

Chapter 1 — My Hero's Journey

My Origin Story

“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”

— Jim Rohn

The above quote emphasizes the importance of the people I surround myself with. It's the key to success in the world of personal development. The world I live in now.

But how did I get here?

Let's go all the way back to the beginning.

I was born in the southern part of China. Growing up in a small rural village that consisted of about thirty people, I was exposed to the life of a farmer and peasantry. My family had a vegetable garden, farm animals, and even a rice field.

I still vividly remember those long summer days spent under the sun with my older brother, waiting for the rice grains to dry. We had to make sure hungry chickens or birds ate none of them.

To this day, my mom fondly recalls the story of when I was born: as soon as I was brought home from the hospital, my two-year-old brother told me that I would become a great farmer, and take care of everything we have when I grew up.

But look at me now.

- I don't have a water buffalo.
- The sickle is not my favorite tool.
- And I'm nowhere near a rice field!

My parents' dream for my brother and I was to attain a good formal education. They wanted us to live a better life than they had. As a result, my parents put a strong emphasis on school. They believed that was the key to success and living a comfortable life.

This line of thinking is extremely common in the Asian culture.

When I was a child, I learned the act of discipline the painful way. Since physical punishment was an acceptable form of teaching, instructors were allowed to hit their students if they didn't excel in school.

In those rare times when I didn't do well on exams, the teacher would smack my hand with a bamboo stick, associating each incorrect problem with a single whip.

Even though it is now considered immoral and a widely unaccepted way of teaching, the fear of physical punishment was effective as it taught me about self-discipline. Because of this social conditioning, I was always motivated to do my best in school.

I was determined to avoid getting punished by my parents and teachers.

As a result, I became one of the top students in my class. I was highly respected by both teachers and peers alike, which made me feel validated. Every single award I received as a child was proudly displayed in the center of our house.

It was my parents' way of showcasing the accolades to their friends and family who came to visit.

Although living as poor peasants, my family and I were happy and content, because we had everything we ever needed. The simple life allowed us to focus on the essential things, such as family and health.

To us, spending time with our loved ones was the most important thing in the world.

From Hero to Zero After Transitioning to the U.S.

“Every adversity contains, at the same time, a seed of equivalent opportunity!”

— Napoleon Hill

Now let's fast forward to when I was nine. My family and I moved to the United States.

That's when my world flipped upside down.

I went from a confident boy who was top-ranked in his class to being an outcast who couldn't even say the English word *“hello.”*

Shortly after arriving in the U.S., I was enrolled in an English Second Language class with other non-English speaking students. After just one year, my English proficiency levels in reading, writing, and speaking improved exponentially.

Now in the fourth grade, I was put in a class with native English-speaking kids. Initially, I was thrilled, but that excitement was short lived. Since I was different and didn't fully understand and speak the native language, other kids frequently bullied me.

I was the easy target - the big black dot on a white piece of paper.

There were many incidents of me coming home crying because of the horrific and nasty comments that my classmates said. Not all the incidents were just verbal.

A few became physical as well.

After being picked on so many times, I desperately wanted to find a permanent solution for all my physical and mental abuse. As I was looking for potential solutions, I discovered a group of boys that were categorized as the “cool kids” in my grade level.

They were highly respected by all the other kids in school, but despised by the teachers. These troublemakers were my answer to freedom; they can make all the pain go away if I can become one of “them.”

My strategy was simple: mimic them and do everything that they did.

Since they played basketball during recess, I played basketball too. Because they wore baggy clothes and cool shoes, that would be my wardrobe of choice as well. If that's what it took to be accepted by the cool kids, so be it.

But would my plan work?

I wasn't sure, but I was willing to try anything at this point. Days went by and nothing. They didn't seem to notice me. I was getting anxious.

"What if they never talk to me?"

I was nervous, sad, and restless at the same time. Just as I was about to give up hope, it happened.

One day, the leader of the "cool kids" group invited me to play basketball with them. That was my chance to impress him, and hopefully join their exclusive group. Fortunately, I didn't disappoint, as I was able to have fun with them and ended up beating the other team.

It was amazing!

As a result, I started hanging out with them. Eventually, they welcomed me into their clique.

Finally!

Thanks to my new friends, all my problems with other kids went away because of my association with the "bad boys." Messing with me meant messing with the whole clique, and no one wanted that.

As the years went on in fifth and sixth grade, we grew closer. In addition to playing basketball and hanging out, we had frequent group phone-calls.

Thanks to constantly chatting with my crew, my English speaking skills were improving at an enormous rate.

It was around this time. I realized the importance of surrounding myself with people who had the qualities, and characteristics that I wanted for myself.

After establishing myself in elementary school, I was able to carry that momentum and fly smoothly through middle school and high school.

Being a Follower of Society's Script for Success and Happiness

“If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month.”

— Theodore Roosevelt

Growing up, I loved math and science (Chemistry in particular). Therefore, when the time came to choose a college major, I picked chemical engineering.

After years of my parents' social programming, I was hardwired to believe the only way to achieve success was through formal education. As a result, the bulk of my time in high school and college was purely focused on schoolwork and getting good grades.

Any “extra” time I had left was spent playing video games for fun. I would spend countless hours playing them alone in my room, with Internet friends whom I have never met in person.

The gaming was fun, but it eventually became an addiction. In fact, I sometimes spent so much time playing that I forgot to eat.

My social life was nonexistent: the games were my friend.

Everyone I knew was either from class or old college dormitory neighbors. I never made the extra effort to meet people outside of my normal activities. My shyness and lack of social confidence (due to lack of exposure to social settings) prevented me from trying.

To ensure having a job after college, I invested in an internship during my senior-year that was relevant to my major of chemical engineering.

My hard work paid off. Thanks to that internship experience, I was able to find a similar opportunity after college.

Transitioning from College to the Real World

“Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.”

— Mark Twain

After graduating from college, I focused all my time and energy on building my career. Looking to make a positive first impression, I went into work early at 8 a.m. and stayed past 6 p.m. Sometimes, I even stayed until 7 p.m.

I was dedicated and determined. I was on a mission to succeed.

Hoping to turn my internship into a permanent job position, I put my best foot forward to create positive outcomes and results to meet my manager’s expectations.

Dedicating most of my effort to work, I rarely had time to take care of my health. But this was a common theme throughout the workplace. Everyone seemed to sacrifice his or her health to be more productive.

Not knowing any better, I assumed not taking care of my health was the “new normal.”

As a recent graduate, I moved back home and lived with my parents. One of the luxuries was eating my mom’s delicious home-cooked meals.

Being away in college for four years, my mom had reasons to think I starved myself. Therefore, she cooked numerous plates of tasty Chinese food for me to eat. This was her way of compensating for my long college years away from home. Appreciating my mom’s loving intentions, I ate all her yummy dishes down to every last single grain of rice.

Reflecting back, I don’t regret eating any of those amazing meals.

However, it wasn’t long before I started gaining weight. It wasn’t all because of my mom’s home cooking. The other reason was this:

I was constantly eating pizza, burgers, and other types of unhealthy food at work.

To be successful in business, I knew having strong professional contacts, and establishing healthy relationships with my coworkers was key. To strengthen my connections with my colleagues, I would go out to lunch with them.

Combined with what I ate at home, I found myself feeling tired and sluggish a lot more. Then, I noticed the weight gain.

Oh no: “*Am I getting fat?*”

If that wasn't bad enough, I was always physically and mentally drained after work. Hence I wasn't motivated to exercise at all.

This was not good! What was happening to me?

This is what was happening:

I was following the exact footsteps of my senior coworkers. I was dedicating my whole life to work at the expense of my health and personal life.

Witnessing their unhealthy way of living, I challenged and questioned my current lifestyle.

I knew something had to give.

Despite my desire to be healthy, my drive wasn't strong enough to evoke the feelings and emotions required to make a lasting lifestyle change.

I needed a spark, something to take me off this dangerous path.

The Turning Point: My Defining Moment for Lasting Change

“All change begins with a DECISION. Once the decision is made, DISCIPLINE becomes the bridge between desire and accomplishment.”

– A. R. Bernard

What finally awakened me was the day when I was sitting down on the couch with my shirt off. My mom walked by and casually said:

“Son, you now have a big gut.”

That’s all she said and walked off.

“What?!”

Having played many recreational sports growing up, I have always been athletic and fit. But that day, I looked down at my stomach and felt disgusted.

This is the fattest I have ever been!

Before taking a shower that night, I looked at myself in the mirror and was appalled by what I saw. There were fats on my waistline, and in other areas that I’ve never had before.

After repulsively staring myself in the mirror for five minutes, I slammed the bathroom sink and yelled to myself:

“ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!”

“I hate the way I feel and the way I look!”

“I’m tired of feeling lethargic!”

“It’s time to make a change!”

I stared at my reflection in the mirror and furiously said:

“Get off your butt and do something, do anything!”

“I want to feel strong and look great!”

That moment, I made a lifelong commitment to myself.

I would start taking better care of my health. Going forward, I would never allow myself to feel and look like that again. Ever.

My Health Transformation Journey

“I believe life is constantly testing us for our level of commitment, and life’s greatest rewards are reserved for those who demonstrate a never-ending commitment to act until they achieve. This level of resolve can move mountains, but it must be constant and consistent. As simplistic as this may sound, it is still the common denominator separating those who live their dreams from those who live in regret.”

– Anthony Robbins

The next day, I woke up with the same resolve deep in my spirit: I was ready to make the change. I was fully committed to losing the weight and getting my health back. No matter how long it took, I was going to do it.

I searched on the Internet for ways to lose weight with a primary focus on getting six-pack abs. I started my workout program with a fire and determination I hadn’t felt in years. Despite after doing endless abdominal exercises, the change was nowhere to be seen.

Although feeling frustrated with the lack of results, I didn’t give up. The momentum of taking action propelled me to work even harder.

Feeling lost and slightly deflated, I asked my friends and colleagues for guidance. Surely somebody could help me. Fortunately one of my coworkers introduced me to the P90X workout program.

With a level ten commitment, I followed it religiously!

Every day I went straight home after work and did the exercises. If there were days I had to stay late for work, I would wake up early and did the workouts the next morning.

In addition, I changed my diet.

As difficult as it was, I had to refuse my mom’s delicious food and decline my coworkers’ lunch invitations. I also significantly decreased my food consumption, which resulted in reducing my overall caloric intake.

Slowly but surely, my weight started to drop.

By the third month of my new diet and exercise program, I felt leaner and stronger. The changes were reflected in the mirror accompanied with my regained positive attitude and confidence.

My coworkers noticed the change as well. With their positive feedback and encouragement, I was further motivated to keep going and to expand my knowledge for healthy living.

After a year of doing P90X, I became bored with the program. They were great workouts, but I was starting to feel stagnant. I was ready to try some new and exciting exercises.

In addition, I realized one thing: I didn't enjoy working out indoors. I felt trapped. Getting outside would help me feel "free." So what did I end up doing?

I started running.

Even though I never enjoyed jogging because I found it to be extremely boring, I decided to give it another try.

After the first few weeks of running, my feet and legs were always sore and in pain. The reason: I was running in my old, torn up tennis shoes. But after consulting with my coworker who was an avid runner, I discovered I wasn't wearing proper running shoes.

After investing in suitable footwear, I instantly felt the difference in my running movements and comfortability. As a result, all the pain I felt after my runs vanished. There was still soreness because I hadn't built up the physical strength in my legs. But I could tell I was getting stronger and faster.

When I first started, I couldn't even run one-quarter of a mile without stopping. But by consistently and gradually leaning into my edge, I was able to run four miles (the circumference of a lake near my house) without stopping within a few short months.

To say I was excited would be an understatement!

The significant progress and improvement gave me more confidence to push myself further. To test my running abilities, I signed up for a half marathon (13.1 miles). Although the ambitious goal was far beyond my comfort level, I accepted the challenge by staying focused and dedicated to my training regimen.

I knew it would be a stretch, but I welcomed the opportunity to push myself past my current limit.

"How would I know what I could do if I never pushed myself?"

No one would do it for me. I had to do it for myself.

After many hours of training backed with proper fueling and recovery, I was able to finish my first half marathon. I felt incredible after crossing the finish line. Even though the winner completed the race well before I did, I raised my arms in victory.

I was a champion.

I won my own race. I had accomplished something that my former self a few months ago would have thought impossible.

A fire had kindled in me. I felt strong, confident, and ready for more!

To keep myself motivated, I immediately signed up for another half marathon. Feeling energized after crossing the finish line, I decided to take it up a notch and signed up for a full marathon (26.2 miles).

Committing myself to numerous hours of vigorous training, I completed the full marathon and was eager to set even more challenging goals: competing in triathlons.

But I would take it slow by improving one event at a time.

The next activity on my list was cycling. Because it was my main form of transportation in college, I was able to get quite comfortable with biking fairly quickly.

I love new challenges.

To get started, I immediately set a lofty goal for myself by signing up for a century ride (100 miles). Dedicated to completing the race, I invested in an expensive road bike.

Following a strict diet and exercise regimen, I trained mostly in the gym. I took spin classes during the week and supplemented with one long bike-ride on the weekend.

All my hard work paid off, as I was able to finish my first century ride!

I felt invincible after accomplishing my goal. It was an amazing feeling of triumph. Just like after completing my first half marathon, I quickly signed up for another century ride.

Upon finishing two century rides, I shifted my focus to swimming.

My ultimate goal is to do an Ironman (2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run).

But unfortunately, swimming is my weakest link of all three sports in the triathlon. There's a good reason for it.

My Life-Changing and Near-Death Experience

“It always seems impossible until it's done.”

— Nelson Mandela

When I was seven, I experienced the most traumatic experience of my life.

I almost drowned to death.

That haunting memory still lingers vividly in my mind.

It was a beautiful summer day in rural China. My mom and I went to collect water from the village well. And next to the well was a huge pond.

While waiting for my mom to fill up the water buckets, I entertained myself by walking along the small ledge next to the pond. Losing my balance for just a second, I fell into the water. Not knowing how to swim, I moved my legs and arms vigorously trying to stay afloat.

All I can remember seeing was my head going in and out of the water surface.

After what felt like an eternity of struggling and fighting for my life, I saw a bamboo stick in front of me. I immediately grabbed it. Within seconds, I was pulled out of the pond and onto the ledge.

My savior was one of the villagers who also went to get water from the well. Thanks to him, I'm still alive and able to tell you this scarring story.

I'm forever grateful to that beloved villager.

But ever since that near-death incident, I've always been afraid of being in the water. To face my biggest fear, I had to confront it head-on.

There was no other way.

I invested in swim lessons. By doing so, I shortened my learning curve without wasting time through trial and error.

It was an excellent investment.

Thanks to those classes, I became a more efficient swimmer. Practicing the fundamentals of breath-work, arm-strokes, and leg-kicks was exactly what I needed.

Now I enjoy swimming because it's therapeutic and a type of moving meditation. Although it sometimes tastes salty, water is now my friend who's always there to lift me up with its buoyancy.

I have learned to love the water.

It took many years, but I've learned to use devastating past events as fuel and motivation to confront my fears.

Using them as guidance, I overcome what scares me the most.

As a result, I gain the confidence and courage to conquer any challenges that life throws at me.

My Definition of Success

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

— Theodore Roosevelt

For every weakness I have, I see it as an opportunity for growth. I am determined to put in the work to defeat any challenges to grow and become the best version of myself.

The sole purpose of having goals is to give me direction.

For example, the reason for setting health goals is to allow me to exercise, eat healthily, and meditate on a regular basis. This enables me to keep a strong body, mind, and spirit.

Whether or not I achieve my fitness goals is irrelevant. That’s because I will always be growing if I’m taking action towards them.

The simple act of going for it and giving it my all takes me one step closer to becoming a better person. By consistently taking the necessary steps to accomplish my goals, I will always be successful.

That’s *my* definition of success.

I don’t care what society or anyone else says. My interpretation of success is not dependent on any external factors or materialistic achievements.

After transforming my health, I began to wonder:

“What else is possible?”

“What other goals can I accomplish?”

“What areas of my life need improvement?”

That’s when I opened up the treasure chest of the endless possibilities for improving different areas of my life. They included relationships, finance, and even my professional life.

Creating My Own Belief System

“By trying to please everyone, “nice guys” often end up pleasing no one – including themselves.”

— Robert A. Glover

For most of my life, I didn't want to rock the boat. I did everything I could to please others so they would like me. I grew up assuming if I did everything everyone told me, I would be liked and live a happy and problem-free life.

For example, I always had trouble saying “no” to working late for my job, because I didn't want to anger my colleagues and boss.

I was afraid they wouldn't like me anymore.

I was *not* being my authentic self.

But after identifying what's truly important to me, I started setting boundaries at work. As difficult and frightening as it was, I had the difficult conversation with my manager of telling him my expectations.

One such conversation was insisting I leave work no later than 5:30 p.m. This allowed me sufficient time after work to improve my personal life, which included my health and social circle.

Even though my manager didn't know the reason for the abrupt change in me, he agreed to it. By standing up for myself and setting boundaries, I gained respect by being grounded in my own beliefs.

This was a paradigm shift!

It was a slow process. But I started killing the “nice guy” inside of me, and learned to stand up for myself. By saying “no” to events that didn't excite me, I started saying “yes” to things that did.

When I do things that I enjoy and spend time with people who I care about, that's when I experience happiness. But the choice is entirely up to me. It led to my discovery:

I'm the only person responsible for my own happiness.

I get to decide what I do and whom I spend my time with. In addition, I have complete control in how I react to any event.

For relationships, others' behaviors and actions can only *enhance* my level of happiness, but they *can't* be the cause of it.

Ever since understanding this important fact of life, I strive to be kind to others out of sincere generosity, instead of expecting something in return. With that said, if I do want other people to reciprocate, then I must clearly state that during the interaction. They are not mind-readers nor psychics.

By keeping the line of communication open and honest, both parties know exactly what's involved.

By taking full responsibility for my own happiness, I learned to take extreme ownership for everything else in life: my past, present, and future.

I realized I'm the *cause* of all my problems. But ultimately, I'm also the *solution*.

If I'm unsatisfied with my current situation, it's entirely up to me to fix it. If I want something in life, it's my job to earn it. By taking control of my life, I feel empowered to achieve all the positive results.

First up, I was ready to improve my social life.

The First Heartbreak Is Always the Most Difficult

“Our choices determine our destiny.”

— A. R. Bernard

To improve my social life, I joined a rock climbing gym. Not only was it beneficial for my health, it was also ideal for meeting cool and interesting people.

By going to the gym two to three times a week, and being receptive to meeting new people, I made great friends. In addition, my skills as a rock climber improved dramatically.

Even though I had numerous friends, I felt something was still missing in my life - a woman to share it with. Because of this “lack” feeling, I shifted my focus to learning about masculinity and femininity.

Growing up, my only priority in school was to get good grades. Because of that laser focus, I didn't spend much time socializing with people, let alone with women.

I viewed spending time with women as a distraction. As a result, I never had a girlfriend or any sort of serious relationship. Reflecting back, there were definitely some women who showed romantic interest in me. But at the time, I had no desire to get involved with them.

But when I got a job after completing college, my perspective on romantic relationships slowly changed. Suddenly, I had the time to focus on getting the woman of my dreams.

Compared to college, meeting women who are in the same age group, with similar interests in the real world was much more difficult.

Fortunately, I still kept in contact with some women I went to college with. One of them was my former coworker who I knew from my internship.

When we first met, I wasn't interested in her because of my unwillingness to date colleagues. Not only that, she was also in a relationship. However, after graduating and getting to know her more, I became romantically interested in her.

During one of our meet-ups, she told me that her relationship with her boyfriend had ended. On the outside, I appeared sad and remorseful. But on the inside, I was ecstatic!

This was my chance!

After spending time with her that day, I took a deep breath, gathered up my courage and asked her out.

With a nervous smile and blushing slightly, I told her that I liked her. I told her I enjoyed spending time with her and that she was special. I liked her a lot and asked if she felt the same.

She just sat there, looking at me.

It felt like an eternity before she answered.

In the movies, the guy would profess his love, and the music would start playing. The lovely lady would smile with tears in her eyes and jump into her hero's arms. He would spin her around and they would lovingly embrace. Unfortunately, this wasn't the movies. My "co-star" hadn't read the script.

She calmly (although firmly) rejected me because I was her friend. She said she had no romantic interest in me, but we could always be friends.

This was the last place I wanted to be in: the dreaded "friend zone."

That was the first time I put my heart on the line and the price I paid was hefty. My heart was shattered into smithereens. It felt as if someone has pulled it out of my chest and stepped on it with steel-toe construction boots.

Ouch!

That was the last time I ever saw her. After we parted ways, I went to a nearby lake and laid on the grass looking up at the sky.

As I kept thinking about what has just happened, I was overwhelmed with emotions.

I started crying.

Nobody said love was easy. After weeping for about thirty minutes, rain started falling on my face. I thought to myself:

"Now even the sky feels sorry for me?"

With raindrops covering my entire body, I continued sobbing. After about an hour, I wiped the mixture of raindrops and tears off my face. I slowly got up and looked around.

Life was still going on.

Patting away all the grass off my clothes, I made a decision. Then and there I committed myself to getting better with women. As a man, I realized this is an area of my life that I want to be great at.

That was the start of my journey to becoming the man women want.

My Journey of Getting Better with Women

“What you seek is seeking you.”

— Jalaluddin Rumi

To learn about male and female interactions, I turned to the Internet. Afraid of embarrassment and mockery, I didn't ask my male friends for dating advice.

As a man, I “should” know how to be good with women. And if I didn't, then there is something wrong with me.

In retrospect, that's not true at all!

I was never taught in school about how to attract another woman. Nor did I learn them from men on television.

Despite being a great role model growing up, my father was always busy working to support the family. In the rare times we spent together, our conversation topics were about school and family.

We *never* talked about the relationship between masculinity and femininity.

Hence, I didn't learn anything from him about dealing with the opposite sex. After diving deeper into the area of romantic relationships, I discovered dating is a learnable skill.

It is *not* something innate.

With time and effort, I can improve and master it. After applying what I learned about male and female interaction, I discovered the secret to attracting women:

I have to be a better me.

What this means is that I must become the best version of myself. That's because the better I am, the more effective I can serve the world, including women.

When I become a high-quality man, I can attract and *keep* a high-quality woman.

And through improving myself, I discovered getting the woman is only a bonus. My life is already fulfilled with or *without* her. That's not to say I don't desire a woman in my life.

I still *want* her, but I don't *need* her.

This shift in mindset was the key to growth and personal development. That's because she can only *add* to my already beautiful and amazing life, but not the *cause* of it.

In addition, having the woman doesn't make me successful. What defines my success is I'm on the journey living my life's purpose.

The Best Practical Dating Advice I Ever Received

“Knowledge isn’t power until it is applied.”

— Dale Carnegie

The best dating advice I ever got was this:

Be the person that *you* would want to date.

That was when I truly discovered the world of *personal development*. Fascinated with this idea, I started reading books, listening to podcasts, watching TED (technology, entertainment, and design) talks, and anything that I could get my hands on.

Personal growth was my main area of focus. However, I knew the mere act of collecting knowledge was useless until I applied it to my life. I may feel like I’m growing by gathering data like a scientist. But unless I take action and apply the information I’ve learned, there will be no growth (or women to date) at all.

After coming to this realization, I have quickly adopted the 80/20 rule:

- 80 percent of my time is spent taking action.
- The remaining 20 percent is utilized consuming content.

Sometimes, I even spend 100 percent of my time implementing the new knowledge. That’s because it takes consistent practice and repetition to fully ingrain the information into my subconscious.

This is *especially* true for new skills or ideas in all areas of my life.

While improving the four pillars (health, wealth, relationships, and personal growth) of my life, I realized the most important and foundational of it all was health. This brings me to three very important points:

1. I must first take care of myself before I can better serve others.
2. To be selfless, I must first be selfish by making self-love and self-respect my top priority.
3. Only after meeting my own needs, I can focus on people who are important to me.

Another thing I realized is strong and healthy relationships don’t just apply to romantic relationships, but they also apply to platonic relationships. Having good friends for support and companionship is an important part of growth and development as a person. We all want people we can count on.

Believing my network is my net worth, I invest time and effort to maintain and develop powerful relationships with those who I value and appreciate. This includes my:

- Parents
- Brother
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Mentors
- And clients

Relationships are important to me because of the unconditional love and assistance I receive from others. Their encouragement inspires me to become a better person. It is important for me to reciprocate that positive energy, by investing the necessary time to further strengthen those connections.

To choose the “right” influences, I carefully filter in people who value my time. Having self-respect, I limit and eliminate interactions with people who drain my energy and bring me down. As a result, I have more time to spend with those who believe in me and lift me higher.

I will have created my network by *design* rather than by default.

Having uplifting and meaningful relationships is beneficial on my lifelong journey to become my best version.

My Comfort Zone Is My Greatest Enemy in Life

“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.”

— Neale Donald Walsch

To grow, I must experience challenges. That’s why I stretch my comfort zone every day just a tiny bit.

It can simply be lifting an extra ten pounds during my workout, giving a high-five to a complete stranger on the street, or presenting a speech for just a minute longer.

All of these small wins add up over time to big victories.

By doing something that scares or challenges me daily, I increase my capacity to deal with fear and uncertainty.

Every morning, I instantly push myself out of my comfort zone by taking a cold shower. It’s an excellent way to start my day.

Feeling the discomfort, my hands naturally want to increase the water temperature. But I choose not to do it. This allows me to move from the unconscious to the conscious. By doing so, I learned to find comfort in discomfort.

With steady deep breaths, I teach my mind that it’s safe and part of the learning process. By beginning my day with a cold shower, everything else becomes relatively easy. In addition, having an empowering morning ritual (cold shower, exercise, and meditation) puts me in a positive state of mind. This prepares me to crush any tasks I have planned for the day.

In life, I only have two choices; it’s either I’m growing or I’m *dying*.

I will always choose growth!

By designing challenges in my daily life, I grow in the way that I want.

The truth is that problems will inevitably arise whether I like it or not.

It is my responsibility to be ready when they appear.

By facing my fears and obstacles, I condition myself in the midst of adversity and increase my resilience. In addition, I strengthen my character.

Personal growth and improvement is a choice. Self-love is *why* I choose to be better. It’s not because I’m not “good enough.” In fact, I can only truly improve myself after I fully accept all of who I am now.

My compassion for myself and for others compel me to be better.

By further developing myself, the more equipped I am to help others. This means having better interactions with those I come in contact with.

The quality of my life experiences will be proportional to the growth that I acquire. And that advancement is associated with the degree of discomfort I'm willing to face.

Becoming the Creator of My Own Destiny

“Love the life that you have while you create the life of your dreams.”

— Hal Elrod

To create the life of my dreams, I must take full responsibility and ownership to make it a reality.

I'm completely in love with the person I am today, but I'm even more excited about the person I will become tomorrow.

That's enough about me for now. I will share more stories in the later chapters.

This book is about *you*.

Do you want to become better with yourself and have the life of your dreams?

If not, then stop reading because this book isn't for you.

The path to self-mastery is not easy.

It's a lifelong journey of continuous learning and doing. But if you decide to read on and apply what you learn, you'll become the top 1% of men who are up for the challenge and accomplish amazing things.

Are you ready?!

Are you excited?!

Excellent! Let's get started!