

AXEL SCHURAWLOW

The art of **GETTING STUFF DONE**

A GUIDE ON HOW TO ACHIEVE LIFE-
CHANGING RESULTS



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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had a moment in your life, when you said enough is enough? Maybe you stayed in a relationship for too long, or a job that wasn't serving you, and at some point, after a long time of suffering, you ended it. It took you a long time to finally make this decision because it felt more comfortable to feel the same feeling over and over (even if it's negative), than to experience a new uncertain feeling. I said this phrase for the first time when I was 15. I just got beaten up by my father because I lost my key. I had enough. Enough punches in my face, enough hits with the belt, enough scarcity. I was sitting in my room, worrying about my face because it was so swollen that I couldn't recognize myself anymore and because I was so insecure I couldn't stop visualizing how everyone at my school would laugh at me. I had all those flashbacks from from every single time I got beaten up. It started when I was 4.

I always dreamed of becoming a professional football player and couldn't wait for my first training with the team. Instead of playing football, I got choked. My father promised me to drive me to the football stadium but he didn't show up. Well, he did at some point. 2 or 3 hours later. He couldn't understand why I am sad and decided to express his anger with physical touch. Pretty much during my entire childhood. Progressively. It started with chokes, then he decided to slap me, followed by punches with his fist straight into my face, and which was the worst for me: the belt.

The reason why I am telling you this is not because I want your pity. I am grateful for my childhood. Yes, sounds crazy, I know. Here is why: I wouldn't be this strong, empathic and kind human being without all this pain. I wouldn't have such an incredible relationship with my siblings, I would just not be the same person. I also don't want that you hate my father, because even I don't hate him. He was traumatized. He got beaten up as a child, he lost his wonderful wife (my mother) when I was two and had to take care of a whole family on his own. He made a couple of bad decisions and became an alcoholic. Does it make him a bad human being?

No. The reason why I am telling you this is because I want that you understand that you can do, be and become whatever you want.

I hated my life. I was depressed, and I didn't want to live anymore. Today, only 10 years later, I live without this pain. I can't wait to wake up and start my day. I inspire more than 300 000 people every single day with my content while living an incredible life in Bali. How did I get here? I studied psychology. Not at a university but in my bedroom. I read hundreds of books to find the answer to one question: What is the difference between someone who lives a happy life and someone who is depressed? That's what this book is about. This book will give you practical tips that will help you to improve the quality of your life. Being inspired is nice but inspiration without action is worth nothing. In this book, you will get the opportunity to work on yourself and improve the quality of your life, but only if you execute. There will be tasks and challenges which can be transformative, but only, and only, if you execute. Let's get this journey started.

1.1 Taking responsibility for your emotions and behavior

For almost 18 years I've felt like a victim. A victim of my circumstances. I always thought: Why does this happen to me? Why do I have to go through all this pain? My mind came up with answers. I blamed my father for my awful life, until I met Jim Rohn. Well, I didn't meet him in person, but I did read his books and listened to so many of his audiotapes that we almost became friends.

He taught me that I have to take responsibility for my own emotions and behavior. When I heard this for the first time, I was upset. I was still living in victim mode, constantly repeating to myself; "It's not my fault that I got abused. It's not my fault that we never had money. It's not my fault that my mother died when I was 2."

Jim was smart. He knew that I would say that. Jim told me that he agrees. It's not your fault what happened in the past but it's you have the responsibility for your emotions and behavior right NOW. He explained the definition of responsibility: the state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one's power, control, or management. You could also call it response-ability. You are in control. You are responding.

Bad things happened to you and guess what, bad things are going to happen in the future as well. It is your response-ability that decides how much and how long you will suffer. Let me give you an example:

Anna and Lou are twins. Anna and Lou both love coffee in the morning. This one special morning they both decide to wear a beautiful white dress. It is from the same brand, same designer, and has the same value. Unfortunately, they are both a little bit clumsy. This morning they both spill coffee on their beautiful white dress. What happens? Anna freaks out: "OH NO! Why does this always happen to me? This dress is so expensive and now I have to find a different dress". Anna's day is ruined. She is thinking the whole day of her dress and how much money she lost. The same thing happened to Lou. Her reaction? She started laughing out loud and captured this moment on a short video. She sent it to her friends so that they can laugh as well. She finds a different outfit and contacts a laundry service so that they can fix the dress. "What, only 25\$?" Anna was out of her mind when Lou told her how much she paid for the laundry service. "And I was worrying the whole day about the money".

What was different? Their response-ability.

You can either let your emotions dictate your day, or you can take responsibility of your emotions and change your emotional state. The option is yours.

Do you want to be a victim or your circumstances? Where is the power in that?

We all have to take responsibility for our emotions and behavior if we want to stop being victims of our circumstances.

So, instead of blaming my father and my horrible past, I had to shift my focus on the thing that I can change. MYSELF. I can change my emotions, my perspective and therefore I can do, be and become whatever I want. When I finally realised that, I felt like superman. For the first time in my life, I felt like a creator. Not like a victim but like someone who is in control. Someone who can flip things around. Someone who can shine even if it's raining and we all can do that. We all can take responsibility for our emotions and behavior. It's so easy to blame life and our hard circumstances, but you probably already know: This won't make you happy. If you keep doing this, you will probably always live in pain. You will always be a victim of the weather, the mood of your boss, the economy, other people's opinions, and Instagram likes. This is the first and most important step. This has to become your favorite mantra:

I take responsibility for my OWN emotions and behavior.

You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of.

Jim Rohn

1.2 Perspective is everything and everything is perspective

There is a Netflix documentary called "I am not your guru" about a man called Tony Robbins. This man ended up having a big impact on my life. He is a coach, bestseller author, millionaire, philanthropist, and probably one of the most outstanding human beings on planet earth. He coaches presidents, athletes, and billionaires, such as hedge fund manager Paul Tudor Jones. In this documentary, you get insights into his live events. One of Tony's seminar attendees was Dawn Watson. The story that you are about to read changed my life forever. Dawn grew up in a sect called "The Children of God".

The Children of God sect was founded in 1968 by minister David Brandt Berg. The Children of God were asked to give up their jobs and devote themselves full time to preaching Berg's teachings and proselytizing additional members. While on the outside the group claimed to be spreading the word of God, internally members were encouraged to partake in incestuous sexual relationships with minors. Female members began being urged to take part in a practice known as 'flirty fishing', which saw them forced to 'show God's love'.

At some point, Dawn found a way to escape the cult, but was traumatized. She faced depression and was suicidal. As a last resort, a friend recommended the work of Tony Robbins. She ended up selling all her possessions to afford to go to the seminar, which changed her life. Her story touched thousands of people, including Tony Robbins.

Tony himself had an abusive childhood, and shared that all this pain made him the strong man he is today. He asked himself, as crazy as this may sound, what is good about his abusive childhood? His mind came up with answers. He wouldn't be so strong, so resilient and he wouldn't care so much. Dawn felt the same. She is not responsible for what happened to her and it's unfair, disgusting, and people who did that to her should end up in prison. Nonetheless, at this moment she understood that she could change her perspective on life. The perspective on her past.

And I felt the same. My whole life I was saying that life happens to me. I never blamed my father for all the good things in my life, but only for the bad things. My childhood made me so strong, resilient, loving, caring, and beautiful. We will all face difficult moments in life, the challenge is to keep the right perspective. It's about choosing a perspective that serves us.

*“When you’ve gone to the deepest darkest places you can lift
people to the highest places”
Tony Robbins*

Now it's your turn. Get a piece of paper and a pen and answer the following questions:

What happened in my past that still hurts?

What was good about this "bad event"? Did it maybe make me stronger? What did I learn? Try to find at least 3 things.

This is the moment when I found peace. I stopped blaming my father and my abusive childhood. I changed my perspective and decided that it served me in some way. I would not be writing this book or doing podcasts, helping thousands of people, without it.

1.3 Knowing your WHAT and WHY

*"When you know your WHY,
you can endure any HOW."
Viktor Frankl.*

For most of adolescence, I didn't have a clue what to do with my life. It felt like my life was already made for me. My famil, after emigrating from Uzbekistan to Germany,, told me to do the following: Axel, play it safe, find a secure job, buy a house, have kids, impress your neighbours. Well, they didn't say impress your neighbours, but that's what society nowadays tries to do. I ended up as the opposite; an influencer, freelancer, movie maker, coach, podcaster, and I couldn't care less what my neighbours think of me. Why? Because I want to be happy. That's my overall goal in life: I want to live a meaningful and happy life and enjoy my limited time on planet earth. How about you? What is your goal in life? What is most important to you?

During my time as a coach, I had to research failure. Why do some people fail on their goals on some people always find a way? One of the biggest reasons: people who fail don't know their WHAT and don't have a strong enough WHY. Let me explain.

January 1. One of the best days in the life of a gym owner. Everyone signs up for the gym. Gym owners like people who sign up on this day a lot. Do you know why? Because they don't show up anymore after 2 weeks and pay for a year.

I worked in my early days as a personal trainer and I see certain patterns. An example is a client that reached out to me, after failing numerous times at achieving her fitness goals. "I just don't have the motivation anymore". Anna signed up for the gym on the first of January, and yes, you guessed it, she doesn't go anymore. "What was your goal when you signed up for the gym?" "Well, I wanted to lose some weight". So, I told her to simply go to the toilet.

She was confused. "If your goal is to lose some weight, then go to the toilet and you will reach your goal". She smiled. Your brain is like a machine it will do whatever you program. Have you ever heard "Seek and you shall find"?

You need a specific and clear goal. Instead of "I want to lose some weight", tell me exactly how much weight you want to lose. 5 pounds, 10 pounds? Until when? Clarity is power.

And then, even more importantly, tell me WHY.

"I want to go to the gym, because I want to lose some weight" is the perfect example of a bad WHY. Activities without a good purpose equal drained energy levels. We humans need a purpose. We need a good and strong reason.

"So, why do you want to lose weight, Anna?"

"My wedding is approaching."

"Wedding?"

"Yes I am going to marry Andrew in 3 months, and I want to fit in my wedding dress".

Usually, it takes 3 or 4 attempts until you get to the true WHY

"And why do you want to fit in this wedding dress?"

"Because I already paid 5000 \$ for it and I want to look incredible on this day. I want to show myself and my husband that I can get this done."

She went from "I want to lose some weight" to "Hey Axel, I need to get this done for myself, my husband, and for my bank account because I can't afford another 5000\$ wedding dress". Did she accomplish it? Of course! She looked better than ever before, learned the foundations of diet & fitness, and looked incredible on her wedding day.

Knowing your WHAT and WHY is key. Remember: Clarity is power. Know the outcome that you want to achieve. As clear as possible, and find a strong WHY. Activity without purpose is the drain of your energy levels.

Try it out, what is one thing you want to accomplish in the next 8 weeks? Be clear. Write it down. Don't just read! Inspiration without action is worth nothing. If you have your WHAT, start thinking of the WHY. Why do you want it so bad? What is the purpose of this outcome? Write it down. Obviously, you also need a strategy. A plan that you will get you to your goal. The thing is: How do you want to find a strategy for a goal that is super unclear? How do you want to find a strategy and stick to it if you don't even know why you're doing this? Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.

*For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds;
and to him, that knocks it shall be opened. – Matthew
7:7-8*

1.4 Everything is figureoutable - The mindset of high achievers

Nothing in life is that complicated. You can do whatever you set your mind to if you just roll up your sleeves, get in there, and do it. Everything is figureoutable.

Marie Forleo

Do you believe that there is a solution to every problem? Me too. We humans have 6 different needs. One is the need for certainty and it can give you a lot of certainty to know that there is always a solution. So, why not doing it? In a specific moment, we tend to think it's the end of the world. Right now, while I am writing this, people act as if the COVID 19 pandemic is the end of the world. It's not and actually, you know it. The problem with us humans is: our brain is pretty old. Our brain is programmed to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. In the early days of humanity that meant: Find food and avoid lions and tigers because they could kill you. This program is still in our brains. I got news tho. THERE ARE NO LIONS ANYMORE. We don't have to be so afraid anymore of uncertainty. We don't have to worry that much anymore. Anxiety disorders are on the rise, and unfortunately, it's our fault. The way that we process information and expectations has taken a negative toll on our mentalities, filling up our heads with disastrous scenarios that will never play out.

I repeat: Most of those disastrous scenarios will never play out. Never. Most of your worries won't come true. There's a study that proves it. This study looked into how many of our imagined calamities never materialize. In this study, subjects were asked to write down their worries over an extended period and then identify which of their imagined misfortunes did not actually happen. It turns out that 85 percent of what subjects worried about never happened, and with the 15 percent that did happen, 79 percent of subjects discovered either they could handle the difficulty better than expected, or the difficulty taught them a lesson worth learning.

This means that 97 percent of what you worry over is not much more than a fearful mind punishing you with exaggerations and misperceptions.

“Worrying is stupid. It's like walking around with an umbrella waiting for it to rain.”

Wiz Khalifa

Worrying and focusing on negativity create sick cells. That is so important to understand. Gratitude, positive thinking, is good for our brain and the opposite is bad. In moments when you catch yourself worrying or following a negative thinking pattern, do the following:

A) Celebrate because you became an observer rather than a victim of your thinking patterns. You are in control.

B) Shift your focus. You can shift your focus in many ways. One of the most effective ones? MOTION. Motion creates emotion. Have you ever had this amazing feeling after a workout and said? "I felt so bad before I exercised and now I feel so free and light?" We all have. The body and mind are connected. Change your physiology in these moments and you will change your psychology as well. How is the physiology of someone who is worrying 24/7 or someone who is depressed? Shoulders are down, they usually look down, they don't really breathe and guess what you have to do if you want to live in a beautiful state? Correct. The opposite.

Breathe deeply. Stand upright. Jump around. Sing. In those moments you have to break this pattern. You have to change. Radical. What you put out is what you get back. If you look down and look sad, your brain will go: "alrighty let's create the emotions accordingly". Seek and you shall receive.

Physiology is key. American social psychologist Amy Cuddy explains this in her talk from TED Global 2012, saying that both humans and animals express power through their bodies. They tumble in on themselves when they feel unsure, making themselves smaller by hunching over, crossing their arms over their chest, and avoiding big movements. When they feel on top of the world, they sprawl out. Cuddy wondered—could adopting these postures change a person's internal state and make them feel more powerful?

Cuddy, along with her collaborator, Dana Carney of Berkeley, ran an experiment in which people were directed to adopt either high-power or low-power poses for two minutes. Then they were asked if they wanted to gamble. Cuddy and Carney found that 86% of those who posed in the high-power position opted to gamble, while only 60% of the low-power posers felt comfortable taking a roll of the dice. But even more interesting — there were physiological differences between the two groups, as shown by saliva samples. While high-power posers showed an 8% increase in testosterone, low-power posers had a 10% decrease in the hormone.

Meanwhile, the inverse relationship happened with cortisol, the hormone related to stress. While high-power posers experienced a 25% decrease in cortisol levels, low-power posers had a 15% increase in their stress levels.

We will all have bad moments. All of us. Albert Einstein had bad moments, Gandhi had bad moments and Jesus had them, too. So accept that they are part of your life. It's your task to keep perspective. It's your task to remember that you have the ability to figure things out. You can find a solution to every single problem. You also have the ability to change in those moments of uncertainty and pain. You can shift your physiology and break those thinking habits.

What are the 3 most difficult challenges that you mastered in the last 3 years?

Write them down and celebrate yourself for a moment before you go to the next chapter.

*"My life has been filled with terrible misfortune; most of which never happened."
Michel de Montaigne*

1.5 Asking better questions - The art of getting things done

Experts estimate that the mind thinks between 60,000 – 80,000 thoughts a day. That's an average of 2500 – 3,300 thoughts per hour. Most people wake up and think of things that they don't want to do. Remember? Seek and you shall find. The mind comes up with 847 different things that you don't want to do today.

Your brain is like Google. You ask the questions and your brain will find the answer. So if we want better search results we have to ask better what? Correct, questions.

*"Ask the right questions if you're going to find the right answers."
Vanessa Redgrave*

This is why it makes sense to start your day with some conscious questions.

You probably already know that you have a conscious and subconscious mind. The conscious mind is our awareness at the present moment. We are aware of something outside of us as well as some specific mental functions happening inside us. For example, we are aware of our environment, our breathing, or the people around us, if any.

The subconscious mind - also known as the preconscious mind - consists of accessible information. We become aware of such information only when we direct our attention to it. This is like a "memory recall".

Quite often, we walk down the street to our homes without consciously needing to be alert to our surroundings. Many times, I have driven home from office without having to "consciously" navigate the way home! So here are three conscious questions that can change your life forever. I mean it. I know that most people who read books never take action but I still hope that someone here actually does. If you wake up in the morning, answer the three following questions:

1. What am I grateful for?
2. What would make today great?
3. What kind of person do I want to be today?

It won't take longer than 5 minutes and all you need is a pen, a piece of paper and some discipline. Do this every morning for at least three months and you will retrain your brain. Instead of focusing on things you don't want to do you will now focus on things that you are looking for. On gratitude. On intentions. You are not longer just going through the motions. You become a creator, not a victim. So, prepare this piece of paper NOW. Take action NOW. You can use a book, a journal, or whatever. Put it right next to your toothbrush so that you can't forget it (I hope you brush your teeth haha).

1.6 Turning problems into solutions

You can imagine that someone who had as much childhood trauma as I did, had certain problems (I rather call it challenges). I learned that focusing on my problems is not as effective as focusing on the solution. The game-changer was to turn my problems into questions.

As you already, I didn't get much support from home. We didn't have money. The money we had was spent on alcohol. To afford alcohol, we would save on things like getting good food or a haircut. So, my father decided that he will become my hairdresser. The problem was: He didn't know what he was doing. You can imagine the reactions of my school mates. My problem was, besides getting bullied, that I couldn't afford to go to a hairdresser. Probably out of desperation I turned my problem into a question. Instead of saying I CAN'T AFFORD THIS, I asked: How can I afford this?

My brain came up with answers. Plastic bottles!!! In Germany, you get 25 cents for plastic bottles if you return them to the supermarket. So, I decided I am going to wake up early, go to the next football stadium and collect all the plastic bottles and beer bottles (you get around 15 cents for glass bottles) that I could find and return to the supermarket.

So, I decided I am going to wake up early, go to the next football stadium and collect all the plastic bottles and beer bottles (you get around 15 cents for glass bottles) that I could find and return to the supermarket. It took me less than 24 hours to afford my first professional haircut. It felt amazing. At this moment I learned the power of asking the right questions and focusing on the solution, not the problem.

Here are some more examples:

This is too expensive - how can I afford this?

I can't lose weight - how can I lose weight?

I don't know the answer - how/where can I find the answer?

I can't get enough protein on a vegan diet- how can I get enough protein as a vegan?

“When you concentrate much on the faults, you shall be at fault. When you always focus on the solutions, you shall always be a solution. Don’t just find faults; be a solution digger! You shall definitely meet some faults in your journey to digging for a solution, but mind your true purpose: solution! Don’t just find faults; be the solution to the problems you see!”

Ernest Agyemang Yeboah

1.7 Pain + Reflection = Progress

Remember that I told you that your brain tries to seek pleasure and avoid pain? That's one reason why we have to change our mindset, and therefore our brain. Pain, if combined with reflection, equals progress.

Is it painful to workout sometimes? Yes, and this pain is even measurable in your body. Let's stick to this example for a second. Pain is necessary to grow your muscles. After you workout, your body repairs or replaces damaged muscle fibers through a cellular process where it fuses muscle fibers to form new muscle protein strands or myofibrils. These repaired myofibrils increase in thickness and number to create muscle hypertrophy (growth). So, in a nutshell, you train hard, which leads to damages muscle fibers. After recovering, it gets replaced by bigger and stronger muscle fibers. Isn't that interesting?

Was there ever a moment in your life where you felt a lot of pain but now you are happy that it happened because it made you stronger? Maybe it was a breakup, a failure in business or in sports? Pain is often one of the best growth opportunities. Now comes the best thing: We can redefine pain. If we say that pain is necessary and helps us to grow, it doesn't sound so bad to have some pain in our lives, does it?

Sounds like pain is something beautiful. The first time I heard of this concept was when I read a quote by Thomas Edison.

“I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.”

Thomas Edison

It took Thomas Edison 10 000 times before he finally invented the light bulb. Can you imagine that? Trying something for 9999 times and never giving up. The special thing? He didn't think he was failing. He didn't think it was painful. He believed in results, not in failure. Every single try led to a result, something he could learn from. This reminded me of babies. When we try to learn how to walk we have to fail and it's painful, but as babies, we don't sit there and cry for 8 hours just because we failed. We get up again, in the best case we reflect on what we did wrong, change our approaches, and try again. Until when? Tell me. How much time do you give an average child to learn how to walk? Correct. Until. The answer is always until. Until the job is done. Until you succeed.

We don't believe in failures, we believe in results. Without pain we can't grow, therefore pain is something beautiful. We shouldn't avoid it. We tend to give up so quickly because we think that failing is bad. Failing and pain are necessary to grow. I know I already said it 78 times, it's just so important to understand.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice.

Steve Jobs

When are you going to die? Seriously. How much time do you have left? Most of us don't know the answer. Most of us will never know the answer and I think that's incredible. That reminds us that time is limited. That it is not the best idea to waste your LIMITED time worrying about things that most likely are not going to happen.

If you have ever had the opportunity to talk to people who were about to die, you will most likely know that these people often talk about regret. When I hear the word regret I automatically think of Bronnie Ware. Bronnie Ware is an Australian nurse who spent several years working in palliative care, caring for patients in the last 12 weeks of their lives. At some point, she decided to interview her patients who were about to die. She tells the stories in her book "The Top 5 regrets of the dying":

1. "I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me. This was the most common regret of all. When people realize that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled.

Most people had not honored even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made. Health brings a freedom very few realize until they no longer have it."

2. "I wish I hadn't worked so hard.

This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret, but as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence."

3. "I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.

Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result."

4. "I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends. Often they would not truly realize the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years.

5. "I wish that I had let myself be happier.

This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realize until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habits. The so-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and their selves, that they were content when deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again."

Especially this one hit me: I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me. Not surprisingly it was the most common one. We humans sometimes lose perspective. We sometimes forget that our time here is limited. So, instead of celebrating every single that we have we waste our time thinking negative thoughts or worrying. I don't know about you but I decided that I had enough. Enough negativity, enough of doing things just because society expects you to do this, I spent enough time living a life based on other people's opinions of me.

"Do not act as if you were going to live ten thousand years. Death hangs over you. While you live, while it is in your power, be good."

— Marcus Aurelius

1.8 Healthset

I used to be very skinny. I was so skinny that people thought that I have an eating disorder. I remember this moment when a whole group of people told me that I am so skinny that no girl will ever want me. Until then, I didn't care about my health or my body, but it definitely hurt to hear things of that nature. At this moment I decided: I am going to figure this out so that people will never laugh about my body again, and that's how my fitness journey began. With years, this fitness journey turned into a health journey. I learned the basics and principles of diet and was shocked about the impact of the food I ate on my body. Sugar, french fries, and burgers all day. No one really cared about what I ate. Just eat something. This mindset is the reality for most people and I am not telling you what to do. If you want to live an unhealthy life, please do whatever makes your soul happy. I am talking to people who want to live longer, beautiful, and healthy lives.

Do you know which people live long, meaningful and beautiful lives? People in the blue zones. Have you ever heard of a blue zone? Blue Zones are regions of the world where people live much longer than average. These people also get less sick, cancer and depression rates are way lower, in a nutshell, these people live longer and healthier lives than the average person.

These places are:

Okinawa (Japan); Sardinia (Italy); Nicoya (Costa Rica); Icaria (Greece); and among the Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, California.

Several studies have found that these areas contain extremely high rates of nonagenarians and centenarians, which are people who live over 90 and 100, respectively. Interestingly, genetics probably only accounts for 20–30% of longevity.

Therefore, environmental influences, including diet and lifestyle, play a huge role in determining your lifespan. Below are some of the diet and lifestyle factors that are common to people who live in Blue Zones. Characteristics of the blue zones success leaves clues.

If people there live so healthy, it would be interesting to figure out why right? Researchers did. They looked at their diet, lifestyle, relationships, habits, work, well basically on everything humans do (or not do).

1. People Who Live in Blue Zones Eat a Diet Full of Whole Plant Foods

One thing common to Blue Zones is that those who live there primarily eat a 95% plant-based diet. Although most groups are not strict vegetarians, they only tend to eat meat around five times per month. Many studies, including one in over half a million people, have shown that avoiding meat can significantly reduce the risk of death from heart disease, cancer, and several other different causes.

Instead, diets in the Blue Zones are typically rich in the following:

Vegetables: They're a great source of fiber and many different vitamins and minerals. Eating more than five servings of fruits and vegetables a day can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, and death.

Legumes: Legumes include beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas, and they are all rich in fiber and protein. Some studies have shown that eating legumes is associated with lower mortality.

Whole grains: Whole grains are also rich in fiber. A high intake of whole grains can reduce blood pressure and is associated with reduced colorectal cancer and death from heart disease.

Nuts: Nuts are great sources of fiber, protein and polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Combined with a healthy diet, they're associated with reduced mortality and may even help reverse metabolic syndrome. There are some other dietary factors that define each of the Blue Zones. For example, fish is often eaten in Icaria and Sardinia. Fish eat algae which contain a big amount of omega-3 fats, which are important for heart and brain health.

2.Move Naturally

The world's longest-lived people don't pump iron, run marathons, or join gyms. Instead, they live in environments that constantly nudge them into moving without thinking about it. They grow gardens and don't have mechanical conveniences for house and yard work.

3.Purpose

The Okinawans call it "Ikigai" and the Nicoyans call it "plan de vida;" for both it translates to "why I wake up in the morning." Knowing your sense of purpose is worth up to seven years of extra life expectancy

4.Down Shift

Even people in the Blue Zones experience stress. Stress leads to chronic inflammation, associated with every major age-related disease. What the world's longest-lived people have that we don't are routines to shed that stress. Okinawans take a few moments each day to remember their ancestors, Adventists pray, Ikarians take a nap and Sardinians do happy hour.

They also meditate, and do other activities that reduce their stress levels.

5.80% Rule

“Hara hachi bu” – the Okinawan, 2500-year old Confucian mantra said before meals remind them to stop eating when their stomachs are 80 percent full. The 20% gap between not being hungry and feeling full could be the difference between losing weight or gaining it. People in the blue zones eat their smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening and then they don’t eat any more the rest of the day.

6.Belong

All but five of the 263 centenarians we interviewed belonged to some faith-based community. Denomination doesn’t seem to matter. Research shows that attending faith-based services four times per month will add 4-14 years of life expectancy.

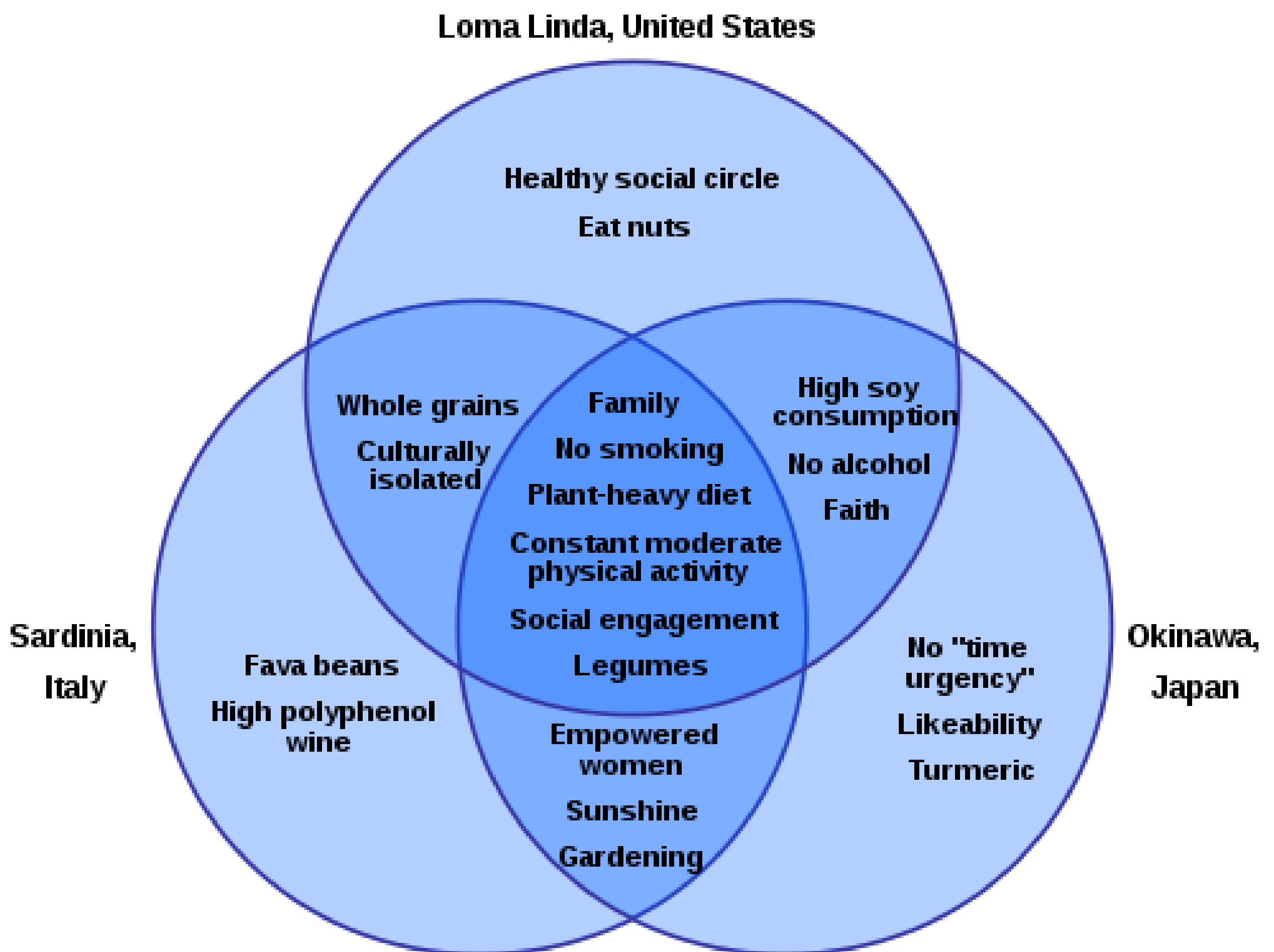
7.Loved Ones First

Successful centenarians in the blue zones put their families first. This means keeping aging parents and grandparents nearby or in the home (It lowers disease and mortality rates of children in the home too.). They commit to a life partner (which can add up to 3 years of life expectancy) and invest in their children with time and love (They’ll be more likely to care for you when the time comes).

8.Right Tribe

The world’s longest-lived people chose—or were born into—social circles that supported healthy behaviors, Okinawans created “moais”—groups of five friends that committed to each other for life.

To make it to age 100, you have to have won the genetic lottery. But most of us have the capacity to make it well into our early 90’s and largely without chronic disease. As the Adventists demonstrate, the average person’s life expectancy could increase by 10-12 years by adopting a Blue Zones lifestyle.



There are many things you can learn from blue zones. I don't agree with everything they do, but like I always say; success leaves clues. If all of them eat predominantly a plant-based-diet, and have noticeable health benefits associated with longevity, then we should all aim to eat more plants. If they all get enough sleep, then we should all prioritize sleep. We will talk more about some healthy habits which will improve the quality of your life in this chapter. Let's start with your morning routine.

“Living longer and feeling better is the sum of a few small easy choices you can incorporate into everyday life.”

Dan Buettner

1.9 Win the morning, win the day

How do you start your day? Or an even better question: how do you prime yourself in the morning? Most people do the following: Snooze their alarm clock 48 times. **If you snooze, you lose.** If you hit the snooze button what do you tell your body? Is it: Hey, we are so excited for the day or is it: Hey, I don't want to wake up. I don't want to start this day. So let's snooze. The problem is, you have to wake up around this time, don't you? That's why you set the alarm in the first place. The 7, 14, or 21 minutes more of sleep don't give you more rest. The opposite. You usually feel more tired afterward. So here is the trick: put your phone away from your bed, best case at the end of the room, so that you have to get up. Go straight to the toilet, make your bed, and start your morning routine. You don't have one yet? No problem, I got you, but first, we have to eliminate this snoozing habit. If you want to be energized and productive, stop snoozing. Remember: if you snooze,, you lose.

Your new morning routine:

Why even creating a helpful routine for the morning that serves you and primes you for your day? The question is the answer. If you sleep in and have a really stressful morning, how will you feel during the day? Stressed? Tired? Bingo. If you have a peaceful and successful morning, how will you feel you during the day? You got it.

Of course, there are 273 different morning routines and you have to find your own, however there are certain things that your morning routine shouldn't include:

Checking your emails, social media, and messages right after waking up.

Jumping into email first thing puts you into reply mode and distracts you, wasting your otherwise refreshed mind on unimportant tasks. You never know what you are going to read. Would you let 10 000 people enter your bedroom straight after waking up? Probably not, right?

If you check social media early in the morning, you are doing something similar. Harvard Business Review explains how email derails your productivity in the morning:

This is the time to do focused, strategic work, and have important conversations. If you read your email as you get up, your mind will get sidetracked and you'll begin the slide toward reactive leadership. Skipping email in favor of heads downtime works best if you're a morning person since that's when your mind is most creative and focused.

How about instead of wasting our focus and energy, we do something good for our mind, health, and soul. A mindful way to start your morning would be to meditate, to journal, or to pray.

I highly recommend meditation, because it's one of the most effective stress releasing tools, but I also do know that most people don't have the discipline to sit down for 10 minutes.

If you don't know how to start, download a mediation app like Headspace.

The first classes are completely free. What helps as well is a journal. Answer the 3 following questions for the next 7 days and you will feel better than ever before.

Answer the following questions:

1. What am I grateful for? (3 things)
2. What would make today great?
3. What kind of person do I want to be?

If you are grateful, you automatically live in a beautiful state. You can't be angry or mad and grateful simultaneously. It's black or white. Instead of focusing on tasks that you don't want to do, focus on the things that you are looking forward to, like dinner with your family, the gym, or whatever puts you on fire. Set an intention for the day. What kind of person do you want to be? Do you want to be energized? Maybe a loving spouse? Maybe a great leader?

'The intention is one with cause and effect. Intention determines the outcome. And if you're stuck and not moving forward, you have to check the thought and the action that created the circumstance.'
Oprah Winfrey

What could you do in the morning that is healthy? Drinking water and hydrating your body is a good idea. Stretching or some yoga, too. Some people like to exercise in the morning. It can be anything.

I can tell you what my morning routine looks like, but ultimately, it is up to you. You have to choose something which you enjoy doing, which you look forward to, and what is sustainable for you long term.

Do this exercise now. Start thinking of a morning routine.

Last but not least: What would be good for your soul? Checking emails and DMs on Instagram? Probably not. Meditation and some gratitude practices? Bingo. I start my mornings the following way: I wake up around 5 am. I love early mornings. I love the feeling at 11 am when I am almost done with all my work for the day. I love the quietness and tranquility in the morning.

I then take a cold shower, because:

a) it is super healthy and good for your lymphatic system, immune system, and your blood flow, and

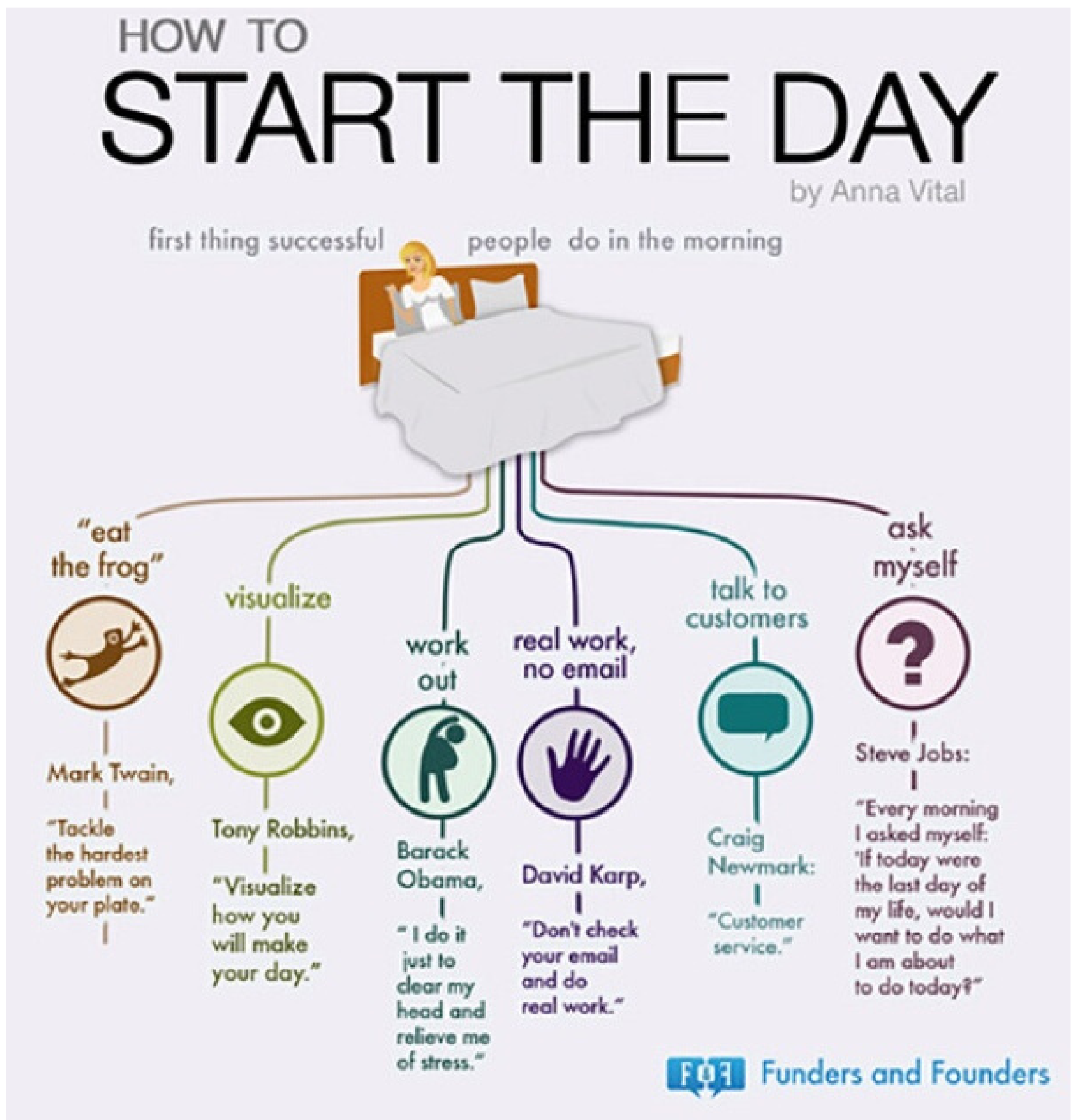
b) it's a good way to train your mind: You don't feel like doing it, you do it anyway and afterward you feel incredible. This feeling after a cold shower is just incredible.

Afterward, I meditate for around 15-20 minutes and practice gratitude. I answer the 3 questions that I just mentioned and put myself in a peak state, not with affirmations but incantations.

Affirmations are spoken words of encouragement, but while the positive thinking is there, affirmations may fail you as a transformative technique. If you want to create real change in your life,, affirmations alone aren't enough. You can recite something uplifting, but if you aren't embodying it physically, you are only skimming the surface.

Incantations, however, are about embodying the meaning behind the words, which is why they are so powerful. With incantations, not only are you speaking words of empowerment, you are using your body and your voice.

My day is already planned one evening before, so that I start with the most important tasks for the day. Now it's your turn. Create your morning routine and start tomorrow. Write it down and put the piece of paper RIGHT next to your toothbrush so that you can't forget it.



2.1 IKIGAI - Do you live a purposeful life?

*"Without a goal,
you can't score."
-Casey Neistat*

Do you have a list of goals? Do you have a plan for tomorrow? This year? If you don't design your own plan, chances are high that you'll fall into someone else's plan and just try to guess what they have planned for you. Do you remember that most of the people in the blue zones had a purpose in life? Goals that they want to achieve every day. You need them. If you are not growing, you are dying.

Society has this dream of winning the lottery and once you have all the money you just spend your time doing nothing. Should I tell what happens if you spend all your days with doing nothing? YOU GET CRAZY. Bored out of your mind. We are designed to grow, to learn, to live. Doing nothing can't be the goal. We have to figure out what puts us on fire and then, surprise surprise, doing things that we love to do.

It's time to clarify what you want in your life. Time to set GOALS. To be honest to yourself. There is no right or wrong (as long as you don't hurt anyone), there is only YOUR right or wrong. Do the following goal setting exercise.

Goal setting step 1:

Give yourself six minutes to brainstorm a list of anything you'd like to achieve, create, do, have, give and/or experience in the next 20 years. Write as many things down as fast as you can in this time.

Goal setting step 2:

Now go back through your list and write one, three, five, 10 or 20 years next to each goal to indicate how long it will take to achieve them. Be realistic when assigning time estimates. You have a minute and a half to get this done, so be quick and go with your gut.

Goal setting step 3:

Review your list. Choose your top four one-year goals. These are goals that make you really excited. Write a paragraph for each goal explaining why you will absolutely achieve this goal within the next 12 months. This should take you about 15-20 minutes total. If you're able to share what you've written down with a friend, family member or another person you trust, do so. If not, just say them out loud to yourself; this helps make the goal-planning process less of a concept and more of a reality.

Visualize yourself older and looking back. What's the pain from not achieving, and what is the pleasure from having achieved your goals?

Effective goal setting helps you stay focused, keeps you accountable and is the single most important aspect of reaching your dreams.

Have you finished the exercise? Awesome. Now get into the habit of planning your day before you go to bed. Plan your day accordingly to your goals.

2.2 DIET 101 - You are what you eat

There are 73 different diets that you can try. Vegan, Paleo, Low carb, Keto, Vegetarian...The list goes on and on. Which one is best for you? We are about to figure out.

If you think of healthy food, what comes to your mind? Probably fruit and veggies. If you think of unhealthy food, what comes to your mind? Probably burgers, pizza or donuts. We all know that it's bad for our health to eat highly processed foods. The World Health Organization has classified processed meats including ham, bacon, salami, and frankfurts as a Group 1 carcinogen (known to cause cancer) which means that there's strong evidence that processed meats cause cancer. I think I should repeat that again. Eating ham, bacon, salami, etc. is in the same group as smoking cigarettes: **KNOWN TO CAUSE CANCER.**

The question is: Why do people still eat these foods? Exactly, because they taste good. It is addictive. Especially when you add sugar or when you combine salt with a lot of fat. We think that we treat ourselves whenever we pizza or donuts.

The truth is: You are not treating yourself, you are harming yourself. You kill healthy cells in your body, and support inflammation every single time you eat unhealthy foods.

Does that mean you should never eat candy or pizza? It is not about this one unhealthy meal, it is about what you do consistently. Your daily eating habits. All professional nutritionists and health organizations will tell you the same thing:

Eat more plants and fewer animal products. So, why not follow this advice? Here are some easy tips that you can implement in your daily life.

Focus on the 5 food groups:

1. Fruits
2. Vegetables
3. Whole Grains
4. Legumes
5. Nuts and seeds

EXTRA: Consider using a Vitamin B12 and Vitamin D supplement. Study after study show that these vitamins:

- a) have a big impact on your mental and physical health ,and
- b) are often lacking.

More than 1 billion people have low levels of Vitamin D which leads to low energy levels and can support depression. Vitamin B12 is super important for your nervous system and is also a critical nutrient nowadays. If you don't eat seaweed, consider taking an iodine supplement and if you live in a country with bad soil quality, like Germany, look for an Iodine + Selenium supplement.

On the next page you will find a list by Dr. Michael Greger which will make sure that you will cover all your nutrients:



Dr. Greger's Daily Dozen

 NutritionFacts.org

Everything we should ideally strive to fit into our daily routine for optimal health and longevity.



BEANS ✓✓✓
Servings: 3 per day
ex: 130g cooked beans, 60g hummus



✓ **BERRIES**
Servings: 1 per day
ex: 60g fresh or frozen, 40g dried



FRUITS ✓✓✓
Servings: 3 per day
ex: 1 medium fruit, 40g dried fruit

✓ **CRUCIFEROUS**
Servings: 1 per day
ex: 30-80g chopped, 1 tbs horseradish





GREENS ✓✓
Servings: 2 per day
ex: 60g raw, 90g cooked


✓✓ **VEGETABLES**
Servings: 2 per day
ex: 50g nonleafy vegetables





FLAXSEED ✓
Servings: 1 per day
ex: 1 tablespoon ground

✓ **NUTS**
Servings: 1 per day
ex: 30g nuts, 2 tbs nut butter






GRAINS ✓✓✓
Servings: 3 per day
ex: 100g hot cereal, 1 slice of bread


✓ **SPICES**
Servings: 1 per day
ex: ¼ teaspoon turmeric





EXERCISE ✓
Once per day
ex: 90 min. moderate or 40 min. vigorous

✓✓✓ **BEVERAGES**
Servings: 1750ml per day
ex: water, green tea, hibiscus tea



Download Dr. Greger's Daily Dozen app and start tracking your daily servings right now.



VITAMIN B12 ✓
2500 mcg cyanocobalamin
once a week



VITAMIN D ✓
For those getting inadequate
sun 2000 IUs of D3 a day

Connect with us!



2.3 Early Dinner & The importance of sleep

Digesting takes a lot of energy, and sleep is the most important part of your body's recovery program. Now, imagine the most important recovery part gets interrupted because the body is busy digesting. If you eat right before you go to bed, your body will start digesting and that takes a lot of effort and energy. The quality of your sleep would be better if you wouldn't eat late, but rather have an early dinner, around 3-4 hours before you go to bed.

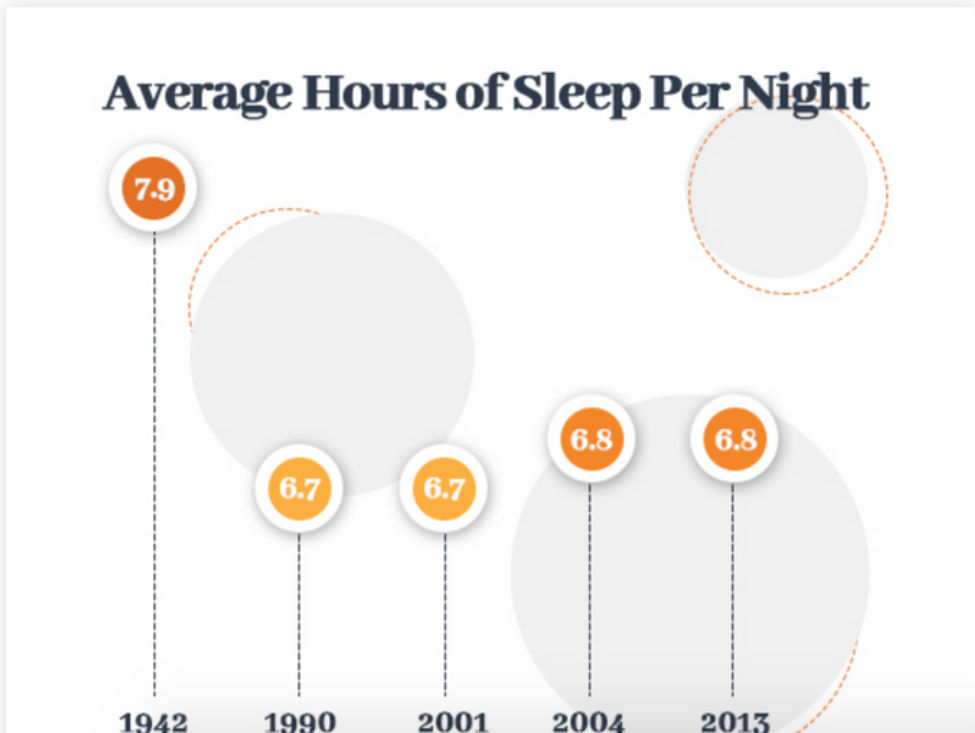
Sleep should be one of your highest priorities. So, challenge yourself for the next 7 days. Eat early dinner and watch yourself sleeping better than ever before. "

How much do you sleep? In 1942, Americans had 7.9 hours on average hours per night compared to 6.8 hours in 2013, which is a 13% decrease. When I was a teenager, I slept usually around 6-7 hours. I remember that I was always tired in school and it felt like the most difficult thing in the world to get out of my bed. If I could go back in time I would tell myself definitely to sleep at least 7-9 hours. Do you remember the people in the blue zones who live longer? Do you think they are sleep deprived? Obviously not. Here are some facts about sleep deprivation:

The following page contains a few sleep statistics.

02

Sleep Deprivation Statistics



Falling asleep takes on average 10-15 minutes. If you pass out within a few minutes, it might mean you are sleep deprived.



Lack of Sleep costs the United States over \$411 Billion Annually, reported Fortune Magazine.



35% of adults don't get enough sleep (7 hours per day) according to the CDC.

[8] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



The population of Hawaii has the shortest sleep duration (54%) while South Dakota has the highest (72%).

[8] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Almost 20% of all car crash accidents and injuries are associated with sleepiness.

[11] National Center for Biotechnology Information

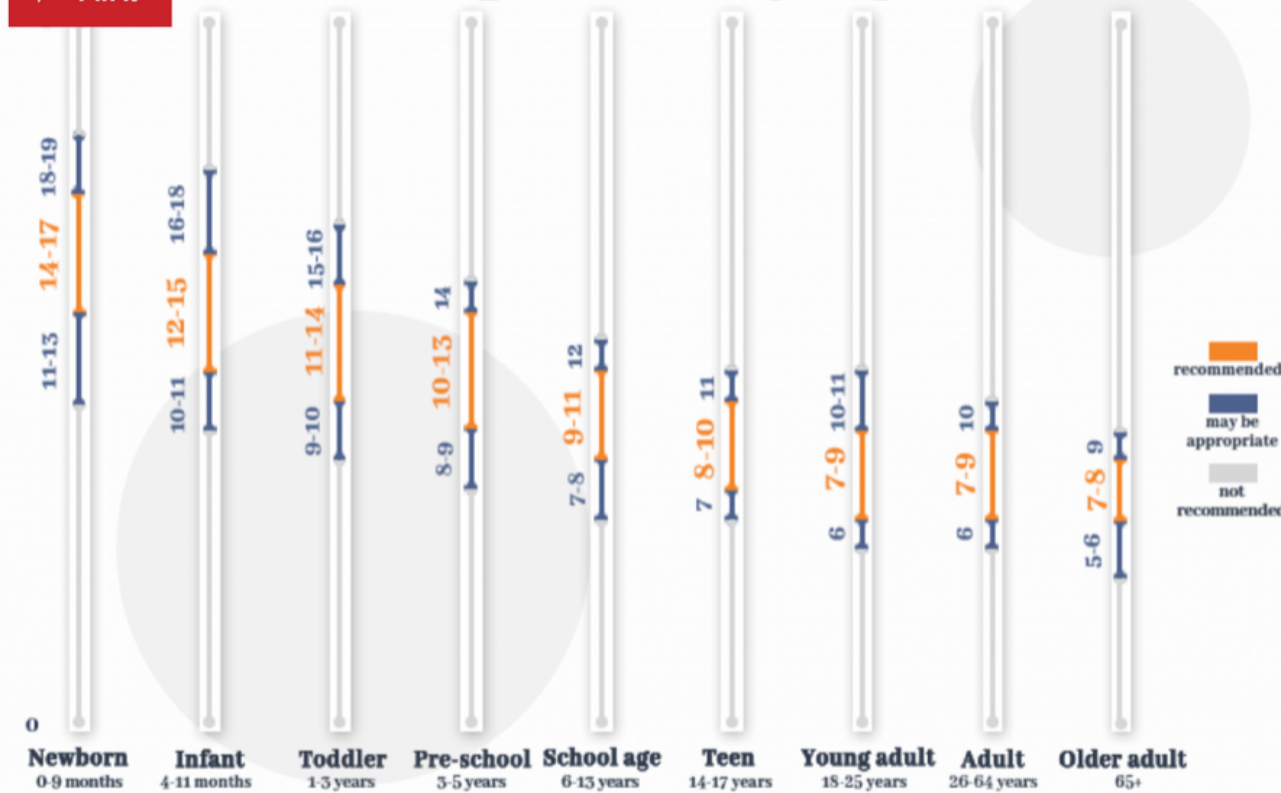


3-5% of obesity in adults could be caused by lack of sleep.

[12] Harvard | School of Public Health



Sleep Needs by Age



[13] Sleep Foundation

03

Sleep Disorders Statistics

50 to 70 million people in the US suffer from one or several sleep disorders.

[14] Maternal and Child Health Bureau



48% of people in the U.S. reported snoring problems.

[15] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



4.7% reported falling asleep or nodding off while driving in the preceding month.

[16] Southern Indiana ENT



37.9% of people reported unintentionally falling asleep during the day or at work in the last 30 days.

[17] Medscape



Tip 1: Keep in sync with your body's natural sleep-wake cycle: Getting in sync with your body's natural sleep-wake cycle, or circadian rhythm is one of the most important strategies for sleeping better. If you keep a regular sleep-wake schedule, you'll feel much more refreshed and energized than if you sleep the same number of hours at different times, even if you only alter your sleep schedule by an hour or two.

Try to go to sleep and get up at the same time every day. This helps set your body's internal clock and optimize the quality of your sleep. Choose a bedtime when you normally feel tired, so that you don't toss and turn.

Avoid sleeping in—even on weekends. The more your weekend/weekday sleep schedules differ, the worse the jetlag-like symptoms you'll experience. Be smart about napping. If you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep at night, napping can make things worse. Limit naps to 15 to 20 minutes in the early afternoon.

Tip 2: Control your exposure to light

Melatonin is a naturally occurring hormone controlled by light exposure that helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle. Your brain secretes more melatonin when it's dark—making you sleepy—and less when it's light—making you more alert.

If you need some light to move around safely, try installing a dim nightlight in the hall or bathroom or using a small flashlight. This will make it easier for you to fall back to sleep.

Tip 3: Exercise during the day

People who exercise regularly sleep better at night and feel less sleepy during the day. Regular exercise also improves the symptoms of insomnia and sleep apnea and increases the amount of time you spend in the deep, restorative stages of sleep. The more vigorously you exercise, the more powerful the sleep benefits. But even light exercise—such as walking for just 10 minutes a day—improves sleep quality. It can take several months of regular activity before you experience the full sleep-promoting effects. So be patient and focus on building an exercise habit that sticks.

Tip 4: Be smart about what you eat and drink

Your daytime eating habits play a role in how well you sleep, especially in the hours before bedtime. Limit caffeine and nicotine. Similarly, smoking is another stimulant that can disrupt your sleep, especially if you smoke close to bedtime. Avoid big meals at night. Try to make dinnertime earlier in the evening, and avoid heavy, rich foods within two hours of bed. Avoid drinking too many liquids in the evening.

Drinking lots of fluids may result in frequent bathroom trips throughout the night. Cut back on sugary foods and refined carbs. Eating lots of sugar and refined carbs such as white bread, white rice, and pasta during the day can trigger wakefulness at night and pull you out of the deep, restorative stages of sleep.

How to influence your exposure to light

During the day:

Expose yourself to bright sunlight in the morning. The closer to the time you get up, the better. Have your coffee outside, for example, or eat breakfast by a sunny window. The light on your face will help you wake up.

Spend more time outside during daylight. Take your work breaks outside in sunlight, exercise outside, or walk your dog during the day instead of at night. Let as much natural light into your home or workspace as possible. Keep curtains and blinds open during the day, and try to move your desk closer to the window. If necessary, use a light therapy box. This simulates sunshine and can be especially useful during short winter days.

At night: Avoid bright screens within 1-2 hours of your bedtime. The blue light emitted by your phone, tablet, computer, or TV is especially disruptive. You can minimize the impact by using devices with smaller screens, turning the brightness down, or using light-altering software such as f.lux.

Say no to late-night television.

Not only does the light from a TV suppress melatonin, but many programs are stimulating rather than relaxing. Try listening to music or audiobooks instead.

Don't read with backlit devices. Tablets that are backlit are more disruptive than e-readers that don't have their light source. When it's time to sleep, make sure the room is dark. Use heavy curtains or shades to block light from windows, or try a sleep mask. Also, consider covering up electronics that emit light. Keep the lights down if you get up during the night. If you need some light to move around safely, try installing a dim nightlight in the hall or bathroom or using a small flashlight. This will make it easier for you to fall back to sleep.

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Tip 5: Improve your sleep environment

A peaceful bedtime routine sends a powerful signal to your brain that it's time to wind down and let go of the day's stresses. Sometimes even small changes to your environment can make a big difference to your quality of sleep. Keep your room dark, cool, and quiet. Keep the noise down. If you can't avoid or eliminate noise from neighbors, traffic, or other people in your household, try masking it with a fan or sound machine. Earplugs may also help.

Keep your room cool.

Most people sleep best in a slightly cool room (around 65° F or 18° C) with adequate ventilation. A bedroom that is too hot or too cold can interfere with quality sleep.

Make sure your bed is comfortable. Your bed covers should leave you enough room to stretch and turn comfortably without becoming tangled. If you often wake up with a sore back or an aching neck, you may need to experiment with different levels of mattress firmness, foam toppers, and pillows that provide more or less support.

Reserve your bed for sleeping and sex. By not working, watching TV, or using your phone, tablet, or computer in bed, your brain will associate the bedroom with just sleep and sex, which makes it easier to wind down at night.

2.4 Cold Showers

I mentioned it earlier: I am a big fan of cold showers and I invite you to become one as well. Why? Because it's one of the healthiest things you can do. Thousands of people from all over the world already incorporate cold showers into their daily routines. The main benefits reported by people who take cold showers regularly are listed below:

Reduced stress levels. Regularly taking cold showers imposes a small amount of stress on your body, which leads to a process called hardening. This means that your nervous system gradually gets used to handling moderate levels of stress. The hardening process helps you to keep a cool head, the next time you find yourself in a stressful situation.

Higher level of alertness. Cold showers wake your body up, inducing a higher state of alertness. The cold also stimulates you to take deeper breaths, decreasing the level of CO₂ throughout the body, helping you concentrate. Cold showers thus keep you ready and focused throughout the day.

More robust immune response. Scientific studies have found that taking a cold shower increases the amount of white blood cells in your body. These blood cells protect your body against diseases. Researchers believe that this process is related to an increased metabolic rate, which stimulates the immune response.

Increased willpower.

It takes a strong mind to endure the cold for extended periods of time. By incorporating cold showers into your daily routine, you are strengthening your willpower, which benefits many aspects of (your) daily life. Glow hair & skin. This is the only one that I can't back up by science. My girlfriend promised me it worked.

"But, cold showers hurt..."

You are right. Get prepared, it's going to hurt. Especially if you are a newbie. I've been taking cold showers now for years and yes, it still feels uncomfortable, but it's not as painful as when I started. The 3-second rule will help you. You go 3-2-1 and just do it. Start with 30 seconds. Breathe consciously, repeat a mantra like "I am capable of everything" and go for it. Focus on your breath and after 30 seconds you will feel like a warrior. You will be awake and ready to start the day. It's also a great exercise for your mind. A cold shower is out of your comfort zone - in fact, it's really uncomfortable, but if you start your day with leaving your comfort zone and practicing discipline, it will be easier to keep doing that during the day. As you already know: The most beautiful things in life are out of your comfort zone. This is when growth happens. So, see it as a mental exercise. You show your body and mind who is in charge. Either you control the voice in your head, or the voice controls you and if that happens you become one of the people who say "aw I am not good enough...aw I can't do that..". Remember you can do, be and become whatever you want.

"Standing under freezing cold showers every morning, - I did that. I got up to seven minutes most mornings, and it actually works; it immunizes your body, and your body starts getting used to the cold. It really works."

Liam Neeson

The little things add up

Small daily improvements are the key to long term results. These little things add up. Your brain is on autopilot 90-95% of the time, so we have to change our habits if we want our lives to change.

If you want that your life gets better, you have to get better.

If you want more than just an ordinary life, you have to develop a more than just ordinary character.

If you eat healthy and exercise every day, guess what will happen with your body? It will be a mirror of your habits. If you meditate every day and practice gratitude, what kind of person will you become? An angry, stressed person? Probably not. I hope you see the pattern. I hope you see your patterns and change the ones which don't serve you.

It is no surprise to me that heart disease is the number 1 killer in the world. Why? Look at what most people eat. Some white bread with eggs and bacon for breakfast. A sandwich for lunch and a pizza for dinner. Maybe even two. It is also no surprise that depression rates go up. Why? How does an average person spend his/ her time? After waking up, most people check their phones and literally become addicted.

Most people don't meditate or take a cold shower, they snooze and don't sleep enough. They rush from one meeting to the next meeting and are constantly stressed out. They don't read books about health or personal development.

They don't live with intention.

They don't exercise. Being healthy is not super complicated. It's simple. Simple, but not easy. It's probably easier to say yes so all these yummy unhealthy foods, than to prepare a nourishing buddha bowl. It's easier to start your day with Instagram than with meditation. It's up to you. Do you want to live a long, healthy, and fulfilled life? If your answer is yes, start developing the habits that are required.

*"It's the small habits.
How you spend your mornings.
How you talk to yourself.
What you read and what you watch.
Who you share your energy with.
Who has access to you.
That will change your life."*

~Michael Tonge

2.5 The need for spirituality

Nowadays, we talk a lot about physical health and, sometimes, even the mindset, but we are missing out on one thing. Our soulset. You can have the best six-pack on planet earth and still feel miserable. We have to find ways to feed our need for spirituality, and that doesn't mean to pray 5x per day. It means that we have to spend time feeding our souls. This could be through meditation, journaling, or praying. There are many different ways.

The ultimate goal is: living in a beautiful state. What does that mean? A beautiful state means living with gratitude and joy. It doesn't mean that you can't have bad moments, too. We all have bad moments. Some of us carry these bad moments for days or even years and some of us find a better strategy to get back to this beautiful state of gratitude. Gratitude is a superpower. You can't be angry and grateful at the same time. You can't be mad and grateful at the same time. It's either-or.

That's why I start my day with meditation and answering the three following questions (I hope you remember these questions from the beginning of the book):

What am I grateful for?

What would make today great?

What kind of person do I want to be today?

It's such an easy and simple way to feed your need for spirituality. Try it out and find yourself blooming like never before. It's time to take action. I know that most people never read more than 10% off a book, so congratulations if you made it until here. You are a true power ranger.

I also know that most people feel inspired, but never take action. They never change. They know, but they don't get started. Why? Usually, because they are too comfortable. Our brain is trained to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. Change is usually painful in the beginning, messy in the middle, and incredible at the end. So, please if you've made it until here: **MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN**. If you want a better life, you have to get better. What happens if you develop better habits? You guessed it. Your life will improve.

I will give you an example. I had this habit of spending exactly as much as I earned. When I was 12, I made 80 Euro per month as a postman and I spent exactly 80 Euro. When I was 14, I started making 400 Euro per month as a fabric worker and guess what? I also found a way to spend that money. Until I was 21. I started studying the minds of successful investors and everyone said the same thing: Many people have the habit of spending exactly what they earn, sometimes even more than that. So, at this moment I had to change this habit and create a healthier one. Since then I invested every month 20% of my income. It's an automatic process. I simply created a new habit. The habit of investing a part of my income and spending less than I earn. Isn't that simple? What are the habits that you want to change? Which habits do you have to change to live a better life?

Outro

Ladies and gentlemen. We are coming to an end here. My intention with this book was to make your life better. To give you the tools to live a healthier and more meaningful life. I hope I was successful. If so, come say hi on Instagram @axelschura and give me your feedback. I know that so many of you have this desire to live a more meaningful life and that's beautiful. Never, and I mean NEVER, stop believing that it's possible to get to your goal. People will laugh at you and say things like: Stop dreaming. My father and many people told me the same and honestly sometimes when I was sitting there in my father's house I believed it. I was so depressed and such a victim of my circumstances that I just accepted it. I am happy and grateful that I found a way out of there. I am happy and grateful that I made the decision that I am the creator of my circumstances. I believe that I can do, be, and become whatever I want. This mindset and this permanent development of my personality brought me here. I went from broke and depressed to waking up every morning with joy. I live in Bali and do whatever the F I want and you can do it, too. ONLY if you are willing to put in the work. Work harder on yourself than on your job. Work harder on yourself than on your biceps. If you become better, life will get better. Read books, feed your mind, practice good habits and you will transform your life.

I can't wait to hear your success story in a couple of years, or maybe in a decade. People often overestimate what they can do in a month and underestimate what they can achieve in 5 years. Be patient. Work hard. Enjoy the present moment and be grateful for the fact that you are a life. Thank you so much for reading this ebook and taking action.

Much love,
Axel

People say it takes 10 years to change your life. It's bullshit. It takes a moment, a second. But it may take you 10 years to get to the point of finally saying, "Enough."

Tony Robbins

References

If you loved this book and the examples I gave, you will love the following books as well. All of these books or documentaries are mentioned in this book. Also a special thank you to the co-author of this book Mariana Beckova.

