

CHAPTER 1 - DON'T TRY

We get anxious about feeling anxious.
We get angry about being angry
We get worried about how much we're worrying.
We feel guilty about feeling guilty.
We feel bad about feeling bad
This is why not bothering about this is so key

You get anxious about confronting somebody in your life. That anxiety cripples you and you start wondering why you're so anxious. Now you're becoming anxious about being anxious. Self-improvement and success often occur together. But that doesn't necessarily mean they're the same thing.

The Feedback Loop from Hell

There is a saying: "The smallest dog barks the loudest." A confident man doesn't feel a need to prove that he's confident. A rich woman doesn't feel the need to convince anybody that she's rich.

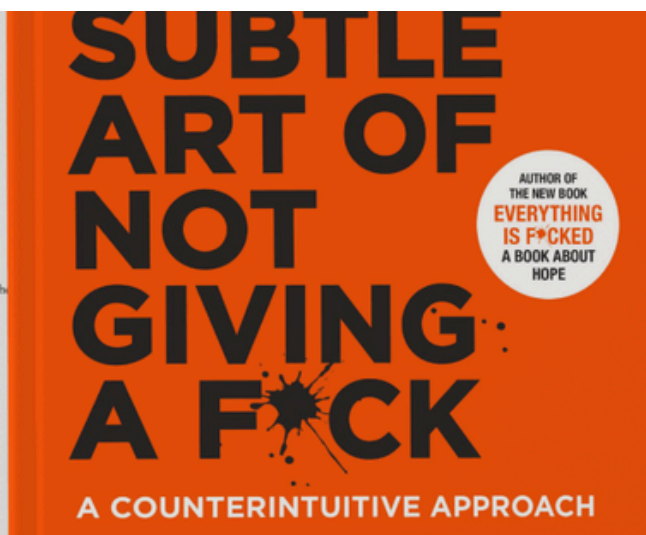
Stress-related health issues, anxiety disorders & cases of depression have skyrocketed over the past thirty years, despite the fact that everyone has or able to afford materialistic things.
Our crisis is no longer material; it's existential, its spiritual.

The Backwards Law

The desire for more positive experience is itself a negative experience. And, paradoxically, the acceptance of one's negative experience is itself a positive experience

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Don't Try

Charles Bukowski was an alcoholic, a womanizer, a chronic gambler, a lout, a cheap skate, a deadbeat, and on his worst days, a poet. He's probably the last person on earth you would ever look to for life advice or expect to see in any sort of self-help book.

Which is why he's the perfect place to start.

Bukowski wanted to be a writer. But for decades his work was rejected by almost every magazine, newspaper, journal, agent, and publisher he submitted to. His work was horrible, they said. Crude. Disgusting. Depraved. And as the stacks of rejection slips piled up, the weight of his failures pushed him deep into an alcohol-fueled depression that would follow him for most of his life.

Bukowski had a day job as a letter-filer at a post office. He got paid shit money and spent most of it on booze. He gambled away the rest at the racetrack. At night, he would drink alone and sometimes hammer out poetry on his beat-up old typewriter. Often, he'd wake up on the floor, having passed out the night before.

Thirty years went by like this, most of it a meaningless blur of alcohol, drugs, gambling, and prostitutes. Then, when Bukowski was fifty, after a lifetime of failure and self-loathing, an editor at a small independent publishing house took a strange interest in him. The editor couldn't offer Bukowski much money or much promise of sales. But he had a weird affection for the drunk loser, so he decided to take a chance on him. It was the first real shot Bukowski had ever gotten, and, he realized, probably the only one he would ever get. Bukowski wrote back to the editor: "I have one of two choices—stay in the post office and go crazy . . . or stay out here and play at writer and starve. I have decided to starve."

You'll never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You'll never live if you are looking for the meaning of life. A person who is the least invested in the success of something that actually ends achieving it.

If pursuing the positive is a negative, then pursuing the negative generates the positive. Being open with your insecurities paradoxically makes you more confident and charismatic around others. Suffering through your fears and anxieties is what allows you to build courage and perseverance.

Everything worthwhile in life is won through surmounting the associated negative experience.

When we believe that it's not okay for things to suck sometimes, then we unconsciously start blaming ourselves. We start to feel as though something is inherently wrong with us

Practical Enlightenment - Becoming comfortable with the idea that some suffering is always inevitable - that no matter what you do, life is comprised of failures, loss, regrets, and even death. Because once you become comfortable with all this stuff that life throws at you, you become invincible in a sort of low-level spiritual way. After all, the only way to overcome pain is to first learn how to bear it.

“ Everything worthwhile in life is won through surmounting the associated negative experience. The avoidance of suffering is a form of suffering. The avoidance of struggle is a struggle. The denial of failure is a failure. Hiding what is shameful is itself a form of shame. ”

Three Subtleties

Not bothering about does not mean being indifferent; it means being comfortable with being different.

Little truth about life: You can't be an important and life-changing presence of some people without also being a joke and an embarrassment to others. The point isn't to get away from the shit, but to find something you enjoy dealing with.



To not bother about adversity, you must first give importance to something more than adversity.

When a person has no problems, the mind automatically finds a way to invent some. It then follows that finding something important and meaningful in your life is perhaps the most productive use of your time and energy. Because if you don't find that meaningful something, you will bother about meaningless and frivolous causes.

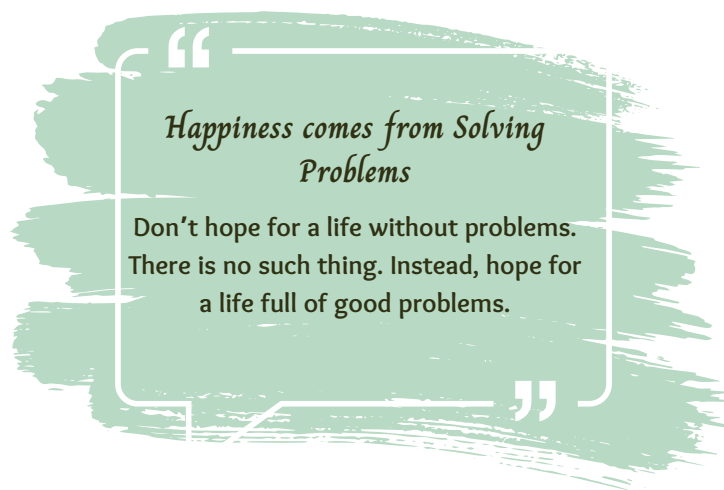
Whether you realize it or not, you're always choosing what to bother about.

We become more selective about what are we willing to bother about. This is called Maturity.

CHAPTER 2 - HAPPINESS IS A PROBLEM

Physical pain is a product of our nervous system, a feedback mechanism to give us a sense of our own physical proportions – where we can and cannot move and what we can and cannot touch. When we exceed those limits, our nervous system duly punishes us to make sure that we pay attention and never do it again.

Psychological pain is an indication of something out of equilibrium, some limitation that has been exceeded. They are not always bad or undesirable. Sometimes, the emotional pain of rejection or failure teaches us how to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.



Nobody who is actually happy has to stand in front of a mirror and tell himself that he's happy.

EMOTIONS ARE OVERRATED



Emotions are feedback mechanisms telling us that something is either likely right or likely wrong for us – nothing more, nothing less.

Emotions are part of the equation of our lives, but not the entire equation. Just because something feels good doesn't mean it is good & just because something feels bad doesn't mean it is bad.

Emotions are merely signposts, suggestions that our neurobiology gives us, not commandments, We shouldn't always trust our own emotions. Infact, we should make a habit of questioning them.

Whatever makes us happy today will no longer make us happy tomorrow.

HEDONIC TREADMILL

The idea that we're always working hard to change our life situation, but we actually never feel very different.

CHOOSE YOUR STRUGGLE

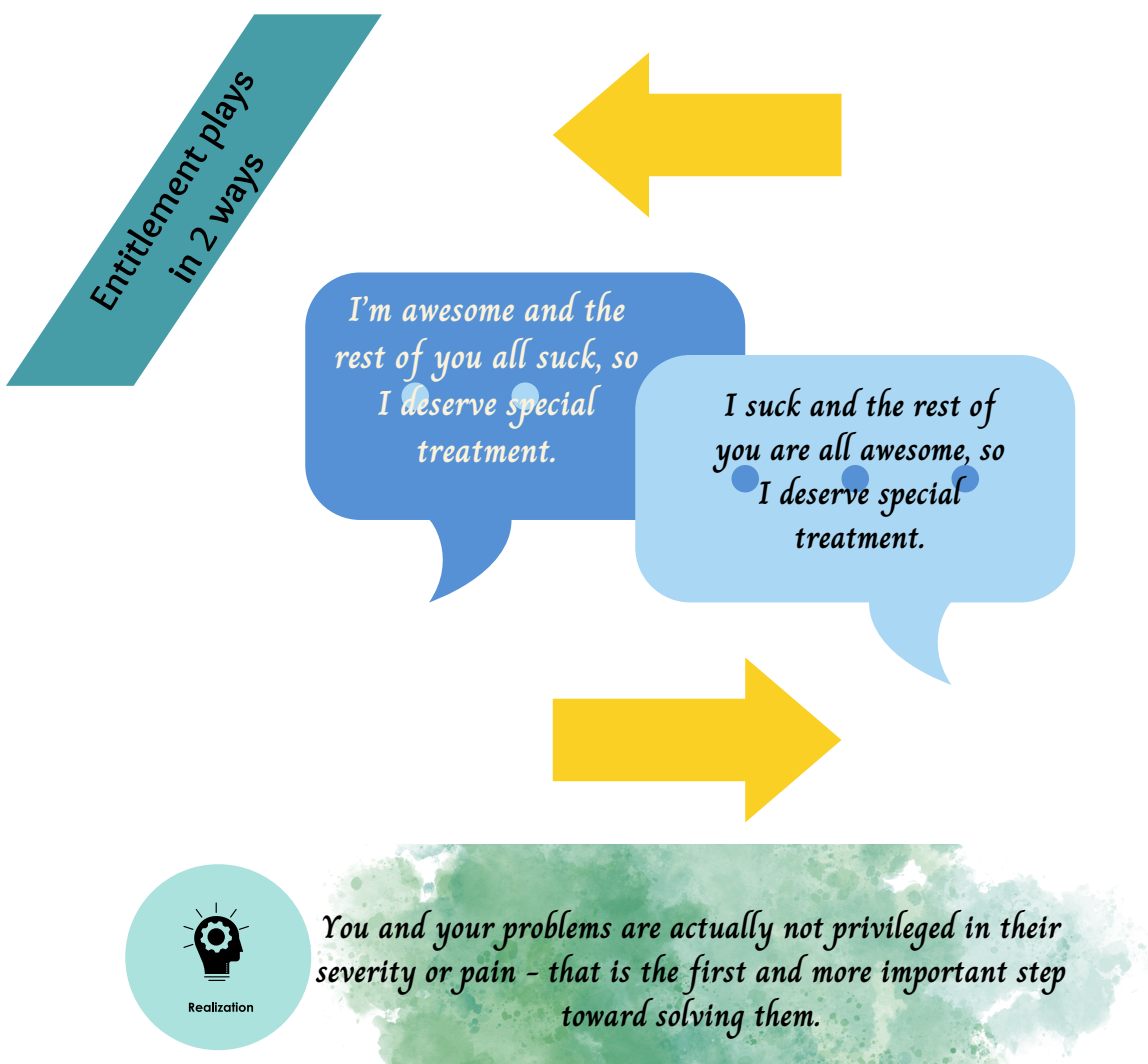
What do you want in Life? – Happiness requires Struggle. It grows from Problems.

If you want something , you should also be ready to sustain the pain that will get you what you want. If you are in love or fantasizing only the result and not loving the process, then you fail.

CHAPTER 3 - YOU ARE NOT SPECIAL

The problem with the self-esteem movement is that it measured self-esteem by how positively people felt about themselves. But a true and accurate measurement of one's self-worth is how people feel about the negative aspects of themselves.

The deeper the pain, the more helpless we feel against our problems, and the more entitlement we adopt to compensate for those problems.



The more freedom we're given to express ourselves, the more we want to be free of having to deal with anyone who may disagree with us or upset us. The more exposed we are to opposing viewpoints, the more we seem to get upset that those other viewpoints exist. The easier and more problem-free our lives become, the more we seem to feel entitled for them to get even better.

CHAPTER 4 - THE VALUE OF SUFFERING

Self-awareness is like an onion. There are multiple layers to it, and the more you peel them back, the more likely you're going to start crying at inappropriate times.

Second Layer

Ability to ask why we feel certain emotions?

These why questions are difficult & takes time to answer consistently & accurately. These questions illuminate what we consider success or failure. This layer of questioning helps us understand the root cause of the emotions that overwhelm us.



First Layer

Understanding of One's emotions

Emotional blind spots - They are those emotions that we were taught were inappropriate growing up. Identifying the blind spots in ourselves and then expressing the affections emotions appropriately, is a huge important task & worth the effort.

Third Layer

*Our Personal Values
Why do I consider this to be success/failure?*

How am I choosing to measure myself? By what standard am I judging myself and everyone around me? This is incredibly difficult to reach. Our values determine the nature of our problems, and the nature of our problems determines the quality of our lives.

VALUES



If you want to change how you see your problems, you have to change what you value and/or how you measure failure/success.

Reality-based, Socially constructive, Immediate and Controllable

Examples: Honesty, Innovation, Vulnerability, Standing up for oneself & others, Self-Respect, curiosity, charity, humility, creativity



Superstitious, Socially destructive
Not immediate or controllable.

Examples: Dominance through manipulation or violence, indiscrimination, feeling good all the time, always being the center of attention, not being alone, being liked by everybody, being rich for the sake of being rich,

Prioritize better values, choose better things. Because when you focus on needed stuff, you get better problems.

Better problems will lead to better life.

CHAPTER 5 - YOU ARE ALWAYS CHOOSING

The only difference between a problem being painful or being powerful is a sense that we chose it, and we are responsible for it.

“

The Choice

We don't always control what happens to us. But we always control how we interpret what happens to us, as well as how we respond.

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With great responsibility comes great power. The more we choose to accept responsibility in our lives, the more power we will exercise over our lives.

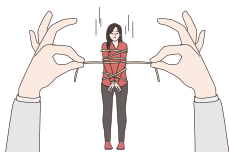


Fault is past-tense.

It results from choices that have already been made.

Responsibility is present-tense.

It results from choices that you're currently making.



People get addicted to feeling offended all the time because it gives them a high; being self-righteous and morally superior feels good.

Poker Game:

The beauty of poker is that while luck is always involved, luck doesn't dictate the long-term results of the game. Some of us get better cards than others. Game lies in the choices we make with those cards, risks we take, consequences we choose to live with.

People who consistently make the best choices in the situations they're given are the ones who eventually come out ahead in life.

CHAPTER 6 - YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT EVERYTHING (BUT SO AM I)

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'Present Me' can look back on 'Past Me''s every flaw and mistake, one day 'Future Me' will look back on 'Present Me's' assumptions and notice similar flaws.

Growth is an endlessly iterative process. When we learn something new, we don't go from "wrong" to "right". Rather, we go from wrong to slightly less wrong. We are always in the process of approaching truth and perfection without actually ever reaching truth or perfection.







CERTAINTY IS THE ENEMY OF GROWTH.

Nothing is for certain until it has already happened. That's why accepting the inevitable imperfections of our values is necessary for any growth to take place. The more you try to be certain about something, the more uncertain and insecure you feel.



Instead of striving for certainty, we should be in constant search of doubt.

-  doubt about your beliefs
-  doubt about our own feelings
-  doubt about what the future may hold for us unless we get out there and create it for ourselves.
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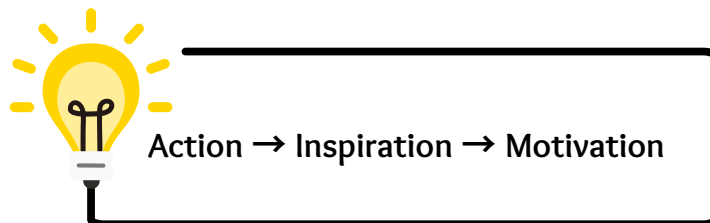
CHAPTER 7 - FAILURE IS THE WAY FORWARD

The 'do something' principle

Action isn't just the effect of motivation; it's also the cause of it. The thing about motivation is that, it's an endless loop:

Inspiration → Motivation → Action → Inspiration → Motivation → Action → Etc

Your actions create further emotional reactions and inspirations and move on to motivate your future actions. Taking advantage of this knowledge, we can actually reorient our mindset in the following way:



If we follow the "do something" principle, failure feels unimportant. It also helps us overcome procrastination. That "something" can be the smallest viable action toward something else. It can be anything.

That's often all that's necessary to get the snowball rolling, the action needed to inspire the motivation to keep going. You can become your own source of inspiration & motivation. Action is always within your reach.

Simply doing something as your only metric for success - even failure pushes you forward.

