



Scott

Consistency is Far Better Than Rare Moments of Greatness

Living Life Without Editing Yourself

By Scott Ginsberg

It's hard to be inconsistent and win.

Especially now.

People know more, see more, remember more and repeat more –
than ever before.

Everything matters.
Everybody's watching.
Everything's a performance.

Privacy is so last century.

And when you lack consistency, when your onstage performance
doesn't align with your backstage reality, people see through you
like bottle of water.

Which doesn't mean you have to be perfect. You are human, after
all.

However.

Consistency is far better than rare moments of greatness.

That's what I've learned after four thousand days of wearing a
nametag, all day, every day, even at the beach and in the shower:

Do something once – that’s a treat.

Do something twice – that’s a trend.

But do something every single day for a decade, and that’s a triumph.

With this 120-day digital devotional, let the consistency begin.

1. **A flexible body changes everything.** I started practicing yoga five years ago. Smartest life decision I've made in a decade. And according to the people who know me best, the changes I've undergone have been most visible in my flexibility. But not just physical. Mental, spiritual and life flexibility as well. Sure, I can reach my toes and touch my head to my knees. But the capacity to respond flexibly to what the world hurls at me? The ability to democratically entertain ideas completely contrary to my own? And the patience to sit quietly next to someone I want to strangle with a rusty strand of barbed wire? That requires a completely different kind of flexibility, all of which I attribute to yoga. Your body affects every other life experience you have. Stretch your muscles and you stretch your life. *How is your physicality limiting your life flexibility?*

2. **Accept not the status quo of the thinking that surrounds you.** Don't walk somebody else's path. Don't resign to reaching a certain familiar melody. And don't allow the world to superimpose onto you its prefabricated definition of who you should be. Otherwise, what you need to practice gets lost in what you are told to believe. The question is: How do you drown out the toxic chorus of voices calling you to edit yourself? Easy: Stop allowing the world to choose for you. It's anesthesia of the heart. Don't be bound and limited by the thoughts others have formulated for you. Instead, believe that you are the shaper of you. Ask permission from your heart and nothing else. Be brave enough to inquire within. Trust yourself. Walk in a receptive and expectant state of mind. And you will remove what blocks the path of truth. Ultimately, you'll sustain more honesty per square inch than anyone you know. And you'll reach a level of intimacy with yourself where you'll never need to write more than one draft. Ever. When you look outside of yourself, all you find are more questions. *Whose permission do you seek?*

- 3. Accept the flux of life – then learn to ride it.** Life doesn't care about your plans. It rarely consults you before making a decision. Respond to whatever surfaces with an attitude of calmness and, more importantly, leverage. Consider asking yourself these questions when confronted with an unexpected situational change: How can I make this experience useful? What is the message that the universe is giving me through this? What is this an opportunity for? Where is the gift in this? How can I find this situation funny? How can I use this situation as an opportunity to learn something about myself and then change for the better? Reacting is a reflex – responding is a choice. *Do problems stop you or stretch you?*

4. **Attract others with equal commitment.** There's a reason that the world perks up and notices when you walk your truth: Because honesty is so rare, it's become remarkable. I'm reminded of Brett Dennen's song, *Because You Are a Woman*: "Walk like truth to a world of fiction." This lyric inspired my official definition of honesty: "Honoring the truth, your truth and other people's truth, while standing on the edge of yourself to salute others without the desire to change, fix or improve them." The cool part is, once you employ this philosophy in your daily life, other committed people don't just notice you – they join you. Their unique commitment will both inspire and challenge your own, keeping you accountable to walking your truth when the world expects fiction. *How committed are the five people you eat lunch with the most?*

5. **Autobiography is irresistible.** Since day one, you've been beaten over the head with the same three words: Know your customer, know your customer and know your customer. Which is great and all, but here's the real question: How well do your customers know you? Answer: Not enough. And they need to know who you are, where you are and why you are. That's what matters. Because if trust is a function of self-disclosure, and if trust is the only currency that counts, if they don't know you, you lose. No need to run around the office naked. But *do* find a way to give people a snapshot. A glimpse into that which the world cannot usually see. By enticing their visual appetite by dangling the carrot of fascination in front of their nose, your interestingness will skyrocket. *Is the bio page on your website worth showing to a friend?*

6. **Be a synthesizer.** This is, by far, my favorite musical instrument. And you don't have to be a big fan of electronic music to admit: They're pretty damn interesting. Probably because they create sound combinations that are outlets for emotions and feelings that can't be adequately articulated in plain language. And as an individual, your challenge is to do the same: To be a synthesizer. That's one thing all objects of interest have in common. Take Henry Rollins, for example. The reason big audiences pay big money to sit for three hours at a time – just to hear him talk – is not an accident. They do so because the composite of his synthesized experiences as a punk rocker, author, world traveler, political activist and television and radio host make him so compelling that his audiences demand to hear more immediately. No wonder he's done over one hundred talking shows worldwide, every year, since the nineties. Even Rollins admitted this himself in an interview with The Independent Film Channel: "My goal is to be completely interesting, take whatever intellect I've accumulated and come out hard from the gate every night." Be anything but monotone. Remain a consummate adventurer and you'll remain a competitive animal. *What are you synthesizing?*

7. **Be always guided by your body's wisdom.** It will never lie to you. And don't have to climb to the top of a mountain or pay thousands of dollars for some weekend seminar to attain that wisdom. All you have to do is listen to what your body trying to tell you. Here's how: Think about where you manifest stress. Back pain? Stomach acid? Migranes? Then, notice patterns in how you feel when doing certain activities. Anticipatory waves of anxiety? Immediate biofeedback? Emotional hangovers? These are all the clues you need. And you'll find that when you put yourself in direct touch with the one thing that will always tell you the truth, your instincts will thank you. But only if you become a consistent congregant of your bodily temple. *If your cells could speak, what would they say to you?*

8. **Be not locked into limited concepts of who you are.** A simple way to call bullshit on yourself is to calmly, curiously and continuously ask, “What is my evidence to support this belief?” Odds are, you won’t find any. And here’s why: Limits aren’t limits. They’re self-imposed constraints. Paper-thin barricades feeding on a steady diet of your fear of them. The cool part is, once you start challenging yourself to legitimately defend yourself, you start to realize that it’s all just noise. Mental mayhem. Whatever it takes to steal you away from the present moment, which is exactly what your ego is most terrified of. Don’t let it happen. You’re stronger than that. *What fictional story have you told yourself so many times that it’s evolved into journalism?*

9. **Be not obliged to the mirage of limitation.** Don't brainwash yourself into believing that you're a one-trick pony. Employ a little artistic diversity. Integrate everything in your life into your expressions. And taste the full scope of your creative power. I started practicing this heavily a few years ago. I was curious about myself, so I decided to explore new ways to make use everything I was. From shooting educational videos to writing poetry to creating innovating new media through which to deliver value to my clients, expressive limits became a thing of the past. You might be pleasantly surprised at the firepower of your creative arsenal. *Where do you limit yourself?*

10. **Be somewhat predictable.** Rarity means everything you do reminds people that they have not wasted the attention they've given you. The trick is: Humans are inclined to ignore the commonplace and remain alert to the unexpected. It's our anthropological mechanism of self-preservation that's safeguarded our species for millions of years. This attribute can work to a rare person's advantage insofar as attention is concerned: You stand out – you get noticed. *Perfect.* But when the unexpected is taken to the extreme, rare can turn into scare. “You can't be offbeat in all ways, because then we won't understand you and we'll reject you,” writes author Seth Godin. The secret, he says, is to make sure that some of the elements you present are perfectly aligned with what people are used to. Otherwise you'll be perceived as a threat. Decide how much predictability you're going to bring to the marketplace – and then remain consistent with its delivery. Brands are expectations. *What has the public grown to expect from you?*

11. Be unwaveringly vigilant of the company you keep.

Respectfully and resiliently silence the negative voices that attempt to infiltrate your positive reality. Don't get sucked into the vortex of petty mindsets. Become a public spokesperson for your values by personally amputating anyone who doesn't believe in or support you. Life's also too short to hang around people who don't challenge and inspire you. *Are you still wasting time on relationships you've outgrown?*

12. **Be willing to meet yourself and not turn away.** “Look at yourself in the mirror non-judgmentally. As a reflection and nothing else.” That’s what Erin, my yoga instructor, constantly reminds the class. That we need to learn to be open to all we are. My best suggestion for laying your world bare is to meet yourself at the page, for at least fifteen minutes a day. Take out your pen and bleed all over the page. Saddle up to the keyboard and start pounding. Bust out your boss’s flip chart if you have to. Whatever writing style works for you. Writing is an extension of thinking. Writing is the great clarifier and the great confronter. Everything you ever wanted to know about yourself can be learned through writing. But only if you do it honestly. Only if you use blood, not ink. *Do you see yourself as you are or as you want to be?*

13. Behave as the most truthful representation of who you are.

The big challenge of walking your truth is that nobody knows it better than you. Which means the only person who can truly tell when you've accidentally taken a detour, is you. Better learn how to motivate yourself. A helpful question to ask yourself throughout your day is, "If I were me, what would I do?" This kind of casual dissociation helps you stand on the outside looking in. You take an object stance on your own actions and thus, keep yourself accountable to yourself. Even if all you do is raise a smidgen of awareness, you win. *What question will you ask to stay on the path of self-honesty?*

14. Behind every problem there's a question trying to ask itself.

Your challenge is to spy on yourself in the spirit of self-inquiry. To step back from life's situations and figure out what the question of the moment is. And to call upon untested faculties awaiting your discovery. Then, to make yourself available to any spontaneous feelings that begin to arise. By asking yourself questions about your current experience, you attune yourself to promptings of inner wisdom. *Have you established an ongoing inner dialogue with yourself?*

15. **Believe in the availability of your own answers.** Expectation determines outcome. Expect your intuition to be there for you. I learned this a few years ago when I started reciting the following incantation several times daily, “I am richly supported. I trust my resources.” Since I started meditating on that, my ability to become my own authority figure has skyrocketed. I wonder what would happen if you regularly reminded yourself that every answer you needed lay within. *What do you say when you talk to yourself?*

16. **Believing is overrated.** Don't believe everything you think. Your mind is a moron. Don't believe your own in-house press. The reports are rarely accurate. And finally, don't believe everything your ego says is good for you. The reptilian brain operates on dangerous assumptions. In reality, certain beliefs you hold outlive their usefulness in your life. You need to learn to be okay with that. New learnings will emerge. As long as you intentionally create a space for them by calling out your outworn beliefs first. *What falsehood are you trying to defend because you want it to be true?*

17. **Beware of editors.** When I was a kid, my older brother used to make fun of me for thinking. Not for thinking a certain way. Or for thinking about certain things. *Just for thinking.* Like, it wasn't cool to just sit in your room and dream. But I didn't care. I was going to think no matter what. That's just who I am. The cool part is, now people actually pay a lot of money to rent my brain. Sounds like all that thinking paid off. What about you? Who, in your life, is actively attempting to discourage you from being your truest self? Assess if their comments are constructive criticism or destructive projections. That's all self-esteem is anyway: Deciding whom to listen to. It's how you estimate yourself. The overall appraisal of your personal value. And if you want to make use of everything you are, you have to begin by fundamentally, positive self-regard. *Who are you allowing to edit you?*

18. **Beware of making gods out of your plans.** I don't plan – I just sort of do stuff that feels consistent with who I am, and go from there. Planning is procrastination in disguise. But people do it because it preserves their sense of control. It reinforces the illusion that they know what they're doing. Which they don't. That's why I'm completely against any permutation of the phrase, "Ready, aim, fire!" Here's why: You're never ready, aiming is overrated and fire burns people. An alternate formula you might consider is: Try, listen, leverage. First, you just try stuff. You just do stuff. Don't plan anything. Don't overthink it. Just start. Second, listen. To the people who matter. And not for opinions, but for reactions. Then, be sure to treat everything you hear with deep democracy. Finally, leverage. Kill two stones with one bird. And constantly ask yourself, "Now that I have this, what else does this make possible?" Failure doesn't come from poor planning, but from the timidity to proceed. Don't be stopped by not knowing how. Instead of holding a meeting to get ready to prepare the execution of your plan for formulating your strategy to begin the initial stages of brainstorming your pre-launch, just go. *Are you prematurely committing yourself to an endeavor that might later prove to be unprofitable?*

19. **Beware the dulling forces of intuition.** You can't train your instincts if the velocity and volume of your life never recedes. Here are two practices I've found great success with. First, keep your distance from people whose sole purpose is to pollute your head with toxic noise. Life's too short to surround yourself with them. Second, learn how to disappear from the world. Press the mute button on life. Be quiet. Listen. Your questions will be considered, if not answered. Sometimes that's all your intuition needs – to be nudged out of hiding and onto center stage for a sound check. *What rust do you need to remove from your life?*

20. **Book blank time.** I don't care how stressed out you are. What I want to know is how you occupy your stillness when the world works overtime to make you tremble. Ah, stillness. The untapped reservoir of self-knowledge. If you truly want to become a master of self-confrontation without self-condemnation, practice meeting yourself in empty moments. Physically book time in your schedule for nothing. The world won't fall apart without you. Remind yourself that there are no emergencies let the silence swallow you whole for five minutes. Even if no great revelations arrive initially, practicing regular intervals of silence will eventually get addictive. Before you know it, you'll be setting aside juicy chunks of your busy week to quiet down and confront yourself. *How much blank time do you have booked for next week?*

21. **Certainty locks down your story.** After wearing a nametag everyday for the past twelve years, I've finally comes to terms with this reality: Commitment has the potential to degrade into detriment. The deeper you commit to something, the more likely you are to become so obsessed with idea of being committed to that something, that your desire actually becomes bigger than what you're committed to. And as a result, you end up hurting the people you love because you're blinded by the fire of your own conviction. What's more, you block yourself from whole world of cool opportunities that would have come your way had you not been so damn certain. But it's too late. You were too right. Never overlook the possibility of changing your mind midstream. There's nothing wrong with quitting. And it's not a sign of failure to change your vision As long as you do so when it's right – not when it's hard – nobody is going to spank you with a ruler. In fact, they'll probably give you a medal. At least you had the guts to admit you were wrong, turn the car around and barrel into the other direction. That's imperfect in action but consistent in values. *Are you too attached to it?*

22. **Commit to stillness.** After five years of practicing yoga, I've found my instincts to be sharper than ever before because the most challenging component of practicing yoga is the stillness. Especially in Bikram, when it's a hundred degree and sweat gushes out of every pore of your body for ninety minutes straight. Kind of hard not to wipe, itch, scratch, pick, pull or adjust *something*. But that's the whole point. To be able to practice perfect stillness amidst surrounding chaos. That's when you're confronted with who you really are. That's when you can't hide from your truth. Sounds simple, but it's actually the most challenging part of class. Anyone can touch head to knee. But to just sit there and do nothing for sixty seconds? Yikes. Most people are so voluntarily overbooked and crazybusy that the mere thought of absolute stillness gives them an ulcer. But if you can practice stillness in the studio, you can practice stillness anywhere. Muscle memory is a beautiful thing. From stillness comes lucidity. And from lucidity comes the ability to listen to your intuition. Ask anyone who does yoga: The highest benefits are found outside the studio. Their instincts will get sharp as steel. *How much time did you spend yesterday just sitting?*

23. **Committing to yourself is not a selfish act.** That's the first realization that needs to settle in. That you deserve to walk your truth. That you're worth being honest to. It's not selfish. In fact, it's the exact opposite. You can't commit to others if you haven't first committed to yourself. You'll still have time to support the people who matter. And yes, there will be plenty of times when your job – as a leader, as a parent, as a professional – demands that you take a back seat to others. Good. Just remember: The longer you go without putting your own name on your list, the harder it will be, and the guiltier you will feel, when you eventually try to take time for yourself. Think of it as a form of tithing. Walking your truth could be as simple as taking a walk by yourself. *How high are you on your own list?*

24. **Confront the number.** Here's the smartest weight management strategy I've ever practiced. Get on the scale. Every week. Same time. Write down my weight on a chart on the wall. Then look at that number every day. Lost fifteen pounds and kept it off. And here's what's fascinating: Depending on how well I ate during the week, I might be excited, terrified or indifferent about confronting the number come Sunday morning. But I always confront it. No matter what. *Without judgment. Without evaluation. Without appraisal.* What's more, sometimes during the week I'll catch myself mid-bite or mid-meal thinking, "Crap. I know I'm going to have to weigh myself in three days. Better pass on that fifth piece of key lime pie." That's the cool thing about self-confrontation: Even the mere anticipation of confronting your numerical truth can modify choices and behaviors in the meantime. I wonder what quantitative metrics you could install to your weekly regiment to accomplish the same. Accountability partner phone calls? Written records of activity level? Public charts of progress? *How will you confront the number?*

25. **Constantly question your own value.** All this time you were confused between what got you in the door, what brought you to the table, and what kept you in the room. Because those three things are not the same. And that's the problem: It's rare that you define your own value. You're simply too close to the subject to make an honest, objective assessment. For that reason, evolving beyond the previous version of yourself requires objective feedback. Ideally, from the people who love you enough to tell you how dense and blind you've been in the past. This helps create the best possible circumstances in which your growth will be supported, enhanced and fulfilled. Ask them today, or risk remaining the same tomorrow. *Have you identified the truly distinct values that will fuel your future momentum?*

26. **Create your own religion.** It's easy: Choose a God. Pick a prophet. Perform a miracle. Settle on a name. Adopt a symbol. Agree on a sacrifice. Formulate the rituals. Determine your enemies. Outline the dogma. Write a bible. Start a website. Construct a building. Select a funny hat. Recruit a following. Spread the gospel. Hold a conference in Orlando. Convert anyone with a pulse. And see ya in the afterlife. Done and done. It's cakewalk, right? *Wrong.* The word "religion" comes from the Latin *religio*, which means, "to link back to." Your religion is the one thing in your life that every other thing in your life links back to. Figure out what that one thing is, and you're all set. *What church are you the founding member of?*

27. Customize a system for exposing your blind spots. The term “blind spot” isn’t just an idiom or catchy pop song lyric. It originates from the Greek word *scotoma*, or darkness. Optometric literature reports that your blind spot is the place in the visual field in which there are no cells to detect light on the optic disc. This is what prevents a certain part of the field of vision from being perceived. *Interesting.* Sounds like your challenge is threefold. First, accept the existence of your shadow. You have one, and you need to shake hands with it. Second, surround yourself with people whose thinking is perpendicular to your own. By virtue of intellectual diversity, their provocations will sneak into the dark corners of your truth and expose your unperceivables. Third, give these people permission to look out the rear window of your life and tell you whether or not that truck is merging into your lane. Finally, listen. Listen loudly. Take notes if you have to. Then, thank these people for exposing your blind spots and reminding you who you are. Not even the basic Lasik surgery in the world can see that stuff. Remember: Sometimes we’re too close to ourselves to see the truth about ourselves. *How are you shedding light on your blind spots?*

28. **Decide what are you doing this in the name of.** Whether you're an artist, entrepreneur or non-profit warrior, without a why, what and how become irrelevant. Before you progress any further in your quest, I challenge you to unite with a higher order by thinking these items over: What are you on a mission to eradicate? What were you mandated to cure? What cosmic injustice have you committed to fighting? That's your currency. Your fuel. Your why. Root yourself in it. Otherwise your efforts remain hollow and misdirected. *Why do you want to make meaning in the universe?*

29. **Destroy yourself to reinvent yourself.** Keep doing what you're doing and risk staying where you are. I learned this very early on as a professional speaker. You can't keep telling the same stories. You can't keep using the same material. Otherwise you bore people. Worse yet, you bore yourself. And that's when you know you're really in trouble. I've actually done that before. There is nothing more existentially agonizing than growing tired of your own act. If you don't obsolete your own stuff, you risk allowing someone else to do it for you. On the other hand, if you make your own material obsolete, at least you're still you. Look at what you're doing today; think about how you can destroy all of that to create a new you and watch the previous version of yourself melt like a snowball in the sun. *What are you afraid to let go of?*

30. **Discard what doesn't jive with your future.** Upgrading means saying no. Sometimes to good opportunities. Sometimes to great opportunities. But that's the only way you're going to invite the best opportunities: By knowing what you don't want, what doesn't matter, and who you aren't. And the challenge is that self-knowledge of this variety doesn't come easily. It's a function of getting very honest with yourself. It's dependent on your self-control to say no when saying yes would go undetected by the masses. And it's reliant on questions like, "Is this an opportunity or an opportunity to be used?" "Will this contribute to the best, highest version of myself; or create a mediocre future that I'm going to feel obligated to be a part of?" Get pickier, grow richer. *What have you said no to this week?*

31. **Discern the voices.** There's nothing wrong with hearing voices inside your head. What matters is listening to the right ones. What matters is courageously identifying the angry voice of your ego that is making it difficult to hear the subtle voice of intuition. *What's haunting you?*

32. Discover what drummed the magic out of you. Indoctrination starts early. Very early. Usually long before you're old enough to realize there's a shiny watch swinging above your head. The trick is to travel back in time and pinpoint the person, institution or dogma that first hypnotized you. Then, to honestly admit how that conditioning affected your choices as you grew up. From there, anything is possible. *Are you willing to look in the mirror and ask yourself when you stopped thinking for yourself?*

33. **Do it all with daring originality.** Rare isn't the absence of fear; rare is the absence of hesitation to move into that fear. When you're up against the fear, that's exactly the time to move into it. Because that's where genius lives. Consider creating a policy, filter or standard operating procedure for attending to your fear. Perhaps a ritual that greets fear with a welcoming heart, but also leverages it into something beautiful? Without such a practice, your creative flame gets smothered under the ashes of average. Resist the undertow of normal, pursue a perilous and uncertain course and welcome the difficulties that will propel you beyond ordinary. Even if they scare the hell out of you. *What type of marvelous intelligence is at work in your fear?*

34. Don't abandon the process just because it gets tough.

Trusting the process doesn't mean being passive. The secret is to understand the principle of threshold level. That's the moment in the process where you're so close to completion, you can taste it. The moment when the entire the world is doing everything they can to prevent you from finishing. That's when you hit it hard. That's when you take every ounce of trust you have left and invest it in the process that brought you to the threshold. Because in the end, trusting the process is about doing the footwork. Even if you don't recognize the road before you. *Are you willing to hustle while you wait?*

35. **Don't be so hard on yourself.** In Leonard Cohen's documentary, *I'm Your Man*, he shares his philosophy on the writing process: "You have to go to work everyday, but know that you're not going to get it everyday." Initially, that was a bitter pill for me to swallow. The idea of accepting a blank page as part of the process was devastating to my creative spirit. But over time, I learned to stop beating myself up when I didn't get it. That's part of trusting the process: Knowing when you've got it, knowing when you've lost it, knowing when there's no way you're going to get it, and knowing when you're going to have to take measures to get it back. When I sit down to write every morning, I give myself an hour. That's my cut off. And if the faucet never turns over to hot, and if I realize that I'm just not going to get it that day, I get on with my life. Simple as that. Then, an hour or two later, I hit the page refreshed and renewed. Works every time. *What's your strategy for returning to the work that matters?*

36. Don't be stopped by not knowing how. How is overrated.

How is the enemy of progress. How is the barrier to trusting the process. Not that it hurts to know what you're doing once in a while. But if you always waited until you knew what you were doing, you'd never do anything. Because you're never really ready. Nobody is. Whether you're starting a business, starting a family or starting a new career, trusting the process means walking on the periphery of your competence. That's exactly what I did when I started my publishing and consulting company right out of college. I didn't know anything. I was twenty-two. But for some reason, I trusted the process anyway. Eventually, you're just going to have to jump into the pool with your clothes on and trust that you'll figure out how to swim before the water fills your lungs. Let's go. It's time to put down that margarita and make a splash that matters. You don't have to get good to get going; but you do need to get going to get good. *Whose permission are you waiting for?*

37. **Don't dismiss or deny your native background.** During a presentation last year, one of my audience members insisted on correcting the grammar on one of my slides. "I can't help it," she admitted to the group. "I'm an editor. It's in my blood." Then, from other side of the room, someone asked, "Have you considered a transfusion?" The group got a good laugh out of it. But I can't help but wonder if the woman was a bit hurt by that man's comment. I know I would be. And I think that's something we need to watch out for. Because it's a disservice to yourself to dismiss or deny your native background. On the other hand, making use of everything you are flows from a complete openness to yourself. Even the parts you view as liabilities. And if you don't remain true to that basic nature, you'll render yourself a traitor. Try waking up with that taste in your mouth every morning. Blech. *What dormant parts of you await permission to be expressed?*

38. **Don't disregard discoveries that are unjellable with your beliefs.** I don't care what you have faith in. What I want to know is if you're willing to admit the truth of something you don't have the courage to believe. That's the great commission of anyone who walks down the self-confrontational path: To attend to whatever experience surfaces with a posture of deep democracy. Knowing that everything matters equally. And to reassess any maladaptive assumptions that might be holding you back. Because the reality is: Somewhere down the self-confrontational line, you're going to learn something about yourself that's inconsistent with the way you thought you saw yourself. And that's when you choose: Do I pretend that I didn't just see that, or should I call myself on it? Self-confrontation is, if anything, a form of finding yourself. And the more you practice finding yourself by yourself, the less you lose yourself with others. *Are you pretending not to see what's too difficult to confront?*

39. **Don't fight the contractions.** Pregnancy is a process. And according to a recent study from University of Hawaii, it's a process that's happened approximately ninety-six billion times since the dawn of time. Not bad. Proving again that the real secret to trusting the process is to honoring the natural rhythms. Easing your judgmental tendencies and embracing the contractions no matter how much they hurt. You don't have to be pregnant to practice this. Take writing, for example. Readers often ask me, "How do you know what you're going to write everyday?" And my answer is always the same: "I don't. That's not my job. Instead, I listen for what wants to be written." Stop fighting the contractions. The baby will come when it's ready. Even if you're stuck in that godforsaken hospital bed for the next twenty hours. *What are you allowing yourself to give birth to?*

40. **Don't save your opinion for later.** Especially in those moments when you get the squirms. Find some means of saying the essential thing that is within you and let your art find its own legs. As long as you're still respectful in your response. That's the caveat, which I learned this from my friend Nico during a workshop with a group of Toronto sanitation workers. She offered a suggestion that stopped the collective heartbeat of the entire audience: "Listen to who you are before responding." Great idea. Especially since each of us has our own personal and emotional response to existence. Without that, without listening to who you are first, you're just a parrot. A ditto. A copy machine. If you're going to do your own thinking, you've got to give up what you've been taught to believe, impose your own order on chaos and slash your canvas to pieces. *What do you need to let out before Friday?*

41. **Don't think big – think now.** The problem with the big picture is that it fills up your entire wall. And that prevents you from hanging the art that matters most. When the reality is: Just when you get there, there disappears. Just when you think you have life figured out, it changes on you like a traffic light. And just when you think redheads are your type, your online dating profile matches you with a dishwasher blonde that steals your heart like a thief in the night. That's been the biggest learning for me: That your currency will change. That you will outgrow things. And that you will have to leave some people behind. That's why I'm all about getting lost. And that's why people who try to choreograph everything annoy me. I'm sorry, but life isn't that predictable. The world pivots quickly. And if you don't meet the now need, you're going to make the mistake of living your life and not being present for it. Embrace the moment. It pays better. *Are you willing to leave room for the unexpected, or are you still seduced by the sexiness of what's next?*

42. **Endure the scrutiny of spectators.** “Scott, not everyone will get you. Learn to be cool with that.” My mentor told me that a few years ago. And it reminded me that you’re nobody until somebody hates you. After all, if everybody loves your brand, you’re doing something wrong. Then again, that’s just part of the success equation. And it’s shocking because you figure everybody would be happy for your success. But they’re not. Outside of those who really, really love you – your success will piss most people off. And it will drum up significant resentment, even if it’s never vocalized. Don’t get mad at people for being mad at you. It’s their perfect right. Just tell them, “I respect your opinion of my work,” and get on with your life. Otherwise their envy will encourage you to edit yourself. Besides, if people don’t like you, why would you assume they have good taste? Clearly, they’re morons. Otherwise they’d recognize your awesomeness a lot sooner. *When the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune head your way, will you hold up your shield calmly or head in the other directly cowardly?*

43. **Energy always follows priority.** If you're not doing it, it's not important to you. Stop kidding yourself about what you "need to start making time for." Look at your planner from last week. The activities you spent your time on were the things that were important to you. Period. No room for bullshit there. Calendars don't lie. Priorities are the things you make – not *find* – the time for. "Find" comes from the Old English term *findan*, which means, "To come upon, alight on." Which implies a search. Which means it's possible that you might not find the time. "Make," on the other hand, comes from the Frisian term *makia*, which means, "To build." As in: "build into your schedule." As in: "build your entire day around it." Which implies a commitment. Which means it's not possible that you won't do it. Call bullshit on yourself by reminding yourself of that fine line. *How do you know what's important to you?*

44. **Enlist your inner governor.** I don't know about you, but I am on an epicenter quest. In any given experience, my mission is to be able to move to a place of peace at a moment's notice. It's taken a lot of training, but I think I'm slowly starting to get the hang of it. Like that time I rear-ended that guy with my car. *Dude flipped out.* And right after the collision, he leaped out of his dented Lincoln – fuming – and hurled towards the open window of my Mazda. The first words out of his angry mouth were, “And how many beers have you had tonight?” To which I calmly replied, “I don't drink, sir.” He didn't believe me and stormed back to his car. A few minutes later after his wife calmed him down; he came back to my window. A bit more relaxed this time, the guy said, “Okay. I'm sorry. I may have overreacted. Are you okay?” We were both fine. And so were our cars. More importantly, I learned the contagious power of calm. Perfect tool for maintaining consistency. *Are you treating each experience you experience as a test of what you believe?*

45. **Establish a practice.** And, practice with distractions. This helps you remain calm in the midst of chaos. By doing so in smaller situations, you develop a deeper ability to walk your truth through the larger storms on the horizon. For example, yoga class has been a blessing for me in this respect. I've become a master at practicing with distractions. Because in any given class, I'll be confronted with parking lot car alarms, smelly people dripping their sweat on my matt, and of course, beautiful women – wearing almost nothing – bending from the waist, directly in front of me. Nice try, ladies. But I took my contacts out in the locker room. If you can stay committed to your core during that distraction, you can do anything. *What practice arena will train you to walk your truth when the road gets rocky?*

46. **Fall in love with why.** When you infuse your process with deep purpose, it's noticeably easier to trust it. That's why rituals are so critical. They carve a pathway. They create a sacred container around what you're about to engage in. And they prevent you from asking, "Why the hell am I even doing this?" This helps you fall in love with the process, not just what the process produces. Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's defined this dichotomy in his book *Creativity*. "Exotelic means you do something not because you enjoy it but to accomplish a later goal. But autotelic means there is no reason for doing something except to feel the experience it provides." Lesson learned: Trusting the process is a spiritual discipline. An investment in the stability of the universe. *Why do you do what you do?*

47. **Find evidence of your wrongness.** Which isn't as hard as it sounds. My cousin Collin, a tuberculosis researcher, talks about this phenomenon the time. It's called *confirmation bias*, and the simple definition is, "Whatever you're looking for, you'll find," he says. And this is a good thing – it should be easy to find evidence of your wrongness. I challenge you to spend some time asking yourself which of your assumptions might be misguided. Yes, questioning your own logic is probably more confrontational than you're used to. But humans have the knack of proving things right when it's important to them. Make it important to you and you will make it right. Or in this case, wrong. *How will you beat your own math?*

48. **Firm up your faculty of self-expression.** I watch a lot of documentaries. Mainly about artists, writers and actors. And in my experience, the reason these movies are so interesting is because the featured individuals are masters of self-expression. They create highly visual experiences with their work. Lesson learned: If you want to become an object of interest, you have to express yourself. Period. It doesn't matter how you do it – only *that* you do it. And it doesn't matter if it's good – on that you're willing to share it with the world. The hard part is, sometimes the theater of the mind is better. I know. Sometimes you'd rather keep your art to yourself. But if you truly want to arrest the interest of masses, you've got to expose (at least) some of it to the eyes of the world. Remember: Art, as Edward Debono once said, is the choreography of attention. *How much of it will your self-expression earn?*

49. **First thoughts, best thoughts.** When you start writing, it doesn't matter what you write or how you write – as long as you're writing, the truth eventually arrives. The page doesn't lie. It just takes a while. Usually about twenty minutes. Give yourself permission to keep writing, to write what you feel, and to write what wants to be written. The truth has a sneaky way of slipping out. Often times, right under your nose. Ever experienced that before? The moment when you look up from your laptop think, "Crap. Is that how I really feel?" the answer is yes. You just needed that container of honesty, safety and patience to invite that naked truth to make an appearance. Off the top of your head usually means from the bottom of your heart. Beatnik author William Burroughs was right, "Rewrites are a betrayal of your own thoughts." Don't edit yourself. Words contain truths. *Are you using them as intuitive weapons?*

50. **Focus yourself to free yourself.** Never feel bad about saying no to the people who haven't learned how to value you yet. Life's too short, and you've got stuff to do. For example, I once met with a company who wanted to hire me to conduct a branding workshop with their employees. For the first fifteen minutes of the meeting, everything was going great: My philosophy engaged them, my content excited them and they *seemed* ready to move forward. Until one of the executives said, "By the way Scott, we don't allow facial hair in this building. Or blue jeans. Or open toed shoes. Oh, and your hair is way too long. Just a few things to keep in mind before you come back to our office again." *I never came back.* In fact, the only time I talked to them again was in my email the next day, in which I wrote the following: "Thanks for your interest in my program. Although it seems that my content is the right fit for your team, it's clear that my personality is not. And while I respect the culture of your organization – I don't edit myself. Ever. Here's the name of a colleague who might be a better fit. Hope she works out." You're defined by what you decline. *How much money are you willing to turn down to preserve your integrity?*

51. Formulate and memorialize your own decision-making system. If you truly want to convey a thorough understanding of yourself, if you honestly desire to create a good working model of your own identity, and if you sincerely want to maintain consistency and alignment of your actions, you need to consider how you decide. A life-changing exercise to do is to create a governing document for your daily decision-making. I just stumbled upon this process about six months ago myself. And I assure you it's the most powerful exercises I've ever executed for creating becoming my own authority figure. The only thing in this world you have any control over is your choice. Map out how and why you make those choices. *What would you do?*

52. **Get out of your familiar misery.** I have close friends who can level me like a piece of farm machinery. With one word. Or one question. Or one dirty look. The key is, they serve as a trigger – not the gun. They say what they need to say – then I’m disturbed into action to do the majority of the work. Consider the three people in your life who currently serve in a bullshit-calling capacity. Email them. Thank them. Let them know how essential they are to your detection of the veneer that’s in place. Then, recommit yourself to remaining open to their proddings. Sure, it hurts. But growth is the residue of discomfort. And until it causes excessive misery, the struggle isn’t going to stop. *What do you need to unsweep under the carpet?*

53. **Give yourself permission to indulge occasionally.** The moment you refuse to do so is the same moment your admirable self-discipline starts to morph into intolerable self-righteousness. For example, I don't eat much meat or dairy. Not that I'm a vegetarian or vegan. In fact, I'm all for slaughtering animals for delicious human consumption. It's primarily a digestive issue and a health choice. Still, don't put it past me to throw down an occasional basket of chicken wings like the carnivore I once was. Hey, I'm realistic. Standing your ground is one thing. But life without wings? That's just wrong. Once in a while never hurt anybody. Except maybe the chickens. *What did you indulge this week?*

54. **Go looking for trouble.** Victory goes to the highly imaginative, the infinitely curious the partially insane. Therefore: Turn over lots of rocks. Be a hunter of patterns and explorer of problems. Become a pillar of curiosity and a ceaseless asker of stupid questions. Instead of making waves – make a tsunami. And instead of rocking the boat – capsize that mofo. These actions will help you figure out what you’re the answer to. What you’ve been designed to cure. Just try not to end up in jail. Unless you’re Nelson Mandela, making meaning in the universe is tough to do from a cell. *What did you disturb this week?*

55. **Goals are for soccer players.** The problem with goals is that you're never really happy when you accomplish them. You just keep setting more goals. And you end up living in a perpetually state of dissatisfied expectation. Nothing but an infinite regression of marginally worthwhile accomplishments. This is not healthy. First of all, there's more to life than accomplishing your goals. Being trumps doing any day of the week. And just because you're not "getting things done" doesn't mean you're going to disappear. Secondly, life changes. Quickly. And often times, what you thought you wanted later proves to be irrelevant, redundant or erroneous. Instead of deadlocking your life to an arbitrary list of pointless attachments, focus on your intention. Decide how you want to invest your life. And let go of your outdated plan that has no relationship with reality. You might also try making a list of one hundred reasons why you do what you. After all, life's greatest transformations occur in the moments when we've lost our way, but preserved our why. Remember: Success is not a spreadsheet. And what can't be measured, matters. *Are you a victim of the victories that don't count?*

56. **Goals are overrated.** It's one thing to be goal oriented – it's another to be goal obsessed. That's the problem: Once you become too fixated on your goals, a whole host of dangerous reverberations echo through your life. First, you lose sign of the true intention behind the goal. And that's way more important than crossing some arbitrary number off your list. Second, you become too attached to the outcome. And you lose site of what matters most: The person you're becoming while accomplishing the goal. Third, you lock yourself into working on something you're no longer passionate about. And that's not fair to you, your work or the world. And finally, when you're too fixated on accomplishing your goals, you end up living in a perpetual state of dissatisfied expectation. And that blocks you from finding contentment in the now. My suggestion: *Hold intentions; don't set goals.* This approach focuses on the present moment, isn't so outcome oriented and makes it easier to pivot when life throws you a curveball. Then, instead of striving for the finish line, you can remember why the hell you're running in the first place. *Will you really be that much happier when you accomplish all your goals?*

57. Gradually release the old. Determine what you would like to have room for. Then, create the space you need by heeding one or more of the following pieces of advice: Avoid outdated frameworks. Conquer obsolete fears. Discard old scripts. Dismantle outmoded assumptions. Dispose irrelevant presuppositions. Eliminate useless answers. Reject aged procedures. In the same way that productivity is about what you avoid, personal evolution is about what you discard. Sure, it's hard to let go of a part of yourself – especially something that's working. But sometimes you have to destroy yourself to reinvent yourself. *What are you holding onto that no longer serves you?*

58. **Honor your dominant architecture.** Remember what happened when the Green Bay Packers offered Brett Favre twenty million dollars to retire? He turned the money down. To me, that was a great moment in sports history. Favre basically said, “Excuse me, but, do you know who the hell I am? I’m sorry, maybe you’ve heard of me before: I’m Brett Favre. The greatest quarterback in the history of ever. And you’re seriously asking me not make use of everything I have? Peace out, cheese heads.” That’s what it sounds like to be in tune with your heart. That’s what it sounds like to honor the dominant architecture of your life. The cool part is, when you do this, the example of how you live your life will become a walking book for people to read. And those lucky enough to watch the chapters being written right in their midst will be changed for better and for always. *When you figure out what’s under your fingernails, will you design it into something that devastates the world?*

59. **Humor is the gateway to truth.** In his postmortem autobiography, *Last Words*, George Carlin wrote, “No one is ever more herself than when she really laughs. When you make someone laugh, you’re guiding her whole being for the moment.” If you want to remember who you are, never forget what makes you laugh. Ever. Even if you find humor in unexpected moments that most people would deem unfunny, inappropriate or perverse. Laugh anyway. Laugh so hard you pee, cry and puke at the same time. Laugh so loud the people five rows behind you look over to see if your oxygen mask was accidentally filled with nitrous. Denying laughter is denying truth. Telling someone she can’t laugh is like tell someone she can’t be herself. And if there’s one thing you should never, ever have to apologize for, it’s that which makes you crack up. *How many comedy albums do you own?*

60. Impose your own order on chaos. *A Course in Miracles* reminds us that inner peace is not something that we create, but rather something that already exists within us as a part of our true identity. That's exactly how you delete the drama: By tapping into your indispensable stabilizing element. Something to anchor you when world tries to knock the music out of you. Something to help you soar above the turmoil that surrounds you. As a yoga student, mine is my breath. The mantra is: "Fast heart, slow lungs." This reminds me that more that chaos erupts around me, the deeper I need to breath through my diaphragm. That's how I cope calmly with my inconveniences. That's how avoid becoming wrapped up in the injustice of the situation. By using my breath to remind myself that there are no emergencies, there are no emergencies, there are no emergencies. The tricky part is, human hardwiring predisposes us to react, which is a conditioned reflex. We have to teach ourselves to respond, which is a conscious choice. *Do you refuse to be conquered?*

61. **Inconsistency arouses suspicion.** John Kerry may have been a war hero, but he was also a waffler. During his presidential campaign, every statement he made seemed to contradict his original position. Issues he claimed to support, he voted against ten years prior. From welfare reform to gay marriage to social security, nobody knew where he stood. No wonder he got knocked off the platform. People shouldn't have to wonder about your brand. If you're truly living your values, you'll leave no doubt in their minds who you are, what you believe why you matter. If you're truly consistent, you'll sustain the spirit of your brand through every touchpoint. *Is the message you're preaching the dominant reality of your life?*

62. Inconsistency causes anxiety. There's this guy named Dalton. We've shared the stage a few times over the years. Good speaker. And what's fascinating is, the first time I watched him, I later heard someone in the bathroom comment, "You know, I've always had a hard time taking Dalton seriously – because of his mullet." That's the thing about inconsistency: People won't listen to you if they're too busy questioning you. The human brain has a motivational drive to reduce cognitive dissonance whenever possible. That's why inconsistency is so dangerous: It causes frustration, which is a precursor to psychological stress. And when word and deed don't line up, people's heads hurt. *What is affecting your ability to be taken seriously?*

63. **Inconsistency costs trust.** Many of my clients are bloggers. They're big thinkers, great writers and smart businesspeople. The problem is, not all of them post daily. And when I bust their chops, they all use the same excuses: I don't have the time. I can't think of anything to write about. Nobody cares what I have to say. My industry has too much regulation. I don't know what I'm doing. Doesn't matter. Credibility isn't an entitlement – it's a dividend. And you have to reapply for it every single day. Otherwise there's no reason for people to believe in you. Because they're certainly not going to waste their time playing the guessing game with your brand. They'll simply find someone else and move on. *How are you building a consistent timeline of credibility?*

64. **Inconsistency creates hesitation.** As an author and publisher, the first lesson I learned about selling books was: *The longer they take, they less they buy.* If people flip through my book for more than five minutes, they are never going take it home. Complexity generates contemplation, and contemplation kills sales. And it's not their fault: People are tired, busy, lazy and overloaded. They don't want to think. They don't want to make decisions. They just want the shortcut. And that's exactly what brands are: Shortcuts. Expectations. Predictable moments of youness. Your job is to confirm people's hopes about the value you deliver and the values you stand for. Otherwise there's always an asterisk. There's always something people can't quite put their finger on when they're around you. And that's precisely why they hesitate to work with and talk positively about you. *Are you taking up too much space?*

65. **Inconsistency implies unreliability.** When I became president of my local association, I made a bad decision selecting a second in command. Greg had developed a reputation for undependability. And his inconsistent behavior made the board look stupid on several occasions. But I refused to believe that's who he really was. So I gave him the benefit of the doubt. Three times. But he continued to verify my suspicions. Eventually, enough was enough. I fired him from the board. Which was especially painful considering it was a volunteer position. People shouldn't have to use their flake filter on you. Ground your consistency in commitment or be left behind. *When people show you who they are, will you believe them?*

66. Intentionally step out of the current. Otherwise, like a relentless but subtle ocean undertow, the drama will own you. To the point that you won't even realize you've been swept out to sea. To the point that when you come up for air, you discover that you're miles away from the peace your heart requires. The secret is to start with awareness. To see things dispassionately. Three questions I find helpful are: "Am I thinking a thought that will stress me out?" "Is this *really* worth my energy?" and "Why are you rushing?" Ask yourself these questions internally. Write them on sticky notes on the dashboard of your car. You can even ask your spouse or partner to elbow you in the ribs with these questions anytime the drama takes over. Whatever it takes to say goodbye to what no longer serves you. The cool part is, the more these questions enter your mindspace – the sooner they become second nature. Eventually, you'll start to live your questions. And the current of drama won't stand a chance. *How do you talk to yourself when you experience stress?*

67. Investments that pay pitiful dividends. I have a good friend who's a former alcoholic. He once told me that many of the Alcoholics Anonymous members he sponsors are people who go out of their way to stock alibis and make excuses – when they really need to scrutinize alternatives and make choices. “That’s why I always challenge my guys to tell me the biggest thing they’re willing to give up to get sober,” Marty says. “It teaches them to invest in their threshold level of commitment, not their standard-issue line of bullshit.” Learn to identify the stories you’re telling yourself. Retain ongoing openness to your misguided perceptions. And be aggressively skeptical about the things your ego tells you. Otherwise, you’ll wind up saluting your illusions for so long that you actually start believing in them. Yikes. *How strong is your emotional dividend portfolio?*

68. **Invite people to have bigger conversations.** Spending four hours arguing which contestant on *The Biggest Loser* deserves to win is not going to help you make a mark that matters. If truly want to create lasting change that matters, you have to get people talking about bigger things. Scott Adams recently wrote about this very topic on his widely read blog. “Arguably, the most important function of human language is to protect the smart from the strong,” says the Dilbert creator. “Humans use words to create sentences, and sentences to create concepts, such as our notions of duty and honor. Powerful concepts control behavior. And without our language and concepts, the strong would kill the smart, and humans wouldn’t evolve to be any smarter. I think you could say that human evolution is being guided at least partly by the power of ideas.” Lesson learned: Elevate the dialogue. Next time somebody asks you what your favorite reality show is; respectfully ask them if you can shift the conversation to a topic that counts before you club them in the head with a fire extinguisher. That way you’ll definitely make your mark. *Are your conversations laboratories?*

69. **Keep brighter company.** Find people who won't try to change you. Ignore people who attempt to smother you with their bodyguard of dogma. Delete people whose life goal is to stamp out any shred of creativity. And avoid people who seek to systematically beat the originality out of you. Individuals like these are cul-de-sacs of deadening cumulative saturation. And unless you surround yourself with people who challenge, inspire and support you, their negative voices will blend with your own. You'll subconsciously absorb their whispered suggestions. And the red pen of self-editing will run out of ink very quickly. As graphic novelist Alan Moore said, "When we're doing the will of our true self we are inevitably doing the will of the universe and it's impossible to do anything wrong." *Whose voices are blending with your own that cause you edit yourself?*

70. **Know that you're bigger than your past.** Living larger than your labels means bowing to the door of next. Surrendering your case history. And accepting that whatever you created in the past – or whatever created you in the past – matters little beyond the fact that it brought you here. After all, what happened to you isn't who you are. Past is prologue. Past brought you here. Past made you who you are. And to align your thinking with this truth, try asking the following question: *If everything I've done up until now is just the beginning, what's next?* When you start to explore a few answers, a new world of growth will open up like a spring perennial. And you'll forget all about those measly labels that once limited you. Edwin McCain was right: Tell people to let you be who you're becoming and stop seeing you as everything you've been. *Will you view the past as a crutch or a catapult?*

71. **Live larger than your labels.** I was sitting on my mom’s couch when it happened. “Scott, did you notice what was missing from this article about you?” she asked. “No. What?” “Look closely. You’ll see it.” And then it hit me like punch in the gut. For the first time in my career – after eight years, ten books and five hundred interviews – this was the first article about me that *wasn’t* about my nametag. In fact, the article didn’t even mention my nametag. The piece was about creativity, content management and entrepreneurial execution. And as I sat back and soaked in the moment, my mom cemented the experience with single question: “How does it feel to be known for your brain – not just your badge?” Pretty. Damn. Good. Because when you learn to live larger than your labels, an entire symphony of advantages comes your way. You expand your role repertoire. You reengage with life’s possibilities. You open yourself to becoming more. You uncover new territory for expansion. You invite new dimensions to your career. You make profitable use of everything you are. You crush the boundaries of your personal growth. No labels, no limits. *What are yours?*

72. **Live without interference to the expression of your own individuality.** Refusing to self-edit means you're determined to stay undeterred when people attack you for exercising your ability. This will probably happen more than once. Especially from the mouths of the mediocre. And it's essential that you proactively pursue your own path despite *lack of popular appreciation and understanding*. The hard part is, when the hurricane of Haterade devastates your inner landscape, it leaves a lot of soul damage. After all, your work isn't close to your heart – it *is* your heart. And if you're like me, you have this deep-rooted tendency to express your total sense of life. To embrace the totality of your truth, knowing that everything you do is an extension of the world you came from. My suggestion: Don't just stay the course – stay *your* course. Otherwise you destroy yourself in response to an invitation from others to stop living. *Where are you holding back from expressing yourself?*

73. Look back at the path that you followed to failure. Make a list of three situations where you ignored your instincts. Write down the answers to those same questions from the first example. Simply by making these two lists, you will immediately double the sharpness of your intuition through the power of self-awareness. In the same way that getting the appointment is making a sale in itself; simply asking yourself these questions like pressing the on button of the intuition sharpening saw. Self-evaluation is the impetus of self-improvement. *Would your instincts be sharper if you became a more contemplative person?*

74. Look back at the path that you followed to victory. That way you can see the sequence of moves that led you where you are. Make a list of three situations where you trusted your instincts. Maybe it was a key business decision. Or the choice to end a relationship. Or that time you took a left down a gravel road even though the annoying British voice on your Garmin kept telling you to turn around. Whatever your situations were, write the answers to the following questions for each one: What were your intuition triggers? Where did you feel a sense of self-trust in your body? What questions did you ask yourself? How long did it take to make your final decision? And most importantly: How did that situation ultimately turn out? *Are you polling your past successes?*

75. **Loosen your grip on life.** One of the reasons you're not making enough meaning in the universe is because you're blinded by the illusion that you control it. You don't. You can only respond to it attractively. The hard part is letting go of your need to run the show. Consider auditing your control tendencies as follows. First, calculate how much time and energy you're wasting on things over which you have absolutely zero control. Then reprioritize. Second, when circumstances are beyond your control, what do you do, choose to experience them differently. Third, if things you can't control are controlling your life, discover what about your situation is within your control – that you can realistically change – and change that. The minute you stop trying to control life and start allowing it to flow abundantly through you, meaning will make itself. *Do you actually think you can go on controlling life indefinitely?*

76. **Make no restrictions on your testimony.** The question I constantly ask myself while writing is, “What do I risk in presenting this material?” Without a strong answer, I don’t write it. But if the material scares me, I write it. If the material stretches me, I write it. If the material makes me hesitate even a millimeter, I write it. And if the material convinces me that some Podunk housewife in Texas is going to read one particular sentence of my blog – and think to herself, “Dude, this guy is disturbed” – then I’d definitely go to write it. That’s how you slay your inner editor: *By redirecting your fear into a more creative channel.* The challenge is learning how to assess the risk level of the ideas you share with the world. Create a personal security system. Some form of biofeedback to alert you that your work has entered dangerous, honest and unedited territory. Do you notice a pulse in your gut? A hesitation in your hand? Or an increase in perspiration down your back? Good. Now you know – based on bodily wisdom – that you’re crafting material that’s real and true. Which means you don’t have to edit. Because you’re living the best, highest version of yourself. *What system can you put in place to remove the restriction of your expression?*

77. **Make use of everything you are.** Cali Lewis is the founder and host of GeekBeatTV, a widely popular podcast about technology, gadgets and important research projects. During her keynote presentation at a recently Blog World conference, she discussed the concept of labels, and how they inhibit growth. And I swear I was the only person in the audience who heard it, but Cali had an inspiring throwaway line that I wrote down immediately: “Don’t get me wrong. I love my website. But that’s not everything that I am.” It takes a heroic dose of courage to admit that. To declare in front of thousands of people that your thing, your brainchild, your passion – that became widely successful because you worked your ass off eighteen hours a day for three years – is not all there is to who you are? That’s how you live larger than you labels: When you realize that it’s okay to be known for more than one thing. Let go of what you have and get what you need. *What aspects of yourself – that you absolutely love – do you have to let go of to become something better?*

78. **Mattering is a choice.** Feeling insignificant sucks, but refusing to take responsibility for your perceived insignificance is just plain stupid. However you look at it, it always turns out that you are chiefly to blame for everything. That's what Dostoyevsky wrote in *Letters from the Underground*. And that's what you have to take ownership of: That you are the result of yourself. That the feeling of insignificance floated downstream of yourself. Now, that doesn't mean other people didn't play a role in influencing the way you feel about yourself. After all, human beings craft their identities based on how people react to them in the past. Still, you can't absolve mattering to someone else. Make a list a hundred reasons why you matter. The first third will be easy. The second third will be challenging. But the last third will be revelatory. If you still feel insignificant after that, email me. *Have you decided to matter?*

79. **Monstrously human means monumentally noticeable.** Reality television is popular for two reasons. First, it's incredibly cheap to make. That's what happens when you stop casting actors and start using citizens. Secondly, the human factor is off the charts. This makes it easier for viewers to see themselves reflected in the people on the screen. Now, odds are, you won't be staring in your own reality show anytime soon. But that doesn't mean you can't invite people for a leisurely swim in your massive sea of humanity. I'm not promoting rampant narcissism, inflated self-importance or a violation of personal privacy. Rather, I'm suggesting you sack up and show more of true self to world. Your audience doesn't just expect it – they demand it. Give the people what they want. Take them behind the scenes. When they see that what you do on a daily basis speaks straight to the heart of the human experience, it will be hard not to pay attention. Turn yourself into a walking mirror. *How are you fully integrating your humanity into your profession?*

80. **Normalize your fear.** It's a beautiful moment when you understand that you're not the only one who struggles to matter. It's not fair, however, to commandeer other miserable people just so you have someone to sulk with. Misery might love company, but mattering loves positivity. Instead of boo-hooing, start brainstorming. Ask each other, "What was in play the last you felt an overwhelming sense of mattering?" As my coach, Dixie Gillaspie explains in *Anatomy of a Brick Wall*, "Figure out what inspired you and find another way to design that outcome. Reframe it, repaint it and redesign it. You can achieve your purpose, but sometimes you'll have to rethink your method." This exercise – which I've done before – will help you commit your whole psychological pitch to believing in your ability. And that will exert the necessary energy to effect the transformation from wah-wah to wow-wow. *With whom could you greet and leverage your fear together?*

81. **Not knowing is the great gateway.** In the humbling book *Being Wrong*, author Kathryn Schulz takes the reader on an adventure through the margin of error. Here's my favorite passage: "We all outgrow some of our beliefs. So instead of parading your own brilliance, try rebuilding your understanding. Otherwise certainty becomes an obstacle to the path toward truth." That's the cool part about not knowing: *It engages a higher part of yourself.* That's what keeps you mentally flexible. That's what allows you to trust the process. And that's what affords you the psychological freedom to pivot into new directions. Only from that space of openness, vulnerability and surrender can you make discoveries that change everything. The only problem is: Not knowing will drive your ego crazy. Even if you know you're wrong -- your head will make sure your heart never gets that memo. But that's an inner battle you have to fight. And it will annoy you to no end. For one week, stop being right. No arguing, no asserting your opinion and no spinning everything people say into another statement you disagree with. You'll be amazed how differently you treat people when you're not trying so hard to prove them wrong. *What insecurity is being disguised by your relentless need to be right?*

82. **Nothing fails like success.** Failure is the fun part. I don't know about you, but if there's one thing that wakes me up shivering in a cold sweat in the middle of the night wishing I still had my Teddy Ruxpin, it's success. Blech. Winning? Are you kidding me? Can anyone imagine a more terrifying prospect than getting exactly what you want? Two examples. First, it's like the fear of having your books actually being read, instead of being ignored. Why does that scare us? Because with great success comes great responsibility. And who the hell wants to deal with that? Second, the other reason I fear success is because my mentors educated me early on in my career: The arrogance of past victory becomes the aerosol of future failure. As such, you need to recognize that legacies not only jeopardize your growth, but also fuel the gravity that handcuffs you to the past version of yourself that's not gonna cut it anymore. Ultimately, complacency is the great growth-destroyer. Avoid it like the clap. *Will the next version of you drown in its wake?*

83. Offer simple, unarguable reasons. Next time someone asks you why you choose not to partake in something, try this: Instead of launching into your seven-minute diatribe about why a particular choice goes against your personal constitution or runs crosswire to the grain of your soul, just smile and simply say, “It’s not important to me.” That’s enough. That’s all people need to hear. Anything more is probably unnecessary. Take it from someone who used to share his personal philosophy on everything, with everybody, in every conversation – even when they didn’t ask. Unless people put in a request for your entire dissertation, keep the explanation of your self-discipline brief and simple. *Are you exhausting to be around?*

84. **Plans are for architects.** One of my favorite mantras comes from legendary point guard Steve Nash: “If you don’t know where you’re going, nobody can stop you.” I’ve been living that philosophy for nearly a decade. Think about it: When I started my business the day I graduated college, I had no idea what I was doing. And now, nearly a decade later, I’m happy to report that I still have no idea what I’m doing. Interestingly enough, it seems to be working: *Business is good, and life is even gooder.* That’s the big secret nobody tells you in business school: You don’t need to know where you’re going – you just need to know why you’re going there. Because if you know your why, the how will come. As long as you develop a deeper awareness of the dance – and believe that the path will take you where you want to go – you’ll figure it out. Stop making gods out of your plans. Find your core motivation, embed into the pavement and use the why to set yourself on fire. Because the irony is, there’s actually a lot of predictability in uncertainty. But only if you listen. *Are you willing to plunge forward planless?*

85. Play the music – don't just show people the notes.

Superficiality is bankruptcy. If you want to walk your truth, stay away from superfluous exertions, as Seneca wrote in *Letters to a Stoic*. Such endeavors do nothing but set your commitment back another thousand years. Instead, find the unique song you were made to sing. And in the distinctive voice you were given to sing it with, belt that baby out with all your might. If you do that on a daily basis in a respectful, remarkable and real way, the people won't just take notice – they'll take a number. And if you're lucky, their wallets will open faster than a cheerleader on prom night. *What is the music of your truth?*

86. Practice listening louder. Readers often ask me how I know what I'm going to write about each day. And to their frustration, my answer is always, "I don't." because that's not the way creativity works. You can't decide what you're going to write – all you can do is listen for what wants to be written. Otherwise you end up limiting yourself to what you already know you want. And that prevents you from hearing the unintentional music that might change everything. The game goes for the page of life: If you want to keep yourself open to possibility, don't ignore the whispering invitations of the world. Listen loudly. Respond to your inner urgencies. And trust that whatever needs to open within you, will. Because the last thing you want to do is force-feed the canvas with something that doesn't matter. Remember: If you're not alert to the forces streaming around you, you'll never pin down what wants to be written. Grow bigger ears. Trust the process. And always ask yourself what wants acceptance in this moment. You'll have no trouble figuring out your next move. *What are you allowing yourself to give birth to?*

87. Practice positive deviance. That means believe what you believe because you actually believe it – not because somebody told you to believe and you mindlessly followed. That means free yourself from the constraints of heartless orthodoxy. That means make yourself the exception to as many rules as possible. And that means approach everything with a healthy dose of curiosity and aggressive skepticism. Just don't deviate just for the sake of deviating. Mindless contrarianism isn't much better than mindless conformity. I urge you to bleed for what you want, but not for the sole purpose of staining the rug. *Do you know when to break the rules?*

88. Practice unrelenting single mindedness. When you choose focus over fuzziness, making meaning in the universe becomes a natural byproduct. I learned this from Salaimartin and Mulligan, two scientists who are smarter than me. Their work explains single mindedness as: “The groups of people who are more able to focus on the minimum number of issues to gain greater power, thus enabling them to eventually get what they require.” The universal secret is asking yourself focusing questions: How much time are you wasting not focusing on your priorities? What daily energy keeps you from keeping focused? How much time are you spending on things that diffuse your focus and hamper your goals? And are you subconsciously keeping yourself busy to avoid the important? Probes like these help you stick a stake in the ground. Even if that means polarizing a few people, even if that means sweating in obscurity before you can cry in the spotlight. Each of those realities is payment for making meaning in the universe. After all, it’s awfully hard to resist a man on a mission. *What do you have to give up to focus single-mindedly on what will set you apart?*

89. Prepare yourself for the onslaught of emotion. Walking away from anything is a painful rope to cut. Especially when it involves someone you love – or something central to your identity. Personally, I once divorced myself from an entire group of close friends that I'd known since childhood. The reason: They thought cocaine was cool – I didn't. *So I bailed.* And the next day, I experienced a bona-fide anxiety attack. You know, the kind that makes you feel like the entire world is closing in on your lungs? That's how my body responded to walking away. Which isn't entirely surprising, as relationships are fundamental to my Personal Constitution. Fortunately, the few close friends I had left helped me navigate the pain. And I made it out alive. What's interesting, though, is that none of my old friends ever called to ask where I was. Apparently, my absence wasn't enough to warrant any follow up. *Weird.* I think that's the hardest part about walking away: Knowing in your heart that people aren't going to come chasing after you. Fortunately, walking away from a closed door usually helps you find a key to open a new one. As Shakespeare said, "To thine own self be true – not to thine own group of friends you don't even like anymore be true." *How will walking away make you feel – really?*

90. **Rarity is inherent.** The problem is, there's such pervasive pressure to remain average, that most people lose touch with what makes them exceptional. It's not about seeking rarity – it's about squashing the barriers against finding it. You can't block who you are. And even if you could, apologizing for the best within you is the highest form of moral treason. Stop stripping away your rarity. Put an end to all this self-editing. All these unconscious acts of omission. Otherwise you'll wear yourself out trying to be something you're not. Instead, access your most elegant instrument. Figure out what you're good at and do only that. And always retain burning contempt for imitation and mediocrity. Humanity will be better for your life. You already carry something with you that's just yours. It's your unique vision of the world. Your special blend of magic. Fail to bring that with you, and risk becoming yesterday's news. But lay it naked for the world to see, and an unending rainfall of rarity will surround you. *What makes you rare?*

91. **Reciprocation is essential.** Standing your ground requires the respect and openness you extend to other people when they stand their ground. Even when you don't agree with them. Especially when you don't agree with them. You still have to honor other people's truth. You still have to stand on the edge of yourself to salute them, without the desire to change, fix or improve them. Even if you have to agree to disagree. Standing your ground without stepping on people's toes means learning to allow people you care about to challenge your opinions – without becoming frustrated. Instead, becoming thankful for the opportunity to either reinforce your own beliefs and stick to your guns, or to realize when you've been shortsighted. Yes, it's tough to accept influence from others – especially those you love. But sometimes they can see things you can't. Sometimes they're the very alarm clock you didn't realize you needed. Don't press the snooze button on them. *Are you obstinate, yet flexible enough to bend when needed?*

92. **Reframe perceived meaninglessness.** Think of it this way: Moments of non-mattering are positive reflections of your inherent desire to make the world better. After all, mattering wouldn't be important to you if you were a loser. I've been there. Inconsequentiality is a bitch. It's a form of spiritual bankruptcy that feels like an earthquake to your heart. The good news, it's also a wakeup call that mattering is like oxygen to your soul, and your tank is just a little low right now. No problem. You just need to refill it. As long as you start with that baseline level of awareness. Otherwise mattering will feel miles away. As Joseph Campbell also said, "Everything is a possibility, everything is a clue and everything is talking to you." The question is: *Are you brave enough to listen?*

93. **Regularly ask yourself intuition questions.** What do I need to remember to be most aware of right now? What direction do I need to go right now? How do I need to take care of myself right now? What is it that I don't want to know about myself? What remains unexpressed within me? What message is my body trying to give me right now? What are the signs I need to look for in myself that tell me I need to do something different? What is within me that's trying to come through right now? Post these questions on sticky notes. Or ask them to yourself as you fall asleep. Or make a list of one hundred answers to each question. Or repeat them as mantras during meditation. Or write them in blood on your bathroom mirror. The point is to use whatever works for your learning and motivation style – then allow the solutions to your problems suggest themselves. *How do you punch yourself in the face?*

94. **Rely on your intuitive faculties.** Sometimes remembering who you are means opening yourself to bring forth inner guidance that will help you understand yourself with greater clarity. This is easier said than done, of course. And in my experience, the best practice for doing so is to put yourself in situations that demand total presence. Personally, I use yoga, writing, meditation and guitar playing. Find what works for you. Total presence allows you to stop and listen to the voice of your true self. Even if you don't like what it has to say. You listen anyway. After all, listening is a form loving. And as George Washington Carver once said, "There is nothing that will not reveal its secrets if you love it enough." *Who murdered your intuition?*

95. **Remember who you aren't.** Deciding what you want by the process of elimination is less threatening and intimidating. It's like defining the whitespace. In the same way that an illustrator examines the area around his drawing, your mission is to explore your boundaries. Where you end. The red line that, if crossed, means that you are no longer you. Ultimately, by becoming aware of all the places in your life in which you're not present – and by becoming aware of how you inhibit and resist your natural state – you'll come into greater truth about your identity. *Who aren't you?*

96. **Remove what robs you.** I went to college at Miami University with Steelers quarterback, Ben Roethlisberger. We actually had class together. But Ben never came to class. And I'll never forget what my professor told me when I asked about Ben's academic status: "I hope I never see him in class," he said. "I hope he's at the gym. I hope he's studying plays. I hope he's watching game film. Do you think Roethlisberger wants to make forty thousand dollars a year working in marketing; or make ten million a year going pro?" Sure enough, Ben was drafted two years later. And he led his team to the Superbowl. Bet he didn't lose much sleep over missing class. Remove what robs you; embrace what optimizes you. Especially the moment when you realize that you're hardwired to become something bigger. Otherwise, if you choose not to cater to your deepest desires and strongest urges, the existential agony will eat away at you like a one-celled bacterium. *What robs you of your true talent?*

97. **Restore the equilibrium.** The reason it's so hard to trust the process is because it's a form of surrendering. For most people, that's a terrifying preposition. Human beings have an inherent need to preserve their sense of control. And any time they feel it being taken away from them, they freak out. I'm reminded of the Arabian proverb, "Trust God, but tie up your camel." That's the real secret: To restore the equilibrium. To balance letting go with preserving control. For example, when you enter into a new relationship, make a handshake agreement with your partner: "Look, I know we're both scared. I know we're both skeptical. Let's agree that for every path we pave for our hearts to follow, we're going to make regular rest stops for our brains to reflect. That's where we'll check in with honest, open and clear updates on the process." When you ease into that exchange slowly, you hold yourself over until you're more comfortable tipping the scales. *How do you balance control with surrender?*

98. **Reveal the record of your origins.** I love old trees. They never fail to be objects of interest because their rings, branches, roots and bark always take me back in time. Your challenge is to do the same. To give people a ride on the wayback machine. For example, I used to work in a furniture store in Portland that covered their walls with black and white photos, newspaper clippings, decade-old advertisements and antiquated business cards. People would come to the store just to look at the walls. No wonder they did twelve million a year. Ask yourself: What artifacts could you use on your website, in your office or at your store to personify your humble beginnings? Remember: Customers love this stuff. Artifacts lend personality to your surroundings, humanize your organization and build the fascination and intrigue of your brand. *Are the relics of your origins collecting dust or compelling eyeballs?*

99. Rewrite your definition of mattering. Many of my readers are unemployed. Still, despite their job search struggles, they're some of the most driven, intelligent and amazing people on the planet. And here's what I've learned after a few thousand of their emails: A principal struggle of the unemployed is, "How can I matter when I'm not making money?" Good question. Fortunately, mattering doesn't come from money, power or responsibility. Mattering is the incidental consequence of the intentional commitment to fulfill your whole capacity for living. The hard part is believing you can actually fill it. As Benjamin Hoff in *The Tao of Pooh*, "No matter how useful we may be, sometimes it takes us a while to recognize our own value. But in order to take control of our lives and accomplish something of lasting value, sooner or later we need to learn to believe." *Have you put unadulterated self-belief at the apex of your value system?*

100. **Rewrite your definition of victory.** When you start out as a writer, you just want to be read. And liked. And talked about. And maybe paid. Then, after a few years, things change: Now you just want to be taken seriously. And trusted. And not just read widely – but heard deeply. And maybe paid a little more. Eventually, however, once you’ve stabilized your career, moved out of your parents’ basement and figured out how to earn a real living doing what makes your heart sing, you come to the realization that all of the vainglorious crap you used to want was nothing but the preamble to what your soul truly aches for: To matter. To be essential. To become necessary to the world. To make meaning in the universe. And to serve something bigger by gifting your talents to the world. Now, I don’t know what it’s like in your industry, but that’s how it works for me. And I challenge you to think two things: First, how your definition of victory has changed over the years, and second, what new strides you’re going to have to take get there. *What does winning look like to you?*

101. **Ritualize your confrontation.** Ritual, in the words of Joseph Campbell, introduces you to the meaning of what's going on. It properly puts your mind in touch with what you're really doing. What's more, by ritualizing self-confrontation, you create a cushion of compassion for the devastating blows to land. Because let's face it: People don't confront themselves because it's scary. People don't confront themselves because it's a gateway drug to change. And people don't confront themselves because it's ten thousand times harder than slogging along in mediocrity. That's why ritualizing self-confrontation is so essential: Because the circumferencelessness of human potential is terrifying. And needs to be attended to with a certain amount of *namaste*. The spirit in me honors the spirit in you. Without some kind ritual, your ego tells your body to clock out early. Rituals prevent you from wondering why the hell you're doing something. *What are yours?*

102. **Saying no stretches other parts of you.** It's amazing how creative you become once you'd made the decision not to cross a certain line. For example, think about the last time you approached a construction detour in your hometown. I bet you managed to discover several cool, new and exciting shortcuts to get to the same place you've been going for years, right? Creativity works the same way: When you commit to not doing something a certain way, your brain immediately searches for alternate routes to accomplish the same goal. Next time you say no to something, start asking yourself, "What will saying no energize me for?" It's almost ironic. Setting healthy boundaries in one part of your life actually stretches you in other parts. Cool. Maybe you'll discover a new skill you didn't even know you had, simply by standing your ground. *When you stick your stake in the ground, what new terrain might you uncover?*

103. **Scratch your itch elsewhere.** It's always easier to walk away from something if you view it as a springboard. As a stepping-stone to something better. Take organizational involvement, for example. From faith communities to volunteer organizations to professional associations, too often we're afraid to throw in the towel – even when we've passed the point of diminishing returns. We've simply invested too much emotional labor, and walking away would be too painful. *Which makes total sense.* I've certainly been guilty of sticking around somewhere for too long out of guilt. But life's too short to shackle yourself to an unfulfilling, unrewarding affiliation you've outgrown, just for the sake of sparing somebody's feelings. My suggestion: Instead of throwing a life jacket to something that's already sunk to the bottom of the ocean – find somewhere else to swim. Instead of working overtime to convince yourself that your membership is worthwhile – find a better sandbox where you can be somebody. Look: It's never pleasant when you realize that something you love has outlived its usefulness. But everything on this planet has a lifecycle. Maybe it's time to celebrate your victories, walk off the field and step into something better. *Are you willing to confront your organizational expiration date?*

104. **Screw the masses.** Don't allow the world to superimpose its prefabricated definition of who you should be. Life's too short to live other people's ideas about who you are. Instead, find yourself at the deepest possible level. Listen to the ground of being and decide in the solitude of your own consciousness who and what you already are. Find the places you are operating from a limited view of yourself. If you truly want to liberate unsuspected energies, let your heart ask the questions and your life will provide the answers. You will show the world what you can be at your best. *Are you opening yourself to discovering who you are?*

105. **Shields up.** When you *do* decide to stand out, prepare yourself for inevitable slings and arrows from the people around you. It comes with the territory of occupying the margins. You'll find that many of them will become uncomfortable. Or feel threatened by your distinctiveness. They'd much rather you fit in – that way they could ignore you. Unfortunately, because you've sculpted yourself into a monument of non-conformity, people are not confronted with just how boring they really are. Good. Maybe that will disturb them into action. Maybe Steven Pressfield was right: "When we see others living their authentic lives, it drives us crazy because we know we're not living our own." *Are you prepared to be hated?*

106. **Shrink not from hardship.** First, stop deluding yourself that you can outsmart getting hurt – you can't. Stop believing that you can build immunity against life's sorrows – you can't. And stop thinking you're superior to the wounds and upsets of life. I've tried all three, and none accomplished anything but exacerbating my misery. Secondly, remember that you can breathe through most pain, decapitations notwithstanding. Oxygen is the new aspirin. With a healthier relationship with your breath, you will be floored at how much of the impact your lungs can displace. Third, pain is an invitation to excel and a deliverer of wisdom. Consider making friends with it instead of trying to eradicate it. Pain is a natural part of the human experience. It makes you feel alive. But if you're the kind of person who lives a trouble-free life, you're not actually living – you just exist. And it's pretty hard to make a mark from such a dormant posture. Ultimately, Parker Palmer said it best in *A Hidden Wholeness*: "Don't become alienated from your truth. Feel it, name it – but don't numb it. The pain will crack the closed system open and force you out from behind the wall toward healing."

107. **Slay your inner editor.** As I've already mentioned, I don't edit. I don't rewrite. I don't do drafts. I don't go back and revisit old work. I write things once, I write them in blood, and I publish them to the world with zero regret and infinite confidence. Sure, I might change a few words here and there. Or modify my position on an issue. And of course, always make grammatical improvements at the request of my editor. But that's proofreading. Editing means correcting the core of something. And the moment you allow that to happen – to the work or to the person who authors it – is the moment you betray yourself. Self-editing renders your creativity timid and impotent, and it's not fair to your core to let that happen. But living a life without editing yourself isn't just about writing. It's about walking your truth. It's about breathing your brand. It's about staying loyal to yourself. It's about giving your river a voice and letting it flow. Self-editing is self-betrayal. And I know what you're thinking. Sometimes it's safer to sabotage the work. Sometimes it's safer to sabotage yourself. And you're right – it is safer. But to those who seek to turn their lives into remarkable portraits of brilliant creative expression, safe is a very dangerous place to be. Stop editing yourself. *Can your heart take it anymore?*

108. **Smoke a peace with why you are.** During a recent workshop with a group of student leaders, I was asked if I knew what I was doing when I started my business right out of college. “No way. And I still don’t know what I’m doing – I just have a deeper sense of why I’m doing it.” Making your mark means not being stopped by not knowing how. Instead, commit to a consistency of why. The how will come in time. Promise. After all, that’s what people really want to know about their leaders: Not just how they are, not just who they are – *but why they are*. That’s the verb that matters. That’s how you fulfill your function. That’s how you put a check mark next to your divine assignment. And if you betray the mission you were mandated to fulfill, you commit a form of spiritual suicide. I know how hard it is to surrender to something larger. You feel vulnerable, uncertain and out of control. And while I don’t preach the predominance of any particular supernatural agency, there is always value in making peace with something that’s big enough to crush you like a walnut. It’s an essential step for building faith, instilling the proper humility and trusting your higher resources. Plus, chicks dig it. The best way to leave ineradicable imprints on the world is to live a life that makes an unmistakable statement about what you believe. *Have you subordinated yourself to something larger than yourself?*

109. **Stand your ground.** Here's the caveat to living life without editing yourself: *Terminal uniqueness*. It's thinking you're uniquely qualified, excessively entitled or appointed to behave a certain way at the expense of others. *Not attractive*. And people can smell it from a mile away. The challenge is balancing between self-editing and self-righteousness. Because while you don't want to wear yourself out trying to be something you're not, you also don't want to wear others out by trying to be on all the time. Otherwise you wind up sticking to your guns only to shoot people in the foot. Just be careful. Have some tact. You don't need to share your opinion on every issue with every person on every occasion. Silence isn't self-editing – it's just self-etiquette. Make sure you don't become a victim of your own conviction. Otherwise commitment without cordiality becomes contamination. *Is your commitment to slay your inner editor causing collateral damage?*

110. **Stay away from editors.** Unless you're a professional writer, delete all editors from your life. You know the people I'm talking about. The ones who constantly correct everything you do. The ones who relentlessly require you to adjust who you are to accommodate their selfish needs. The ones who incessantly ensure that you're molded into their idealized version of a person. Yeah. Those people. I call them editors. And if you're not careful, they will yank you off the path of your truth and lead you down a dangerous cul-de-sac of dishonesty. That's why I love my family: After thirty years, they've never asked me to edit myself. They know I'm crazy. They know I'm different. And they know that certain parts of who I am will never change. And they're okay with that. Because they're all the exact same way. Normality isn't exactly a common branch in the Ginsberg family tree. And likewise, I would never ask them to edit themselves either. That's how we roll at my house. *Are you surrounding yourself with people who don't ask you to edit yourself?*

111. **Success is more than one right decision.** I learned this lesson on a recent flight from Tokyo to Atlanta, where I had the pleasure of sitting next to Brian Littrell from The Backstreet Boys. He's the cute one, if you remember. And I thought his philosophy was brilliant in its simplicity. Especially coming from a guy who sold a hundred million records. "We've been around for seventeen years and we're the only boy band left. We must be doing something right." Significance is incremental. Cumulative. One pebble at a time. Be patient as your mountain of meaning piles up. *How do you make decisions?*

112. **The detour is the path.** It's amazing how easy it is to relax when you come to the realization that you're always in alignment. That everything happening is exactly what is supposed to happen. Even if it's inconsistent with the great life plan you orchestrated in the shower this morning. Part of being flexible is seeing good, seeing possibility and seeing growth in everything that happens to you. Leaving the path is a choice – but so is embracing the detour. *How does this accident relate to my life purpose?*

113. **Think of your label as a dry erase board.** If you don't make a name for yourself, someone will make one for you. But if you refuse to rewrite the labels you stick onto yourself, you rob the world of the opportunity to experience the best, highest version of that self. That's the problem with labels: *They imply immunity.* And you assume you're nailed to a certain cross forever. But you don't have to choke on your labels. Not if you're willing to evolve. *When was the last time you took a long, honest look at the labels you gave yourself?*

114. **Trace your trajectory.** Have you ever mapped out your *entire career*, year by year, on one sheet of paper? It's a fascinating exercise: Some call it a lifeline, some call it a visual biography or some call it a career trajectory map. Either way, I was curious about it, so I decided to give it a whirl over the summer. And to say that the results were revelatory would be an understatement. Here's what happens: First, you become inspired to live larger than your labels by investigating the labels you've already outgrown. Second, by examining each of the progress points of your professional life, you gain greater perspective on where you've been, where you've come and who you've become in the process. Finally, because the exercise it's a form of visual self-reflection and cumulative self-confrontation, the trajectory map helps you create a healthy distance from yourself. Ultimately, the map reflects your truth in a new light. The kind of light that outshines the brightness of the former version of yourself. The kind of light that helps you cut yourself loose from the past and swing into the future. *When was the last time you traced your professional trajectory?*

115. **Travel back in time.** Kids rarely forget who they are because they don't have a backstage yet. Somewhere around adolescence, however, most people develop two separate selves: Their onstage performance, based on what their ego thinks they should be and their backstage reality, based on what their core already is and has always been. In order to be the person on the outside that you are on the inside, think back to when you were a kid. What have you historically done when you noticed stress in your life? What did you used to do for hours with absolutely concentration and enthusiasm that your mom had to drag you away from to come to dinner? Assemble a preponderance of data. You'll remind yourself who you are in no time at all. *Where is your territory?*

116. Trust that there is a place for your gifts in the world.

Otherwise, why else would you have them? To impress your dog? Come on. Your dog is impressed when you fart. Look: You're amazing at something for a reason. And you've been given your own plot of soil to cultivate. Your challenge is to unite those inner elements and regift your originality to the world. Because whether or not you believe it, the world needs to hear your voice. Go give it a chance to sing. Don't be the annoying girl in the back of the karaoke bar who, every week, violently refuses to drag her lazy ass up on stage. Sing. Sing your heart out. Sing like Whitney in *The Bodyguard*. Show the world what you can be at your best, and your voice will be the great maker of meaning. *What corner of the universe is yours to transform?*

117. **Uniquely define your curriculum.** The most formative years of my childhood were first through sixth grade. That was when a handful of us were pulled out of class to spend a portion of our time in Gifted and Talented Education. The programs varied from critical thinking drills, creative exercises and other subjects typically not covered in the classroom. Interestingly, none of us knew why we were being pulled out class. We were just told that were part of a unique group. And when the gifted teacher, Mrs. Ray, visited our classroom, it was time to pack up and go get creative. It was the absolute highlight of elementary school: We learned how to think, we learned why to think and we were all given an irrevocable license to create. And if you want to make use of everything you are, locate your territory for expansion. Enter it with constructive ambition. Creatively engage whatever you have and empty yourself into adventure. That's how you leave room for genius to enter. *Where are you practicing creative deployment of self?*

118. **Use visual reminders.** People love to ask me if I wear a nametag to remember who I am. And as facetious as their playful remark usually is, it finally occurred to me a few years ago: *Wait a minute. That's exactly why I wear a nametag.* Because it's easy to forget who you are. Sometimes you get so wrapped in who you think you are, who other people think you are, or who you want other people to think you are – that you overlook your own truth. That's the benefit of regular self-confrontation: To assist you in getting and staying over yourself. To remind you how you roll. And while you don't need to wear a nametag to do so, you might consider using something tangible as a visual cue to induce ongoing self-confrontation. *How could you paint yourself into a confrontational corner?*

119. **Visualize the aftermath.** During one of his thousands of spoken word concerts, Henry Rollins said, “I want to make life run for its life. I want to be a pain in life’s ass. I want life to celebrate the day I die. I want life to finally get a breather once I’m dead.” What about you? Once you’ve made use of everything you are, what do you want to happen? What do you want people to remember? Personally, when I die, I want life to give me a standing ovation. And I don’t want it to even think about sitting down until its ass is numb and its knees start buckling. For you, it’s worth asking two questions: What will be the afterlife of what you do? What is the field on which you will leave everything you’ve got? Your purpose isn’t a task – it’s the way you live your life. It’s what your life is committed to. Don’t die with un-lived parts of within you. Welcome the dust of the daily battle. Unlock more of your hidden capacities and unutilized talents each day. Set yourself on fire and let the world sit back and watch you burn. *What is the result of you?*

120. **Yield to the impulse of expression.** A song that ignites my creative sprit every time I heart it is “No Choice,” by Edwin McCain. “It was a love so big that it filled his heart, until it swelled and finally burst apart. And where the love spilled out they called it art. But he never really had no choice. There was a beautiful fire inside of him as he balanced his way out on that limb. Could’ve burned right through that branch so thin, but he never really had no choice. He had no choice. When he gave his river a voice. He never really had no choice.” If you want to express all that you have to contribute, you have to believe that something valuable will emerge. You have to believe you have the ability to build something substantial. Only then can you get touch with your natural rhythms, surrender to the river – the unbounded vital force – and be creative without limitation. *Where will the current of your truth carry you?*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Ginsberg is an author, speaker, consultant, mentor, publisher, award-winning blogger & one smoking hot piece of brain candy. He also wears a nametag 24-7. Even to bed.