

January 2016 Book Review Post

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

I believe what Einstein is really trying to help us understand is that learning should never stop. The real learning comes from the referential experiences we live through that will shape who we are as unique individuals. While speaking at a Career Day today in the Metro area, my colleague said something very profound, “School teaches you HOW to learn, not necessarily WHAT to learn.” I think there is profound truth in that statement. Honestly, I am in sales, and I will never need that Trigonometry class that I took back in high school, however it did teach me how to study, structure, and discipline myself to make my brain grow.

“Learners are earners.” The mastermind group I am a part of had the opportunity to sit down with a high level business and life coach, and these were his words of wisdom to us. We know that the greats, past, present, and future will always spend time expanding their worldviews and skilling up by reading.

I have a goal to read no less than 50 books this year, and I want to do something special with the golden nuggets I have learned from each and every book I read. I call it my Information Aggregation System, or IAS for short (trademark pending). I will be providing you 1 main idea or thought I gleaned from each book I read.

Let’s jump right in, the books I read were Awaken the Giant Within by Tony Robbins, Nine Words by Allen R. Hunt, The Lessons of History by Will and Ariel Durant and my Success Magazine for the month. (I have included my magazine subscription in this which is accompanied by a great audio CD as well.)

Awaken the Giant Within by Tony Robbins – This book is chocked full with content and deciding on one main idea was extremely difficult. If you would like the full review (which everyone should read) reach out to me directly. However, don’t worry! I will share with you a life-changing strategy that I have already began to implement into my own life. I would like to start by asking you a question – Have you ever felt like you were stuck in what we call a “rut,” or just spinning your wheels in the mud, not getting anywhere? If you answered yes, listen closely. Tony says that **you could be actually winning at the game of life and feel like you’re losing because the scorecard you’re using is unfair**. We all, knowingly or not, have a set of rules that allow us to feel a certain way. What is a rule? Tony explains that **a rule is a set of conditions which, if achieved, gives them permission to feel good and if not, gives permission to feel some pain**. The great insight about are rules is that they are completely self-imposed! We control and create our own rules! Tony says there is a simple fix - spend more time feeling good, develop a new set of personal rules which are achievable on a consistent basis, independent of the actions of anyone else. I took this a little deeper, and created what I call **S-M-A-R-T Rules**. The rules that I have set for myself are specific, measurable, attainable, relative and time-intensive - just like S-M-A-R-T goals! The main idea here is to make the rules for ourselves **easy to feel positive emotions and states, and very difficult to feel negative emotions**. An example would be that a top level executive has the wrong rule for success. His rule is that he must have an annual income of 3.5 million dollars, and he will not feel fulfilled unless he hits that goal. This exec hit 3.3 and now feels like a failure. See how his rule was not S-M-A-R-T?

Tony's Action steps:

1. Design your rules so you are in control and the outside world has very little effect on how you feel.
2. Set up your rule system so it is extremely easy to feel good, and exceptionally hard to feel bad. Give your rule system a positive bias.

Nine Words by Allen R Hunt – One of my top 3 goals this year along with reading 50 books is to increase my faith and living out the Gospel every single day, in every single way. That being said, one of the books that I will read every month is going to be faith based. My big takeaway from this quick read is that God wants us to live life as the best versions of ourselves. I have, in many situations been called an over-achiever or someone who is striving for perfection. Heck yes I am striving for perfection, because I know that I am never going to get there, but I am going to work every day to become the best version of myself. Like John Wooden said, "Perfection is what you are striving for, but perfection is an impossibility. However, striving for perfection is not an impossibility. Do the best you can under the conditions that exist. That is what counts." St. Paul shares nine words in his letter to the Galatians that create a blueprint of values we should all be striving to incorporate. These nine words or values are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. I will say a prayer that we all can work these into our lives, and the lives of others.

The Lessons of History by Will and Ariel Durant– This book is a little out of my comfort zone, however it is refreshing to brush up on the past which creates different perspectives and worldviews for myself. My main takeaway from this book is simple, if we are not aware of the past, we are inclined to repeat the same mistakes in the future. We need to look at past failures as feedback. Failure is just learning another way how NOT to do something. Most everything that will be done, in some form, has been done in the past. Let's stand on the shoulders of giants and learn from them; thus cutting our learning curves down and amplifying our impact and the value we can bring into the world!

Success Magazine – James Lawrence completed 50 Ironman races, in 50 days, in 50 different states. Re-read that, I typed it correctly. An Ironman race is arguably one of the toughest endurance races that includes a 2.4 mile swim followed by a 112 mile bike ride, and finishes with a 26.2 mile run. Over the 50 days this amounted to 114,750 strokes in the water, 7,061,600 pedals on the bike and 13,100,000 steps. (So much for my 10,000 goal each day). Seriously though, this is an incredible feat, almost too hard to believe. James was asked what he thought about while completing each one of these races and what he said was so profound – **"I tried not to think about how many miles or days I had left, I just wanted to be perfect at whatever I was doing – running, biking, or swimming for the next minute."** James noted that another one of the keys that allowed him to complete this heroic feat was to have patience and consistency. James said he focused on the basics, doing the little things right. Incredible insight from an incredible athlete.

I have to note that I was (and am) still also skilling up by reading a sales book as well as a speed-reading manual. I will review those when the time comes. The best investment will always be in yourself. If you want to create more value for others, start by becoming more.

From my mentors to yours,

#LiveFree

February 2016 Book Review Post

Steal Like An Artist by Austin Kleon – In this short, fun, picturesque book, Austin Kleon takes the notion that there is nothing new to create, and flips in completely around. This 130 page book is chalked full of great quotes and references to back this up as well. One of my favorites is: There are no new ideas, only stolen ones – “nothing comes from nowhere.” The good book also says that “There is nothing new under the sun.” – Ecclesiastes 1:9. What does Austin mean by this? Let’s refer to his manifesto which states: “Draw the art you want to see, start the business you want to run, play the music you want to hear, write the books you want to read, build the products you want to use and do the work you want to see done.” Wow, this is almost as profound as the cover of the book where Austin gives more content than most 200 pagers I read where he says that “NOTHING is original, so embrace influence, school yourself through the work of others, then remix and reimagine to discover your own path. Forget the old cliché about writing what you know: Instead, write the book you want to read, and make the movie you want to watch.”

Long Story Short: this book will get your creative juices flowing with practical tips packed in every page.

The School of Greatness by Lewis Howes – Lewis is one of my all-time heroes and my first love in the podcast world. His way of asking great guests even better questions is unquestionably entertaining. Lewis is a genuinely great person who has a huge vision to help many people. I would recommend this book as a fun loving, feel good book. While there are some action steps given, this is definitely a beginners guide to personal development.

Long Story Short: Everyone needs to create their definition of greatness, but start with Lewis’s definition he gives: Greatness is what happens when your talent and your vision face adversity, and you persist in the face of it to learn the language of the new, the scary, the unfamiliar.” Profound.

Steal the Show Michael Port – Michael Port comes on to my radar with big bang for the buck content. From successful movie actor, to faking it until he was making it by landing a huge corporate gig with no experience, to running a successful company and being one of the top paid speakers in the world, this guy knows how to get his message across. Port’s book has a of detailed information, especially for speakers and the like; however the two main takeaways I delved out of this gem was how to use contrast to keep any audience engaged and how improvisation can help communicate to and influence other people. Port goes on to explain the three types of contrast which are:

1. **Structural contrast** – this is how you organize your material and use different types of content
2. **Emotional contrast** – this is how an audience experiences your performance emotionally or how you strike up different emotions in your audience during the performance
3. **Delivery contrast** – this relates to how you deliver the content physically, orally, and visually. Examples include vocal tonality, timing, and pacing.

Master the different types of contrast and implement them successfully into your speeches, toasts, or next sales meeting and you will have your “audience” giving you a standing ovation! The second key takeaway from this gem was how and why people who are not speakers can use this technique to better the dialogues and “performances” they are experiencing throughout our lives. So, why use improv? Port says **first**, that improv gives you confidence to adapt to any situation, not only presentations. **Second**, a focus on improv can makes your presentation more relevant to the moment as it is happening in the room because it creates positive, interesting moments that make for a bigger, better experience for

your audience. **Lastly**, you can use improve to sharpen your skills for saving difficult moments during a performance. Things will, and do go wrong. When they do, will you improvise, or lose the sale?

Long Story Short: Want to win a room over? Nail a big presentation? Close a huge deal? Then you better rehearse, rehearse, and then rehearse some more. There is no such thing as over-preparing. Use contrast, and learn improv skills.

March 2016 Book Review Post

They Can't Eat You by Marc Sparks – Out of all the great real world, applicable lessons Marc shares with us in his book, one in particular stands out for me. I have never heard of this approach before – Build your packaging (box or website) first...everything else will come. Stay with me here. Marc said it has always been his style to first and foremost focus on packaging the product he is selling. Marc notes in his experience, simultaneously building your packaging and product creates a canvas that allows you to develop a MUCH better product. He calls it his “designing the box first” strategy. I will leave you with a quote from Marc – “Your packaging determines who you are.” Best get it right.

Long Story Short: Marc is a true entrepreneur. He has built businesses and made tons of money, then lost it all. His book is full of “Sparks” that will undoubtedly help guide anyone who is interested in building a business, or anyone who owns a business and is looking to take it to the next level.

Relentless by Tim S Grover – Tim writes that the word relentless is used to describe the most intense competitors and achievers imaginable, those who stop at nothing to get to the end result. He adds that being relentless is a state of mind that can give you the strength to achieve, to survive, to overcome, to be strong when others are not. It means craving the end result so intensely that the work becomes irrelevant. This book took my mental game to another level, because Tim describes a level of mentality I have never even heard of, and few ever attain. The likes who have accomplished what Tim calls the “Cleaner,” perspective are the Jordan’s, Kobe’s, and Wade’s of the sports world. Tim gives some behind the scene looks at these amazing performers, and breaks down how we can all strive to attain the same levels of mentality.

Long Story Short: What is a cleaner? A step up after the “closer.” A closer can win the game if given the opportunity, but a cleaner creates the opportunity! Cleaners never feel as if they’ve achieved success because there’s always more to do. That’s the “Cleaner,” mentality. Good is to Great as Great is to Unstoppable. A Cooler is to a Closer as a Closer is to a Cleaner. Failed? How can you fail when your worst day is better than most people’s best? You know exactly who you are and could care less what others think. Cleaners don’t compete with anyone, they make you compete with them.

As a Man Thinketh by James Allen - "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Allen notes that a man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of his thoughts. Allen creates an analogy that I believe sums this whole book up in a few sentences: "Man's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated, or neglected, it must, and will, bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed-seeds will fall therein, and will continue to produce their kind."

Long Story Short: James says that a man should conceive of a legitimate purpose in his heart, and set out to accomplish it. I agree. So often we seem to make an excuse, or blame the circumstances around us for not accomplishing our goals. However, Allen writes that even though a man cannot directly

choose his circumstances, he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape his circumstances. We must remember that "**Circumstance does not make the man, it reveals him to himself.**" I will leave you with one final thought - "Self-control is strength; right thought is mastery; CALMNESS is power." Thanks Mr. Allen for the most thought provoking 30 pages I have ever read.

On the Same Page by Joe Calhoon – "Vision describes where you're going. Mission articulates why you're going there. Values define who you are at your core, and how you treat each other along the way." If you are a business leader, or aspiring to become one – this book is for you. I love practical, and that is exactly what this book is. The authors, Joe and Bruce are both business coaches and created a system called the *PriorityAdvantage*. This system aims to re-align employees, grow revenue, increase profits, and re-invigorate owners. Joe and Bruce outline 4 practices:

1. *PriorityPrinciples* – Learn how to implement principles that govern effective planning, achievement, and renewal.
2. *PriorityPlanning* – Learn how to write the six essential elements of a **dynamic business growth plan**
3. *PriorityAchievement* – Learn the essential leadership skills to make progress with your plan
4. *PriorityRenewal* – Discover how to celebrate progress, learn from your experience, and adapt your course as you move forward.

I learned more about how to run a business in the short book than I did completing a master's program.

Long Story Short: Hands down, this is one of the most efficient, straightforward business books I have ever read. Joe and Bruce were definitely not trying to sell fairy dust in this book, it is all practical steps you and I can take to improve and re-align our businesses. I shared with Joe my "one liner" for this book and we came to the conclusion that every successful business must **start with an inspired vision that is powered by our mission and fueled by our values.**

Emotional Intelligence by Travis Bradberry – Everything you see, hear, smell, and taste travels through your body in the form of electric signals. These signals enter your brain near the spinal cord, but their end destination is the frontal lobe where logical thinking takes place. However; along the way they pass through the limbic system, the place where emotions are produced. This causes us to experience things (situations, events, people) emotionally instead of rationally. There are four emotional intelligence (EQ) skills that are paired up under two competencies: personal competence and social competence. Under personal competence falls self-awareness and self-management skills which Bradberry says focuses more on each of us individually than on our interactions with other people. He notes that this relates more to our ability to stay aware of our emotions and manage our behaviors. Bradberry goes on to explain that social competence is made up of your social awareness and relationship management skills; and is defined as the ability to understand other people's moods, behaviors and motives in order to improve the quality of your relationships.

Long Story Short: People with the highest levels of intelligence (IQ) outperform those with average IQs just 20% of the time, while people with average IQs outperform those with high IQs 70% of the time. What's the difference? Emotional intelligence. Intelligence is your *ability* to learn. Intelligence is the same at age 15 as it is at age 50. Emotional intelligence is not related to IQ. EQ is a flexible skill that can be learned, unlike IQ. If you are not convinced yet, studies show that the link between EQ and earnings

is so direct that every point increase in EQ adds \$1,300 to an annual salary! Time to take this test and get studying!

April Book Review:

What I Know for Sure by Oprah Winfrey

Long Story Short:

Integrity Selling (Customer needs – focused) : Selling is 85% emotional and only 15% strategy – strong ethics and values contribute more to selling success rather than strategies and techniques

- Selling is a process of identifying and filling people’s wants or needs, and creating value for them
- **A – I – D, I – N – C**
 - **Approach** – the approach is the first sale you must make – you must gain rapport before you’ll be heard
 - Get them talking about themselves, and listen! (What led you into this profession)
 - Law of Psychological Reciprocity – people are unconsciously compelled to return to us the same attitudes and feelings that we give them
 - **Approach Action Guide**
 - Tune the world out and people in
 - Put them at ease and make them feel important
 - Get them talking about themselves
 - Hold eye contact and listen to how they feel
 - **How to Know You’ve completed the Approach Step**
 1. People seem comfortable and open to you
 2. They appear ready to move on to share their needs with you
 3. They indicate that they have time to get into your interview
 4. You can get the necessary people together for a fact finding interview
 - **Interview** – This is the heart of the AIDINC system
 - Transition to – *I’m not sure what I have is the best solution for you or not. I can’t know until I understand your needs, wants, problems, challenges, or goals. So, if you don’t mind, I’d like to ask you a few questions and get some information, so that I’ll know if what I have is right for you.*
 - A customer needs-focus is where salespeople go through a discovery process to determine if customers have needs, wants, problems, or objectives they want filled, satisfied, or solved. The objective is to establish a need before initiating any selling activity.
 - **Interview Action Guides**
 1. Ask open-ended, indirect questions that draw out wants or needs
 - a. Don’t ask your customers what they want to buy, but find out their needs, and then recommend what would be their best buy
 - b. Get your customers talking – the more they clarify and define their own problems they develop an inner tension for solutions

2. Listen to and paraphrase all points – write them down
3. Identify dominant wants or needs and get agreement
4. Assure people that you want to help them enjoy the most value
 - a. *“From this point on, my objective will be to help you fill those needs and enjoy the most value possible.”*

- **Demonstrate**
- **Val – I – date**
- **Negotiate**
- **Close**

The Four Traits of Highly Successful Salespeople

1. **Strong Goal Clarity** – having clear, specific, written goals of what you want to have happen in your future.
 - a. Road to Goal Achieving – initial excitement, conflict, doubt, resistance, commitment, acceptance.
2. **High Achievement Drive** – a latent, potential power that everyone has. Once you have strong goal clarity, achievement drive can be unleashed.
 - a. *Your view of selling – I feel a professional responsibility to create as much value for my customers as possible, I know that I will, and should be, rewarded to the degree that I create value for customers, So I will focus on creating as much value as possible for clients, knowing that I’ll be rewarded accordingly*
 - b. *“Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain,” – William James*
3. **Healthy Emotional Intelligence** – The ability to understand the emotions you are feeling and those of others as well as their impact on your behaviors. This self-awareness leads to the inner discipline to do things that you often don’t want to do, but need to, to be successful.
4. **Excellent Social Skills** – have less to do with talking, and more to do with communicating with people – asking questions, listening, understanding, having empathy and rapport.

The Three Parts of You

1. Intellectual – “I think” – rational/logical part of us that makes decisions and choices
2. Emotional – “I feel” – often how we feel has nothing to do with what we intellectually know
3. Creative/Unconscious – “I am” – contains your self image – you literally perform consistent with who you perceive yourself to be, whether your perception is true or false
 - a. Area of the possible – the deep, unconscious beliefs that drive or inhibit your success which controls all of your actions, feelings, behavior, and abilities.
 - b. The goals you achieve will always be consistent with your self-imposed belief boundaries

Behavior Styles Model

- **Talker** – Process oriented, buy from people they like
 - How have you been doing, tell me about your children
- **Supporter** – Process oriented, their greatest fear is running risks
 - How did you learn to do your work?
 - What are some of the important functions of your job?
- **Controller** – Results oriented, their greatest fear is being wrong

- How do you keep up with so many facts and so much information?
- Doer – results oriented, their greatest fear is the loss of power
 - How do you manage to get so much done? What are some of the things that have helped you to get where you are today

Integrity Selling Success Principles

- Selling Success is more an issue of who you are than what you know. While knowledge is necessary, sustained success comes to the person who's driven by strong values and ethics
- People are more apt to trust and open up to you when you listen to them, care about them, and have a sincere desire to understand them.
- The art of persuasion is paradoxical. The more we attempt to persuade people, the more they tend to resist us. But the more we attempt to understand them and create value for them, the more they tend to persuade themselves.

Sales Congruence Model

1. Your view of Selling – your internal belief about what the process of selling really is
2. Your view of your Abilities – your internal belief about who you are, how capable you are, and what levels of success you deserve to enjoy
3. Your values – the rules or internal guidelines by which you live your life
4. Your commitment to activities – performing the necessary activities that must be done in order to successfully sell
5. Your belief in Product – your belief of whether what you are selling exceeds the customers cost in value

Long Story Short: