

CHAD HOWSE'S
ONE MONTH OF
MANHOOD



30 DAYS TO A GRITTIER YOU

DAY 1

A GEM CANNOT BE POLISHED WITHOUT FRICTION

“A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man without trials.” ~ Seneca

To endure is not enough. We all face hardships in our lives, and to simply go through them without complaining is not enough to constitute a life well lived. One must pursue hardships, aim high enough to experience the greatest trials, face fears so great that an average man would crumble.

Don't pat yourself on the back because you've endured some kind of trial. Realize, in order to live well and to flourish, you need trials to forge the manly virtues and qualities that grand goals depend on.

Go into the dark corners of the world. Attempt what others are afraid to do. Endure when most would quit and give up. Persist longer, strive harder, get up earlier, work harder, and do all of the things that are becoming unpopular in our modern politically correct society.

In short, seek our trials because they make you the man you want to become. It's trials that will help you become a winner.

DAY 2

MAKE YOURSELF A MAN

"I mean to make myself a man, and if I should succeed in that, I shall succeed in everything else." ~ James A. Garfield

A man is a lot of things, most of all he is dependable. He is his word. He is his work. He isn't the complaints and cries of the masses. He's stoic and resolute.

To make yourself a man in modern times is to essentially buck the times, it's to oppose the trends. To be a man is to want not what trivial minds aspire to possess, but to see the deeper meaning in life, in what we're here to pursue.

Make yourself a man, and you'll succeed in everything else.

Aspire to possess the virtues that the life you want to lead depend on. They're virtues that will help you persist, but not only through anything, through the doors and paths that you should follow as an honorable man. As society turns its back on the manly virtues that built its roads and bridges and fostered its freedom, aspire to develop what was once praised.

To make yourself a man is a necessary and honorable quest. Manliness is earned. Don't mistake it with being a male, they're two very different things.

Manliness is won by enduring life's hardships with honor. It's won by doing what must be done without seeking acclaim. It's earned through persistence without false pride.

Make yourself a man; it will be the foundation for the life now only found in your dreams.

DAY 3

HONOR IS FLEETING

“Because there is very little honor left in American life, there is a certain built-in tendency to destroy masculinity in American men.” –Norman Mailer

Be aware of the trends that develop in society and why they develop. You can't always go with the flow nor should you want to side with the masses. Sometimes you have to fight what's going on around you by forging something stronger within you.

Honor is fleeting. It cannot flourish where vanity is king. It won't thrive where envy and jealousy are the most common attributes.

Honor is the standard by which you carry yourself. It's acting with justice and respect, integrity and character. It's being a moral man when everyone else acts in convenience.

Honor is doing what must be done and what's just even if it be a detriment to yourself. You don't matter, your character does. Character is what helps you make decisions. Character is what helps you navigate the uncertain and murky waters of life.

Convenience has no place in an honorable man's life. Convenience doesn't rule his decision-making process. It can't. Yet, it takes practice and self-awareness to understand what road should be travelled and what decision should be made.

We cannot be men if we do not live and act with honor in spite of our own welfare.

It's easy to be honorable when honor is the easy decision, the sexy decision, the profitable path. But that's not what honor is. Honor is staying the course through ridicule and pain, through trials, tribulations, and disaster. It's not compromising who you are for convenience's sake, nor fame's, nor popularity's, nor wealth's.

As honor leaves American life, the attempt to destroy masculinity in American men, in all men, will follow.

Don't let it.

ONE MONTH OF MANHOOD

Aspire not only to be a good man, but aim to be good at being a man. Be the protector and provider of your family and your community. Be the last line of defense. Be the source of logic and wisdom. Be all you can be or be nothing.

DAY 4

FEAR REGRET

"It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live." ~ Marcus Aurelius

Fear regret. Most fear death or bodily harm or failure, but it's the fear of regret that will propel us to attempt things we won't attempt if we fear the latter more than the former.

The fear of regret, of dying with a heart filled with the stinging pain of not taking advantage of opportunity, pushes us to live. The fear of death confines us to an existence devoid of daring adventure or audacious attempts.

Don't fear death, it's a constant. It's something that will come in its time regardless of whether you're ready or not. Fearing regret, of dying on your deathbed wishing you'd been more and done more and accomplished more should conjure a pit in your stomach that can't be cured until you start doing what you know you must do, living in a way you deem as life, not mere existence.

Most live a life of cowardice, a life in avoidance of living. They're pussies. Don't be a pussy. Don't fear death, it's an illogical thing to fear because it grabs every single one of us. Not living, however, is something most do but everyone has the choice not to do.

We can all live, few ever do. Be of the few, not of the many. Live a damn daring life in the face of irrational fears. Be a badass. Don't be a little bitch.

DAY 5

WELCOME ADVERSITY

“No man is more unhappy than he who never faces adversity. For he is not permitted to prove himself.” ~ Seneca

You have no reason to try to prove yourself to others. They really don't matter in your pursuit, one that should be *yours* and yours alone.

You have to, however, prove yourself *to yourself*. That's how you gain confidence. That's how you gain power, strength, and character. And a man who never faces adversity can never really know what he's made of nor what he's worth.

Seek adversity by aiming higher and persisting. The flaw in many of our pursuits in life is that we think we *find* meaning. No, meaning is something you create, not by jumping from project to project or job to job, but by sticking it out and creating meaning in the least likely of places.

The profession is irrelevant. The aim has to be high, but the persistence has to be infinite.

Don't run from adversity, it will always be your best teacher.

DAY 6

NEVER ACCEPT HANDOUTS

“You cannot help people permanently by doing for them, what they could and should do for themselves.” ~Lincoln

Don't accept hand-outs. Accept investments and guidance, but don't look for a gift. The entitled look for a gift. If you truly want to learn, ask for knowledge, not a freebie.

40% of millennials think they deserve a promotion after two years in a job no matter of merit. That is fucking insane. That is the definition of being a little bitch. It has nothing to do with being good at something, with growing, with improvement, it's the product of a generation who've been awarded participation medals.

Merit means nothing to them but it will always mean something in the real world.

DAY 7

CRAFT YOUR OWN DAMN PATH

“If you want to succeed you should strike out on new paths, rather than travel the worn paths of accepted success.” ~ John D. Rockefeller

In business, don't look for trends; instead invent a new one. Don't follow leaders in your industry, craft out a new niche.

In life, don't pursue what has already been pursued, and don't follow paths that have been laid out for you. This is the worst trap that the majority of us fall into. We don't take time to really think and decide if this path we're heading down is the one in which we *ideally* want to venture.

Success is as much about accumulation – of knowledge, skills, wealth, land, etc. – as it is about exploration. You need both, and when combined you find true success no matter how you define it nor what you place the most importance upon.

Spend some time, real time, a day or better yet a week thinking about your path and what path you want to head down.

You don't have to make a dramatic change, sometimes we head down a road simply to learn, it isn't our eventual direction, but we're learning, absorbing, acquiring the knowledge necessary to step into those paths yet to be travelled.

DAY 8

YOU'RE IN CONTROL

"You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength." ~ Marcus Aurelius

So much of our time is spent worrying about things we cannot control. We fret over our birth place, the money we were or weren't born into, the 'breaks' we've gotten in life, the weather, and so forth, that we ignore what we *can* control.

You have complete control over your mind. Realizing this and using this control is power, it's strength, it sets you apart from almost every human on the planet who's stuck blaming someone or something for how their lives are going.

You have power to choose to see opportunity where others only see crisis. This is the greatest gift we can possess, and all it takes is awareness.

Take a notepad and a pen and spend a day writing about your thoughts. How do you think when someone cuts you off? What's your reaction when you get an email from an unhappy customer? How do you think about your prospects in life?

Are you a slave to your desires? Do they determine how you act and who you are? Do they shape your mood and worldview? Do you let emotions prevent the opportunity for clarity?

You cannot control the weather, so why fret over it?

You cannot control where you were born, but you can control where you end up.

Spend time thinking about the things you can control, like your thoughts, your reactions to emotions and desires and be a man of strength rather than a victim to every whim that enters your brain.

DAY 9

CRISIS IS A GIFT

“Difficulty shows what men are. Therefore when a difficulty falls upon you, remember that God, like a trainer of wrestlers, has matched you with a rough young man. Why? So that you may become an Olympic conqueror; but it is not accomplished without sweat.” ~ Epictetus

We tend to get down when difficulty enters our lives. It's the natural way of thinking. When something unplanned and negative happens, we pity ourselves rather than seeing such an event as Epictetus describes above.

Don't just accept difficulty, revel in it. See it as opportunity rather than disaster. Our history of humans is written by men who've overcome difficulty, who've found the good in it while others chose to pity their plight.

A decade ago I developed horrible spending habits. I spent as my pals spent – which was *a lot*. I bought because I wanted. I wasn't in control of where my money went and thus, *it went*. Combine my ignorance with some bad business breaks and I found myself in seemingly insurmountable debt.

It sucked. Gone was my financial freedom. Gone was my ability to do what I wanted, when I wanted to do it. In front of me, however, was a great opportunity that has served me well ever since.

I needed to learn to budget. I needed this lesson to come into my life to buck the trends of a consumer society where people place value not on work done, accomplished, or character, but on *stuff*. It's idiotic, but I needed a painful lesson to teach me how dumb that focus on life is so when I *did make money*, I wouldn't fall into the same trap again.

Crisis is a gift. It's a teacher. Use it, don't let it use you, break you, crush you. There are lessons in every moment of our lives, and we either choose to see them or choose to ignore them.

Take the path of the warrior, not the coward. Don't pity where you are, learn from where you are and do what you must to climb out of the despair you find yourself in.

DAY 10

BE A MAN OF ACTION

“We do not admire the man of timid peace. We admire the man who embodies victorious effort; the man who never wrongs his neighbor, who is prompt to help a friend, but who has those virile qualities necessary to win in the stern strife of actual life.” –Theodore Roosevelt

The stern strife of actual life is only made more difficult by increasingly audacious ambitions. The man who aims to achieve little won't face many obstacles in his quest for mediocrity. The man who aims to conquer the stars will face forces he may not believe he can conquer.

That's the stern strife of actual life. Life, on its own, is difficult, but instead of asking less of yourself to acquire an easier road, ask more. Ask that you become something you're not already. Let go of the path you're on and step into an entirely different realm.

While the focus of TR's quote is *who we admire*, it speaks to who we must become. Admiration isn't the goal. The goal is to be, as TR was, a man of action and victorious effort.

The pat on the back doesn't come after a day's work well done. This is who you are. You are a man who never quits, of course, but also a man who *attacks* life day in and day out. It isn't the end game that matters to you, it's the pushing of Sisyphus' stone, the act of the work, the process, the *being*, that drives you. Applauds and acclaim are of little value.

Too many of us live timid lives. We fear death or harm or failure, and we let that fear stand in the way of *life*. We let setbacks set us back. We let failures get us down. We allow monotony and safety to creep into our lives forgetting the young lions we once were, replacing tenacity with timidity, vigor with vanity. We allow a system of expectations to shape who we attempt to become, a man devoid of imagination and passion, one simply going through the motions until motions cease.

I get lost in this sedated reality. I allow it to become who I am and how I live until I read a word, a quote, a book that snaps me out of it and sets me back on the right path, but that right path has yet to be daring enough to extract who I can be from who I currently am.

This has to consistently be on our mind. We cannot slide into the easy life when the daring life is a much more attractive option.

We may die. We may fail. To aim higher than any man and to have the courage to live a higher ideal, however, will guarantee a life lived rather than one that's merely existed.

Most visit this planet for 80 or so years. Rarely do we come across a man that is truly giving his all, who is living in its purest form. He's the man of vigorous effort. He's pursuing goals, he's working harder, he's thinking bigger, but he's also venturing into corners of the world where most wouldn't dare to go, chasing adventures that few ever pursue.

This has to be you.

To let another minute go by living as a fraction of who you can be further reinforces the fact that you'll live forever as a shell of the man you could have been if, after reading an article, a quote, a book, you made a firm decision rather than only nodding in agreement then carrying on with a life without meaning, lacking action and deficient of adventure. You and I cannot go on being such a way.

Within life there are moments that define us. Sure, we are our habits. Habits change in moments of decision, where you turn your back on who you were and become who you aspire to be as night time comes and, for a few hours, your dreams become your reality.

DAY 1 1

GIVE YOUR ALL

“Happiness does not consist of pastimes and amusements but in virtuous activities.” ~ Aristotle

The Greek “eudaimonia” is what we translate as happiness; however, it more precisely means “living well” or “excellence”.

To the Greeks, happiness was more than laughter or pleasure. It consisted of something deeper. It was good and virtuous. It was our proper function as humans, more significant than self-gratification, more meaningful than vacations or beers with the pals.

Our proper function as humans.

Your proper function has to be your potential; it cannot be anything less. It's not merely doing or being but being you at your best. Part of that is goodness, how you are to others, how you serve, how you make them feel, how you teach them, but another part of that is how much of yourself you give.

We leave so much in the tank every day. We should be crawling into bed as a refuge from the battles faced and enemies defeated during the day. We don't do that. We don't give our all. We don't even give our focus to a single thing, we chop it up and hand it to multiple things at a given time, but never that which best deserves our attention.

Your highest purpose as a human cannot be split, it must be a singular focus, an arduous pursuit, only one thing at a time and while that thing is your only focus, there should be no other.

Give your time to something virtuous. Happiness isn't found in pleasure or constantly chasing our desires, but in a higher pursuit.

DAY 12

MASTER THY SELF

“No man is free who is not master of himself.” ~ Epictetus

Most men are victims, and their victimhood isn't at the hands of a more powerful oppressor, but in their hands. They don't have mastery over the Self. Every desire that comes into their minds is followed to its fruition.

No man can be free if he isn't free from himself and to master himself.

Are you free?

Can you control a desire and determine if its genuinely in your best interests to follow in a given moment, in *this* moment?

Do you let your weaker tendencies to prevail? Those like lust and envy, sloth and laziness, or do you have a fundamental understanding that your time and energy and imagination are best given to other things, like adventure, or work, or training of the body to become tougher, stronger, mightier?

Mastery over the Self is difficult. To *not be a master* of the Self is easy, you simply do whatever you feel like doing in a moment, and avoid the things you *must do* to get what you want from life and become who you must become.

What are your weaknesses?

In what areas of your life do you lack control?

Come to grips with where you're weak. Write it down. Proclaim it. Those who seek to hide their weaknesses will always be weak. Finding clarity is simply being self-aware enough and courageous enough to admit where you're weak. People like to be ignorant of their weaknesses, and I'm not talking about the blatant ones.

Do you have control over your spending? I mean *real control*. Or are their motivations that you don't own, that are the result of clever advertising? Apply that question to every area of your life. Cover the things you're not proud of, but also that don't help you improve.

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Are you in control of your TV watching? Even more importantly, are you in control of your thoughts?

Can you stop the depressive thinking that plagues us all or do you follow that rabbit hole until you're off your game and you give up on a day.

Remember that each day is your life. You cannot separate the two nor can you give one more importance than the other.

You ruin one day, it could be your last. You ruin one day and you have an excuse to ruin another, and before you know it you've ruined them all.

Be real with yourself. Where do you lack control? Then figure out how to take control back.

Freedom is what every man needs and it's what we all want. We just have ignorant ideas of what freedom is. We think freedom is the freedom to do stupid, selfish, lazy things. That isn't freedom. Freedom is control and focus. Gain control over yourself and you'll have *real* freedom.

DAY 13

KEEP AN UNTROUBLED SPIRIT

“The first rule is to keep an untroubled spirit. The second is to look things in the face and know them for what they are.” ~ Marcus Aurelius

An untroubled spirit is one that lacks guilt. That doesn't come from being a sociopath, but from being a man who does good, honorable things with his time and lends his mind to learning and improving, not tearing others down in a quest to get to the top.

An untroubled spirit comes from simplicity. To be a simpleton is frowned upon. Blowhards who know many things look down on those who knew but a few things, even if that specialized knowledge aides other humans in a greater fashion than the blowhard's diversified knowledge. Simplicity, however, is the key to productivity and happiness. It's the path to a life devoid of stress and worry.

When you know what's good and what's bad, and that should be something very simple, black and white even, life becomes easy. All you then need are the balls to live life according to those decisions that are right.

It's when you sell your soul, when you compromise your values for momentary pleasure or brief reward, you cannot possibly have an untroubled spirit.

Seeing things for what they are is simple, but difficult. We latent motivations, underlying aspirations, weaknesses, that lead us to see things not for what they are, but how we'd like them to be, whether that's good or bad. We attach emotions to things that don't need them, that are clouded by them.

We're swayed by media that presents a story to fit their narrative. We're influence by friends and foes and family that all want something for us or from us and what they show us, who they present themselves as is the cause of what they want.

We're gullible, even to ourselves, our own faults and follies. Seeing things as they are takes calm where rage wants to win. It takes stoicism where emotion wants to dominate.

Both may be simple, but they're far from easy. Yet, to live a flourishing life, a good life, a happy and successful life, we need both as our foundation.

DAY 14

DISCIPLINE EQUALS FREEDOM

“Your choice in life is simple; you’re either disciplined or you’re unsuccessful.”

Discipline equals freedom. Jocko Willink says that over and over again as a way to explain discipline and its true benefits. Without it you cannot save, nor can you earn. You can’t live life on your own terms without discipline, instead you’ll be a victim to every wish and desire that comes into your wee little brain.

Discipline is the route to freedom, and freedom is necessary for happiness, yet discipline is avoided, it’s chided, looked down upon by those who aim to live life on whim, without direction or purpose or meaning, claiming to be in the present, yet for no good reason.

You have a choice in life, and that choice is discipline or failure. Failure is dependency, it’s never creating something of value, it’s being a slave to your desires and never fully understanding that desires are often the distraction, not the true source of happiness that we all crave.

What do you really want in life?

Are you fine with accomplishing nothing, with choosing ease over meaning?

What you want is what you give your time to. Most people give their time to dreaming or TV. Winners give their time to activities worthy of their time, understanding that time is limited, fleeting, and disappearing.

Choose discipline, and not just in your work, choose it in how you use your time, to give your time to things that you deem important, beneficial, things you may even call *living*.

Don’t get lost in the lie that is doing whatever you want in a given moment. That’s not how happiness is earned nor created, it’s how it’s avoided, it’s how life is avoided. Have the discipline to decipher what is good and the balls to act upon only what is right.

DAY 15

BE GOOD AT BEING A MAN

*“You have to be a man before you can be a gentleman.” –John Wayne
(McLintock!)*

Being good at being a man, ‘tis a skill and a pursuit lost on males today. We want to be good men before we learn how to be men.

What is being *good at being a man*?

Well, forget goodness, and focus only on manliness.

Men are protectors and providers. You must have the aptitude to protect. That is, learn how to fight and learn how to use a gun.

Choose one discipline, then get really good at it. Box, kickbox, learn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu or Judo. A part of being a man is learning how to protect those who depend on you and learning how to kill those who threatened you, your family, or your way of life.

Men have grit, they possess a toughness that mere males don’t have. They’re willing to do what must be done even if it comes at their detriment or downfall. Get in a fight for the sake of getting in a fight. Add habits to your daily routine that make you tougher and remove those that weaken you, like TV or porn or sleeping in.

The world isn’t a nice place if you get the guts to truly get out there in it. It’s ruthless. You realize this when you see wolves take down an elk or a bear take down a doe. I’ll leave you with far better advice than I could ever give...

*And he said, “Son, this world is rough
And if a man’s gonna make it, he’s gotta be tough
And I knew I wouldn’t be there to help ya along
So I give ya that name and I said goodbye
I knew you’d have to get tough or die
And it’s the name that helped to make you strong”*

*He said, “Now you just fought one hell of a fight
And I know you hate me, and you got the right*

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*To kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do
But ya ought to thank me, before I die
For the gravel in ya guts and the spit in ya eye
'Cause I'm the son-of-a-bitch that named you Sue"*

DAY 16

DO WHAT YOU MUST

“A man does what he must – in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures – and that is the basis of all human morality.” ~ Churchill

We’ve gotten away from this. Today it seems as though males do what’s convenient, not what has to happen not only for their betterment, but for the improvement of the lives of those that depend on them.

In short, we’ve become pussies. Not all of us, but when you see the debt-per-house ratio, it’s clear we’re not living by the old school values that created and defended great and free nations.

We’re buying to fit into an image that has nothing to do with what we actually want and need in life.

Think about what you *really* want in life.

Go deep. Think about the land, the ranch, the farm, the mansion, the family, the animals, the job, the legacy, whatever... Think about that ideal. Write that shit down. Now, think about what you’re doing on a daily basis.

Is it in pursuit of this ideal or are you wasting your time and money on getting side-tracked by bullshit?

Likely not. Our purpose largely differs from our actions. Our dreams, our ideal breaks heavily from what we spend the majority of our money *on* and what we spend most of our time *doing*.

Do what must be done, forget about personal consequences or the opinions of people who wouldn’t dare do a greater good at a personal detriment. Forget about popular opinion. Forget about what others think.

Define your life. Define right and wrong and act accordingly.

DAY 17

WHATEVER YOUR LIFE'S WORK IS, DO IT WELL

"Whatever your life's work is, do it well! A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better." ~ Martin Luther King Jr.

Excellence is a duty, not an option. It's using what you have as best you can. The job is irrelevant, it should be done as best you can because the other option – to do it as most humans would, as if a clock is being punched or time is counting down – is unbefitting of a human who knows that time is, indeed, counting down, and that other people have sacrificed and slaved and hustled to give us the opportunities we have whether we acknowledge them as such or not.

A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better.

Think about that. Fuck. Even writing this article and reading that quote would require that I edit as if I was aspiring for the Pulitzer, or when I work in the yard, to work as if I was tending to the Vatican gardens.

Whatever your life's work, be it author or garbage man or stock broker or banker or carpenter, do it better than anyone could ever hope to do it. Make it so that they can't match your attention to detail nor the quantity of your output.

We spend so much time dreaming about our ideal job but we're not giving our current career the respect it deserves. *You are your work.* The quality and the attention you give to your job is a reflection of the quality of your life.

Think about the effort you give, is it enough? Is it your best? Why not give only your best, day in and day out if it only takes a little more effort?

Be the man who takes pride in all and live the life as the man you have the potential and the capacity to become, but instead of waiting to become him, be him today, tomorrow, and always.

DAY 18

GO FROM GOOD TO GREAT

“Don’t be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.” ~ John D. Rockefeller

We do what we’re expected to do and too often these expectations are those of an average man, a mediocre man.

You have to pair this with MLK’s quote about doing your job better than anyone else can do it. The pursuit matters a great deal, don’t dare sell yourself short in what you aspire to achieve, but wherever you are right now you have to live as that man that you aspire to become.

Don’t be afraid to be something better than what you are and who you are and what you aim to do every day.

Give up the good to go for the great. It’s a decision, one that’s backed by actions that fit a higher standard.

These actions creep into your thoughts, you can’t lend your mind to dirty, negative, unproductive thoughts if you’re to give up the way that most people live and become something better, aspire for something more. You cannot share the same habits as the average, those who give their time to TV and gossip and envy and even dreaming.

Don’t allow negative thoughts to grab your mind, instead, appreciate where you are and what you have and the fact that you can shape your future if you so choose.

It starts with a decision, sure, but it has to be carried out in your thoughts and actions and in your daily habits and it has to be in stark contrast to who you were because, well, who you are right now isn’t who you can be and who you can be and the life you can pursue are your duty to chase.

This isn’t a decision that should have to be made. To actually consider the choice of doing average work, choosing a mediocre path, versus doing more work, having more discipline, being more ambitious, should not be a choice, but a duty that each man pursues.

DAY 19

CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” ~ Marcus Aurelius

Where do you let your mind take you when you wake up?

Are your thoughts about your work, your dream, your pursuit, or do they immediately follow an envious trail, one where you despise those doing what you wish you ‘could do’?

Are you thinking about the wonderful life you have – something that’s a matter of perspective and your perspective should lend you to agree with that statement – or do you think about what you wish you had?

Ambition is a great thing, necessary thing, it’s a man’s duty to be better than he was yesterday. To ignore what you have, both in talent, potential, and in those wonderful people that surround you, is ignorant. It is literally ignoring what’s right in front of you.

Our life is what our thoughts make it, thus, we can make our life into whatever we want it to be.

This is where the real power of this wisdom lies. *You* have control over your happiness, your level of purpose, meaning, value in life.

DAY 20

YOU ARE WHERE YOU DESERVE TO BE

“Not to feel one’s misfortunes is not human, not to bear them is not manly.”
Seneca

Brilliant.

To be a little bitch is not manly (another way to put it).

Your misfortunes are yours and they’re yours to bear. That sounds incredibly insensitive, but it’s also true. We’ve gotten away from truth lately. We’ve created victims where there aren’t any.

We’ve ignored the roles of the sexes. We’ve turned our back on the fact that there *is* such thing as manliness, and it’s earned not innate. It’s earned through bearing one’s burdens manfully, with honor and courage and strength.

This isn’t to say you don’t talk about them in an effort to find a solution, it’s simply to say that you don’t complain about them, or talk about them looking for someone to save you from your misfortunes.

A reality you, I, we all have to come to grips with is that we are where we deserve to be. This place may suck, it may be warranted, or we could have simply lost the birth lottery. The reality is, however, that we are here for a reason, and it’s our duty to end up in a much better place. That doesn’t merely mean financially, but in our relationships, in the value we give others, in the men we are.

That better place is earned by bearing misfortunes with honor. It’s won by acquiring greater obstacles that come with more audacious goals.

Do not wish your misfortunes would go away. Bear them. Bear them with your head high and your mind set on finding, no, *creating* a solution.

You’re a man, don’t forget, and men don’t whine or wish, we forge onto victory.

DAY 21

IT'S BETTER TO LAUGH THAN LAMENT

"It better befits a man to laugh than to lament over it." Seneca

One of the best 'skills' I've learned is to laugh at the stupid shit I do, the pickles I find myself in, the predicaments that are self-inflicted.

I used to go to a dark place, replaying them over and over again, avoiding life all the while I'm living in a dark place while my life is quite alright if I'd only sit up and realize such.

It is better to laugh than to lament.

Think about those times in your life where you were really down. Think about what drove you to be there. Those moments are now gone, maybe even forgotten completely. It does you no good to feed your despair. It would serve you well to fuel laughter, a brighter outlook on your life, one that sees that hard times are merely a part of the journey.

It's easier said than done, of course, but one activity that has helped me is identifying three things I'm grateful for that happened within the last 24 hours. It's an activity, a habit that forces you to find the good.

Another habit I've created is finding one solution to a problem that I face every day. It's a habit that forces you to actively find solutions.

Laughter, however, is the best medicine.

Learn to laugh at events, and more importantly at yourself. You know your insecurities, you know the things that bring you down, that keep you down, expose them, open them up to ridicule, and laugh at them.

Treat your weaknesses like a muscle. The only way to build a muscle is to first break it down.

DAY 22

DARE MIGHTIER

“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.” ~ Seneca

Safe goals are cowardice. A safe life is the life of a coward; it's a life of fear, a timid life that will someday be a regretted life.

To dare to aim higher, to live to a greater standard may bring bigger obstacles and more risk, but it will also provide more meaning, happiness, and value. It is because we do not dare that they are difficult.

An average life where one doesn't dare is a life filled with pain, sorrow, and regret. A daring life is actually easier, more enjoyable and far more exciting than a timid life. Yet, most choose safety over excitement. They somehow figure that it's easier to live when you're not really living at all. So they slide into a life laid out for them. They follow paths that have been trodden by millions. They avoid risk and daring and as a result they avoid excitement and passion.

Difficulty isn't the obstacle in life. *Life* is difficult. It always has been and it always will be. Accepting that and opening yourself up to something more is a shift of the mind that won't make things tougher or darker, on the contrary, it will make things brighter.

Life is something we're supposed to be excited about.

Whatever you're currently setting out to do, aim higher. Whatever your goals or your vision for your life, dare mightier. Whatever you're chasing, put it down and reach for something bigger.

DAY 23

FIGHT YOUR DESIRES

“He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.” ~ Epictetus

Advertising is all around us and it rarely seems like advertising at all. We’re shown what we should aspire to have when our friend buys a new car. We’re told what to buy and what to desire when we watch a TV show.

A life of consumption is a life of dependence. How can a man be free if he’s dependent on the rush of a purchase?

Power comes from being self-reliant and being in control of your desires. It’s becoming more and more difficult, to be in control, to know what’s real and what’s not, or what’s needed and what isn’t.

The vision or the ideal you’re being pitched by your pal, your neighbor, or your TV screen isn’t real. It’s now what you should want because it isn’t the thing that will get you what you want.

What you want is power, freedom, accomplishment, and happiness.

A purchase cannot do that. What you do not have cannot do that.

Everything you need is within your brain and your soul and it’s your job to figure out how to bring it about.

What you have, your health, your family, your friendships, and my favorite thing, your potential, shouldn’t just be appreciated but rejoiced. You should be ecstatic about what you have. You should write it down every day and realize that focusing on what you don’t have is a rabbit hole that will never end.

When you make it a habit of desiring *things and stuff* that aren’t already yours, you won’t break that habit. It doesn’t matter how much you acquire or how much you end up owning, it will always end up owning you.

Change. Now. Be unlike the minions who see and buy and build up debt. Know what’s important in life, it’s actually quite simple.

DAY 24

MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT

“One should count each day a separate life.” ~ Seneca

End each day with the question, If this day was my life, would I consider it a success?

It's a simple but profound barometer. Success in life, after all, is a series of successful days. The future, however, isn't always easy to work for nor to get excited about. A day is a life wrapped into 24 hours. When you add that kind of weight to a single day and you're genuine about answering that question at every day's end, it's difficult not to have urgency in your hours and minutes.

Urgency and excitement are what allow us access to energy that defies what's normal or common. Most people live a sedated life, almost waiting for their final day or blissfully ignorant to the fact that it's coming, getting ever more close with each passing minute.

They live in such a manner because there is no urgency nor importance on their time. Time is something that ticks, it's here to be spent or wasted or enjoyed, not used.

The worker, the hustler, the fella with the fundamental understanding that a day really does matter, and thus, so does an hour and a minute and the focuses of each should fit into one's idea of a good life, a successful life, in the end, wins.

He wins because he doesn't waste time. He doesn't waste a day nor an hour nor a minute.

What defines a successful day?

Accomplishment.

A day without accomplishment cannot be judged favorably. Accomplishment is time well-used. Time well used is time that fits into the overall goal or plan for a life. If, within your day, you accomplish one or two things that bring you closer to your overall idea of success, then you've succeeded.

ONE MONTH OF MANHOOD

If you've spent more time being pulled away into projects and attitudes and thoughts that don't fit your definition of a good life, then you've failed.

It's a personal definition, but if you want to build a great business, one that leaves a legacy far after you're dead, then work without distraction has to be an important part of your day.

I assume you also want to 'live', thus, a day spent outdoors, in the woods, in new lands, or in adventures, has to also be deemed victorious.

Every day doesn't have to be the same, nor should it. They shouldn't be measured by the same categories because on different days our focuses change.

Your work matters, it's a part of who you are and why you're here.

Your family and friends matter, they're an important piece of having a happy, meaningful life. Adventure and exploration are also important. At times work has to be left and an adventure has to be had.

If every day is successful in either of those three categories, then your life will be as well.

DAY 25

CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN

"Make the best use of what is in your power, and take the rest as it happens." ~ Epictetus

Control what you can. Leave what you can't.

Most do neither. They try to control what they cannot control, or they get angry over it being so, and they ignore the power that they do have and chalk it up to how things are.

The weather is, you have no control over it. To get angry at it being the way it is makes no sense. You cannot control what other people do, so why fret over their stupidity or ignorance? Why spend time arguing about things when you have no hope in hell of changing the other person's mind on the subject?

You can, however, control your body weight. If you're fat, that's on you. If you're skinny, again, on you. If you're weak or lazy then you cannot complain about it, you are who made you weak or lazy.

Don't just accept that you can control something and go on with your life. Spend time determining what in your life you can control and are not controlling to the best of your abilities, and what you shouldn't even be attempting to have power over because in reality you have none.

Excellence is just that, wielding your power over what you have power over better than everyone else and ignoring what you don't have power over, or simply not letting it take up space in your brain.

You cannot control the hate or envy of others, so leave it be. You cannot control what family you are born into, just appreciate them, and make the most out of the hand you've been dealt.

It's an imperative skill in life to understand what you can and cannot control. It's a necessary skill if you want to live a happy, successful life, and it doesn't matter how you define happiness or success, this skill is still required.

There are three things you can do:

ONE MONTH OF MANHOOD

1. Spend a few hours thinking about the things that take up space in your mind. Do they belong there or should this space be taken by something else that you do have power over.

Most people won't do this step. They'll gloss over this suggestion, maybe nodding in agreement that it would be a good idea to do this, but that's all they'll do. Don't be them. Do this.

2. Take a little notebook around with you over the next few days and write down things that make you angry or stressed. At the end of the three day period, go through the list and determine if they're things that are under your control or not. Then figure out if there are things that are under your control that you're passing off as things that aren't.

3. Stop making excuses.

It's simple. Pay attention to how you think and talk and if you ever make an excuse, stop yourself, and then figure out how you can take ownership over the situation, no matter the situation.

This is true power, ownership, that is. It's actively controlling what you can and the man who does this isn't easily defeated.

DAY 26

WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." ~ Aristotle

Success is accumulative. It isn't born from a grand act or audacious intention. It is who we are every damn day and what we repeatedly do in those days.

I'm not where I want to be. Not close. I'm light-years short of that marker, and what I'm realizing more and more is that this isn't because of talent or a lack of it, nor is it a matter of a lack of breaks, it's because I haven't been nearly consistent enough.

As I'm becoming more consistent, the results are beginning to show. The more work I do, and this work isn't done in a grand attempt at greatness, burning the midnight oil trying to squeeze everything into one day, it's methodical, persistent, lacking all glamour, and the more I do this methodical approach, the better I get at what I do.

This is just from personal experience. The evidence for habitual greatness is found in every success story. It doesn't matter if you're talking about 'genius' like Da Vince or Michelangelo, their success came on the other end of their toil in solitude and silence and failure.

It takes time to understand what habits lead to success and which ones don't, and we're often swayed by others in the wrong direction. That time is important. You need it.

We've become a society that praises youth. We're the first in history to praise youth as we do. It's a marketing ploy to create buyers at a young age. Once you've got your hooks in them they're yours. As a result, success has become something we want instantaneously. It doesn't happen like that.

Not real success. Not the perfecting of a craft or becoming great at something. Sure, you can make money at a young age, but you're not going to become great unless you begin your practice earlier than everyone else, and by a long shot.

The faster you pick a singular focus and set your habits to becoming excellent at that endeavor, the quicker success will come. Of course, it doesn't matter the age you begin, it still requires 5-10 years of obscurity and often failure before you realize anything near your potential, and before you have that final breakthrough.

Accept this daily toil. Come to grips with the fact that it's on you and what you do every day. Don't expect anything to come quickly. Determine the habits you need to have, then be those habits every damn day.

DAY 27

DON'T BE BLINDED BY YOUR PERCEPTION

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." ~ Aristotle

We live in a funny time. No longer can we sit at a table with someone who disagrees with us politically – at least one side can't do this. They call names, they stop discussions before they can begin by placing labels on those who oppose their views.

Then you have older folks. They can hear your opinion and just let it be. They may not agree with it, but they often don't even feel the need to voice theirs or to correct yours. They've come to grips with what's worthy of anger and what isn't.

Be like them.

Be willing to entertain a thought without accepting it.

Don't dig your heels in. Don't hate the holder of the opinion. Don't call them a name or cry because their opinion differs from yours. Just entertain the thought.

It's simple. It leads to a happier life. It leads to less stress, more laughter, and more unity.

Stop getting 'triggered'. Differing opinions have a root in some kind of logic. Stop halting a viewpoint by being blinded by a minor detail or *your perception* of that opinion.

Just listen. Hear the opinion, let it settle in your mind, understand why someone may hold that opinion, and let it be.

DAY 28

MASCULINITY IS NOT GIVEN, IT'S EARNED

"Masculinity is not something given to you, but something you gain. And you gain it by winning small battles with honor." ~ Norman Mailer

Men throughout history have seen the importance of this virtue and the necessity to not only teach it, but also praise it and earn it.

Goethe said, "One cannot always be a hero. But one can always be a man."

Orison Swett Marden wrote, "This is the test of your manhood: How much is there left in you after you have lost everything outside of yourself?"

Manhood is a state that is progressed to by your conduct through trials, not in your ability to stay alive and see a certain age.

The thing is, we all know what masculinity is. We know immediately when we come across a good man, a strong man, a masculine man, a "real man". We may call them old school or a throwback, but they are the archetypes of masculinity and the common threads in their persona, beliefs, and virtues are glaring.

Whether it's overtly masculine men like Roosevelt or John Wayne, or the Stoic philosophers Seneca and Aurelius, or writers like Mailer and Marden, or contrasting and opposing leaders like Churchill and Gandhi, manliness has always been a virtue with similar characteristics. Never before has its meaning been up for much in the way of debate. Now, however, as we ignore the existence of this being seeing it merely as a gender, we're losing the North Star that guided men to not only greatness in a worldly sense, but the greatness and value within the home and within the community.

True masculinity in the old school, honorable, courageous and gritty sense will likely go un-praised for a lifetime. It's these men that build our cities, protect our towns and our way of life, and guide our families through life that are fleeting. And as we fail to teach our boys how to become men as our men don't have the slightest clue how its done, we lose the backbone that sustains what our society values most, be it freedom or prosperity or community.

DAY 29

A MAN CANNOT BE DEPENDENT

“A man must stand erect. Not be kept erect by others.” – Marcus Aurelius

We coddle our kids. Heck, we coddle our adults. We tell everyone that they're special, that they deserve more, and that simply by thinking positively that they'll get it. So we buy what we can't afford. We spend what we've yet to earn. We reward ourselves before we've won a single fucking thing.

A man cannot be a slave to his desires. Aurelius had the opportunity to depend on whatever he wanted, but he saw the weakness that's incurred when one becomes dependent on the fix that we all get from an impulse buy or from dressing loudly and proudly and spending money on things that make us feel as though we've won something, earned some new kind of status, and bought our way into happiness.

A man who could have anything telling men who comparatively have nothing that they have power over their every thought, wish, and desire, and to enact that control over your thoughts, wishes, and desires is real power, is priceless. The temptation to play the role, to get down and up and to *show* his power was there in a far greater capacity than it is for us, and yet we're slaves.

We buy things we don't need to impress people we don't like. We're lazy in thought and lazy in action. We rely on quick fixes and pick-me-ups to sprinkle joy into lives we enact no control over.

A man cannot be a dependent. It doesn't matter if that dependency is another human, or if it's a desire, or if it's a guilty pleasure. Dependency comes in many forms and the man who's held up by others is more male than man.

DAY 30

READ THIS WHEN YOU WANT TO QUIT

"I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature." ~

John D. Rockefeller

You have to remember this fact; it isn't talent that gets you greatness. There won't be a single moment when you get what you want if it's not first built upon the back of countless other moments where you were learning to *deserve* what you want.

The fact that perseverance is the most important quality to possess is something you have to remember when you're overcome with doubt.

It happens to all of us. We doubt in our abilities, in our talent, in our direction, pursuit, even in our habits or the work we're doing right now.

We doubt that what we're doing will yield the results we want them to. We think about quitting, we question whether this is all going to be worth it.

It's these moments that make you or break you.

You can either persist or quit.

If you quit, you're guaranteed to fail. You've proven that negative voice right, that you weren't cut out for it after-all, that you're a loser, a whiner, a quitter.

This doesn't have to be true, your truth, or your reality.

You can carry on.

In these moments of doubt we don't necessarily have to 'believe in what we're doing'. Sometimes it's too difficult to rationalize that all of this effort is going to pay off as we want it to.

Doing something for an end doesn't always happen.

Sometimes we need to persist simply because that's what we do, that's who we are, and it's persistence that will make us who we ought to be.

Forget about the goal, the dream, the motivation and inspiration and the pursuit. Sometimes you need to put your head down and work if only because you're the kind of guy who does that. You don't quit. You don't look for an easier way. You're not a whiny little bitch who feels entitled to something he's not yet earned.

You're a worker.

As a worker, you don't complain and you don't even 'wish'. You just work.

Next time you wonder 'if'...

If all of this work is worth it or if it's the right work or if it's what you really want, shut that part of your brain off and carry on.

There is time for reflection, where you need clarity on your path and your focus within that path, but often times that questioning voice just needs to be shut up.