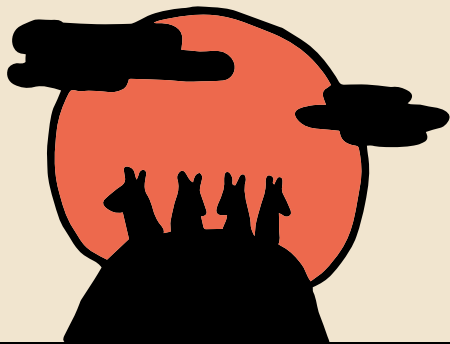


24

QUOTES

THAT BECAME A COMPASS

FOR MY LIFE



DAVID HIEATT

The best quotes come into your life and never leave.

They are on repeat in your head.

They become a secret mentor.

A board of directors.

All rolled into one powerful single sentence.

They inform you how you conduct yourself.

How you build a business.

Remind you of your values when times are tough.

They represent a way of thinking about **ONE THING**, but somehow **ALSO** about how you think about **EVERYTHING** in your life.

THEY SHOW YOU THE WAY WHEN THE WAY IS NOT CLEAR.

These quotes have definitely helped me, I hope they can help you.



"If someone steals your cab, then it wasn't your cab." – Anon.

#1

In 1987, I found myself in New York. I was 21 years old, and I was learning how to be a copywriter. I was on a 6-month city swap when I worked at Saatchi and Saatchi.

I loved New York. The energy. The people. The optimism. The humour.

It is all verb.

And the Cab drivers summed up NY for me.

So when I saw the Taxi Wisdom book, I just bought it.

The one quote that stayed with me in all that was this one.

The best quotes are multilayered.

On one level, it teaches me about Fate and to be in acceptance of it.

But if you dig deeper, it is about Entitlement, which is something to fight against.

It is one of the least attractive things to witness in another human being.

It reminds me that the world doesn't owe me a favour: *Do the work.*

To never take anything for granted. Be grateful for everything. Say lots of thank yous.

And let go of things that don't go as originally planned. They often won't.

This quote is a Swiss Army knife of a quote.



DO

"The problem is we are neither all-in at work, nor all-off at home." – Anon.

#2

This quote speaks to me because I fell into the trap of thinking the only way to grow my business was, as they say:

"Put the hours in."

But working longer is not growing your business. It is just working longer.

But the opposite is a more effective way to grow your business. Learn how to rest.

Your best ideas come from moments of quiet contemplation.

That moment when your brain puts two random things together in a completely new way.

Great ideas do an enormous amount of hard work, so you don't have to.

So creating that space to allow you to have more of them is actually the best way to grow your business.

But it is now harder to switch off than ever because of the smart-phone.

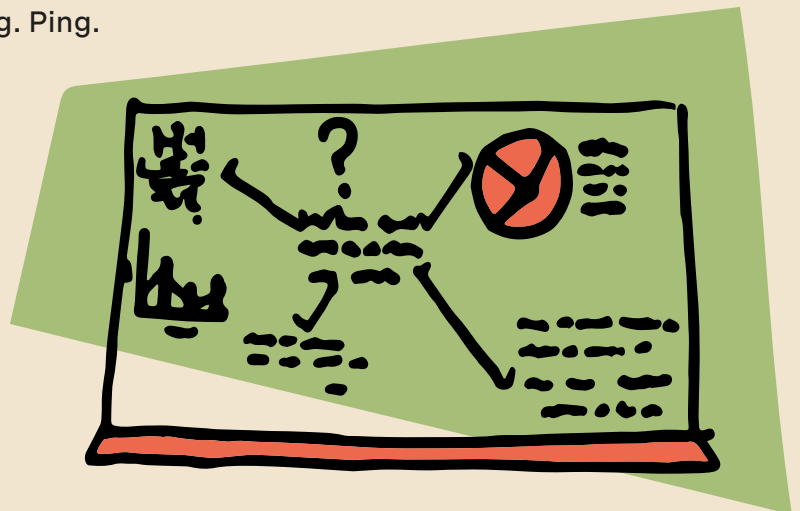
Doing our best thinking requires deep work and not checking our phones every few minutes.

We have to learn how to replace our distractions with focus.

Dopamine is a tough opponent: Ping. Ping. Ping.

But if you can find the off-button, you will win.

This quote reminds me of the importance of winning the dopamine war.



"Find your optimum, not your maximum." — DJ.

#3

I learned this on a morning run with a brilliant brand maverick and investor called DJ.

He asked the question about why is it that brands seek so much growth that, in the end, the brand loses its magic.

And no one desires it anymore. The opposite of what they set out to do.

They found the maximum for the brand, but no one can stay at the maximum.

A car can not. An athlete can not. And certainly, no brand can either.

For longevity reasons, it is better to ask the question, 'what is our optimum for our brand?'

The optimum has more longevity.

It might not have as much growth as others, but it will last longer.

It is good to remember those that rise the fastest tend to fall the furthest.

Yeah, I think about that a lot.



**"Don't wish it was easier; wish you were better."
— Jim Rohn.**

#4

Feeling stuck is something we all experience.

When I do, I keep returning to this quote. It reminds me that other people have **ALREADY** learned to solve the problem I am facing.

They didn't always have the skills to do that. They learned them.

They didn't always have the wisdom they needed; they had to go and learn it.

They didn't always have the experience to keep calm in this situation; they learned it.

So learning to ask a better question here is important:

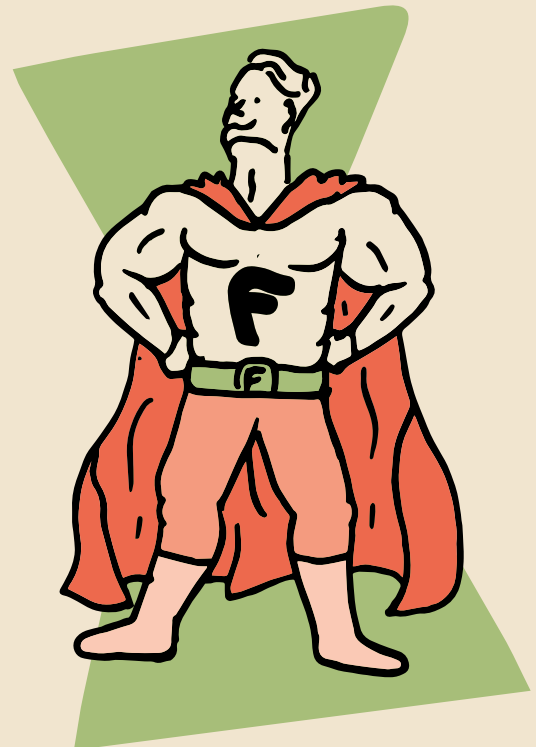
What do I need to learn to do this better? And who is my role model?

Who has **ALREADY** done this?

Who has made all the mistakes that I can avoid?

I recommend paying for any education that will make you better and save you years of doing it wrong.

Investing in your future self is never a mistake.



**"Be regular and orderly in your life, so that you
may be violent and original in your work."
— Gustave Flaubert.**

#5

As a founder, no two days are the same.

But you need a safe harbour to come back to each evening.

Your evenings can be the same.

Quiet. Restful. With family or friends.

If you are burning the candle at both ends, at some point, you will burn out.

You need to arrive at work with the most energy, had the most sleep and then let the crazy day begin.

A founder is essentially a problem solver.

And your job is to come up with solutions that no one else has.

Thinking original thoughts takes it out of you.

That 1% of inspiration requires a lot of sweat.

Come in early.

Leave on time.

Thinking is hard work.

Get back to the harbour on time each evening.



**"When I was 20, I wanted to be a millionaire...
Now that I'm a millionaire, I want to be 20."
— Alex Hormozi.**

#6

Ask any old person would they swap all their money to have their youth back, and the answer would be 100% yes.

We can always make more money, but we can't make more time.

And yet, money seems to have a higher value, especially in our younger days.

But our real wealth is our time.

And yet we squander it with deferred life plans, stay in jobs we hate, run companies we have no passion for just because they provide money, and then wonder why we suffer with depression and regret.

We didn't listen to our souls.

You let them steal your time, the one thing you **CANNOT** replace.

We set out to be a money millionaire, but in the end would swap anything to be a time millionaire.

This quote reminds me to think about how many minutes I have left.

How many summers have I left?

Am I doing this with all my heart?

It teaches me to value time much more than money.



"What boat you are in is far more important than how hard you row." – Charlie Munger.

#7

This quote reminds me of the importance of our choices.

Being on the right side of the trend or the wrong side makes more of a difference than how hard you work.

Is the wind on your back, or is it flying in your face?

When you are in a sector that is growing, everything seems easy.

But when you are in a sector that is shrinking, everything is hard.

Just like nature, industries have seasons.

Right now, electric cars are growing. Diesel cars are shrinking.

When you pick a career or a business sector, you want to be in one that is growing.

You have to pick the right boat?

That is more important than how hard you can row.



"Chase the work, not the money. The money will always follow." — Paul Arden.

#8

These words came from my old boss at Saatchi and Saatchi.

And it came at a time when lots of my contemporaries were leaving the company and doubling their salaries as they did so. And I was skint.

They were leaving to work on less creative work but more pay.

They were playing the short game with a long career.

The chances of them adding to their reputation were now less.

And the creative industry is biased toward what you have done in the last 12 months.

Especially in the early years, how much you add to your reputation is more important than how much you are adding to your bank balance.

It is you playing the long game with your career.

You keep adding to the reputation bank, so when one day you choose to withdraw from it, it is more of a meaningful sum.

As Bill, the farmer once said to me:

"You only get to sell once."

Don't play the short game with a long career.



"Push the bees where the bees want to go." — Gerald Cooper.

#9

This quote has stayed with me for over a decade.

I heard Gerald say it in his DO Lecture about bee-keeping.

It reminds me to listen.

Often in life, we try to push our ideas, but the world tells us it is not interested.

Instead of listening, we push harder.

Instead of making the product better, we push harder.

Instead of admitting that you are too early, we push harder.

When the market votes, you have to stop trying to be right and adapt to what people actually want.

As opposed to what you think they want.

Be agile.



“Do hard things, have an easy life. Do easy things, have a hard life.” – Naval.

#10

This is a big one.

Every day you have to choose between pain or pleasure.

But most people don't think about it like that.

It is an argument that goes on in my head. And yours. And we do not even realise it.

To be aware of that conversation each day can be life-changing.

Awareness makes the outcome more likely to be in your favour.

Should I go to the gym? Well, that is a hard thing. But a healthy body is worth the pain.

The pleasure is greater than the pain.

And that is the powerful secret of this quote.

To learn how to use pain and pleasure instead of having pain and pleasure use you.

If you do that, you're in control of your life. If you don't, life controls you.

As I said, it is a big one.

Once you understand everything is a battle between pain or pleasure, your ability to control it will determine your success in life.

The pain/pleasure principle is the core of all the decisions we make:

Beliefs, values, actions and decisions are built upon this principle.

This quote is the sledgehammer in the tool box.



**"For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf,
and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack."
— Rudyard Kipling.**

#11

The best thing is to be part of a team.

That is why this quote is powerful to me.

When a team comes together and decides that the team must come first, it can beat any odds.

It can achieve anything.

The selfless team is the ultimate team.

All are dependent on each other. All are equal in the pursuit of the mission.

But the ego is a hard thing to remove from the team, trust me.

If one person thinks they are more important, it all comes crashing down.

So as a coach, you have to get them off the team as quick as possible.

The team must come first.

It is a hard skill to build a team.

But, when the chemistry is right, there is nothing like it.

Teams win when the team comes first.



**"The people you should care about their opinion
of you should be the ones closest to you."
— Gary Vaynerchuk.**

#12

This is a powerful one.

I know Gary V gets a lot of beef because people think he is just the king of hustle culture, but his latest book called 12.5 is all about emotional intelligence.

It is his best book. And shows there is much more to him than what YouTube shows.

This quote got to me because it is a truth.

The people who need to hold you in the highest regard are those closest to you.

They know you, warts and all.

And they can vouch for you as a good human or not.

Social media has done a good job on persuading us that our outer circle is more important than our inner circle.

We get obsessed with people we don't know, unlikely to ever meet, who live in places we may never visit, what they think about us.

We have outsourced our self-esteem to an algorithm.

It changes our mood, our day and erodes our attention from the important.

This quote reminds me that the people who matter to me are the most important.

What they think about me really is important to me.



"In winter, prepare for summer. In Summer, prepare for Winter." – Art of War. Sun Tzu.

#13

This quote I carry around in my head in good times and bad.

It teaches me not to get too complacent.

Because it is almost inevitable, in good times, we ease off.

We think good times will never go away.

But everything has its seasons.

And sure enough, hard times return. And the hard times are harder because we got soft.

We say:

"Never again."

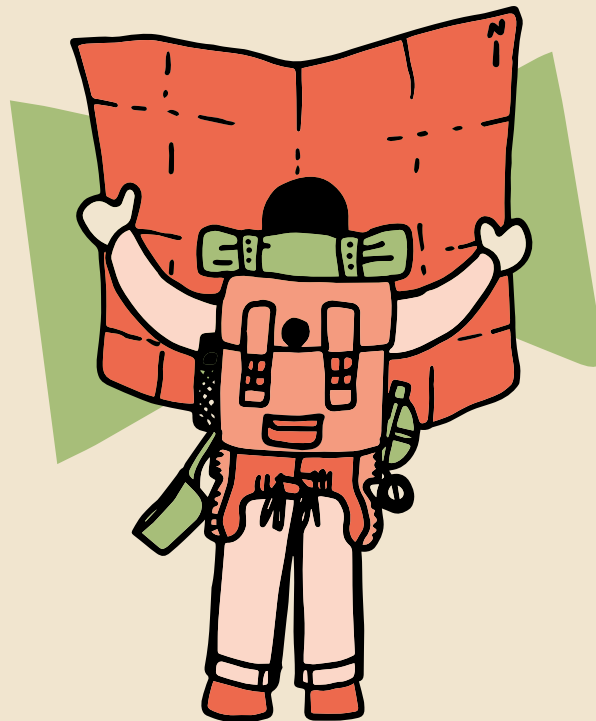
We say:

"Next time will be different."

That is the tug of war of business.

That is the ebb and flow of the seasons of economies and businesses.

This quote reminds me to plan ahead.



"You can't get to wonderful without passing through all right." – Bill Withers.

#14

Getting good at something is a journey. From where you are now to where you want to be. But the thing that makes that journey harder is two things.

1. How bad you are currently?
2. How good someone else **ALREADY** is.

And we compare. But it is not a fair comparison.

As another quote says:

"Don't compare your chapter 1 with their chapter 20."

Everyone starts at zero.

Everyone starts out and sucks.

Everyone beats themselves up.

But once you understand, it is a journey.

All you have to do is simply keep going.

Another quote that supports this is:

"How you climb a mountain is more important than reaching the top." – Yvon Chouinard.

Enjoy the ride.



**"The big money is not in the buying or selling,
but in the waiting." – Charlie Munger.**

#15

We all know the tortoise wins.

But that doesn't stop everyone from running the money race like the hare.

Patience is a superpower because most people lack it.

Most people want to get-rich quick, so they chase fashions, hype and the latest shiny new system. These tend to rarely deliver on their promise.

So people then chase the next big thing, which also fails to deliver.

Most people go from one get rich scheme to another. Like a firefly chasing the brightest light.

Without ever getting what they truly want.

Everything I have read about money and investing can really be boiled down to one thing:

PATIENCE.

Most people think short-term. And yet most wealth is created because of longer time-frames.

If you can change your time-frames, you will change your life.

To change time-frames, you have to gain conviction on your thesis.

A mountain of research will separate you from those who do a molehill of research.

Money spent on research is never wasted.

Patience is good.

Informed patience is better.



This quote has helped when things have gone wrong. And when you are running a business, things will go wrong. Guaranteed.

One story from the early days of howies was I wanted to introduce organic cotton T-shirts as I had found out how bad cotton farming was.

But this was the early days.

I phoned all our skate and bike shops to tell them our plans.

"Nice idea, Dave. How much?"

As soon as I told them a T-shirt would be an extra £10 they told me where to go.

I lost all our shops in one morning.

But it turned out that the barrier was a gift.

It made me start the howies catalogue, which was what made it famous which put it on the map.

Be grateful when the obstacle appears.

It will make you think different.



"These are the days, they always were."
— Jack Moore.

#17

I saw this on a skateboard in Cardigan skate-park, and I have carried it around with me ever since.

It reminds me to be in the moment, and if things are not going well, they are still moments.

You can not cherry-pick just the good moments.

They are all moments. Each day counts as being in the **NOW**.

If I think back to the times running our first business, they were the toughest days.

But those days are now looked upon with a chuckle, but at the time, they were painful.

You can't pick what comes at you in life, but you can choose how to respond.

Who knew you could find life answers on a skateboard?



"It is not how good you are but how good you want to be." – Paul Arden.

#18

Another quote from my old boss from his book by the same title.

This really asks the question, what is better:

TALENT OR HUNGER?

Talent can get lazy and therefore lose what it has.

Whereas hunger never stops. Never settles. Never gets complacent.

So, in the end, hunger wins. Always.

I think about this when I hire. And ideally, you have both.

But if you had to choose one. Pick hunger.

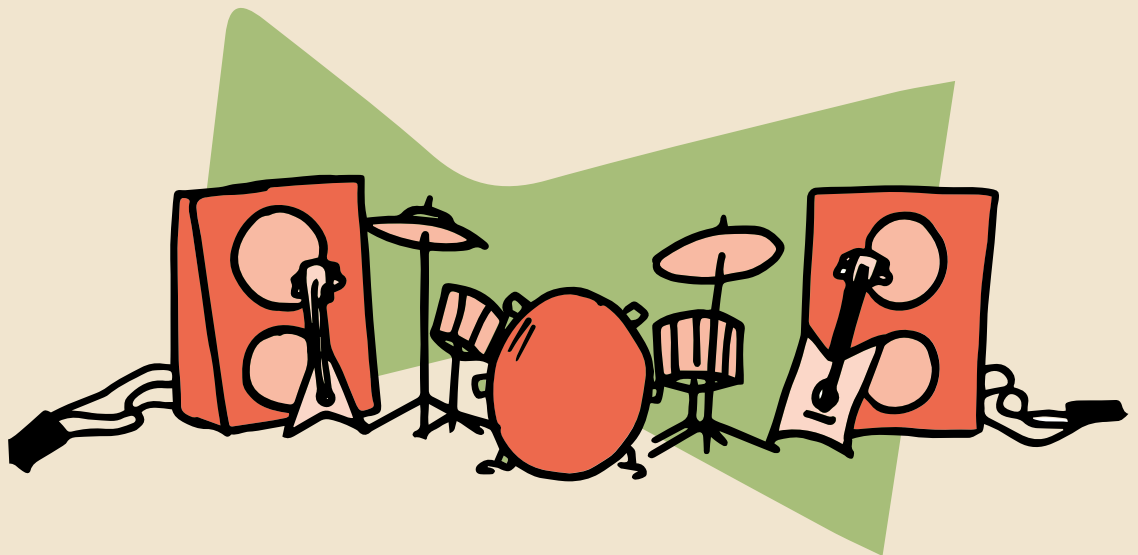
Another way to look at this is from a quote from Naval:

"What feels like play to you, but looks like work to others."

This to me, explains why hunger wins.

They keep going because it doesn't even feel like work to them.

DO



Gareth, who I go sea swimming with, heard this on a podcast, and I quickly added it to my portfolio of life quotes.

To me, it says that there are times when we want something too much.

And it stops us from performing.

That time when you want to do a great talk, but you care too much. You don't relax.

That time you want a relationship to work so much that you end up driving them away.

That time when you are trying to raise money for your business, and the people on the other side of the table can see your desperation.

This quote reminds me not to focus on the outcome.

The hardest thing is to relax when we care the most.

Somehow you have to make a contract with failure and say you accept the worse that can happen.

And then lastly, practise like crazy. So, you can relax the most when you care the most.

Inner confidence is great energy to be around.



**"We are kept from our goals, not by obstacles,
but by a clearer path to a lesser goal."
— Robert Brault.**

#20

This I heard from Benjamin Hardy in one of his coaching talks.

Most people understand time management. But attention management is what really matters.

Where is our attention? And where should it be?

Most people do **NOT** focus their attention on what matters.

Our biggest opponent each day is Busy.

It is this incredible trap we fall into. **BUSY MAKES IT EASY TO BE BUSY.**

We think we are doing well if we are busy. But there is a huge gulf between busy and effective. It is seductive to fall into the bust trap every day.

It is easier to go and answer emails than to think.

It is easier to admin rather than strategic problem-solving.

It is easier to have a meeting than ask yourself what is the real problem here.

I think about this quote because it is so easy to be busy.

And it is much harder to make time to think.

The act that will actually change our business or future trajectory.



**"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader."
— Robert Frost.**

#21

Writing is an exchange of energy.

When you feel something, your reader will too.

Most writing is done as a chore. Not out of love. And that energy is transferred.

Most writers never find their voice because they are not willing to open up.

To release the handbrake.

To let others feel their pain, their laughter, their regret.

Most people care too much about what others think. And that stops them from opening up.

This quote reminds me that I am at my best when I let go, release the handbrake, and let others in. I am strongest when I show vulnerability.

I am at my best when I share me at my worst.

Indeed, as another great quote reminds me:

"What is most personal is most general."



I saw this quote in Daniel Meyer's book Setting the Table.

And I think he heard someone else say it. So not quite sure of the source.

But as a mantra, it struck a chord.

He tells the story of constantly moving the salt pot to where it should be until people get that the salt pot goes there.

Rather than have outbursts of anger, the way to show people what is the right way to do something is to remind them gently.

And to keep doing it. And doing it.

It reminds me that building something great takes time.

You are trying to raise the standard but **ALSO** to never let it slip back.

When you see the salt pot out of position, you move it back.

A culture of excellence is an ongoing thing. It is a daily quest.

Each day. Every day. Relentlessly.

Until one day, the salt pot is where it should be.



This is a story about a man who in 1994 had become a big fan of an unknown band.

And wanted to help them become popular. So he built them a website. Hundreds of thousands of fans visited it when this unknown band suddenly become a huge deal.

That band was Green Day.

The website became so popular that Green Day's manager contacted the fan who built it and asked if they could make it the band's official page.

The response was: *"Great; it's all yours."*

He just gave it to them.

A year earlier, one of the visitors to the website had written an email to him to suggest that Green Day was just Pop music. And they should be able to find more than just Green Day if you were a *"real"* punk fan.

So, a series of links were added to the website, so fans of *"real"* punk had more choice.

The name of the fan who built Green Day's website was Adam Rifkin.

Some five years later, Adam emailed the fan who had sought to educate him on what *"real"* punk was and had a meeting with him.

The name of the person who had emailed him was Graham Spencer. He started Excite, which went on to become one of the early web portals and search engines.

So when Adam asked him for advice on his internet start-up, he agreed to meet because he had helped him.

Graham introduced Adam to a VC, which ended up funding his start-up.

When asked how he managed to pull this off, he told his friend: *"Givers get lucky."*



Human beings are better at adding complexity to their lives than subtracting it. Truth.

The same goes for businesses: *"What if we did this? Or this?"*

Rarely do we say: *"What if we stopped doing this?"*

This is why I keep coming back to Tim's quote whenever I think we are at a fork in the road.

Life easier? Life harder?

It sounds so obvious when you put it like that.

Yet, we go to overwhelm more often than we go to calm.

We spread ourselves too thin rather than doing one thing well. This pattern is on repeat.

It leads me to question: *"Why do we do it that way?"* And do we **CONTINUE** to do it that way?

Because we **ALWAYS** have. Which is why this quote is powerful.

If we change our questions, we change our life.

What if working harder and longer is just a symptom of not finding an easier way to do something?

A good bedfellow to this quote is from Bill Gates: *"I choose a lazy person to do a hard job. Because a lazy person will find an easy way to do it."*

Sure, there is a part of me that thinks anything worthwhile has to be hard work.

I even say: *"Easy, don't build great."*

But this quote has got me to rethink that.

It has got me to be more strategic with time and energy.

How can I get the result I want with the least amount of effort and money?

It is a good starting point before you start out on a new project.

