simply living their lives based on a script that they automatically imported from their parents. They did not stop to challenge the script.

In fact, a lot of people didn't even bother to read it at all. They feel that since their parents live a certain way and thought about things a certain way that they should do the same thing.

There is no attempt at any kind of analysis as to whether that script makes any sense as far as their lives are concerned. They don't think about a better fit between the script and the lives they are living out.

They don't consider whether the script has a specific historical or emotional context that may or may not be relevant today. They just automatically assume that since somebody they love and respect chose to live their life a certain way, then this path is the way forward.

It is no surprise that Americans, by and large, are not happy. The end result of everything I have described above is not pretty. We Americans are overmedicated. We are maxed out on our credit cards and are overstressed.

In spite of all the money, time, effort, and mental energy we spend on getting more and more stuff, we are nowhere close to being content.

We are actually nowhere near to living the kind of joyful life we initially sought out to achieve. The reason for this is actually quite obvious - we live cluttered lives. What makes this tragic is that we are not even aware of

CHAPTER

1

The danger of cluttered living

Most people are so stressed out that they are not as effective as they could be. Their relationships suffer. They don't do a good job at work, they break down easily, and can barely handle challenges that life throws their way.

You have to understand that life is not smooth nor easy. Life, after all, is made up of one unpleasant surprise after another. Some of these surprises can turn out to be positive if you prepare yourself properly.

Sadly, too many people choose not to do this because, at some level or other, they feel that they are entitled for things to be smooth, quick, easy, and convenient. It's no surprise that so many people are stressed out. Most people are so stressed that they are not as happy and content as they could be.

They focus on what they can get not just today, but tomorrow. They are focused on things that have already happened. They obsess about past failures, disappointments,



and missed opportunities. They often engage in finding people and situations to blame for things that are going on in their lives in the here and now.

This is mental clutter. Unfortunately, a lot of people think that not only is this perfectly natural, but it actually defines who they are as individuals. That's right; you heard that correctly.

They believe that this is an integral part of their identity as human beings. Talk about missing the point. Talk about misreading the total picture.

Mental clutter, unfortunately, doesn't fall out of the sky. It doesn't appear at random. It is not something that you luck into. Instead, it is part of a larger equation. Believe it or not, physical clutter leads to mental clutter, and this produces a self-enforcing mechanism.

The more mental clutter you suffer from, the more you tend to create physical clutter around you. And when you see this in your physical surroundings, you stress out and create even more mental clutter. The process repeats itself over and over again.

It is a negative feedback loop that way too many of us are simply clueless about. If you are in any way, shape, or form unhappy with any aspect of your life, chances are quite high that you can trace that unhappiness and discontentment to mental clutter.

This toxic feedback loop holds people back from the life of victory, success, and happiness they could otherwise be living.

The worst part of this is that it's invisible. In fact, a lot of us justify this or make excuses for this to the point that this is what defines us. If somebody were to come into our lives to try to simplify things, don't be surprised if you put up a fight.

If somebody told you that a lot of the things that you're holding on to are unnecessary or even downright toxic, you would not be alone if you were to push back. You might even be thinking, "How dare you question me?", "How dare you insult me? This is part of who I am."

This is how people instinctively respond to any kind of decluttering maneuver imposed from the outside. I raised this issue because if you want to change, you have to want to change. It's one thing to mentally accept that you have to change, but it's another to let that mental awareness sink into the level of your emotions.

That is crucial because unfortunately, until and unless you develop a sense of emotional urgency regarding what you need to do, nothing will get done. Somewhere along the way, you would put up some sort of justification.

At some point in time, you would come up with a range of excuses. Now, a lot of this is not obvious. In fact, in many cases, it seems like you're saying or thinking about the most natural things in the world.

This is how people trip themselves up systematically. They know that things have to change. They know that they are far from happy. They know that they are not living a life based on their fullest potential. They know what is wrong.

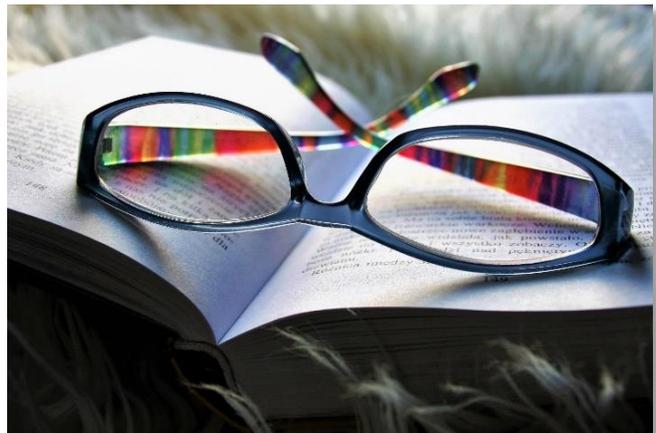
They can make sense of all of this on an intellectual level, but until and unless this sinks to the level of the heart, no progress is possible because ultimately, they don't believe it. They don't feel it.

What is at stake?

When you stress yourself out because of mental and physical clutter, it doesn't end with you. You're not some sort of self-contained organism that can hold in all these conflicting signals and emotions. Instead, you end up infecting the people around you.

This negative feedback loop between your material possessions, material environment and your mental and emotional state also plays out in your personal relationships.

Just as physical clutter stresses you out and your mental clutter produces even more physical clutter, when you are filled with all sorts of toxic emotions, ideas, attitudes, and mindsets, don't be surprised if this leaks out. This creates divisions, misconceptions, misunderstandings, and guess what happens - your relationships get worse and worse. Now, this doesn't necessarily mean that all your relationships will blow apart. Things are not that dramatic. Instead, you might end up with passive-aggressive arrangements.



You mind end up in a situation where you are sabotaging each other to emotionally get back at each other. This can take many different forms but they all lead to the same place - your relationships.

Instead of building you up and leading to a mutual emotional, psychological, and spiritual health, it ends up becoming yet another toxic feedback loop. You stress yourself out, you stress the other people around you, and the cycle repeats itself over and over again. It is kind of like a downward spiral.

The worst part of all of this is that you feel that you can't let go. You feel that you have to keep doing what you are doing because to let go means that you miss out, you get left behind, or you are somehow or someway put in some sort of disadvantage.

I know this sounds almost impossible. It definitely is very frustrating, but the good news is that you can break out of this. And what is really surprising is that the solution is actually simpler than you think.

It all centers on the concept of clutter and the many different forms it takes. By simply deciding to be more proactive and effectively dealing with clutter in your life, you can go a long way in living the kind of life you want for yourself.

It doesn't matter how old you are. Maybe you are 50, 60, 70, or you are 18 years old. You are never too old nor too young to start decluttering your life. I will see you in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

You can Do Something about Clutter

A lot of people are actually quite discouraged the moment they realize that a lot of their frustrations can be traced to the fact that they have too much clutter. Whether it's physical, mental, emotional, psychological; clutter tends to get the better of us. It happens even to the very best of us.

At some point in time, you just run into that wall. In fact, a lot of people are aware that they just have too many things going on. Either they are dealing with stuff from the past, or they are confronted with challenges today.

This often translates into unreasonable worries and fears regarding what's about to happen. In other words, they're worried sick. Most people can understand the impact of clutter. In fact, they don't need other people to tell them that this is what's going on.



The good news is you can do something about it. This is where a lot of people get pretty weird. Believe it or not a lot of individuals get so used to their personal clutter that thinking of life without such mental obstacles and assumed realities seems downright foreign or even alien to them.

A lot of people would dismiss “decluttering” talk as empty theory. They think people are speculating. They readily dismiss such ideas as flat-out impractical. I've got great news for you.

This is not theoretical. This is not just people bouncing ideas together and wondering what could be. This is real. How come? You can actually get measurable results, you can actually see the impact of decluttering and the best part of all of this is that you take the lead. It's you calling the shots.

Why Do You Need to Do This?



Even if you were able to talk to people into accepting the possibility that they can get rid of their clutter, interestingly enough the next question that they would ask you is “Why even do it?” I know it sounds strange.

After all, a lot of people understand that the reason they're suffering, struggling and not exactly living their

lives to their fullest potential is because of clutter. They would almost instantly ask, “Why should I do this? What's in it for me?”

You might be tempted to blurt out “Isn't it obvious?” Well, to spell it out, decluttering enables you to become a more effective person. I don't mean to the sound basic and utilitarian, but that's really what it boils down to.

If you are worried sick, anxious all the time, fearful of the past or suffering a wide range of other issues, you're not all that effective. This gets in the way of your contentment. Your relationships tend to suffer.

Sooner or later, this lingering discontent that you feel, which boils up to the surface in different forms simply gets the better of you. All your focus is diffused, and you end up spreading yourself too thin.

When you learn to effectively declutter, you become a more contented person and this enables you to focus on what truly is important. Ultimately, this leads to a life of freedom.

People who are worried all the time are not enjoying their freedom. They're not. They're walking around trapped in invisible mental prisons. Either you're all caught up about the past or you're worried sick about what will happen. It all leads to the same place.

You have a tremendous amount of potential. You can do so many things. You can change your reality based on what you want it to be yet you choose to stay where you are.

You choose to box yourself in, and it's not like somebody is standing over you with a big gun pointed at your head. You're doing this to yourself. You're cheating yourself of a life of freedom, possibility and a sense of adventure.

In this chapter, I'm going to just give you an overview of the seven steps you need to follow to become clear of all the forms of mental clutter you are struggling with. Please understand that this is not a race. The objective here is not to skip from step to step until you get to the end.

Believe me if you get there too quickly, you're doing something wrong. You should instead dwell on each step until you master it. You stay at each step until it becomes easy. In fact, you should stay long enough until it becomes almost second nature to you. Then and only then should you move on to the next step.

Here is your seven-step plan for a less-cluttered life:

Step 1: Get clear

Step 2: Start with what you can see

Step 3: Get rid of emotional clutter

Step 4: Get rid of psychological clutter

Step 5: Get rid of career clutter

Step 6: Enjoy more with less

Step 7: Learn the art of contentment

These seven steps are not set in stone. Everybody is different. We all come from different backgrounds. We all have different experiences. When you go through these steps, customize them to your set of circumstances.

I don't want you to think even for a moment that these seven steps are some sort of magical, mystical formula for a perfect life. No, that's not the impression that I want you to walk away with. Instead, this is a framework and just like any framework, you have to tweak, modify and change them to fit the reality that you are dealing with.

Everybody is different. Everybody looks at the world from different perspectives. Everybody has different ghosts and demons and skeletons in their closets. Accordingly, these steps need to be remolded, tweaked a little and adjusted to fit your circumstances so they produce results for you.

Again, this is not some sort of magic-bullet, cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all solution. I'm sorry to be the one to say this to you, but no such solution exists. Instead, this is a framework that requires your active participation to customize and tailor-fit it to your particular personal reality. I hope that's clear. Let's jump in to chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Get Clear

The first step in clearing away whatever form of clutter that fills your life is to get a real understanding of what is going on in your life. This is your personal strategy for less clutter. Please understand that getting clear about clutter doesn't mean that you are going to resolve to eliminate all clutter in your life. That's not gonna happen. Instead, you're going to work on a strategy for less clutter.



I hate absolutes precisely because they're impossible. To say that you're going to resolve to have absolutely no clutter is really setting yourself up for disappointment later on.

Your goal should be to just lessen the clutter that you have. As it stands now, you are probably dealing with so much clutter that you really don't have any perspective. Everything is distorted. Everything is warped. Everything is off-center. This, of course, leads to a very imbalanced view not only of your life, but your place in the world, who

you are, what you're capable of, whether you're worthy or not and other profound issues.

You have to create your very own personal strategy for less clutter so you can stop thinking that you have to spend money that you don't have on stuff that you don't need to impress people that you don't even like.

This is the key. It's the beginning. It's the first step but it is crucial.

If you're still unclear as to where to start, you need to first pay attention to the five signs that you are living a cluttered life. If any of these are present in your life, you are dealing with clutter.

You have to understand that clutter, just like with a lot of things, is easy to spot in the beginning. Eventually, you get accustomed to it. It becomes part of your mental landscape.

In fact, if you were to clear the way overnight so there is some sort of black-and-white difference in your perception before and after you took away the clutter, you will actually miss it. I know it's shocking considering its effect on your attitude, mindset, emotions, relationships and capacity for action, but this is the absolute truth.

Here are the five signs you are living a cluttered life:

Sign #1: Angst



Do you feel like something is missing in your life? You can't quite put your finger on it, but regardless of what you do, regardless of who you're with and regardless of the stuff that you have around you, it seems that there's something missing.

It seems that somehow, some way the big jigsaw puzzle of your life just can't seem to fit together neatly and nicely. Somehow, some way you feel that there's something defective. Something is "off." Things don't quite fit and, at some level or another, it's bothering you.

What's really frustrating about this is that this comes and goes. Sometimes it's very pronounced, but oftentimes it's just kind of like a low-level, background, emotional noise. You know it's there, but it's not so pressing and so imposing that it actually irritates you. At the end of the day, you still know it's there.

Think of it like psychological peanut butter stuck at the top of your mouth. Have you ever had peanut butter stuck at the roof of your mouth? Annoying, right? However, as you continue to eat, you start getting used to it but, at the back of your head, you know it's still there. You drink what seems like a gallon of milk, but it's still there.

Sign #2: Anxiety

Do you worry constantly? Do you think in worst-case scenarios? Has this ever happened to you?

You worry yourself sick about what somebody is going to say, what they will do and how things will line up in the future, but things actually turned out okay. Things are far from ideal but, at least, they're not the complete and total unmitigated disaster you had imagined.



Has this ever happened to you? Did you feel any sense of relief when your worst fears did not materialize?

If you're suffering from anxiety, you never get that sense of relief because by the time you see that your old fears about a certain event that was supposed to happen at a certain date did not come to pass, you're already thinking about something else.

You're like working yourself up to greater and greater levels of frustration and fear only to see that things really aren't that bad. However, instead of feeling happy, content or relieved, you're working yourself up over something else. This goes on and on and on.

It's as if you have this sword that's right on top of your head and, at any given time, it will fall, and you're just going to get hurt really badly. You don't know when. You can't even picture how it will play out yet, for some reason or another, you feel that you're going to suffer some sort of loss or some sort of harm.

Right before you're about to burn out, things clear up but, by that point, you're worried about something else.

In fact, in certain situations, you suffer so much anxiety that you physically get sick. Maybe you rock yourself for comfort, or you engage in some sort of personal ritual to center your mind or triggers some sort of emotional calm.

Sign #3: You need more, more, more



Have you ever wondered about stuff that makes you happy? There are things in your life now that make your happy at some level or other. Have you ever wondered that if you were to get more of that stuff, you will be happier?

A lot of people think along these lines. A lot people think that if they just have

the right car, live in the right part of town, live in a big-enough house, move around in the right social circles, then they will have everything they need.

Sure enough through enough planning, they're able to get stuff. However, their enjoyment and personal joy lasts a very short time. Soon enough, they're back to where they began and they need more and more and more.

There's actual psychological science to this. According to a fairly recent study, money does make people happy. I know that's not politically correct. You're not supposed to say that. However, it's actually scientifically proven.

Yes, when you buy stuff, it makes you happy. There is a measurable rush, a sense of fulfillment, a sense of completion, a sense of relief mixed with joy. This is real. The problem is, after some time, that feeling goes away. You are then looking to buy more stuff to get that feeling again.

Does it sound familiar? Well, it should. This is a classic addiction cycle. It's no different from a sugar rush, as well as a cocaine, methamphetamine or heroin experience. You get that nice, little surge of great feelings in the beginning, then it dwindles so you look for it again. However, the next time you get that experience it's never as good as the first time.

I know this sounds crazy, but nothing really beats the first time you bought a car. It's your very own. I still remember my first car. It was a 1971 Toyota. It looked like a sardine can on wheels, but it didn't matter. I loved that car.

Now, I'm on my fifth SUV and I can tell you with all sincerity and honesty that the rush that I get when I sign on the dotted line at the auto dealer to drive home my new SUV is never as intense as when I got that first beat-up Toyota compact. It doesn't even come close.

Right now, I'm at this stage of my life where when I buy a new car, it's basically like trading in old shoes. You know, after so many years, things start to fall apart, and the ride and the handling aren't exactly like they were before. So, I just buy the latest model. It's become a routine.

However, when I first laid my eyes on my first car, it was magic. There was a mixture of anticipation, a sense of discovery. I mean it smelled old because it was at least fifteen years old when I bought it, but it was mine. It also helped that I was 17 at that time.

However, you get my point.

When you buy stuff to feel happy, it's like a sugar rush. The great feeling is undeniable. It exists. It's measurable. However, the problem is it's a temporary. You crash, and then you hunger again for that rush so you buy and buy and buy, and guess what? It doesn't plug in that need permanently. You're kind of like a rat chasing its tail.

Sign #4: You feel that there is never enough

Have you ever sat down and thought about what you have, what you've accomplished and who you are as a person and, in all honesty, said, "Yeah, I have enough"? Chances are if you are like the average American or Western European, the answer would be a big, fat no. You're always looking over your shoulder.



What does your neighbor have? Do they go on a vacation every quarter? Why aren't you doing the same thing? Are they rolling in on a new BMW? Why can they do that when you can't? Do they have new stuff? Do they seem happier based on their Facebook updates?

You get what I'm trying to get at. You feel that whatever you have accomplished and whatever you have gathered, bought, borrowed, rented is simply not enough. Now, don't get me wrong. Obviously, you feel that there's enough in terms of numbers.

However, in terms of quality, fulfillment, value, worth and everything else, there's just so much more out there. You have a lot on your hands, but you're constantly looking at bigger, better, brighter things.

Sign #5: You're worried about losing it all



Interestingly enough, most people feel that they don't have enough but they're worried sick, at some level or other, about losing the stuff that they don't have enough of. Quite an irony, right?

If you put all these signs together, you are living a cluttered life. The mental, psychological as well as

physical clutter surrounding you both inside and outside prevent you from living a truly meaningful, purposeful and effective life.

Don't be surprised if you feel that each day simply blends into the other, and there's really not much point or purpose behind each day. You go to your job, you put in eight hours and it basically feels just like the same eight hours that you put in day after day. Each day is not really all that much different from the days that preceded it.

You look forward to more stuff that you can buy, but by the time you buy them, you want to buy other stuff. You look forward to your vacation but by the time you have finished your vacation, you can't wait for the next one. It's like this endless, pointless circle. The more you run, the more you stay in place. You tire yourself from running in place.

Get Clear by Figuring Out What is Truly Important to You

Now that you have analyzed your life based on the five signs of clutter I described above, figure out what truly is important to you. Here's a hint. If you're like most people, what truly is important has nothing to do with stuff. If you're like most people, it's not your possessions. They're not the most important to you.



Unfortunately, I cannot give you the answer because you have your own life. We come from different walks of life. We have different experiences. We have different values and characters. You have to supply the answer to this.

However, I have already given you a very important hint. It has nothing to do with possessions. Ask yourself what is truly important in my life. What would I trade everything for? What would I give everything up for?

At this point, these are really big questions. Considering what you've been going through before, these questions may almost seem unanswered. Believe me I've been where you are. I understand what you're going through. To simplify things, do a values audit.

Values Audit 101



How do you audit your values? Very simple. Just whip out a piece of paper and ask yourself assuming I don't care about what other people think of me, and assuming that I'm not supporting anybody else or I'm responsible for anybody else, what would I want to do even if I'm not getting paid to do it?

Write down a long list. Write down the first thing that comes to your mind. Don't edit yourself. Remember there's no right or wrong answer here because the right answer to me may be pointless to you and vice versa. Remember this is all about you. This is about your values. This is about your character.

Don't worry about people thinking that you may be shallow or your values are too weird or you're stupid. Forget about that. Focus on what's real. Honestly list down the things that really drive you.

These are your values. At some level or another, they inform your life to the extent that you wake up every day and go through your day because you are informed by these values. Without these values, you won't get that energy.

You won't get that motivation. It would be too easy to just stay in bed because whatever you do in life really wouldn't matter because there's nothing driving you. That's what I'm trying to discover. That's what I want you to remind yourself of. So, do a values audit.

Here's the trick. List down everything. Be completely honest with yourself. Even if you know it's negative, even if you think that it's embarrassing or it somehow puts you in a negative light, write it down. List it out. Don't edit yourself.

Do a Values Detox

Now that you have listed down the stuff that's important to you, ask yourself is this important to you because it really gives you meaning? Does it give purpose to your life? Does it make life worth living? Does it trigger your sense of adventure? Does it engage your powers of imagination?



Alternatively, do you prize something because that's what you're supposed to like? Have your parents been telling you since you were a little kid that you're supposed to be a certain way, that you're supposed to desire certain things and that you're supposed to look at life from a certain vantage point?

Do you hang around certain people who look at the world from a particular perspective and do you see that in your values?

Filter your values based on what you personally chose and external considerations. Maybe you're doing things or desiring things because that's what's expected of you. You kind of just automatically snapped into it. When you became an adult you just quickly bought into what your parents were into.

I need you to separate these two things because they're very different from each other. So, do yourself a big favor. List down in one column values that you know came from you and are fully your own. In another column, put "From the Outside" and then list down those values.

This is how you detox because we're going to focus on your own values. You're going to try to get out from under values imposed on you or things you absorbed from other people.

This is first step of decluttering. You let go of external stuff. You focus on values that came from you. We're gonna clean that up, but first we need to step away from externally imposed clutter.

CHAPTER 4

Start with
what you
can see

The first thing that you are going to work with as far as your decluttering campaign goes is the visible stuff. We're talking about tangible things. You're going to clear out physical stuff that gives you mental, psychological, emotional and spiritual clutter. This sounds great, but the problem is you can't just jump in with both feet.



You can't just get all pumped up about taking care of possessions that have somehow some way along the line possessed you instead.

You have to have a game plan. If you are really just emotional about this from the get-go, chances are you will start missing the things you have put away. Sooner or later, you will get back to where you began.

You have to have some sort of game plan coming in. Again, as the old saying goes, if you fail to plan, you're actually planning to fail. This is absolutely true when it comes to decluttering.

What you need to do is to first begin with what you're trying to achieve. In other words, focus on the question "why?" I know at this point you're probably thinking, "Isn't it obvious? All these things are dragging me down.

They're holding me back from the life that I know I deserve. All this mental clutter is just sapping my energy. It's obvious that this physical stuff, my possessions which I worked so hard to accumulate actually has a toxic effect on me. Isn't it obvious?"

Well, you might be surprised as to how inefficient you could be when decluttering stuff because at some point you will come across some things that you're going to compromise with yourself over.

You know that it is very toxic. You know that it prevents you from moving on but, for some reason or another, you can't let it go. It has that much of an emotional hold on you.

If you don't have a clear understanding of why you're doing this, you will fall into this trap again and again and again.

Begin with a game plan. Focus on why you're doing things in the first place. What is the great objective? What do you stand to gain? What do you stand to lose?

Do yourself a big favor and write all of this down. It's one thing to keep all of this in your mind. However, let's face it we have all sorts of minor crises breaking out in our lives every once in a while. Guess what happens when such a crisis flares up? That's right.

You forget about supposedly high-priority items.

Don't allow this to happen. Write everything down. Read it every morning as you think of the things that you are going to have to clear out of your life. Pay attention to what's at stake. Remember it.

Sure, there are going to be points where it's going to get very uncomfortable to let go of stuff. However, if you have everything down in writing, and you constantly read your reasons, you will be fine. You will be able to stick to the plan.

I have some bad news for you. Even the best-laid plans, the ones that make all the sense in the world, fall apart if we're not careful. Why? Lack of consistency. At some point in time, you run out of juice. You just run out of steam. You can't do it anymore.

You think you're the first person to come up with a decluttering plan? I'm sorry to report but the vast majority of people who planned to declutter their life flat-out failed. It's not because they're dumb. It's not because they don't have the resources.

Many have the time. Many were motivated. Many were driven by a tremendous amount of passion. Still, they failed. Why? They did not stick to it.

It really boils down to having a plan. I know it might seem basic, but you'd be surprised as to how powerful simple solutions can be. By simply writing down your game plan and why you're doing it, you have a tool that would enable you to put in the work day after day week after week, month after month, year after year.

It doesn't matter what side of the bed you woke up on. It doesn't matter what you're feeling like. It doesn't matter if things are going wrong in your life. You're going to stick to it again and again and again.

That's how you achieve a serious breakthrough. I don't mean to discourage you, but you're up against a tremendous amount of resistance. If you are anything like the typical person, you define yourself based on your possessions. This might not be obvious, but deep down inside, it's true.

Deep down inside you're thinking, "Well, I live here. I associate with these people. I went to this school. I buy this stuff." Soon enough, those external things end up defining you. They also end up limiting you. They determine what you can do and what you cannot do or at least what you feel you're incapable of doing.

You have to have a game plan, and it has to be written. You have to revisit it each and every day for you to make progress. Do that first.

Commit to a Change in Your Personal Acquisition Patterns



Before we go any further, I just want this to be clear. I'm not saying that you should get rid of all your possessions.

I'm not saying that you should shave your head, wear a saffron robe, go up to the highest hill far, far away and live your life in a secluded Buddhist monastery. I'm not saying any of that

nor am I saying that you should never acquire stuff again in your life.

Instead, the game plan that I want you to come up with involves changing your relationship with stuff. Prior to this point, you've let stuff define you. Sooner or later, your possessions start possessing you. Things that you own, own you.

I know it sounds ridiculous, but it's the truth. It happens all the time. Sooner or later, people live their lives based on what they can consume and what they possess.

However, regardless of how much they eat, how much they consume, how much they accumulate, how much they acquire, they're never fulfilled. They are afflicted with a hunger that actually scales up over time.

If you need proof of this, think back to when you were 20 years old and living in college dorms. I remember when I was living at the dorm back in the San Francisco Bay Area I was very happy to eat two bowls of ramen a day.

That was my definition of a great meal. If I'm feeling extra luxurious, I would go to Central San Francisco and eat at this Vietnamese restaurant that had this amazing fried rice dish for \$3.

These simple pleasures were born of the fact that I was on a scholarship, and I had to live on \$20,000 a year. That \$20,000 a year paid for my schooling and my room and board. This means that I really did not have that much money left over.

However, that was my life, and I was extremely happy. I had friends. We would always go out. We would do stuff that's free or nearly free.

I still look back to those days, and they were the best years of my life, and those years did not come with a big price tag.

Fast forward to today, and it's a completely different picture. The price tag of my life kept going up as I started to make more money. Once I graduated, my expectations changed.

I had to get a nice apartment in a nice part of town. That's the only way I can remind myself that I am moving up the economic ladder, that I was "making something out of myself."

When I got promoted at a corporate job, my expectations went up again. When I got married, it went up some more. When I finished graduate school, it went up a lot, and then when I had a child, it just reached the stratosphere. It goes on and on and on. I'm sharing this with you because I want you to zero in on a basic truth.

If you focus on what you really need, it will quickly dawn on you that you really don't need all that much. Do you really need that BMW in the garage? Do you really need that 5000 square-foot house?

You're going to have to focus on what you really need and who you really are. Between these two lies the answer. Again, this is not a one-size-fits-all template that I can cram down anybody's throat regardless of where they come from in the world.

No, it doesn't work that way. You have to ask these questions to yourself. You have to honestly answer so you can come up with a plan.

You have to ask yourself, "What do I really need to be me and who am I really?" Once you answer these questions, then you would have a map as to what your proper relationship to possessions should be.

What you're doing here is you are trying to figure out what you can commit to because once you commit, you're going to have to do it regardless of what happens next. It doesn't matter what you feel like. It doesn't matter what else is going on in your life.

You're going to stick to it day after day after day.

Focus on what you can commit to. Regardless of the specific answer you come up with, I want you to zero in on the fact that the change that you're going effect in your life must be all about changing your relationship with your possessions. This means that you're going to have to change your personal acquisition patterns.

This does not mean that you're not going to buy anything ever again. Instead, what this means is that you're going to change how you're going to acquire stuff because it must now be centered and/or focused on your personal meaning. Are we clear?

Now, let's go to decluttering. We're going to be cutting out the stuff that holds you back and drags you down.

Do It!

By this point, you are committed to changing your personal acquisition patterns. You also have a game plan as to what you're trying to achieve. You're clear on the objective. You understand why you're doing things. Now, let's get down to what you should do. You have committed to doing this. Let's focus on what you should be doing.



Start with the 80/20 Rule. What if I told you that 20% of the stuff you own accounts for 80% of your results, happiness and contentment? Sounds crazy, right?

Well, look at all your possessions. I would venture to guess that around 80% of those items are things you don't even use on a regular basis and of those things that you think you use, a lot of them are ornamental in nature.

They just make you feel good if you look at them. If you devote any kind of thought to them, they give you some sort of positive feedback but, by and large, they really do nothing.

If you were to list down all your possessions, 20% will stand out because these are the things that you always use. These are the things that produce positive mental states on a regular basis. These impact your personal effectiveness, happiness and contentment on a sustained, regular and conscious basis.

Get rid of the 80%. I know this is easier said than done but, actually, if you list down the 80% and sort them in descending order of emotional attachment, you actually have a lot of stuff you can give away, sell or exchange. Whatever you do, get rid of the 80%.

Start at the bottom. Start with the stuff that you really don't care about. This is stuff that is obviously clutter to you. There's no question. This stuff is just hogging precious space. However, as you move up that scale, that's when things get real because it gets closer and closer to your comfort zone.

However, you have to stick to the plan. You have to say to yourself, "This stuff possesses me. I don't possess it. It's holding me back. It's toxic."

Focus on the 20% that truly matters, and get rid of the 80%. You don't have to do this overnight. You don't have to put out an ad on Craigslist, hang up a garage sale sign over your door. However, you have to do this. Create a timeline. Get rid of the clutter. Focus on the 20%.

Remember What Matters



I wish I could tell you that changing your personal acquisition patterns is a simple one-step process. I wish I could tell you it's some sort of bright line on a calendar somewhere that once you hit that date and you do what you're supposed to do, things are better permanently. It doesn't work that way. It's like trying to lose

weight.

If you've ever gone on a diet, you know that the first few days or even weeks, you're doing really well. The pounds just melt off. You feel really good about yourself. Every time you look in the mirror, you see this very beautiful or very handsome person. You feel like you're on top of the world. However, sooner or later, that weight comes back. Why? You did not remember your game plan. You didn't focus on what's important.

This is not just a simple matter of getting rid of stuff. Anybody can do that.

Let's get real here. If this is all just about getting rid of stuff, most people can do this. Instead, you should focus on changing your mindset. You're changing how you think about stuff and what your relationship is to stuff in your life.

This is what requires heavy lifting. This is what can get uncomfortable, but you have to do it. Stick to the plan. From time to time, you will come across some sort of shiny object.

You might stumble upon some gadget or trinket that just seems so irresistible. That's when things get real because when you remember your game plan, you present yourself with a choice.

Unfortunately, a lot of people forget the game plan so they just stumble back into that acquisition pattern. They strengthen their old habits, they feed it and they end up where they began. Remember your strategy.

Be Thorough

It's easy to clear out stuff that are obviously status symbols. It's easy to get rid of stuff that are obviously trinkets, gadgets and things that really don't add much value except for maybe some sort of emotional reward. You have to go past status symbols. Look at items that give you comfort. There's a lot to work with there.



You have to understand that if an item gives you comfort, you are just using that item as some sort of mental mirror. Real comfort, assurance and a sense of worth or meaning can only come from you. You're using that item as a prop. You're bouncing off these mental signals off that tangible item.

Your job is to remove the item and go straight to the source. It is you giving yourself that meaning. It is you allowing yourself to feel that way. Cut out the middle man. Focus on within.

This is a good segue to what we will focus on in chapter 5. After you have gotten rid of the 80% of physical clutter, you have to start looking at all your other acquisitions. This

can be non material. I'm talking about attitudes, mental trends, mental clutter, mindsets, assumptions, expectations, misconceptions.

Believe it or not these are harder to get rid of. Why? Like I mentioned, a lot of the physical stuff that we buy are actually just mirrors. Their real value is based on what's going on in our heads. They remind us of ideas that we possess in our minds.

Get rid of those ideas, and you would not have to need stuff that mirrors that. That is the real project. As uncomfortable as clearing up a lot of this physical stuff may be, this doesn't compare to the kind of heavy lifting that you would have to do inside your head. That is our big project in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Get rid of emotional clutter

As I mentioned in the introduction to this training, your physical clutter triggers the emotional clutter. Emotional clutter in turn triggers other forms of internal clutter, which pushes you to engage in hoarding behavior, or other personal acquisition patterns that lead to physical clutter.

This physical clutter then speaks to your internal clutter, and the whole process repeats itself again. You end up in a downward spiral. You're sending all the negative signals to yourself, and you end up thinking and doing things that drive you further down this hole.

While taking care of physical clutter definitely can go a long way in helping you deal with internal issues, you have to take the next step and deal with this internal clutter.

Otherwise, regardless of how much stuff you cut out of your life, you will eventually get back to where you began. You have to understand that, by and large, the physical clutter that we assemble or hoard in our lives is simply a stand-in for our emotional issues.



As I mentioned in the previous chapter, we buy stuff not because we need but because we read all sorts of meanings into it. Let's face it. If you are looking for a car, you can do just as well buying a Kia.

It gets you from point A to point B. It keeps you nice and warm, and dry when it's raining outside. It has air-conditioning. In other words, it takes care of the basics, but people don't buy Kia's. Instead, they long for and desire Ferrari's, Lamborghini's, Mercedes Benzes, BMWs, Maserati's.

In other words, you're not really buying stuff because of the needs that purchase addresses. Instead, you're buying stuff because of the emotional signals or emotional reality you're reading into that stuff that you are purchasing. Be clear about this because this is the enabler of emotional clutter.

As I mentioned above, there is a call-and-response pattern here. You buy stuff because you're feeling empty inside. You buy stuff to comfort yourself.

The more stuff you have, the more you need because you keep feeding that emotional hole which is perpetually hungry. You have to deal with that emotional hole after you've taken care of the physical component of clutter.

How do you do this? Well, you have to change your emotionally stressful habits. This is the first step.

If you spend a lot of time with social media, you are doing yourself a big disservice. You really are. Why? When people post their updates, they're showing you pictures of their "perfect life."

Nobody is going to post snapshots of themselves getting into a heated argument with their significant other. Nobody is going to post video footage of them getting fired from their job. Nobody is going to post snapshots of their bills coming due and their bank account's zero balance. Nobody does that, at least nobody in their right frame of mind. Instead, what you get are snapshots of the parts of their life that are going right. You get a nice picture of a family going out for lunch. Everybody dressed really nice. You get nice, underhanded shots of the new BMW in the driveway. Of course, they're not coming out and slap you in the face with the BMW logo.

They will come up with creative ways to let you know about their new acquisition.

Maybe somebody would post "Check out the new bike I got," and they have a really

nice, decent-looking bike, and right behind it is a Bentley. You know the drill. You've been around the block. You know how this works.

Unfortunately, if you immerse yourself in that kind of stimuli, you are caught in a social signal "soup". You're just beating yourself up. You're essentially comparing the reality of your life with the false reality projected by other people. It's a losing game. You might as well box somebody with a hand tied behind your back.

I hope you get the analogy. They're in perfect shape because they're showing you the part of their life that is going right. They don't show you the cocaine addiction. They don't show you the infidelity. They don't show you the cancer or HIV.

Instead, they show you what's going right. They show you the perfect side of their lives. In fact, a lot of people who do this, do this to reassure themselves. They're not really bragging. They're just telling themselves, "Somehow some way at least some thing is going right in my life."

The problem is you're soaking this all up and the message that you're getting is: "I'm not getting enough. My life sucks compared to this person." The funny thing about comparison, at least in a social media context, is that regardless of what you have and regardless of how well you have it going, it will never measure up. Seriously.

You might have a great job, but somebody who's unemployed might post pictures of him on a bike trail or tour of Southeast Asia. It's as if this person who you know is unemployed has all the freedom in the world.

You have a health plan, you have a retirement plan and you have a steady paycheck coming in every two weeks. This person doesn't but, at that point in time, you can't help but think about the freedom this person has.

Do you see what I'm coming from here? Because whenever you compare, you end up on the losing end because you don't focus on the things you have. Instead, your attention goes to what's missing, and it all goes back to the same place. You don't have enough.

That's the message you keep drumming into your head when you engage in emotionally stressing habits like social media.

Even if you were to delete your Facebook or Twitter accounts, you're still going to run into this if you hang out with people who brag about stuff that's going well in their lives. That's all they talk about.

Keep in mind that a lot of people who do this don't really do this to put you down. In fact, a lot of them feel really insecure. They feel very small, powerless and lacking control.

So, what do they do? They play up the things that are working out.

Somebody who did not do all that well in school can make a big deal out of their job.

Maybe they got that job because they knew somebody. However, they make a big deal out of that because they know, at the back of their head, they're not really qualified.

They don't have what it takes.

Here you are soaking it all in, and you take whatever they say at face value. What do you think will happen? You end up losing out. You end up coming up short. That's how comparisons work.

This is a very toxic environment, and you don't have to be on social media to feel this.

You should dial down or eliminate your social media accounts, and you should stop hanging around toxic people.

The Bottom Line



Getting rid of emotional clutter really boils down to watching what you feed your emotions. That's all it boils down to. It's emotional hygiene. You have to understand that everything you pick up has an effect on your emotional state.

Unfortunately, a lot of people are very careless regarding what they

feed their head. They think they're just checking out what's going on with other people, paying attention to what's going on in their lives and catching up.

The problem is if you have the wrong attitude, you end up putting yourself in a worse spot. It doesn't really matter what kind of advantages you have. It doesn't really matter

what you have going for you. If you have the wrong attitude, you will always come out at the losing end of that comparison.

I know this sounds crazy but even the most powerful and richest people in the world can make themselves feel miserable through comparison. If you don't believe me, imagine Bill Gates, the world's richest man comparing himself to Michael Jordan or Kobe Bryant. Bill Gates thinks to himself, "Man, they're such better basketball players than me."

I know that sounds ridiculous, but Bill Gates can easily do that. He can focus on the part of his life where he doesn't really measure up against these people who play basketball for a living. That's a guaranteed one-way ticket to misery. That's how corrosive comparison is and, unfortunately, people do this all the time.

Avoid that comparison mindset. It's okay to hang out with a lot of people, but if your mindset leads you to do this, then you corrode yourself. You position yourself to lose. Watch what you feed your emotions.

How? Well, it all boils down to your mindset. When people are saying something to you, you can always read it a neutral way. You can even read it in a positive way. You can put a spin on it that lifts you up, encourages you or inspires you.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Instead, people read this material in the worst way possible. They put the worst reading into it, and they feel worse and worse about themselves.

Be mindful of who you surround yourself with, what you focus on and, ultimately, how you read that material. The secret to this really all boils down to managing your emotional habits.

I can't blame you for having the emotional habits you have. Everybody picks up habits along the way. In fact, a lot of our emotional habits are "inherited" from our parents. We are, after all, mostly products of our backgrounds.

However, if we are unhappy in any way with our lives, it is our responsibility to ourselves to overcome our backgrounds. Just because your past is a certain way doesn't necessarily mean that you have to die with that past.

The big project of life is to overcome past programming. Just because you were born poor and struggling doesn't necessarily mean you have to die that way. Just because

you came from an abusive background doesn't necessarily mean you have to live out your life a victim.

Do you see how this works? This all boils down to watching what you feed your emotions and tying them into the emotional habits you have. You have to overcome those habits.

Eventually, you should reach the point where regardless of how negative people are around you, your positive mental habits enable you to neutralize that feedback. Instead of beating yourself up, you might even use this input to push yourself forward and out. To begin the process, you must first zero in on five toxic emotional habits or to work to minimize and then eliminate these from your life.

Toxic Emotional Habit #1: Constantly comparing yourself to others

I've already referred to this earlier, but it definitely needs more explanation. You have to understand that people naturally compare themselves to others. I would say that this is hard-wired into our genes. We're kind of genetically predisposed to doing this. But How come?



Well, imagine thousands of years ago and you and a buddy are walking down a trail and one of you sees a bear. You notice that your friend start limbering up like he's practicing for a sprint. You ask him, "Are you crazy? You're not going to outrun that bear. You know how fast bears are." Your friend would then tell you, "I don't need to be faster than the bear. I just need to be faster than you."

This old joke highlights the fact that people are comparative by nature, and this comparative instinct has a distinct genetic advantage.

When people stop comparing themselves to others, it's very likely that they're not going to put in enough effort, and their genes will die out. It is no surprise that this tendency to compare seems so hard to shake off.

Still, we reached an age where a lot of our basic needs are taken care of by technology and modern markets. You don't necessarily have to be faster than your friend to escape being eaten by a bear. Now is the time to get rid of this default tendency to constantly compare yourself to others.

You should actively disrupt such thought patterns. For example, if you see somebody you haven't seen in a long while, and you see their clothing and how fit they are, don't automatically think about yourself. Don't think, "What a fat slob I've become." Or "She's so much more beautiful than me."

Instead of an inward directed focus, one of the most powerful ways to disrupt comparative thinking is to be more outward-directed. Be more appreciative and say, "Wow! You lost a lot of weight" or "You look really good. You haven't aged one day. Turn your analysis and your mental focus on the other person.

This is one of the best things you can do because not only does it make the other person feel better and this can go a long way in cementing your relationship. It also redirects your mind from your normal tendency to compare.

Direct more of your attention to others. Be more appreciative. Always remember that the world is not about you. It's a huge world out there. There are a lot of very interesting people. There are a lot of great situations out there. Be more outward-directed.

Learn to share people's emotions. In other words, be more compassionate. When you're able to do this, you're judging yourself less. You're beating yourself up less.

Toxic Emotional Habit #2: Drawing Emotional Rewards from Material Possessions



When you look at the stuff that you have, stop looking at them in emotional terms. When you look at your most-prized possession, appreciate them based on their own intrinsic properties. Instead of looking at the logo of the car that sits in your garage and how that logo brings to mind all sorts of “elite” or “status” imagery, appreciate your

property for what they do and the problems they address.

The car in your driveway would still have the same hood on it. It would still have the same brand logo. However, when you change the way you think about your possessions, the focus now is on the property itself, not what the property can do for you.

You look at the sleek lines, you look at the amazing engineering and you’re just marveling at how awesome the manufacturers are. You step out of your circle of concern and your need to constantly bolster yourself self-esteem.

Instead, you get drawn into an amazing technical journey involving the kind of engineering needed to get into the product. Do you see how this works? The same applies to watches, any other kind of luxury item.

You can look at a Hermes bag instead of fixating on the “H” logo, look at the craftsmanship that went into this thing. It’s amazing!

Imagine the people crafting it. Imagine the kind of planning and painstaking measurement and attention to detail to create that amazing product.

When you do this, you focus not only on the product but also the people behind it.

You’re making great progress when you start thinking along these lines because you’re no longer thinking about yourself.

Normally, when people look at status symbols, they look at the item really as a mirror.

What they’re really conversing with and addressing are their emotional needs. They

look at the bag that has a product logo on it and think about how rich they are, how other people would look up to them, how trendy they are because they carry a bag that is desired by other people and on and on it goes.

None of this mental discussion really has anything to do with the bag itself, and it has nothing to do with the people behind the bag. It's all about you, and the more you focus on yourself, the more you're stuck on that ego black hole, and it gets worse and worse and worse.

Start thinking about material possessions based on their terms, not based on the emotional rewards you get because you own them. This is how you make progress in your journey to owning stuff instead of having stuff own you.

Toxic Emotional Habit #3: Automatically Assuming that a High Price Tag Means High Value

A lot of people confuse price with value. You do know how prices are set, right? Prices are set through supply and demand. When there is a limited supply and there a significant amount of demand, the price goes up.

Similarly, even if there's a huge supply, if the demand is big enough or constant

enough, the price goes up as well. This also works the other way. If there's a lot more supply than demand, the price goes down. Pretty basic, right?

I need you to pay attention to demand. A lot of people have this crazy idea that demand is essentially a product of need. When the price of wheat or pasta, for example, goes up and people assume that it's because of need. People just need for pasta, bread, noodles, you name it.



What if I told you that demand can also involve perceived demand? In other words, the perception of value by people demanding a particular product because in economics there is such a thing as substitution.

You might be thinking that the demand for wheat is fixed, but you have to also keep in mind that people can switch or substitute rice, potatoes or other forms of starch for wheat. Wheat, after all, is not the only game in town.

I bring this to your attention because a large component of demand involves group perception. The more you can convince people that a certain item has value, regardless of how abundant that item is, its price will go up.

A classic example of this is the diamond industry. Did you know that diamonds are actually quite common? That's right. This crystallized form of carbon is actually not that rare. However, thanks to the DeBeers cartel operating out of South Africa as well as long-running, intensive marketing campaigns, diamonds have become very expensive. In fact, a lot of guys customarily give their prospective fiancée diamonds. It's kind of a rite of passage when people get engaged. However, despite that volume of demand, the actual supply of diamonds is so vast and so great that the actual pricing of diamonds doesn't make any sense.

It shouldn't be as expensive as it is. Do you see how this works? This is due to manufactured demand.

What does all of this have to do with you? Very simple. Just because something has a high price doesn't necessarily mean it has value as far as you are concerned. Its high price may be due to some sort of group delusion like diamond prices. It may be due to some sort of manufacture exclusivity. How do you think luxury goods get marketed?

When you watch a Calvin Klein commercial or view Ralph Lauren print ads, they try to get you to buy into a lifestyle. A lot of these photographs just show really attractive people in exotic locales and maybe one of those people would be wearing the actual item that's being advertised.

However, these compositions are so off center that you're almost wondering what is being advertised. It's not like the jeans that are being marketed is front and center of the ad. Instead, you see this really attractive model looking to the side like she has a problem or another guy just looking dreamily off center to the side of the photo.

This is not a mistake. This is not an accident. This is intentional. The real product here is not the jeans. Instead, it's the lifestyle that you're supposed to buy into because it's so awesome, it's so different from your life.

Your life is boring. These models' lives, on the other hand, are exotic, and you buy into that lifestyle when you buy the product. Do you see how it works?

In other words, they are appealing to what's missing in your life. Your life involves nine-to-five routines. You show up to work, you punch the clock, you work your eight hours then you go home. Rinse and repeat. Year after year. Decade after decade. Sure, from time to time, you go on a vacation and try something new, but that's your life.

Calvin, Klein, Ralph Lauren, all these great fashion brands understand this. That's how they market to people. Abercrombie and Fitch turn this into a science. Basically, they don't show you your life.

Instead, they show you this alternative life that you could have, and you experience it when you buy their product. This product is the gateway to this lifestyle or experience.

I know this sounds pretty weird, and probably you've been thinking, "Would people really fall for this?" You only need to look at the billions of dollars being spent every year on lifestyle marketing to get your answer. The answer, of course, is a resounding yes.

The worst part to this marketing is that it drives home the point, ad after ad, video after video, and message after message that your life sucks. It's not complete. It's not good enough. There is something better out there, but you need to buy our product to get there.

When you ask people buying Gap jeans, or other fashion items like Giorgio Armani accessories, they want to be able to explain this to you except they will just tell you,

"Well, it fits good. It fits well. It looks good on you." That's their conscious answer but, subconsciously, they made the selection because of this lifestyle that's being pushed.

Let's put it this way if we take people's word for it and they actually bought stuff because it fits well, I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this but there are tons of other clothing lines out there that fit well. What makes this brand any different? What makes it so special?

It really all boils down to marketing.

This is what you pay for when you spend \$300 on a pair of jeans from one brand when you could have bought another brand of jeans for \$30! The funny thing about this is

people do this with a smile on their face. They think that they're locking into a truly awesome brand.

However, if you look at the material, the design and everything else, it's really hard to justify on a purely practical level spending \$300 on a pair of jeans when you can buy it for \$30 from another brand or a no-name brand. The difference? The lifestyle.

I bring this up because this is what inflates perceived value. That value is air, but let's be honest. It's clever. It shows genius on the side of these big brands but, ultimately, there's not much difference in practical terms between a \$300 pair of jeans and a \$30 pair.

For this to work, they have to trick people into thinking that high price means high value. The more people you successfully program with this mindset, the larger the market gets.

Considering that there is a multibillion-dollar luxury goods market stretching across different industry verticals tells you all you need to know about how pervasive this programming is.

I wish I could tell you that this only applies to clothing or perfume or cologne. It doesn't. The mobile device you have in your hand is proof positive of this. If you're just looking for features, you probably would be better off with an android device that costs all of \$50.

There's really no compelling reason you should spend over \$500 on a mobile device that has a nice little logo of an apple behind it. Do you see how this works?

I can't even begin to tell you how many times I come across people who say, "Well I spent \$600 on this model because it's worth it. It brings so much value to the table. No, it doesn't. I mean if we're really honest with ourselves here and are willing to let go a lot of the marketing program.

Sadly, this leads to emotionally toxic habits. Just because something has a higher price doesn't mean it automatically has a lot of value. You shouldn't beat yourself up over the fact that you cannot fill your life with high-price-tag items.

At the end of the day, they may not have the value that you're looking for. If you really think about it hard enough the only value any item can bring is the value you read into it.

This process again reflects how the market works because pricing mechanisms don't work based on how much labor somebody puts into product. Karl Marx is absolutely wrong.

According to his book, *Das Kapital*, the real price of any product is the amount of labor that is put in there. Capitalists make money when they sell the product far in excess of the amount of money they paid the worker to create the product. That's how Marx thought.

What if I told you that even if you spent two thousand hours creating a product but when you put it on the market, nobody wants to buy it. How much is that product worth?

That's right, a whole lot of nothing.

Pricing is set by demand. This highlights my point. This drives home my point. The price of something or value of something is something that you read into it. It comes from you.

You have to break the artificial link between price and value that is set by the other people. Just because something has a high price tag doesn't mean it has a high value.

You beat yourself up to buy that thing because you want to be highly valued.

Believe it or not you have your own intrinsic value. Regardless of what you put on, regardless of what you buy, regardless of what you eat, that value remains.

Think of yourself like a piece of gold or a hundred-dollar bill. If I took a hundred-dollar bill in front of you and spit on it, stomp on it with my foot, crumple it, throw it around, drop some slime on it, how much do you think that hundred-dollar bill is worth? That's right.

It's still a hundred dollars. Some people will pick it up because they know value when they see it.

The same applies to you. You may be covered in rags. You may look all scuffed up. However, you still have value. Always keep this in mind because the stuff that you have may not have a high price tag.

However, this doesn't take away from the fact that you still have value. Now, the secret to all of this is the only person that unlocks your value is you. If you act like a high-value person, people will respect you.

If you respect yourself and treat others with respect, people will respect you. At the end of day, this really all boils down to your choice and your decisions.

Toxic Emotional Habit #4: Focusing on “Extracting” the Good Things People Have Going On Instead of Seeing Them as Complete People



Do you hang out with people who are emotional energy vampires? These people hang out with you just to soak up your positive vibes. They don't contribute anything. They're very depressed. They're very anxious. All they talk about are their problems. They still hang around you because they want to feel good. So, you talk

about what's going on. You talk about things that are going right, and they ride on this positivity. They suck it all up. These people are extracting positive energy from you. They don't really see you as a complete person. Instead, they see you as a host. They are energy leeches. Believe it or not you probably do this as well at some level or another or in one form or another.

It's very rare that you come across somebody who just likes to hang out with you because of who you are. They don't want anything from you. Instead, they just want to be around you.

Some are even gracious enough to want to give to you not because they are expecting something in return, but that's just who they are. They have a lot of abundance in their life, and it flows outward.

Unfortunately, most people are not like that. Instead, we hang out with other people to extract things. Now, it would suck to hang out with people who try to extract money from you. You probably know some people like this.

However, by and large, it takes another form. These are people who are emotional vampires. I'm sure you have at least one friend who's like this. All he or she talks about

is her or his problems. They talk about past relationships. They talk about things that are not going right.

Furthermore, other people like to stoke your own insecurities because they're insecure. So, they get you to talk about your own frustrations by talking about theirs. They're not looking for solutions, mind you. These people just want to feel that there are other people as miserable as them in the world.

Do you think this is a positive thing? Well, you might want to think twice. Maybe at first it feels good. However, the more you trigger each other's negativity, the more you create a negative emotional soup between you.

Instead of your friendship enabling both of you to get out of this emotional hole, you actually end up handing each other shovels. As you dig in alternating terms, you deepen each other's hole.

Believe me I've been in this type of relationship. I've had friends who just talk about stuff that's, and by the end of the conversation, I'm either so sad I want to kill myself or I'm so angry that I want to kill somebody else.

This is a form of extraction. It doesn't have to be one person feeling good at the expense of another person. It can be two people making each other miserable by reinforcing each other's negativity.

You have to get rid of this especially toxic emotional habit. Why? The more you extract from somebody else, the less likely you're going to solve your own problems. All you're doing is just consoling yourself with what is fundamentally wrong in your life without really doing it to solve it once and for all.

You're definitely not challenging yourself. You're not pushing yourself past your comfort zone. Instead, you're locked deep within your comfort zone, and you're just rehashing this negativity or you're extracting some sort of emotional comfort from your friend. However, at the end of the day, you don't lift a finger to fix your problem. You wallow in it.

Toxic Emotional Habit #5: Sponging Emotionally Off People

Have you ever hung out with people who think exactly like you? You may be thinking that this is a good thing. You might be under the impression that this is exactly the kind of friends you need because, hey who doesn't want to feel appreciated? Who doesn't want to feel like they belong?



Unfortunately, that feeling of belonging has limits. There is such a thing as a comfortable prison. When you're hanging out with people who just reinforce your worst preconceptions, you're not doing yourself any favors.

You end up talking and preaching to the choir. You motivate them by telling them stuff that they already, and they do the same to you, and nobody's any wiser. Nobody progresses. Nobody challenges their biases. Nobody improves their chances of breaking out of this mental prison.

You have to understand that mental prisons become more restrictive when people who live in them network with each other. A sense of powerlessness, a sense of constriction and the other negative dimensions of mental prisons are made worse when we hang out and network with or bond with people who share the same problem.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying you don't get any sort of emotional payoff from this.

There is some sort of emotional payoff. However, you're paying a high price for it.

You're reinforcing each other's biases. You keep rehashing each other's pet peeves.

If you don't believe me pay attention to a friend who you are emotionally sponging off or who's doing this to you. Track the topics you talk about. I'm willing to bet a lot of money that you talk about the same stuff over and over again. In fact, you consciously bring back stuff that you've already talked about because you want to get that emotional rush.

This is toxic. You're not challenging each other to get out of the emotional rut. Instead, you're again helping each other dig a deeper hole.

Let Go of Toxic People



To some extent, this is actually similar to the five toxic emotional habits I described above. A lot of the people who have those negative emotional habits are the same as the people who I'm going to describe. You just have to mix and match these, but the effects are the same. They lead you to a bad place. They reinforce all your worst emotional

habits.

If you wanna try to make things as simple as possible for yourself, just identify the following five types of toxic people in your life and start distancing yourself from them.

This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to cut them off entirely.

You don't have to turn your back on them. You just have to give yourself enough distance so their negativity doesn't poison you.

A little distance can go a long way. They're still in your life. You still talk to them from time to time, but they're not so close and so dear that they end up dragging you down.

At the very least, you're not so connected to them that you are stuck in this downward emotional spiral.

Toxic Personality Type #1: The Black Hole

This person has deep and profound emotional needs. They're very needy people. You can't tell by their appearance, mind you. Some look very successful. Some are very attractive.

However, when they open their mouths to somebody they feel that they can trust, it's all about me, me,

me. It's all about how I lost out, what I need, how the world's unfair, on and on it goes. It's as if any kind of reassurance, any kind of comfort or any kind of emotional support simply won't measure up. Even if you give and give and give, it's still not enough because that's how needy they are. They are black holes. All they know and all they seem to be capable of is sucking in positive energy.

Do yourself a big favor. Stay away from black holes. I'm not saying that you should cut them out, but don't get so near. Why? Well, imagine a spaceship or a planet getting close to a black hole. What do you think happens? Here's a hint. There's a bad ending.



Toxic Personality Type #2: The Judge



Do you have a friend or an acquaintance who's constantly putting everybody and anything and any situation into neat, tidy, little boxes. This might not seem all that negative at first.

However, this habit of theirs can be quite toxic because life is not black and white. When somebody sees you,

they say, "You're a loser" or another person says, "Oh, you're a winner."

It's easy to think that when somebody comes up with a negative judgment that it's unfair.

It's tempting to think that when you come across some sort of negative judgment that this is a bad thing compared to when somebody has a great impression of you and says, "Oh, you're a winner."

Well, what if I told you that they are equally toxic? Why? People are people. We change all the time. We have different dimensions. We have different aspects. There are so many sides to us and to reduce somebody into a one-word description really strips them of their humanity.

If you say to a friend of yours that she's ugly or she's she stupid, you reduce that person's being to just one attribute. Maybe they're just behaving stupidly that one point in their life, but for the rest of their life, they're acting like complete and total geniuses.

Now, does it make sense to dismiss that person as an idiot? The same applies to physical appearances or income mobility or the ability to increase one's net worth.

Unfortunately, none of this nuance matters to the judge. This person derives a tremendous amount of comfort in making his or her world as black and white as possible. Everything is extreme. Either somebody is a loser or somebody is a winner. There's no in-between. There's no middle.

Stay away from these people. Again, you don't necessarily have to stop being friends with them, but achieve some sort of distance because, sooner or later, you start

adopting that black-and-white mindset, and this is very corrosive because the world is not black and white. It's not gray either. It has so many colors. It's so rich, so vibrant and so beautiful.

Toxic Personality Type #3: The Stylish Hoarder

The style hoarder is a person who looks at different people's lives and tries to find trends or styles that they can collect. When you talk to this person, they're not really interested in the real you. They couldn't care less about your hopes, dreams, fears, aspirations, insecurities. None of that matters.



Instead, they look at what you are doing. They're obsessed with all sorts of trends. These can be technological trends, fashion trends. Regardless, it's stuff that other people are doing.

They then use this as some sort of grid when they're judging you, and they say, "Ah, this person, does he think this way? Does he share in that trend? Does she have this fashion sense that is kind of trendy?"

That's their value to you. You basically vindicate their judgments regarding trends because they're extracting a large sense of their self-worth and ego from that. They feel good about being able to spot these trends. They feel good about being part of the right crowd or people who think the right ideas.

However, they're very shallow. They collect. They grasp. Conversely, the motivation is very shallow. It's really all about making themselves feel good, feel substantial and feel worthy.

Unfortunately, this is all at the surface level. They don't really have the core conviction or the substance of the trends that they are so obsessed about.

When you hang out with these people, you become superficial as well. You start slicing and dicing people based on where they are in terms of politics, cultural sensitivity, ideology, personal style.

Unfortunately, human beings are greater than the sum of their parts. You can take one person and strip that person to different layers, but guess what? When you put all those layers together, they don't add up to that person. Something's missing.

Maybe we can call this the soul. Perhaps we can call this the essence of that person.

Regardless, the truth is you can't just strip people based on these trends and reassemble them into a complete person. You missed the point. You missed the person.

That's how these people think. That's how stylish hoarders look at the world. They see it as layer after layer of stuff that they can reconfigure, recombine, and slice and dice, mix and match.

If you hang around these people long enough, you become like them. Unfortunately, that kind of thinking falls flat when it comes to reality because people, ultimately, are not like that. We're worth more than the sum of our parts. We're not just thin, superficial layers.

Toxic Personality Type #4: The Troll



Internet trolls are annoying. You probably already know this. However, the problem is they're not always obvious. In fact, one of the most common forms of trolling involves flattery.

There are people who think 180 degrees opposite of whatever view or opinion you posted. They couldn't

disagree with you more, but you cannot tell based on their response.

It seems like they're supporting you. It might even come off like they are egging you on. However, what they're really doing is trolling you because they don't agree. Whatever opinion you shared doesn't line up with what they actually think and believe.

Why are they doing this? They're doing it for laughs. They get a sick sense of satisfaction in being complete and total liars. However, the problem is trolls eventually reprogram themselves.

It's not uncommon for a troll to get such a kick getting people to agree with things that they themselves hate because this makes them hate the person or ridicule the person in their minds.

Eventually, they get so trapped in their decision that they no longer know what the truth is. The whole point of the game is just to get a rise or a reaction from people. They're not really invested in whether things are right or wrong or whether things are proper or unjust and unfair.

Instead, it's just the emotional rush that they're getting. "The person is agreeing with me, and he's a complete and total idiot and a bigot. I gotcha!"

Who do you think pay the bigger price? The person who is at least honest with his or her opinion as unpopular or unpalatable as it may be, or the person who egged him on? Remember if you engage in this behavior, you're really trading in your soul, and by soul I'm not talking about some quasi-mystical component of your life. I'm talking about your integrity. You're lying basically.

The worst part to all of this is that the lie eventually seeps in and becomes you. It becomes part of you. You reach a point where you don't even know which side is up. That's how confused trolls are. They become some sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. It all boils down to feeding insecurities because they're very insecure at some level or another. That's why they get a kick out of getting people to say stuff that they hate or say stuff that they deep down inside want to say.

Thanks to their behavior, encouragement and underhanded tactics, they get people to voice out stuff that they wish they could say or stuff that they hate.

Hanging out with these people brings out the worst in you. Moreover, you end up with somebody who doesn't really appreciate you for who you are. If you're not careful, you might end up becoming like these people. Their whole existence is a lie.

Getting rid of emotional clutter requires in your emotional habits as well as an affirmative decision to stay away from people who tend to reinforce those negative emotional habits. This is not easy. A lot of this stuff may be fairly easy to understand, but it's definitely not easy to do. You have to keep working at it.

The good news here is that you don't have to achieve total freedom from these emotional habits and these people overnight. You don't have to do that. You just have

to decide to take baby steps and stick with those steps. Allow yourself to be consistent. The good news is if you keep putting in constant effort, eventually, you will break free. Again, please note that this doesn't mean that you have to cut out a lot of people from your life. You just need to put some distance between yourself and them so they do not emotionally corrode and corrupt you.

CHAPTER 6

Get rid of emotional clutter

As I mentioned in an earlier section of this training, watch what you feed your head. In that section, we talked about watching your habits and paying attention to the people you hang out with. While this is important, you also have to take care to make sure that you absorb the right kind of stimuli.



In any given day, we subject ourselves to all sorts of inputs. Interestingly enough for the vast majority of these inputs, we are completely unaware. There are always things that we see, smell, taste, touch and hear. However, despite the thousands of daily stimuli we are subjected to, we actually only get to remember a small fraction of them.

Of these memories, we only analyze or judge an even smaller fraction. Among these realizations, only a very small amount make it to our personal narrative. In other words, only a fairly small amount of the things that we become aware of, analyze and think about in any given day become new revelations to us regarding who we are.

For the most part, they either reinforce things that we already think we know about ourselves, or we simply remember them, think about them, focus on them and eventually forget them.

Now you may be thinking that this is completely normal. You may be thinking that this is just the way things are. For the most part, you're correct. But the problem is we can subject ourselves to all sorts of stimuli that create psychological clutter.

Now these are different from emotional clutter. Emotional clutter triggers your feelings about your place in the world, what you're about, what you're capable of, your relationship to people, so on and so forth.

Psychological clutter on the other hand involves psychological routines that shape your personal narrative. The way you read things produces emotional states. Choosing how you opt to analyze these stimuli takes quite a bit of work. You have to be mindful of how your mind functions.

This is where getting rid of psychological clutter really helps. When you police the things that you feed your head, you are able to identify your psychological processes and override them if they were against you.

What should you be mindful of? What should you guard against? Like I mentioned earlier, we absorb all sorts of thing throughout the day and you have to really classify these things using broad headings so as to warn yourself about their content.

For example, we can feed our heads shallow forms of entertainment. This can be worthless YouTube videos. This can also be porn. This can take the form of insults and trolling on comment sections as well as Twitter feeds.

These are not 100% devoid of value, but they are essentially worthless because they're so shallow. They don't really engage you on any deep level. They don't challenge your assumptions about yourself, reality and the world. Instead, they just create some sort of emotional payoff. Your mind is engaged. You're having fun and that's pretty much it. Another form of toxic psychological input that you should be mindful of involves ideas that make you less content. It's one thing to challenge yourself and your existing preconceptions, it's another to absorb ideas that really erode your ability to be content. Ideas involving your sense of worth, the worth of other people and life in general. The interesting thing about this is at first, it starts off as another form of entertainment. You can hang out at certain message boards and people just keep repeating the words "kill yourself" or saying that life doesn't really matter or there's really no point to everything.

There are many variations of this. Now I'm not going to debate the philosophical finer points of these ideas. Maybe on a philosophic, rational and logical basis there may be fire where there is smoke. Instead, I'm just going to focus on their effect on you. It's one thing to challenge your assumptions so you can live your life in a more effective way. At some level or another, we definitely need to destroy any false idols that we have involving a mistaken assumption to expectations.

That's part of growing up. That's part of being a responsible adult. But there are ideas that can make you less content. Precisely because they erode your ability to be content. I hope you see the point here.

I'm not talking about coming across an idea that makes you question the religion that you're born with. That's one thing. In fact, in many cases, that's healthy. I'm not advocating atheism here. Instead, I'm advocating people actually believe what they claim to believe.

In that situation, whatever religion you're born with stops being a simple label that's passed on from generation to generation and instead becomes truly your own. You actually live out the truths preached by that system of faith.

You see it play out in your life. You see that it's reality and it's reinforced in your mind and you consciously choose it. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking instead about ideas that destroy your ability to be content. This involves the nature of humanity and the point of life. There are certain ideas out there that basically lead to the conclusion that it's all worthless, pointless and useless.

How can you be content if you buy into that? How can you build something when that is the kind of ideas you surround yourself with or you subject yourself to online content that repeats that same corrosive message over and over again?

Another type of input that you need to be very careful with involves toxic emotions. If you keep running into content that just almost always automatically puts you in a negative emotional state, there's a problem. If you're feeling a tremendous amount of negativity, you are eroding your personal effectiveness.

A lot of people try to trick themselves into thinking that this is just part of them being real. Reality in their minds almost always is negative. If it isn't negative, it's unreal. It's some sort of self-delusion.

Well, thinking of life in black or white turns that way. It definitely positions you for toxic emotions. You end up repositioning your world in such a way that your emotional extremes become even more extreme.

Finally, you have to stay away from time wasters. Sure they're engaging, fun and a lot of people talk about them, but eventually, they just take up too much time. This is time you could've spent developing yourself. This could've been time that you spent discovering certain truths about yourself.

Make no mistake. Opportunity costs don't just apply to economic issues. They also apply to your psychology.

For every second you invest in activities that rob you of your time, you're missing out on something more worthwhile. Maybe you could've been doing something that would enable you to become a more in tune, honest, authentic person who lives in integrity. To get out from under these negative psychological inputs, you need to call a spade a spade. Don't be afraid to label things as they are.

It may seem harsh, it might even seem foolish because it becomes abundantly clear that you're engaged in counter productive thought patterns or allowing yourself to be exposed to this material. You have to overcome your pride and just call things the way they are and simply label them.

The more you label, the more you choose to become aware, the less likely you will keep absorbing this information and these stimuli without a fight. At least you become more knowing and aware that this is going on. Eventually, you will be able to take action on them. You will be able to avoid them or work around them.

Seek and destroy anti affirmations



What if I told you that every single day, you are playing out a script in your head? You're not super conscious of this script, but if you really pay attention to yourself, you're saying certain things about yourself, who you are, what you're capable of and what you're about. Psychologists call this self-talk.

Now you may be thinking that this is just a simple psychological reporting mechanism. Like you're looking out the window and you're seeing stuff play out, then you're just describing to yourself what you're seeing.

There's some of that, but a lot of it really is some sort of running commentary about who you are and what you're capable of doing. You're also telling yourself what your capacities are.

You have to be very mindful of your self-talk because if you develop a negative habit of saying negative things about yourself, they become self-fulfilling prophecies. I can understand if you stub your toe or you hit your hand somewhere because of a mistake you've made for you to say "I'm such a dumb ass."

People do that all the time. That's perfectly normal. But if you keep repeating that to the point that it's not really a reflection of a bad mistake you just did right now, then there's going to be a problem.

If you keep repeating these negative statements when you remember a mistake you did in the past, what you're doing is you're reprogramming yourself to be what you fear. If you keep saying that you're an idiot, then guess what? You will turn into an idiot.

If you keep saying that you're clumsy and you make mistakes all the time, don't be surprised if you start committing more errors.

This all leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy because you are programming yourself based on the things that you keep saying to yourself. You have to understand that your brain is not just sitting back and absorbing all of this passively.

It's not like it's taking it all in and letting it all pass with no effects. It's actually storing it and reading it as some sort of programming and don't be surprised if your negative self talk ends up holding you back and dragging you down.

These are anti affirmations. You probably already know what affirmations are. These are supposed to inspire you. These are words that are supposed to give you strength and focus. You're supposed to say these things to yourself to pump yourself up.

Unfortunately, we also suffer from anti affirmations and unlike positive affirmations, we automatically engage in anti-affirmations unless we choose to be aware of them and disrupt the process. We're already doing this.

There are 5 general groupings of negative self-talk "scripts" you need to neutralize. I've organized them in terms of themes and effects.

The first type involves self-talk that kills your self-esteem. When you engage in this self-talk, you program yourself to feel less worthy. You're basically telling yourself in so many ways that you are not worthy, that there's something wrong with you, that you're no good. You keep judging yourself in the worst way.

The second them of negative self-talk scripts involves security. When you say these things to yourself, you make yourself less and less confident, and less and less secure. You say to yourself, "You're always screwing up. You don't really know what you're doing. You're incompetent."

This is different from "You're dumb" because when you say you're dumb or you have low IQ, you are getting to the root of who you are. You're eroding your self-esteem. Instead, when you engage in negative self-talk that makes you insecure, you talk about your capabilities. You talk about your capacity to do certain things.

Another negative self-talk theme involves your personal effectiveness. You keep saying to yourself, "Well, that didn't work. Why would it work the next time you try?" You keep repeating this type of script and soon enough, you're not even going to try.

Why? In the back of your head, you know that there's a high chance that you would probably fail. So why even try? What do you think happens? You become a less effective person because any kind of skill, even if it's something that you know like the back of your hand, will eventually erode if you don't engage in it constantly and consistently.

Believe it or not, even riding a bike, which you should know instinctively after several years of riding bikes, can become very difficult if you let enough time pass. This creates a negative downward spiral.

You get bad results, you feel worse about it so you're less likely to try, you also feel less worthy and this leads to you trying even less and on and on it goes. There's a tight connection created between poor performance, poor self-esteem and poor results.

Another theme that you should pay close attention to involves your lack of clarity. You can engage in self talk that erodes your ability to properly see things for what they are. Instead, you just see things as a giant fog or haze and it's all just wrapped up in a confusing label of your situation. One common negative self-talk script that the people use is, "I'm just not lucky. It's just not working out."

I hope you can see how this leads to confusion because when you say "I'm just not lucky" you shut off all internal dialogue. There's no need for your analytical and rational side to break down the facts of what's going on in your life in such a way that you can make sense of things.

If you just dismiss everything as just a bad roll of the dice, there's no further analysis needed. How can you analyze luck? Things just didn't line up the way they should.

Tough luck.

This creates confusion. This makes you intellectually lazy because believe it or not, things don't happen for the most part by random chance. Usually, the results you get are the effects of your previous decisions.

The last time I checked, the iron law of cause and effect is still in effect. Decisions that you're making now will play a role in the reality you're going to live tomorrow. This has always been true and will continue to be true.

Unfortunately, when you engage in self talk like luck, the system, or people, or it's all a conspiracy, you create confusion for yourself because you create this logical fog that has some elements of rationality. At some level or another, it kind of makes sense. You end up tricking yourself into thinking that "That's all the analysis I need. I don't need to go any further in analyzing these core issues with my life. I just have to go with the fact that I'm just not lucky."

When you create this confusion for yourself, you're really robbing yourself of all the power that you already have. Last time I checked, it doesn't really matter what you look like, where you came from, where you are, the mistakes you made in the past, you can always choose to turn things around now.

You can allow yourself to be driven by your visions and your hope for the future so you can move passionately to build the kind of tomorrow you want for yourself.

Finally, there's another set of self-talk themes that make you mentally lazy. This is, by and large, related to the confusion that I mentioned earlier, but it requires its own category. Because people tend to absorb these. As the old saying goes, birds of a feather flock together.

When you hang out with people, don't be surprised if you start thinking like them. This happens because you absorb other people's attitudes and their way of looking at the world.

You wouldn't do this if this didn't work in some level or another. People are not stupid. You're only going to absorb mental habits only if they serve some sort of purpose. At some level or another, it works, but the problem is you may be settling for an idea that is not all that deep.

It's not all that comprehensive and worse yet, you position yourself to live life based on assumptions. Instead of challenging your reasoning faculties, you become stuck. You just look for certain signals and you start jumping to conclusions.

Things like racial prejudice, religious bigotry, scientific dogmatism and similar mental habits make you lazy.

Instead of allowing yourself to be open minded enough to actually look at the facts and try to come up with different readings, interpretations or better yet, coming up with your

own theory, you start the game with this template in your hands and you're just imposing this template on everything you come across.

Not surprisingly, most of the time, you come up with a bad fit. Things that play out in your life don't neatly fit this intellectual template that you use. But people who do this can't be bothered.

They become mentally lazy. If they come across a pattern that has 5 things and 2 match their assumptions, that's good enough. It doesn't matter if the conclusion that they come up with is actually not all that good. It's close enough in their minds.

Beware of the affirmations that fit any of these 5 themes. Doesn't matter how you say them. Just pay attention to these themes. If the things that you say on a daily basis lead to these conclusions, then you're in trouble. Disrupt them.

Try to overcome them. How? One of the most effective is to just simply override them. What this means is you say another affirmation to replace them instead of automatically launching into "Well I'm just not lucky. I'm dumb." You turn things around and say something else.

How to craft affirmations that actually work

This subsection is going to be a little bit difficult because I can't give you some sort of magical laundry list of affirmations that will work in your situation. A lot of other books try to do that, but let me tell you, they fall short. Why? They don't know you.

The authors of those books obviously can't read people's minds. That's why

it doesn't make sense for them to come up with this canned list of affirmations that work on people depending on certain situations.

That gives you a certain level of reassurance that they even try to do that. But I think it causes more harm than good. Instead, I'm just going to walk you through a process of you crafting your own affirmations that have a higher chance of working.



Why? They actually fit your set of circumstances. They actually reflect your background and experience. They are responsive to how you see the world.

First, you need to go beyond the basic and the shallow. When you give an affirmation to yourself, you have to cut to the heart of the issue. Instead of just simply saying, "I look good" think of why being told you look good matters. When somebody says that you look good, it means that they appreciate you, see your value and they think that you matter.

Focus on those things. Don't get so caught up in the wrapper which are the shallow and obvious words. If you do that, your affirmations don't sink deep enough.

They're very easy to override or ignore because at the end of the day, your problems may feel like they're so big, so deep that whatever you say to yourself is simply not going to reach them, much less neutralize them. Strip away the shallow and basic part. Focus on the meat and potatoes inside.

Next, you have to custom tailor your affirmations based on how you actually think. This requires that you listen to yourself first. When you say certain things to yourself, how do you phrase it? Do you just say "I'm screwing up" or "I scored big this time" Pay attention to your actual internal dialogue and then phrase the affirmation to fit that dialogue pattern.

Again, this is something that only you will be able to find out. Based on my experience and research, a lot of affirmations out there flat out fail because they seem so superficial, contrived and basic. It's as if you're just trying to hypnotize yourself.

You keep repeating these words like they're some sort of mantra, but they're not sinking in. They're not producing the desired effect. How can they? They don't even fit the way you normally talk to yourself.

This is why it's really important for you to focus on how you actually think. How do you phrase these mental words? How do you string them together? Now that you have a general idea of the affirmation you want to give to yourself, mold and reshape these to fit the way you normally talk to yourself. That's how you get it to sink in.

CHAPTER

7

Get rid of career clutter

Another form of clutter that you really need to get out from under involves what you do for a living. If you're like the typical American, chances are you're not all that happy with your job. Welcome to the club.

Most people that I've spoken to in researching this training actually hate what they do for a living. I'm not

talking about a slight discomfort here and there or some generalized resentment. They actively hate it.

If given a chance, they would do something else. In fact, a lot of people say that they would do it at the drop of a hat. They might even take a pay cut. That's how strong their discomfort is with the things that they do for a living. Believe me. This is a really big source of clutter.



If you go to a job that feels like a daily humiliation, what effect do you think that would have on the rest of your life? It's not going to remain hermetically sealed.

It's not like you kind of enter this super sanitized antiseptic chamber for 8 hours and then you get out of it to enjoy the rest of your life. It's not like what you do in those 8 hours and your mental state before, during and after those 8 hours will not have an effect on the rest of your life. It obviously does.

A lot of family abuse actually arises from this. For example, a father is unhappy with his career, don't be surprised when he's not a very forgiving person as far as his kids or his wife are concerned.

The same applies to the mom, and the kids. They're not happy with school, that's going to produce turbulence across the board. It may impact their relationship with their parents.

So how do you get rid of career clutter? How do you work around this sense of animosity, fear or ambivalence you have about the things that you have to do to put food on the table? Here are just some suggestions.

Again, I'm not cramming an answer down your throat. You just have to pick and choose among these. Tweak them for them to make sense in your particular situation.

Choose to love what you do



The first thing you can do is to go to work with the clear objective of loving what you do. You know what you normally feel about your job. This is not a mystery. But starting at a certain date, I want you to consciously find the enjoyment, meaning and value in what you do.

Savor it. Celebrate it. Embrace it. Allow yourself to feel good about the things that you do.

Believe it or not, finding passion in what you're currently doing for a living is actually easier than you think. How am I so confident? Well, let's put it this way. If your job is such a complete and total waste of time, you probably would have found an excuse to quit your job earlier.

If it really burns you or if it really is such a black hole in your life, you would've found the will and the strength to quit your job earlier. You would've been able to do that, but you're still there.

I discovered this when I worked for an insurance company and I had this friend who walked in and he would just bitch about his job all day, everyday. As he was shuffling the papers, seeing the clients, looking through the manuals and procedure books. He would just complain all day, everyday. Well, sure enough, the company went through a reorganization and there were several months where supervisors as well as management staff were actively evaluating everybody in terms of termination or early retirement.

What do you think my friend's reaction was? It's not what you think. If he really hated this job, he would've been excited about the possibility that he may get retrenched because it comes with a nice, fat, lump sum as well as retirement benefits. After all, he's been working there for at least 20 years. Instead, he was scared stiff.

During those months, it dawned on him that as annoyed as he was about certain aspects of his job, by enlarge, he loved his job. It was one of those massive personal realizations, but of course when he shared this with me, he wasn't exactly emotionally honest about it.

Because hey, let's face it, if you've been bitching about your job for several months or even years to your friends and then all of a sudden, you come back with a total 180 degree different view of your work, you'd look like a fool.

But reading between the lines, I knew this happened. It dawned on him that his job wasn't as bad as he thought it was. Soon enough, I started seeing Paul smile at work more often.

In fact, he would often whistle. He didn't get retrenched, but the possibility of being let go finally woke him up to what exactly made him show up to work for well passed 20 years.

If you are in a job that you feel is a dead end, sucks up your soul or otherwise feels corrosive, I want you to stop and think about what activities you engage in at work that keep you coming back.

Like I said, finding passion in what you're doing is easier than you think. At least one activity gives you enough passion to want to come to work day after day, week after week, month after month. Find that.

It may have something to do with autonomy. It may have something to do with the subject matter you're engaged with. It may have something to do with the people you work with. It doesn't really matter. Find passion in what you're doing.

If this doesn't work for you, the next technique that I know works involves gamification.

This is just a fancy word for trying to turn certain elements of your job into a game.

Maybe you can look at different processes that you do and try to tie some sort of achievement at the completion of a process. Maybe you work at an office where you can easily compare your performance with other people.

In that situation, you can create a leader board. There are really no prizes here, but by looking at your job as some sort of giant video game, you can see yourself start at a level and move up.

You can find yourself going from milestone to milestone, achievement to achievement. In other words, you start looking at it differently. It no longer seems like some hazy mishmash of pointless activities that don't really lead you anywhere.

Instead, you see a nice linear progression and if you treat your job as a big enough video game with a heavy focus on unlocking more and more achievements and racking up more points, you might be shocked to discover that your boss would love to promote you more often.

You might be pleasantly surprised by how much more money you'll be making.

How does this work? Well, it's actually quite simple. You have to understand that the amount of money you're making at work is really the price tag your boss or the powers that be puts on the value of your work.

Of course this is discounted by their profit margin, overhead and other factors. Still, it's an assessment of how much value you bring to the table.

If you apply gamification techniques to your work activities so you become more productive, your work quality goes up and you are able to handle more difficult tasks, the value of your work increases. What do you think happens then?

For quite some time, your boss will be enjoying a bargain because the total value of your output is so much bigger than the amount of money they're paying you.

But since the labor market is still a market, your boss would be a fool to keep this disparity going for too long. Eventually, they would start ratcheting up your compensation to get a little bit closer to the actual full value of your work.

Now don't get too excited. It will never get there, but at least you will be making more than you are making now. More importantly, your standing within the company increases because people know that you are a tried and proven source of value.

You're not just another face in the crowd. You're somebody who actually cares about their work. You're actually part of that core group of employees who take things to a whole other level.

Another technique you can use to love what you do is to get a sideline. You can start an online business, maybe it's an online store, maybe you could look into drop shipping. Maybe you can even freelance on the side. Whatever the case may be, you start doing things on the side that earns an income.

This has the effect of directing your attention to activities that have nothing to do with your main 9-5 job. A lot of the stress and negative feelings that you have about your work can stem from the fact that you just have all this idle time. After you get home from work, you start thinking about what happened at the office and you feel bad.

Now, instead of doing that, you start thinking about your sideline and doing freelance work, doing production work or online promotions, you don't give yourself the opportunity to keep picking over stuff that you're frustrated about.

This keeps things fresh with your main 9-5 job. Eventually, you start looking at it with a different perspective. It's no longer as suppressive as you previously thought.

Finding the courage to let go

Now, as powerful and effective as loving what you do may be, for some people, it's really not an option. They just can't find the passion in what they're doing, gamification doesn't work and try as they might, their sideline doesn't keep them distracted enough. They're still unhappy.



In this situation, you have to find the courage to let go of your job. It's cluttering up your mind. It's just creating too much negativity in your life. It's this source of toxic thoughts that you can't shake off, regardless of how hard you try.

You probably would rather consider this as your first option, but I suggest you try to love what you do first. If that isn't working, you have to come up with a game plan to let go. Don't play the game the way most other unhappy employees do. They reach a point where the straw broke the camel's back and they put in their 2 weeks notice. Instead, set your resignation or retirement date at a comfortable point in the future.

Ease into it. For example, you can say to yourself, "Okay, I'm unhappy with this job. It's not really leading me anywhere. It's causing a lot of problems. I'm going to quit. But I give myself 2 years or 1 year." Whatever the case may be, you have to give yourself a nice cushion.

One practical effect of this is that you know that at some point in time, your income is going to drop because you're going to quit your job. This pushes you to plan better so this way, whatever money you save, you can invest. You can manage your resources better.

You're not putting yourself in a situation where the date all of a sudden appears and you just have to quit and your income drops like a rock. Then get so desperate that you find another job that is similar enough to your old job that you become miserable again. Your career tragedy repeats itself over and over again. Don't do that. Ease into it.

You have to set that date, but here's the secret. Once you set that date, stick to it. That's how you make progress. Unfortunately, a lot of people try to set up false ultimatums to themselves. My friend, Paul, that I described earlier did this all the time. He'd often say to me in frustration, "That's it man. In 6 months, I'm going to leave." Then he would give me a date and say "Mark my words. When that date comes, I'm out of here." Sure enough, that date came and went and he's still there. He was still bitching, still complaining and life went on.

You have to set a date when you will take that leap. When you do this, you push yourself to plan ahead. You start putting away money, creating a reserve and most importantly, you start setting yourself up for a soft landing. Maybe you can start an online business. Maybe you can get a job search going that leads to a much better work.

Whatever the case may be, you use that deadline to push you to action. It's not just like some sort of mental or emotional bookmark. That's how Paul handled deadlines. That's why he didn't get far. Set a date and stick to it.

Unleashing the power of passive online income



Regardless of whether you stay with your job or you are planning to transition to self-employment, you might want to consider setting up a passive online income business. This involves creating an online asset that you work really hard to build up. But the good news is you work once, but the income keeps coming. You

work once and earn many times.

Now don't get too excited. This doesn't mean that there's absolutely no further work involved. Such systems don't exist, believe it or not. Despite all the hype that you have heard, there's no such thing as a complete "set it and forget it" income system or "online income machine" There's still going to be some sort of work involved, but it's not going to take up so much time like an active job.

The big difference between a passive income and an active job involves having to work to earn. With active income, no work means no pay. With passive income, you can work to build up the asset, stop working and still generate an income.

That's where you need to be because when you stop working on one asset, you can build another asset and another one after that and before you know it, the little trickles of online income add up to a nice river of revenue that can not only exceed your 9-5 income, but give you a tremendous amount of freedom.

How come? Well you build them up once to get them going and you don't have to babysit them. You don't have to do work to earn unless, of course, you get into freelancing, which is really just like working a 9-5 job but on your own terms and timeline.

The core dynamic of freelancing is still similar to active income. You still have to perform work for you to get paid. You stop working, you don't get paid. Essentially, you're selling your time.

With passive income, you put in the time once and then the system produces revenue on its own. You don't have to babysit it so you can set up other systems. If you're able to successfully set up passive online income streams, you can lead a digital nomad life. There are many bloggers out there who jump from one country to the next. They take on many different hobbies. They let the world know what they're up to with their Instagram account or their blogs.

They're able to do this, of course, because of passive income. Their blogs make money through advertisements. Their Instagram accounts make money through sponsorships. You can be one of those digital nomads. I've already revealed the secret here.

You should disabuse yourself of the idea that there's this one massive way to make money online. I'm sorry, but unless you are thinking of building a startup, that's just not going to happen and usually when you build a startup, you basically trade your life for the business.

Startups require a lot of time and there's really no indication that the startup would succeed as how much time, effort and mental energy they take.

Instead, I'm talking about building up small, passive income streams and these asset's incomes are fairly humble. You don't really make all that much, but the good news is when you create many of them, these streams add up to quite a bit of money.

This is especially true if you get into e-commerce by building your own drop shipping store. If you want to totally own your time and enjoy a tremendous amount of personal and financial freedom, look into earning from internet-based assets.



CHAPTER 8

Learn to
enjoy more
with less

There's an old zen buddhist saying "less is more" Now, for the longest time, a lot of people were ridiculing this statement. The underlying assumption being that it's impossible. Other groups of people will keep repeating this mantra over and over until it really doesn't mean much of anything.



This really is too bad because there's a lot of truth to this. Less is more. How come? Well, like I mentioned in the story I shared earlier, when I was in college, I didn't have much stuff. I did not have enough money left over for much food, much less, possessions. But guess what? The stuff that I did own, I truly enjoyed.

I remember buying this nightstand from a goodwill store in down town San Francisco. I hung on to that nightstand for close to a decade after graduating college. It meant that much to me.

I really became attached to it not only because of its functionality, but also because of the fact that it reminded me that I don't really need all that much stuff when I moved from apartment to apartment and from my apartment to my first house.

That nightstand was a tangible reminder to me that it was really my attitude that made me feel content. It's my mindset that made me feel that things were worthwhile and complete.

I shared this with you because it's easy to think that for you to feel secure, you have to surround yourself with a lot of stuff. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that for you to feel confident, the stuff you own has to have the right labels, logos or has to be made by the right manufacturers.

The reality is that these things only have meaning because you choose for them to have meaning. The meaning comes from you. Like I said, I had a nightstand that was all scuffed up and didn't really look all that good, but in my mind, it was quite precious. I thought it was very elegant. It made for a nice little center piece.

You have to adapt the same mindset with the things that you own. Because if you read that much meaning into the things that you buy, you end up buying less.

Your mind can only hang on to so many points of reference as far as meaning is concerned. You will be able to enjoy your possessions because ultimately, they remind you of what's really truly worthwhile in your life.

You're no longer engaged in this fruitless race of just acquiring more and more stuff because you're looking for more and more meaning.

Instead, when you choose to become conscious of how each and every existing possession you already have gives you meaning, you feel more content. There's less of a hole in your life that you need to fill with people, possessions, ideas or activities.

Strip down the things you enjoy



The next step you should take involves doing a complete assessment of all the things in your life. This includes people, activities and actual things. Methodically think about the different people in your life.

What do you enjoy about them? What do they bring to the table? How do they engage your sense of meaning and purpose? Do the same with activities you engage in. Apply the same analysis to the things you own. When you do this, you probably would come up with many different reasons, but the more you do this, certain patterns start to emerge. You start connecting the dots and it turns out that people, activities and things in your life all share certain common themes. When you're able to do this, you start looking at these things in your life for what they are. You appreciate them. They're no longer proxies for that ultimate sensation that you're looking for.

They're no longer "stuff" that you have to acquire so you can feel good about yourself. Instead, you strip everything down to emotional states that are real. You start seeing these themes work together. Accordingly, you're less likely to keep acquiring stuff because at this point, it doesn't make any sense.

Rediscovering the essence of enjoyment

You may have a lot of stuff, but do you really enjoy it? You may have a lot of time, but do you really live in that time? These questions go to one place: enjoyment.

You have to ask yourself, what can you appreciate about your life on a daily basis? What are the things that



you really look forward to? If you're completely honest with yourself, you should be able to find at least one or two items and that's good enough.

Unfortunately, a lot of people can't even get that far. A lot of them are so confused that they can't even name one. Think back to what you look forward to day after day. What can you appreciate daily?

Another way to answer this question is to focus on loss. As the old saying goes, you only miss the water when the well is dry. Day after day, you go to the well to get water. In fact, it's so routine and you've done it so many times that you don't even think about it. Getting water from the well is automatic.

Now can you imagine a bad drought and that water runs out? Prior to it running out, you start becoming aware of how important it is. Before you know it, the water is gone. You remember its importance.

Think about certain challenging times in your life where you lost stuff, people, or you were unable to engage in activities that you normally do. What can this tell you about what's important to you? What should be important to you? What does this tell you about things that you should be enjoying?

Zero in on the process of enjoyment. When you're enjoying something or the company of people or enjoying an activity, try to break it down into a statement that you can express.

I enjoy doing this because it makes me feel alive. I enjoy doing this because it challenges my sense of adventure. Whatever the case may be, list down reasons why you enjoy certain things, certain activities and why being around certain people feels so good.

After you've written down your answers, ask yourself, "How can this enjoyment enrich the rest of my life?" In other words, if you're able to enjoy yourself in certain contexts, why not take things all the way? Why not find that level of enjoyment in other areas of your life?

Whatever you do... do this



I know what I'm about to say is easier said than done. I know that you have all sorts of duties, responsibilities and obligations that really require your attention and you're not able to fully enjoy life and be in the moment. I understand that, but regardless of what happens and how you do

things, at least try to do this.

Try to make great memories. Right now you may be stressed. You may be struggling with deadlines or other minor fires or emergencies happening in your life. Still, enjoy what you're doing because when you take a snapshot of what's going on in your life, eventually some of it would make it to your memory banks.

I know it sounds like a cliché, but life is actually much shorter than you care to realize. I know right now you're probably struggling to keep your head above water in certain aspects of your life, but try to take mental snapshots of where you are.

Try to zero in on those points of enjoyment. Believe it or not, you will reach a point in your life where you look fondly back to them. Eventually at a certain point in your life, you will realize the power of memories.

Unlocking the power of memories

Usually, when people think about memories, they often view it in utilitarian terms. You remember stuff because it enables you to do certain things in the future. You remember how to do things, you remember people's faces, you remember certain



dates. It's supposed to lead to some sort of practical advantage.

However, it's also powerful in terms of your sense of meaning and contentment. When you learn how to unlock the power of memories, you will be able to willfully remember things. It's like watching a movie from the past and as you probably already know, when you see a lot more details in a movie, you will be able to piece it together better.

This has a very powerful practical effect on your life. Part of the reason why too many of us are so stressed out, fearful and depressed is the fact that we really have faulty memories.

We fail to see things in context. Surprisingly, we blow things out of proportion, we worry ourselves sick about things that have yet to happen, although we've seen that pattern play out many times before.

The problem is memory. If you are able to willfully remember patterns and details from the past, you would feel more in control. Things won't seem as chaotic or as menacing or as unsolvable as they seem right now. When you are able to willfully remember things from the past, your memories can give you the incentive you need to adjust your filter.

The reason why we tend to react negatively now is because we have adopted bad filters at some point in the past. Maybe it was innocent or not. Whatever the case may be, we have a bad filter. Unfortunately, we only discover that it's bad when it's too late.

A better approach would be to really highlight our ability to remember so our filters become clear. We instantly notice that our filters are not doing us any favors.

We naturally become aware that our filters are working against us instead of for us. For this to happen, you have to have the power of remembrance. You have to have clear memories.

Finally, if you were to put a lot of time and focus in remembering your past more effectively, this can lead to conscious filtering. I hope this much is clear.

All the processes that I've described up to this stage in the training point to the conclusion that we are active editors of our reality. You have to understand that the stimuli the world is sending you is neutral. It is you who gives them meaning.

We can do this passively or consciously and actively. Regardless, it's going to happen. Unfortunately, a lot of the frustrations people have about their lives is due to the fact that they're simply not conscious of their personal filtering process.

They just let it hit them. They think that this is the truth because this is how their mind normally works. It doesn't have to lead to that conclusion.

You can consciously filter the stimuli that's coming in. You can change what you focus on and of these stimuli, you can change how you interpret them. Finally, you can change what you choose to remember and how this relates to your personal narrative. That's how powerful your mind is.

Unfortunately, you won't benefit from this if you fail to be conscious about it and you fail to take control of it. When you keep exercising your power of memory generation and recall, eventually, you start filtering your reality in a very conscious way.

CHAPTER 9

Learn the art of contentment

I wish I could tell you that there is some science to contentment. I wish I could report that there's some sort of equation that you just need to plug in for you to be content. While there is quite a bit of science involving issues revolving around contentment, ultimately, it's an art.

It's kind of like baking a cake. Anybody can break down the ingredients.

People can do a good job describing the sequence in which you mix, fold or otherwise work with the ingredients.

But as you probably already know, there's a lot more to it than that. Even if somebody were to follow the recipe to the letter, it would still not turn out as well as the cookies or cake or brownies somebody with 10 years of experience would produce. What accounts for the difference? Art.



This is a term that covers basically being able to do the right things at the right time to produce the right outcomes with the right people with the right motivations. Art really is all about working with your particular set of circumstances and these circumstances change over time. You yourself also change over time.

When you put all these things together, life is an art. And of course, one of the biggest projects that we have to embark on involves contentment. To become content, you have to treat it like an art. There's no one size fits all solution.

There's no equation. There's no magic formula. I know that there's a lot of books that try to give you this impression, but I'm sorry to report that you're wasting your time looking at contentment from that perspective.

Instead, it's an art. And just like with any other art form, there are certain features that you should look for. Work with these features. Make them connect with your particular personal reality and your particular context for things to work out. Now this doesn't happen overnight, but with enough effort and consistency, things will fall into place.

There is such a thing as enough



The first thing that you will learn when you look at contentment as a personal form of art is that there is such a thing as enough. I know that sounds crazy. Currently, you're thinking the opposite. Currently, you're going through all sorts of frustrations faced with so many challenges precisely because you don't

believe that you have enough or that you are enough.

You have to believe that there is such a thing as enough. You have to allow yourself to believe that there is a mental state of enough. Without this belief, you're just going to be taking shots in the dark.

You're just going to continue to struggle unnecessarily for a ridiculously long pace of time. Make things easier on yourself by simply stipulating this as an article of faith.

Allow yourself to believe that there is such a thing as enough. I can be rich enough. I can be good looking enough. I can be attractive enough. I can be effective enough. I can be enough of a person. I can be happy enough.

When you allow yourself to believe in the concept of enough, things start to crystallize. You're no longer dealing with this confusing fog of emotions, frustrations, anxieties, depression, stress. Instead, you start cementing things. You start putting limits to things. You're no longer shadow boxing with vague ideas.

You have to believe that there is such a thing as enough. After you reach that point, you then also have to believe that it's perfectly okay to stop wanting after you have achieved that state of enough. This is how you reach contentment.

Unfortunately, there is no magical blueprint that accurately takes you from point A to point B with pinpoint accuracy and fidelity to whatever is going on in your life. You have to find that point.

Achieving emotional contentment

When you allow yourself to think that there is such a thing as enough, then the next step is you would believe that you can be happy enough. You let go of some imaginary state of euphoria or bliss.



You leave the world of Disney and enter the world of reality. Being emotionally content doesn't have to conform to some sort of golden standard that remains unchanged throughout your life. Instead, being emotionally content really depends on your circumstances.

If you find yourself in a building that is flooded and you have water up to your neck, you can find emotional contentment even in those stressful circumstances.

Of course the situation will change your definition of contentment, but at least if you're open minded to it, you will be able to achieve that especially if you have to wait for help to get to where you are.

I know that's an extreme example, but there are many situations in your life where you are stuck. Regardless of how hard you try or what you do, you're just there. It's just not going to change. The only thing that can change is how you choose to perceive your situation and this is where emotional contentment comes in.

Listen. We can live in an ideal way. Ideally, everybody would be making a million dollars a year. Everybody would have the very best that life has to offer, but that's not reality. We have to emotionally make peace with what we have.

At some level or another, we have to want the reality that we have. This is where emotional contentment comes in. It's an affirmative choice on your part. And it arises from the willful belief that there is such a thing as enough.

This is completely 180 degrees different from how you normally think about things. Normally, you think in terms of more, more, more. You think in terms of bigger, better, bolder. This is an affirmative choice.

Psychological contentment



When you allow yourself to believe that you have enough and that you are worthy enough, you can reach psychological contentment. It really all boils down to your self-esteem. If you think you're good enough and things are okay enough, you have to allow yourself to stop at that point.

This doesn't mean you have to stay there permanently, but you have to rest. It's okay to stop struggling. It's okay to stop treading water.

This gives you a tremendous amount of psychological balance. Because instead of pumping out all this mental energy trying to grasp at your world and try to assert some sort of control, you realize that it's okay and you start sending out energy in a more focused and direct way.

In a way, achieving psychological contentment is not much different from somebody who is treading water. If you know how to swim, you know that when you tread water, you can kick and move your legs around in a very minimal way to keep afloat. You use up less energy while maximizing your floating time.

Compare this when you first learned how to tread water. You were kicking around frantically thinking that the more you kick around, the more you stay afloat. It then occurred to you that when you do that, you actually reduce your floating time because you tire out. You start to drop like a rock as your legs give out.

Psychological contentment is the same way. You don't have to pump out mental energy by revisiting stuff, worrying about stuff, dragging stuff from your memory banks, agonizing over them. You don't have to do that. Instead, you will be able to focus on the here and now and allow yourself to be in the moment.

Spiritual contentment

If you learn the art of contentment, you start looking at your spiritual aspect in a more positive light. I don't want to sound harsh, but a lot of modern people often address spiritual issues in physical ways.

Either they plug in sex, power, domination or drugs. Whatever the case may be, what would have otherwise

needed a spiritual key is addressed by something completely different.

When you achieve some level of spiritual contentment, you make peace with the fact that there are certain things in your life that you just can't explain. You accept them with what at first feels like an uneasy truce. Eventually, it starts to sink in. And instead of filling a void, things actually become clearer.

You start seeing the outlines of the parts of your life that form your spiritual void. You can then manage them in a more comfortable and less stressful way. You're less likely



to plug in things that don't belong there. All of us have a spiritual side because ultimately, this aspect of our self speaks to our need for meaning and purpose.

Letting go of attachments



By this point, you should have done quite a bit of de-cluttering. Once that happens, you would then be in a position to give meaning to that lack of clutter.

You have to remember that lack of clutter in of itself is not what you're aiming for. Instead, the meaning that clutter had in the first place and in this

case, the meaning that you put in the space freed up by clutter.

This all leads to the issue of attachment. The reason why we tend to accumulate a lot of stuff is because we weed in all sorts of meaning into them.

Eventually, we get so accustomed to this meaning that we actually develop an attachment to the stuff that supposedly produces that meaning. In reality, those items are just mirrors. The meaning really comes from us as I've mentioned in the previous video.

At this stage, you're going to zero in on this fact and take the willful, conscious and affirmative step of cutting loose your power of attachment. You say to yourself, "This is what I normally do.

I look at things like cars, clothing, jewelry, degrees, certificates as sources of meaning. But it's really me who gives that meaning. Now I'm going to cut my attachment to this stuff that I thought gives me meaning and focus on its source."

When you do this, you cut through false assumptions regarding the source of your security, confidence and personal pride. Now I wish I could tell you that this is very easy and straight forward. It isn't.

I reserved this for this stage of the training because it's so heavy, intimidating and difficult. But I've got some good news for you. The difficulty is not inherent or intrinsic in the act itself. What makes it difficult is your own attachment.

The good news is you can overcome that by simple commitment and choice. Keep choosing to let go of attachment.

At first, you might falter, you might slip up, it might seem like it's too difficult, but if you keep at it, kind of like water dripping on a hard rock, eventually, you'll create a hole in that rock. Eventually, the hard rock will give way to the water. You have to do the same with attachment in your life.

Overcome these enemies of personal change

I'm well aware that you're really dealing with big issues. A lot of them are habitual in nature. In fact, you've grown accustomed to them over the course of many years. The good news is if you allow yourself to become familiar with how you, yourself would put up a fight, you can achieve great progress.



Believe it or not, when people try to make the changes that I described in this training, their minds actually operate in predictable ways. You can see these coming.

By choosing to get ready for them and having a prepared answer, you can go a long way in defusing them and getting out from under their effect. But if you let them hit you like a ton of bricks, you may be so surprised and so unprepared that you go back to your old habits.

I'm just going to lay out 3 scenarios here, but they should give you enough of an idea how your mind will try to process the change that you're trying to impose on your life. First, don't be surprised if your mind tells you that being content means you're being a loser. The assumption being that truly dynamic lives of excellence require constant conflict, struggle and effort.

There has to be this frenetic energy where you're constantly pushing against the walls of your comfort zone. Anything less than this means that you have just given up.

Anything less than this means that you have lost out and you are a loser.

This is not true. In fact, being content is the mark of a winner because not only are you conserving energy, but you're focusing energy to where it truly needs to go. The most efficient way to become a loser is to burn yourself out by constantly chasing your tail and going around and around or taking shots in the dark and tiring yourself out.

Another thing you can say to yourself is that being content means you will be left behind. This is a trick that plays up your dependency on external validation.

You measure your success based on the lives of other people. You're always thinking "What do they think? How would they view what I'm doing?" But that's precisely the kind of thinking that got you this hole in the first place.

You're so focused on other people's expectations on you that you have lost sight of what truly matters to you. In fact, things may have gotten so bad that you are actually living somebody else's life and expectations.

Just remember that when this idea enters your mind. Being content doesn't mean you're getting left behind. In fact, being content means you're setting your own life's pace and you're taking ownership of it for once.

Finally, be prepared for the idea that being content means you are lowering your standards. This really is just a variation of the idea that a life worth living must involve constant struggle.

While it's true that to truly take your life to the next level, you have to struggle against certain issues in your life. You have to face certain challenges. There are certain mental giants or demons that you have to slay.

But this is different from thinking that you have to do that all the time, all day, everyday. If you were to do that, then your life is just one giant struggle. It's just this black hole of stress. Do you see how that cuts against you and leads nowhere?

Contentment is the precise opposite of lowering your standards. Because you have found your standards and you have identified what is worthy and meaningful, you enable yourself to be content.



Conclusion

This training has laid out how you can learn to de-clutter your life on many different levels. This training has also taught you the importance of contentment. As awesome as these ideas are, they're not going to do you any good if you just keep thinking about them. For them to change your present personal reality, you have to take action on them.



Challenging how you think is an action. It's not a mental emotional exercise because it has a direct effect on how you act as well as on the things you say. You have to take action. You have to decide on a date, prepare for that date and regardless of what happens, start on that day.

This also means that you have to plan things right. This training has given you a framework, but it really is just a sketch because you have to fill in the details.

Not only am I not a mind reader, I can't step into your life and make the hard calls and hard decisions that need to be made for real and effective change to happen. The only person who could do that is you.

This requires planning and attention to detail. Most importantly, this requires commitment. How important is commitment? Well, you need to keep at it because real change doesn't happen on a "one-time big time" basis. It's not like you do a lot of things for one week and all of a sudden, your life is dramatically different.

This is not the movies. This is your life and often times, you need to make small changes that scale up over time. This is a compounding effect where you invest in certain actions and decisions every single day and their accumulative effect goes up over time.

However, for you to benefit from these effects, you have to keep doing them for a long enough period of time. Compounding, after all, is not just a phenomenon you observe with your bank account or stocks. Instead, it also plays out in your habits. It plays out in your daily activities and decisions. A little bit of consistency goes a long way.

You may be thinking that you're not really putting in that much effort or you're not doing too many dramatic things on a day to day basis. That's okay. As long as you're putting in the effort, as long as there is consistency in your actions, the results will scale up soon enough.