

The Most Important Thing

January 24, 2021 | 233 upvotes | by [Whisper](#)

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Comments

redblueninja • 85 points • 24 January, 2021 03:31 AM*

This concept was touched upon by Pook earlier.

You are caught in the vicious cycle. You are hesitant because you are not used for things going your way. And things will never go your way because you remain hesitant. You see what you want, become hesitant, and the door of opportunity closes. It happens again. And again. And again. With each choice towards Inaction, you reject yourself a little bit more.

It's like that elephant which had a chain to its leg when it was young, so it doesn't even try again, believing the problem to be "intractable" as you say.

Although, the more fundamental skill required here is knowing the appropriate difficulty level of a task, so that's it's something outside of your comfort zone, but still possible. And that requires self knowledge.

Pretty good read, man!

EDIT : This comment by Thotwrecker might help some people here :

If I had to reduce everything I've learned in a decade into 1 principle, it would be this:

Ultimately, experiences transform people, nothing else. Experiences that actually put you into stress, conflict, competition, pain, etc, will force you to grow your internal faculties and external competencies. Seek the right experiences, you will transform.

What are the right experiences, though?

experiences that reveal your flaws and force intense, brutal, painful self-reflection.

experiences that strip you of comfort and happiness

experiences that put you under extreme duress and challenge

experiences that force you to contend with politics, people dynamics, group mentality, etc

experiences that allow you to experience "alpha mentality" from the alpha perspective. Fucking a married bitch. Paying trivial taxi money to fuck hot filipina bitches. It doesn't have to be "alpha" -- it has to put you into the abundance, alpha mentality. Throwing away pussy. Cutting off hot girls teaches you more than learning to "win them".

experiences that expose you to superior men, wherein simple proximity reveals to you paths to mastery. You can read 48 laws as an autistic high schooler, or you can get an internship with a hotshot state senator -- what will teach you more?

experiences that penalize you for victim mentality. Victim mentality is the biggest blocker to your success and biggest cancer on TRP. Everyone here is wahh wahh wahh, I'm a fucking victim. They don't say it, but you can feel the hurt victim mentality. They are essentially no better than homeless people bitching about how the world did them wrong and that's why they're homeless. An example of an experience that penalizes you for victim mentality is being responsible for a team -- and realizing your idiot teammates mistakes will get you lynched by your superiors judging you, so it's on you to force them to succeed, and not be victimized by their mediocrity.

lastly, experiences where you are forced to fail in a miserable fashion, and the only pathway to success is to

kill parts of yourself. Kill the boy, kill the fear, kill the bitch, kill the victim. Basically, if your experiences do not force you to change, they are all garbage. Chase experiences where THE ONLY WAY you will avoid massive pain and suffering is by literally throwing away your person, and being a different person.

Whisper[S] • 35 points • 24 January, 2021 04:24 AM

Not only Pook. Thiel calls it easy, hard and impossible, in reference to what to invest in or build. Martin Seligman shocked dogs who later didn't try to escape them even when they could, because they had learned the shocks were "unavoidable".

The problem is that most everyone interprets these results in terms of either the power of positive thinking, or in terms of the "willpower" to take risks and leave your comfort zone.

But neither of those two things can be changed at will. What *can* be changed at will is *what you know*, because you can voluntarily seek out new knowledge. What I've done here is outline how courage is knowledge. So those who lack courage, if they embrace this model, can become braver by correcting their ignorance.

The brain is an information storage device. We **are** what we **know**.

youcanhandlethelie • 2 points • 29 January, 2021 08:38 AM

What does catching a cab have to do with having sex with hot Filipino's? Couldn't you drive yourself?

ForeverKarlMalone • 28 points • 24 January, 2021 07:27 AM

Amazing read! Brilliant discovery that courage is merely about appropriately identifying a task as hard instead of impossible.

I've also come to the conclusion that the deeper you go into a subject, the less "mystical" and "superhuman" other people's amazing feats seem.

For example, I used to think all programmers were genius hacker types who I could never compete with. Then after learning more and more, I discovered that it's really more about building an elegant structure, like putting together a house more than it is about sheer creativity.

So don't sell yourself short. Outside of physical limitations for athletic goals, chances are there's a winning strategy to achieve whatever it is you want to achieve - money, freedom, success with women. It's all up to you to find it.

We're all much more similar than our egos would like to admit. Chances are whatever "Talent" you have in a skill that you think you're awesome at - is merely something you've worked at since a young age or were lucky enough to have a really good mentor in. There's no reason you can't succeed in anything else you put your mind to.

armenian_UwUcide • 16 points • 24 January, 2021 02:50 AM

Quality content as usual, Whisper. This is the kind of content TRP needs

repfive305 • 16 points • 24 January, 2021 05:27 PM*

100% this. Knowledge/experience is EVERYTHING. People who met me in the past 2 years know me as an alpha dude who's smooth af with ladies. You have no idea how many times I fucked up talking to girls, got insanely nervous, sent beta texts, had massive oneitis etc, to get to my current spot.

My favorite one was I talked to this girl at the gym about 5 years ago. I got super nervous planning out what I was going to say. I walked up to her and was literally shaking. You could hear it in my voice. I blanked, and stumbled through some sentences, and accidentally made a racist joke. Can't even remember it but it was

probably the dumbest thing I ever said. I got her # (pity #) but never texted out of embarrassment.

This experience and reflection upon it led to the realization that I can't sit there and plan it out. That's when I get too nervous.

Lastly, I still get nervous sometimes. It doesn't matter. Go up to them anyway and it leaves real quick. Buds of mine have legit been in awe when I go up to the hottest girl wherever I am with no hesitation. Recently got a girls number who has 70k followers on IG at the gym. Hot af, and 5 guys were watching me. Guarantee they thought things like "damn this guy is confident, and can only do this cause he's jacked". 5 years ago they probably thought "wow that loser just got the shit rejected out of him". Go for it in life or else you'll never get there.

Returnofthemack3 • 2 points • 30 January, 2021 09:31 AM

Lmao the image of a guy nervously saying a racist joke when picking up a girl is hilarious

RPthrowaway123 • 1 point • 26 January, 2021 11:33 AM

I almost never approach at the gym - always seemed to me like a bad place. I'm focused on my workout, she's focused on her workout, earbuds are in, ect. Any tips? It's about the only place left with attractive women and no masks where I live lol.

repfive305 • 5 points • 26 January, 2021 02:59 PM*

Yeah I've heard that from a lot of people. "she's focused on her workout". I think everyone wants to meet someone they like, and I think it's easier with the pandemic. Fewer people are approaching cause it's something you aren't really "supposed" to do.

I usually do 1 of 2 things at the gym.

1. ask them something random about their workout. Example is last week a girl was using one of those giant weighted balls and lifting it overhead and throwing it into the ground. I just asked her what bodypart it worked the most since I never do that. I actually completely fucked up my question. Doesn't matter imo.
2. I say something like "hey I wanted to meet you, I'm Repfive305" followed by "do you usually come to the gym at this time I haven't seen you around before" or some variation of this. And go from there.

I usually go with #2, and always finish here, or will approach them again with "in case I don't see you again you should give me your number". If you do see her a lot just say "hey you should give me your number". The weighted ball girl said she had a bf, but I actually think I could have gotten it if I tried talking to her again. She kept walking by me after she rejected me. At this point the gym was almost closed and I didn't have time to talk. So it does happen sometimes where you or they are too focused. Side note: always take rejection well. Always.

The 70k instagram girl was 2 weeks ago and seemed very focused on her workout. I went with line #2. She had just finished her last set on a machine and said something like "just finished, it's all yours" and I said "no I wanted to meet you". She was definitely in a rush, so it was a short convo. She said she has the all city gym pass so she doesn't usually come to my gym at this time. She started to walk away with "well it was nice meeting you". But I just used my closing line and got her number.

Although don't think this one is gonna work out either. She seemed pretty down with giving me her number and closely watched me type it into my phone haha. But turns out she's real good friends with a girl that beta me suuuper fucked it up with 2.5 years ago. It was literally the last girl that I was super beta for. Crazy how they happened to be such good friends. Small world.

HumanSockPuppet • 6 points • 25 January, 2021 07:00 PM

This is exactly the kind of shit we used to discuss during our couch talks in the good old days. Good stuff, bro.

Whisper[S] • 1 point • 2 February, 2021 07:01 AM

I miss those times, and I miss you, brother. Get your business stuff sorted out so you can join us down here.

MakoShark93 • 5 points • 24 January, 2021 07:17 PM

This is an awesome post full of quality. My whole life I've heard, "You need confidence. You don't have that." My mom told me you have to fake it til you make it, but I never knew HOW exactly. What is confidence? I then learned that confidence comes from competency -- but I still didn't know how to get there -- I've been afraid my whole life, but this post has confirmed a number of my thoughts but not just that -- showed me a systematic mentality to adopt by comparing it to my number one hobby; lifting. Thanks bro.

repfive305 • 3 points • 25 January, 2021 05:50 AM*

I know that exact feeling. "What is confidence?" I had a guy tell me my freshman year of college that I had no confidence. I legit had never thought about what that actually meant.

For me, I built it from always going for it and working harder than everyone. I know when I walk into a room I am in the top 1% of guys physically, and that I will talk to any girl. On top of working incessantly on side projects. I have not met anyone who will walk up to girls like I do no matter what. The crazy thing is, THAT'S ALL IT TAKES. If you do that over and over, you will get better. And then all of a sudden you realize you can do things that 99% of guys can't. Instant confidence whenever your mind turns on. It's like, "I used to be so nervous, but I've talked to hot girls 10000 times. I actually know what to do now. Literally very few people know the game like me."

Great comparison I noticed tonight watching the Bucs vs Packers. Brady threw an interception, and then they showed him on the sideline. He looked so sure of himself. Complete confidence. It's a perfect analogy for talking to girls. When you start out, you throw a lot of "interceptions" and fuck it up. Once you get real, real good from practice, you realize it absolutely does not matter what happened in that one play or gaming a girl. That girl just rejected the shit out of me in front of 5 people? Idc. I'm the only one who had the balls to try (not to mention realizing that it's actually usually a shit test that 99% of guys fail). Brady throws an interception? He's come back 100 times, and is a fucking multimillionaire who puts in more work than EVERYONE. Qbs will always throw interceptions. It comes with the game.

Fucking up does not matter. Let me say it again. Fucking up does not matter. I literally had a girl reject me in front of 5 people 3 weeks ago, and now she's sending me smileys because I didn't give a fuck and made a joke of it. How do you do that? By knowing you can talk to the next hottest girl. You just have to put in the work.

MakoShark93 • 2 points • 25 January, 2021 08:26 AM

Thanks for the response bro! I never really looked at it from the perspective of plays, but that fucking makes a lot of sense! I've also been thinking about something and I'd like to hear your thoughts on this: Being smooth comes from not hesitating -- would you say that's an accurate statement?

repfive305 • 2 points • 25 January, 2021 06:26 PM

I agree partially, being smooth comes from not hesitating, but it also comes from practice and tone. I used to be too excited talking to girls, and while I was funny, it was too much. I've cooled off as I've started to believe in myself more and realize I don't have to impress anyone. Having that tone of the "cool guy" is very important imo. It's like calm, collected, saying something funny and not caring if it

lands or not because you know it's funny. Just takes practice.

INNASKILLZ2K18 • 3 points • 25 January, 2021 07:44 AM*

There is some excellent shit in this post.

Though, I'm not sure I completely agree with the idea that ' ***"Courage" is the cognitive ability to accurately sort problems into one of these three categories.*** '

I'm sure there is more to your message which you may or may not reply with, but if I look at this hypothesis exactly as it reads it tells me that simply cognitively sorting problems into your three categories is in itself courage. Not 'a form' of courage, or a version of courage, but courage totally in and of itself.

Sorting problems into those categories is huge. Takes a lot of guts to look at a difficult problem and say 'I can learn how to do that'. Especially if the guy has resolve to actually learn how.

But that cognitive sorting, imo, is not courage in and of itself. Knowing 'how to do' is not courage in and of itself.

Knowing 'how to do', and thinking something is possible to learn can help someone employ courage. Courage can help someone through the learning process.

Take Rogers, who you mentioned. He had a wealth of knowledge in psychology and a background working in child development. He believed he knew how to help people solve various problems, and attempted to employ what he knew.

However, it was only when he surrendered what he knew and started listening to his clients, that he eventually discovered a whole new form of personality theory and therapy.

Was the act of courage there Rogers believing 'helping people overcome problems is a tractable obstacle', or him daring to surrender what he thought he knew and go against the grain? To trust, as he describes, that place *beyond* intellect?

I don't know, but I think 'courage' is something outside of just sorting problems into the categories you've mentioned.

arakouzo • 3 points • 25 January, 2021 03:30 PM

This post really made me think, but it overlooks the power of laziness and weakness. Which are definitely character flaws and not just a lack of knowledge.

A lot of guys out there know how to eat right, go to the gym, work hard, and get in shape. They have the knowledge and resources to do this. They know that this task is just hard, not impossible. They know what to do. They simply choose not to do it because it is hard. There is nothing else they need to learn or acquire to become able to do it, other than not being a weak and lazy shit. They convince themselves that it wouldn't be worth doing this thing anyway. But really, it's just hard and they don't want to.

A lot of guys out there know that if they really go out and talk to 5000 women, it's unavoidable that eventually they're going to have sex with someone. But that is hard. Embarrassing. They will be shamed. They will be rejected. They could do this, but choose not to, because it is hard. Some men even tell themselves that it is not worth doing this thing and that they don't want to do it anyway, even though they secretly want it and are not doing it simply because it is hard.

Many men when confronted with something that is just hard and not impossible choose not to do the hard thing, even though they have all of the knowledge and resources they need to do it. They tell themselves that it is not worth doing the hard thing. That their time is better spent doing other easier things. That the hard thing is not worth it. That is a character flaw, not a lack of knowledge.

vancityboyo • 5 points • 24 January, 2021 01:00 AM

Nice stuff

Proto_Sigma • 5 points • 24 January, 2021 01:58 AM

Based and *Protagoras* pilled.

jbbwrams1234 • 2 points • 26 January, 2021 08:42 AM

u/RealJoeDee we need whisper now on the show!! ASAP.

lvxvl • 2 points • 28 January, 2021 03:24 AM

One of the great posts, which will soon be buried in a trash dump of platitude posts.

This one I will read every couple days--or twice a day--for a week, then try to remember to reread in a month.

disciplinedFreedom • 2 points • 30 January, 2021 02:43 AM

As much as this sub hates Jordan Peterson, this is JPs approach to living a better life almost to a tee

RStonePT • 2 points • 24 January, 2021 08:29 PM

I like your take on it, a refreshing change from 'courage means bravado + peer acceptance' most guys use it for now.

The only thing that concerns me is the amount of praise in the comments. Maybe it's because I have 400 videos on YouTube and notice it as well; the kind of people who need to hear this are the kind most likely to use it as a coping mechanism against actually trying it out and reporting if it worked or not.

I hope I'm wrong, because you've equated courage to mentorship, which isn't a bad thing IMO

whooptapus • 1 point • 2 February, 2021 09:24 PM

So it's telling me I develop courage by doing what I'm afraid to do? And telling me I'm only afraid because I haven't experienced what I'm afraid of enough? Just making sure I comprehended this right.

FieldLine • 0 points • 24 January, 2021 10:31 PM

Your inner-engineer is showing. This is a great post.

When you find yourself unmotivated, undisciplined, afraid, unwilling to proceed, trapped by despair... recognize that this is just belief that something is intractable.

This is the key point I got out of your article, and I am somewhat torn about it.

On the one hand, I think there is a big problem with the "blackpill" crowd where this becomes very relevant. It is clear that they suffer from the delusion that their very tractable problems are insurmountable, and this is a helpful way to frame self improvement towards the end of doing *something*, rather than flailing in a tar pit of self-pity.

However, this perspective starts to break down when it comes to *excelling* in particular pursuits. I am smart enough to do anything I want *decently well*, and I am mostly limited by time rather than skill when it comes to collecting hobbies and becoming somewhat proficient in them. However, because I have seen real brilliance and real talent, I know that there is no amount of "courage" that will allow me to compete in the arena of excellence in many areas (including some intellectual ones!). I have accepted that I will never write as well as you, while you, perhaps, will never play the piano like I do. As a white, Jewish kid I will never compete in the octagon with you, while you might never match me in out-smarting the tax code.

And I did read the article to the end ("What's important is not to achieve great victories, but to move the needle"), so I know you kind of address this... but you don't really offer an answer. You offer advice on how to be "good enough", but remain silent on how to be *great*.

The answer, of course, is that there is a genetic component to it. The reason I grok things quickly is because I am *lucky*, not (just) because I work harder or smarter than anyone else.

I can't really complain, because ultimately I do consider myself to be a member of the lucky sperm club, but I ultimately despair in the face of brilliance because as good as I am.... it is not good enough. And there is nothing I can do about that. Some problems really *are* intractable, and not because they are beyond the limits of human potential.

Whisper[S] • 3 points • 25 January, 2021 06:20 AM

However, this perspective starts to break down when it comes to excelling in particular pursuits. I am smart enough to do anything I want decently well, and I am mostly limited by time rather than skill when it comes to collecting hobbies and becoming somewhat proficient in them. However, because I have seen real brilliance and real talent, I know that there is no amount of "courage" that will allow me to compete in the arena of excellence in many areas (including some intellectual ones!).

This isn't an article on "how to excel". It isn't even an article on "how to not suck". It's only about about "how to stop being so afraid and hopeless that you cannot move".

"How to be the best in the world at something" is an article I will never write.

I have accepted that I will never write as well as you, while you, perhaps, will never play the piano like I do. As a white, Jewish kid I will never compete in the octagon with you, while you might never match me in out-smarting the tax code.

Only those with genetic advantages can be the best in the world at something.

But I think you underestimate the role of non-genetic inheritance. You are descended from many generations of Jew bankers and intellectuals, while my ancestors were Minnesota farmers and this guy, sure. And that may be why I am a really big bastard, but beyond that, how much can we really say about what's in my basic recipe?

You were raised by people who thought outwitting the tax code was cool (hint: the tax code is written to exempt people who paid bribes to be exempted), while I like to punch people in the face. That's you hit the books while I was in the gym. I think a lot of what most people describe as "talent" is actually "enjoyment of practice". I will never play the piano as well as you do, but FunSize will, because she can't leave the damn thing alone.

And I did read the article to the end ("What's important is not to achieve great victories, but to move the needle"), so I know you kind of address this... but you don't really offer an answer.

That's because I didn't set out to answer the question the you are asking.

FieldLine • 1 point • 25 January, 2021 07:20 AM

I think a lot of what most people describe as "talent" is actually "enjoyment of practice".

Kind of. That is why I tell people not to go into software engineering if they don't truly love it. It's hard to compete when you must force yourself to train while your competition actively enjoys the grind. Call it "genetics", or "non-genetic inheritance", or plain, old fashioned "luck".

I don't entirely agree with the argument, since I have seen first hand that there really are people who

simply "get it" and don't have to work as hard in certain areas, but we don't need to have that conversation right now since it doesn't really change anything in the context of this discussion.

That's because I didn't set out to answer the question the you are asking.

Sure. But for the rest of the class, for those who aren't in remedial math, I think it is worth mentioning that there is also a time to recognize the difference between tractable and intractable problems.

I guess I am confused about the intended audience of this article; I'm not used to seeing you offer advice exclusively to those who do not wish to be helped.

Only those with genetic advantages can be the best in the world at something.

We don't even need to take it to the logical extreme and talk about being the best in the world. I claim that unless you are gifted, even if we reduce that to mean "naturally interested", you will not rank at a skill among those considered to be world class, or even get to a point where you can use it to earn a livable wage. It is disingenuous to claim otherwise: do you really believe that anyone can write good software?