

The Freaks Shall Inherit the Earth.

Chris Drogan. 2014

Preface

- Now, the underground has become the core of a thriving and somewhat hard to track new economy. Trends have a hard time covering this stuff, unless we start squinting.
- That jobless recovery? Where are all those people going? I'll tell you one group of people who aren't rushing back to their cubicles: freaks. Instead, they are becoming artists and pickle makers in Brooklyn, punk rock dog groomer is in Memphis, and zombie apocalypse race organizers in Boston. More experiences like this happen all the time.
- Skateboarder and businessmen Tony Hawk said his parents supported his choices from an early age, but that's not always the case.

Chapter 1: business new and old and new again.

- Marie Forleo: "I quit, started bartending at night, and began building my coaching business during the day. "
- Check her out at Marieforleo.com for an example of her video styling.
- You don't have to wait for permission to turn your entrepreneurial vision into a reality. However, you do have to find a way to get your product or service to the people who will want to purchase it.

Chapter 2: the wild colors and the solid spine.

- My old boss at the wireless company (technically my boss's boss, and eventually my boss's boss' boss) where I worked early in my career began a meeting with me and about 30 other people by asking us to do the "around the table introductions" dance. My direct boss at the time said her name as then used a title that had about 24 words in it, also explaining her context when it got time for her boss to say what he did, he said, "Bill. Technology." And everyone in the room suddenly new who had the power.
 - We tend to make things more complex when we fear that others won't take us seriously—or, when we worry that what we do seem silly or too easy.
- Lots of people tell me they are "bad at sales." But when I asked them how often they actually try to sell, they usually answer by pointing their eyes at the floor and swaying in place. People are bad at selling because they don't practice it much. There are lots of ways that this manifests itself in lots of ways that we mask it.

How to build a discipline:

- **Change your program.** It starts in the language. If you claim to hate doing invoices, they'll never get easier to do. Instead, say "I love the grind. I love getting paid. I'm going to get this done second and other stuff I love, too."
- **Talk yourself into it.** Similar to the above concept, but with a little more execution. For instance, every night before I go to bed, I pop open the little notepad app that lists my gym workouts. I

review what I'll be doing the next day. When I wake up, I tell myself I'll go hit the gym before the day gets busy.

- **Start and keep the streak going.** Take out a calendar. Start doing one thing. Do it repeatedly for 60 days. Just that one thing. If some other things falter, it's okay. Then, add another thing after 60 days. Some are in the process, a ton of streaks will happen. This may sound silly but it's part of the process, and if you don't do it, you will likely not find it discipline.
- **"Eat" lots of goodness.** No matter the discipline you're intending to install, fill your head with great examples and reinforcement. If you're working on getting fit, buy a bunch of fitness magazines. Follow inspirational leaders on social networks. Connect with awesome (will talk more about this later, but this is about discipline).
- **Carve away the badness.** If you're writing a book, TV isn't your friend. If you're working on losing weight, avoid the drive-through windows. There is no "both" indiscipline. You are, or you are not. This is the hardest part. But if you whine about it, clearly you are not in the "Are not" category.
- **Work more than you celebrate.** The week after Julian Smith and I made the New York Times bestseller list, I went back to work writing and creating. When you win (in any sense of the word), the risk is that you will want to coast. Discipline is about the work, not the medals.
- Maybe you've noticed a slight change in my tone over the last handful of pages. I will admit to it. It's because there's a kind of "toughness" that's required to actually accomplish her goals and do something that's not the norm, and it requires you to take some action.
 - One of the major missing ingredients for people who decide that they want to be more entrepreneurial is simple action. There are lots of reasons why they are not taking steps toward success, and none of them are especially easy to hear.
 - You might be lazy.
 - You might think you have to wait for someone's permission.
 - You may lack confidence.
 - You may lack skill.
 - You may lack resources.
 - Want to know a secret? I give you the answers to the above quiz. Stop being lazy. (Sorry. No other answer for this one.) You hereby have permission. No, really! This takes work, but you can use the recipe that is given in the earlier section, "how to build discipline." Skills can be learned, resources can be acquired
- People tell me that they can't possibly do entrepreneurial things because they don't have experience. By the way, potential new bosses will also tell you that you don't have the experience. Oh, the paradox. Experience is this thing that everyone says you need, until you get too much, and then the job is a little beneath you, or you are a little too "mature" to be cutting edge.
- To get experience, you need to do things—before you know how to do them.

Chapter 3: choose your own adventure, defining success.

Chapter 4: skill building for your business goals.

- A while ago, my friend and former boss, Jeff Pulver, told me something very important. He said that no matter how much money someone has or doesn't have, the one the feeling that a lot of people really want to experience is that sense of being "on the inside."
- Gold questions to ask someone in pursuit of growing your business.
 - Where did you waste your time or make the biggest mistake when you are starting out?
 - Who can I most help with what I'm working on right now?
 - What can I do to help you with your business?
 - If you were to recommend one area of growth for me based on what you've seen, what would you recommend?
 - What were some of the testing methods you used to determine what worked best and what didn't for you?

Chapter 5: fall in love with not knowing.

- Everything we know how to do starts with not knowing how to do it.
- We were not born walking. We were not born talking. Everything we do comes from figuring it out.
- Ask questions that the other person can answer briefly enough, but that will give you something to do later. For instance, I asked Kate White how I could go about building greater distribution for *Owner* magazine. Her response was to book myself for many more interviews, work on viral pieces, and do more video and more.
- www.thehappymovie.com.
- Monch means "one family" and embodies the concept that you could help to build value for anyone and everyone around you. Networking means, what can you do for me today?
- The answer back is often something about "figuring I should know." But that's a bit like saying you're interested in baking muffins and learning metallurgy to create the muffin tins.

Chapter 6: the structure of framework for your days.

- Sadly, you and I, and lots of people serve these two bosses more than any other: habits and reactions.
- The easiest way to fail is to think in terms of "day" as the standard unit of measurement. If you plan day today, you'll never do anything particularly big—because the big work of your plans usually require a bit more work than you can normally fit into 24 hours. You have to develop a longer view.
- Let's use the goals as unit of measurement. To build the long view, you need goal markers set up at these distances:
 - Five years
 - three years
 - one year
 - six months
 - three months
 - one month
 - one week

- The real trick is for you to identify milestones you want to hit fill out the goals on this timeline for yourself— and use it in any way you want. Here’s how it would look if you focused on goals for your health.
 - Five years: study state management of health and fitness.
 - Three years: optimal weight for two years.
 - One year: complete a marathon.
 - Six months: six pants sizes down.
 - Three months: three pant sizes down.
 - One month: gym three times a week.
 - Week one: drink my body weight in ounces of water daily, walk briskly.
- The mindset I’m working on imparting is the notion that you can’t work on a day to day until you’ve got something a little more solidified in play for your future goals and vision.

pointed in the right direction

Three-Month Goal	Contacts Today
Week's Big Goal	Reach Out List
Must Do Today	
Must Do Today	
Must Do Today	
Mantra Today	
Watch Out for	
The Prize Is	

This table could also be titled "Good/Bad" or "Stay/Go" or whatever you choose. Sometimes called the "T-bar list," this is the very classic pros and cons kind of list. You essentially count up how many ideas fit in the left column versus the right column to help you make decisions.

Someday/maybe list: This list is right out of David Allen's *Getting Things Done*, and it's a list where you put ideas you might want to pursue in the future, or tasks that won't be good for you to pursue right now. I have one variant for using this list, however. Once you fill it out, throw it in the trash or burn it in the fire. You don't have time to wait to do this someday. Work on it now.

Value/worth list: This is one of the tools to use if you're the type of person who likes to spend money. I use something like this quite often to determine whether I'm being financially careless, and to remind myself of better goals. The following table gives some examples.

One	Costs	Per Month	Per Year	Versus
Latte	\$ 4	80 (20 days)	\$ 960	Trip to CA
Dinner out	\$50 (solo)	200 (4x/month)	\$2,400	Trip to EUR
Spotify	\$10	10	\$ 120	MP3s

In the first two examples I could buy an airplane ticket to California (from Boston) instead of having a latte every day, and a ticket to Europe and back instead of eating out once a week. Obviously, the "versus" category can be other items or experiences you're hoping to acquire. In my last example, I justify Spotify because it'd cost a heck of a lot less than buying individual albums via MP3 (musicians, yes, I do know that Spotify pays you pocket lint).

This list is *really* helpful in thinking through all kinds of solutions. Should you rent office space instead of getting your kids to give you some free space in the basement? At \$300/month (being

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conservative), that's \$3,600 a year. That same money could buy you a . . . what? In the reverse, maybe you're thinking about heading down to that cool tech conference and you've figured out that it costs about \$3,600 all-in. Is that event more important than an office away from the house? (See how this works?)

Monchu list: Remember, *monchu* means "one family." I use it to

- Think in terms of "mortgage math." I have a lot of little calculations I do when it comes to money. For instance, when I launched the opportunity for people to advertise in my newsletter, I decided there would be three slots for \$500 each at launch: \$1500 per issue times four issues a month equals \$6000. If I sell all the spots, I can pay four times my mortgage every month (around \$1400). Similarly, if I'm pursuing something that becomes a hassle, I ask whether it's worth the money—and I use my mortgage math to think about it. This can help you plot some of the rabbit holes you choose to visit in a given day.
- Plan your schedule at 40%. This is a new concept for me. When you plan your schedule full to the top, something inevitably goes wrong. That's when you need more time to fix the problem. If you plan your life so that only about 40% of your hours were scheduled, you'd have some extra time and energy to put towards the problems that pop up. If nothing's going wrong, you can always do something unscheduled during that time. If you take on more and more scheduled work, you'll eventually drown in it.

Chapter 7: are you an Employeepreneur?

- Employeepreneur's usually find themselves working through their own ambitions and goals, which is great and expected. However, because you're under someone else's employment, it's your responsibility to serve that person to the best of your abilities. It's never useful to be at odds with your leadership larger goals, even if you are forever striving to change how they get there. Said another way, the only path for an Employeepreneur is to serve your leadership through your actions.
- Boss' want results without a lot of friction. They want action without a lot of interaction. They want to be informed, and never caught off guard. They want your actions to make them shine without upstaging them. Often times, they want to get home and leave the workplace behind.
- Now, the interesting part of the story is that he ended up taking my recommendations. He backed the project, and my idea turned out to be really helpful in a small way. But I never once forgot my realization that he wasn't focused on innovation and the future of the company every waking minute, the way I was. And that wasn't bad or wrong; he just had a different priorities and was at a different point in his career. The huge take away: it doesn't matter. If you are passionate and ambitious and the boss isn't, provided you can do the bulk of the work and get the support you need, who cares? The magic still happens. But remember: not everyone shares your nutty ambitions.
- Will if I had my corporate life to do over again, I would redo so much. I used to get mired in every possible distraction. I was far too social with my coworkers, was way too deeply involved in office politics, and spent too much time worrying over really stupid and petty issues. As a result, I burned a bunch of years failing to advance and acquire the power to make my time in corporate life as viable as it could have been. In short, I fell into the matrix. To explain the analogy: the movie the matrix sets up in the world which all reality as we know it is just a massive virtual reality program, and we humans are all dormant and plugged into a giant robotic farm that suck the life out of us as if we were batteries. The take away is that there is a fake world that we have all bought into. Certain people "wake up" and get unplugged from the matrix, but then use other methods to plug back in and challenge the keepers of this oppressive system. Stated much more succinctly, there is a lame reality that makes you docile and complacent; and then there is a way to wake up and do something really important and more "real." Will use the term matrix to indicate all those not really important issues that get in our way in our working world—the things that keep us from working on the much more important issues. For instance, "John's chair is better than mine" is a matrix issue. "Jane is advancing much faster than me, and I suspect that it's because she's playing golf with the boss" is a matrix issue. We can get stuck in other people's lives. I realize now in hindsight that if I had spent a lot more time working on the my work—and less time worrying about other peoples, as—things would have gone so much better for me and my old roles. So instead of worrying about which offices your colleagues are assigned, focus on what you can make happen. Figure out how you can make progress that benefits your company, your boss and you (though maybe the order should be your boss, your company and you).

- If you want to become more influential as an Employeepreneur almost immediately, one skill worth owning is your ability to communicate better. In this case, “better” simply means “succinctly, with positive word choices, and with more actionable results in mind.”
- We tend to overwrite and over speak everything in business—usually out of fear. We use way too many words in order to justify some choice or thought. People in business over communicate more often than not. This abundance of words usually leads to under communicating goals and intentions.
- One way you’ll become an owner at work, even as an Employeepreneur, is through your choice of words. If you just scoffed or felt this was cruddy advice, then skip this section. But if you’re up for learning something, I’ll give you three ideas that might really help.
 1. Always use the most responsible words possible. That is, use the words that make it clear you own your spot at the time. Here’s an example:
 - **Not claiming responsibility:** they wouldn’t respond to my email.
 - **Responsible:** I’m still nailing down their response.
 - **Not claiming responsibility:** my boss has me working on this project to rebuild our tagging.
 - **Responsible:** I’m leading a project to improve our tagging.
 - Ownership starts with the words you use.
 2. No whining. Ever. “I’m so busy.” “My workload is crazy”. Don’t say it --people don’t want to hear it.
 3. Use more positive words the negative words. “I can’t get the hang of this” becomes “I’m working on mastering this.”
- Does this connect with you? Do you understand that? I can tell you with certainty that people who choose their words better get further in their pursuits.
- Get the exciting projects.
 - I used to wonder how certain people in my company would get all the plum job assignments. I thought they were maybe lucky, or maybe they were doing something shady— or bribing someone. It took me a while to learn that you get these projects by earning your way there. There’s a simple progression to how this happens and it’s outlined in these four steps.
 1. **Accept and conquer small projects.** Your boss and colleagues will test you. Why would they give you something big if you can’t even handle the little stuff? Take on and deliver small projects flawlessly and on time. Do extra work to make the project even better somehow.
 2. **Create your own projects.** People really dig it when you take initiative and create a project that improves an aspect of the company in some way. I once revived a newsletter that had long been dormant at my company. Exposure earned me lots of other opportunities, while the project gave the management a way to communicate their messages, wrapped around the fun ways I built out the rest of the information. This led to more projects. Here’s the trick: it must be a project that improves the business—even if just in a tiny way.
 3. **Ask for crappy projects.** No one wants to do them for a reason: because they’re crappy. But if you tackle them and win, you’ll have helped the boss or your colleagues, and taken something off the collective plate. I use this approach

repeatedly when I started as a project manager; and let other people to see me as someone who got things done. Then, instead of crappy projects, I took on the “in jeopardy” projects, and found I was able to deal with “burning train about to hit the brick wall” kinds of projects, and so I got lots of those. It was a great way to do the work I found the most exciting.

4. **Take on the bigger projects.** This is the reward for all your hard work. See what you can do when you finally get a big project. Hint: if you choke, that’s probably not going to bode well for you. But if you work and earn the victory, you’ll kick butt and be known as the kind of person who can execute huge project an important work. How do you learn how to do this? Well, my examples replicable, you just say yes to something, and then seek a little advice from peers and people who aren’t your boss. Then use trial and error to make your way towards success.
- Why would anyone give you a shot at something big if you’re not giving attention to the primary role for which you are hired?
 - The people who succeed are the ones who do the work that stands between them and their goal, the mother who owns it.

Chapter 8: create systems that work for you.

- A book worth checking out is Atul Gawande’s the checklist manifesto. You can also search for the New Yorker article that is a shorter version of what eventually become the book. Something as simple as a checklist can really change your life and improve your ability to deliver.
- People tend to ask some pretty repetitive questions via email, so we have software that lets us type a few characters, and POW! Out comes several paragraphs of preloaded information. We then customize it as much as need for the persons question, and the save herself many minutes of performing the same process over and over.
 - Of course, this requires that one use a piece of software like that; in my case, it’s called Text Expander for Mac. If you don’t use that technology, and instead have a little notepad file with snippets you copy and paste that will work too.

Chapter 9: are you a solo or small business owner.

Chapter 10: fall in love with not knowing, redux.

- “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up. - Pablo Picasso.
- www.artisanalpencilsharpening.com
- **My success is built entirely on my ability to fail quickly and then learn and adapt from the results of that failure.**
- Can I accelerate my learning? I can interview people for owner magazine, which will develop great content, but I can also ask a lot of questions that will be helpful to my education. Interviews and consultations are a great way to accelerate.

Chapter 11: worship obstacles and challenges.

- The biggest challenge that we face is that what seems very obvious to people who understand the technology is not obvious to the people who don't understand the technology. And that is the thing that we, I mean we as in all of us who are fighting for the open Internet deal with.
- And even if you love your job and intended to be a freak at your cubicle desk, ask yourself this: would you rather impress your boss or impress the universe?
- When you get a few steps ahead in your business, and then your biggest buyer tells you she's moving to a new supplier, that's a puzzle. That's a challenge. That's what owners face.

Chapter 12: build your own media empire.

- I think the other really big distinction that let me build a business of my own choosing and inherit the earth is that I created interesting media that people read and respond to, and I drove business to me.
 - By “media,” I mean “information packaged for others consumption”—blog posts, newsletter posts, an online radio show, podcasts, YouTube videos etc.
 - www.ChrisBrogen.com/podcasting.
- What are the stories you should tell? In most cases, you create media by thinking of a story that needs telling. But what do I really mean? Here are some ways to think of what to create.
 - Answer the questions your community members might have. A lot of topics I cover in my blog or newsletter are inspired by the questions I am asked when I connect with my audience.
 - Tell your community members stories by interviewing or profiling the people who inhabit the space you serve. If you sell skateboard accessories, talk about the people riding them. If you're an artist, talk about galleries and their owners.
 - Tell the “behind-the-scenes” story of what you do. Everyone loves to see how something is made, or your process, or something else that isn't typically available simply by purchasing it.
 - Interview the people who deliver the greatness. I once asked an air-conditioning company what separated them from the other companies. They said it was the team of installers. So, we shot some video interviews with those people, asking them questions about what drove them, what made them work so hard, and so on. The results were a bunch of proud people talking about quality—which is exactly what you'd want to see in any individual you're trusting your money and time with.
 - Tell larger and inspiring stories. People at GoPro tell stories of their wearable cameras by sharing the lives of people using it.
 - Tell simple and instructional stories on how to do something, not only with the product or services you sell, but in the space that your community populates.
- Make your buyer the hero. You don't need to write “you” stories, but instead use a name and suggest “people like you,”
- Or maybe I'm selling podcasting hardware, and I use this story to illustrate a success story right before pointing out that I have the tools you might need to improve the likelihood that you will become successful. It's not really important exactly what I'm selling, at least for the point I'm trying to make. My point is that I'm not talking about myself or my dumb product. I'm talking about someone who is representative of you.

- Or maybe you'll snap a photo of your kids really cluttered playroom, a photo of your overloaded with papers and stickers desk, and a photo of yourself with not merely bags under your eyes but full on luggage. And these photos, nicely combined in a three-piece frame, can be shared on your website up interest or wherever, with a simple tagline like "ever have one of those times?" And maybe there's a link back to your primary site, we sell white turbans and scented massage oils. Sometimes your life is your buyer's life. If that's the case, you might as well promote the business by making yourself the mere of the buyer you intend to attract.

Chapter 13: connect with your freaks.

- As I was writing this, I thought, "I wonder what would happen if I just type something really silly into Google images. So, I typed in "Batman baby." Should stop reading right now and do this. Go head. I'll wait
- The amount of people who will convince you that your idea is wrong usually grows in accordance with how unique the idea is.

Chapter 14: own everything.

- I immediately give him the means to connect to Katie Davis, the first person who comes to mind in my community who is a successful children's book author and book marketer.
- Own your future. The future is a weird thing. It's already here, only we haven't experienced it yet. And when I say that, let me get really practical and real about what I mean: if I eat a candy bar today, my belly will display that in a few days. If I stay in bed today, my bank will display that in a few days, too. The future is what I create today. Every day. If you want to learn how to play the guitar, you set a date three months from now and then just go about your days waiting for that day to come because then you will learn to play? No. You practice and learn. Every day. The more you practice, the more you learn. The more you mess up, the more you learn. Your future is today.

Chapter 15: when it all goes wrong.

- The best way to apologize, according to the trainer, was to ignore knowledge, apologize, and act.
 - **Acknowledge.** Your food isn't ready to be served yet. It really has been a long time.
 - **Apologize.** I'm really sorry for the delay.
 - **Act.** I'm going to credit you for your appetizer and may I give you your next drink on the house?

Chapter 16: take action, fight crime, save the world!

- This first became obvious to me when I started tracking how people talked about my books online. Here's what I'd see, over and over again:
 - "Just finished trust agents. Now on to read the new rules of marketing and PR."
 - People seem to believe that finishing a book is the same as doing something with the information. You, friend have the opportunity to leap past are well read friends who opted not to take any specific actions.