

ATYPICAL HABITS

ATYPICAL SUCCESS



The Doctor's Orders

D O C J A Y , M . D .

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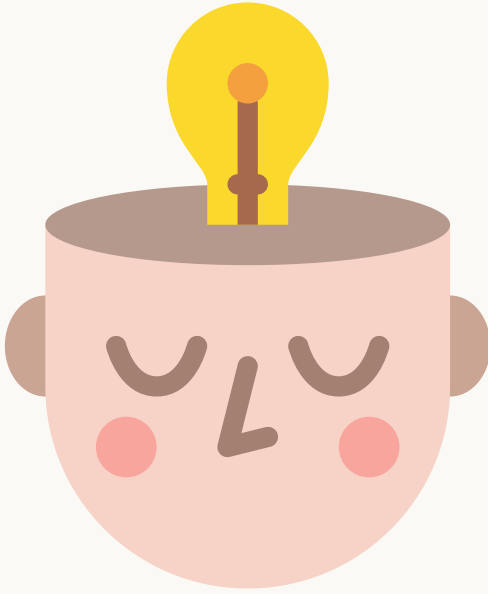


The Doctor's Orders

Your personal prescription for success

Introduction

What is normal?



As unique as each of us are, we share many similarities. We all have the same needs for food, water, clothing and, shelter. There are several other personal and social fulfillment desires, as well. These include making money, saving money, saving time, saving effort, avoiding pain (psychological, social, emotional), praise, appreciation, feeling loved, and being popular.

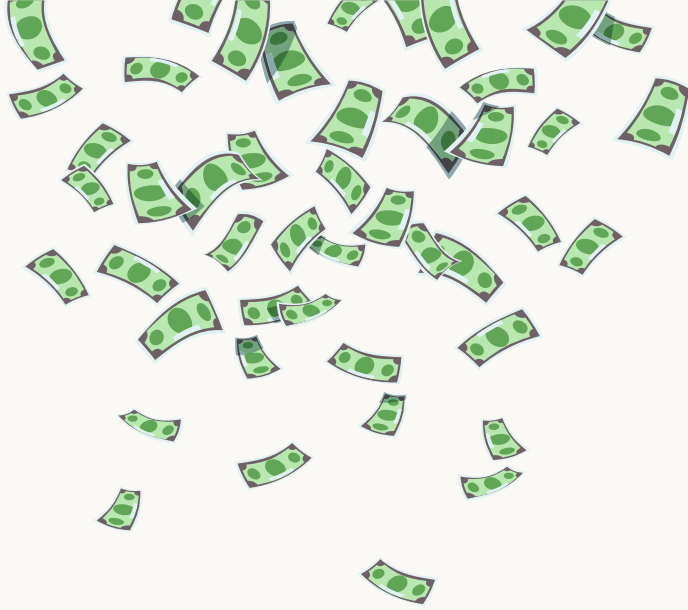
Our differences arise in our strength of these desires. We also differ significantly in our knowledge, experiences, and personal motivation towards achieving goals in those areas.

The typical American believes working a nine-to-five job and feeding your family provides enough happiness. This idea is passed down through the generations.

We learn how life looks from our friends and family. Unfortunately, making a little money from a lifeless job pushes us toward complacency and apathy.

So then what should you strive for? Money?

We have been taught to pursue this dream that money and accomplishments make life worthwhile. Money and achievements do make life easier in some ways.



Riches are not enough!

Money is not the end-all-be-all.

Money does not define the quality of your life.

Only you determine the quality and value of your life. If you are unhappy, you have a choice. You have power. You may have been the victim of some terrible circumstances. However, each of us holds within us the ability to overcome. You have to take deliberate action and develop useful skills to achieve happiness.

To improve your life, you don't need lofty goals. In fact, the opposite is quite true.

You need to set goals, but they should be within reach. That alone can propel your progression.

The people around you have no goals. No passion. They coast through life reacting to what comes their way.

What about purpose and passion?

You will need to change your mindset about life, money, success, time, and productivity.

Learn to find your purpose and fight for it with a passion.

Your life can be both straightforward and fulfilling.

The things we value dictate how we spend our time. But many things distract us from making progress towards these worthwhile goals.

Sadly, ordinary people live without tapping into their own desires and talents. It is normal to live mundane lives. Why be normal? Instead be abnormally successful and abnormally happy.

But when is abnormal bad?

And when is it useful?

Every day as a doctor, I encounter terrible things that are normal. I also discover strange things which are good or neutral. Normal does not mean preferable, and abnormal does not mean bad.

For example, 55.3% of people 18 years or older actively drink alcohol, according to the 2018 National survey on drug use and health. I won't claim whether alcohol use is good or bad. The fact is, alcohol use is normal.



According to the same 2018 survey, 6.6% of adults aged 18 and older engaged in binge drinking in the last month. Whereas 5.8% of adults in the same age group have an alcohol addiction.

Suppose your goal is to be normal and follow the Joneses. In that case, you may be leading yourself and your family down a path to accidental destruction.

Be better.

Do better.



Section 1:

What's Normal?

The Stats

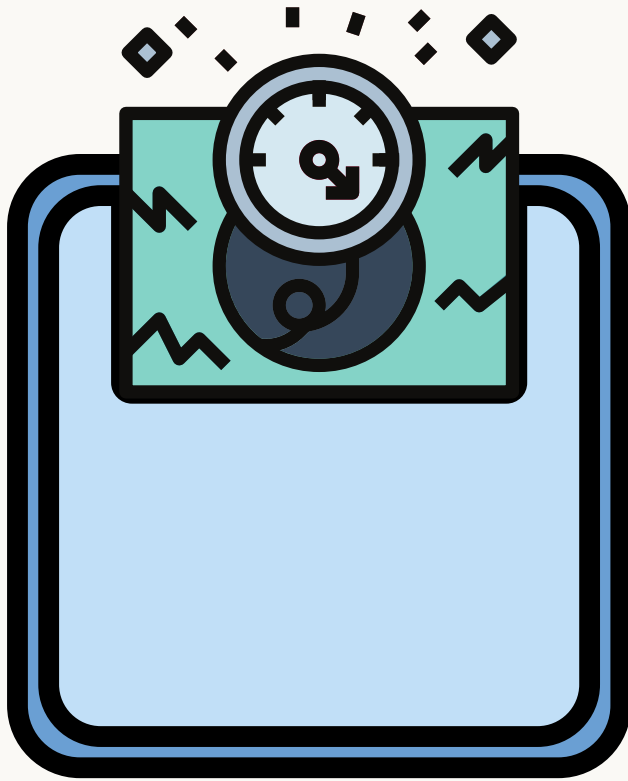


Take the time to read the following few pages of statistics to change your understanding of normal.

This is where your transformation begins.

Health

Obesity



- 42.4% of the population in 2017-2018 was considered obese.
- This number is increasing.
- In 1999-2000 the obesity rate was 30.5%

Health

High blood pressure



- 45% of Americans have high blood pressure.

Health

Heart Disease



- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women of most racial groups.
- 6.7% of American adults 20 yrs and older have diagnosed heart disease.

Family

Divorce



- The marriage rate is 6.8 per every thousand people.
- The divorce rate is 3.2 people for every 1,000.
- Studies estimate that 40 to 50% of marriages will end in divorce.

Money

Income



- The median household income was \$61,937 between 2017 and 2018.

Money

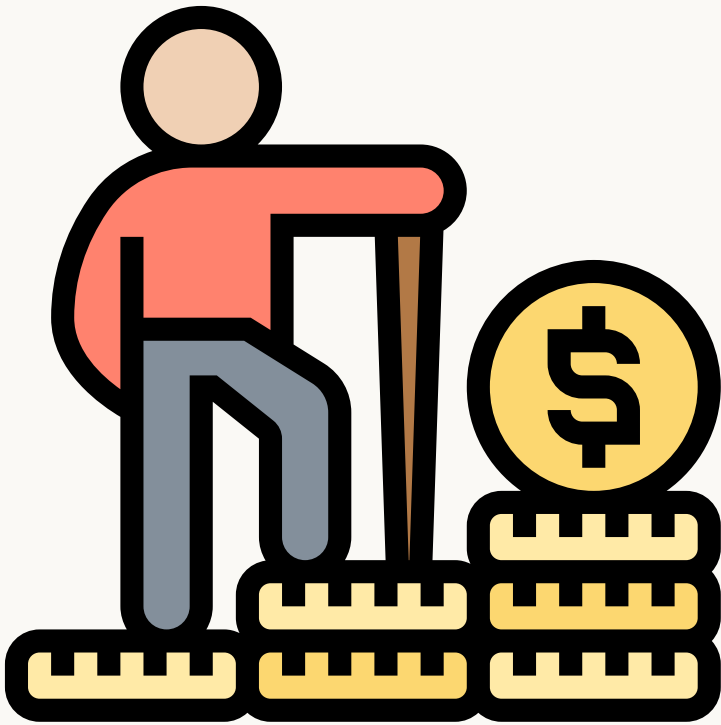
Net Worth



- The average American net worth is \$692,100.
- But, the average is not a representative number.
- The median net worth is 97,300.

Money

Retirement



- American's in their 60s have a median retirement savings of \$172,000.

Money

Debt



- In 2017 46% of households held credit card debt.

Media

Social Media



- Internet users worldwide spend on average 144 minutes on social media.
- The average Instagram user spends 53 minutes on Instagram.
- Average Facebook user --> 58 minutes.
- Average Snapchat user --> 49.5 minutes.

Business

Small Business



- 20% of us small businesses fail within the first year.
- 50% fail within the first five years.

Business

Small Business continued



- 42% of new small businesses fail because there is too little demand for the product/service.
- 29% of small businesses fail due to money problems.

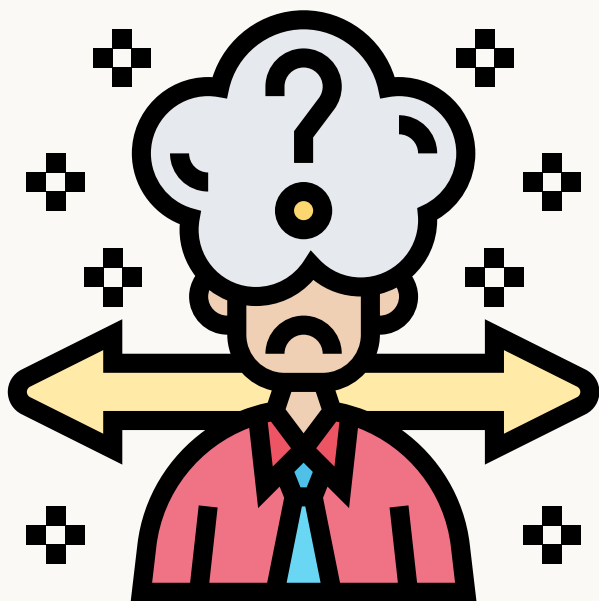
Section 2: The Beginner's Guide to being Atypical



Take the time to read the following few pages of statistics to change your understanding of normal.

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Part 1: Find your purpose.

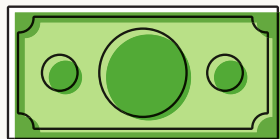
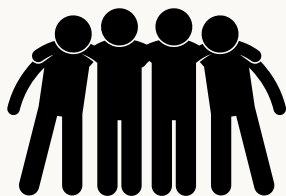


The exercise on the next page is meant to stimulate your thinking. It's intended to get you to concentrate on yourself, your history, your desires so that you can move forward pursuing things that satisfy you deeply.

Feel free to answer other questions that come up along the way. It matters not what stage in life you are. Everyone can use a little self-reflection.

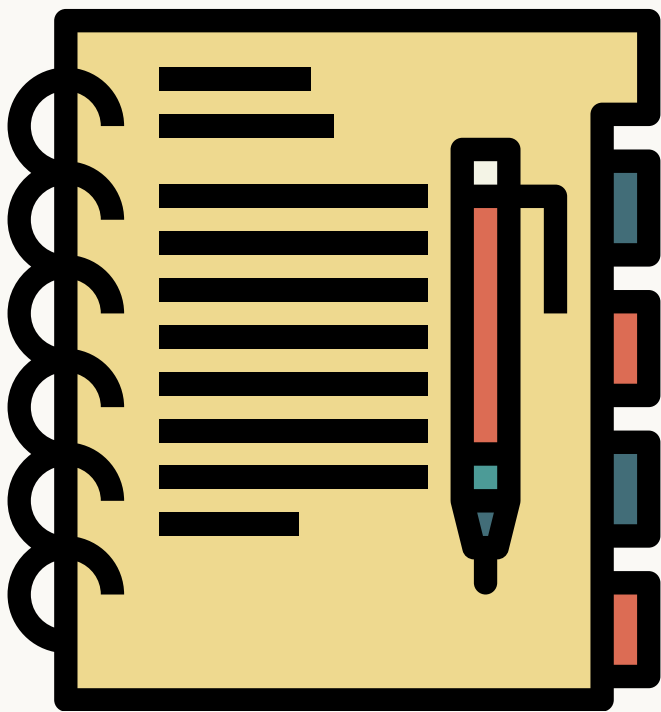
When answering the question on the next page consider these aspects of life.

- Health/fitness
- Work/school
- Hobbies/volunteering
- Friendships/coworkers
- Family
- Romantic relationships
- Spirituality
- Finances
- Emotion
- Adventure



Take out your journal, notepad, or word processor, and get writing.

Seriously, pause to get your note-taking method together.



Here are the questions..

What in life makes you feel most alive?

What excites you about life?

What aspects of your day, week, or month give you the most energy?

Which things could you do all day before getting tired?

What are some of the most essential things in your life?

Now express WHY these things are important.

What aspects of your day, week, month, or year are draining to you?

If you were to die 2 years from today, what would you want your friends and family to say at your funeral?

Which qualities would you want them to say you exemplified?

What imprint would you like to leave in your immediate world?

Don't stress if you can't answer all the questions.

It is merely an exercise to stimulate your thinking.

Additionally, it is not a once-in-a-lifetime exercise.

You should revisit it as frequently as you want.



Now that you've found your direction, let's make space for your passion.

Part 2: Out with the Old



Now that you've found your passion, we need to make space in your life for it. If you are just beginning your journey of self-improvement, you may dread the thought of sacrificing. Letting go is devastating at first, but you will learn to love it. Love the change. Love the challenge. Live the new direction. Trim the fat and scrap the waste. Leave the rubbish lying in the shell of the old you. The new purpose-driven you will emerge soon.

Determine Your Weaknesses

Commit yourself to learn why you waste time.

List things in your life that distract you.

Determine why these things draw you in. What needs do they satisfy?

Are the people in your life just that persuasive?

Do you feel drained all the time because of poor physical conditioning? Do you get lost in the fantasy worlds of books, movies, shows, or video games? Is your online social group stronger than your in-person one?

Once you determine why you seek certain activities, you can find other, more productive ways to satisfy those needs.

Sacrifice Lazy Time.

You **may** spend less time just hanging out. Suppose you develop a passion or addiction to learning. In that case, you're likely to fall down the rabbit hole of knowledge-gathering and practice.

You'll have far fewer lazy days and spend less energy on wasteful things. You won't want to veg out in front of the TV as often.

Leave Excuses Behind.

OK, so you will still have plenty of excuses. They eat at you, though. Once your values, principles, and goals are set, you'll HATE your excuses. Let them go.

Some legitimate reasons will arise, which obstruct your progress. These are not excuses; they are obstacles.

Eventually, your resourcefulness and ingenuity will drive you right past those obstacles.

Sever Toxic Relationships.

Many of your relationships will change. Some will degrade, while others deepen.

People from your past will say, "You've changed." They mean to insult you. But don't take it as such.

Your personal core will change as you walk your journey of self-discovery. Your preferences about who you spend time will change, too.

As you set higher goals for yourself, you will seek relationships that help you reach those goals.

Some of the destructive or wasteful relationships will fall away. Let them go.

You will fight for the relationships you value highly. Those tend to be loved-ones who stick around through the struggle.

Abandon Your Former Self.

Be ready to birth your new self. The old you will die. This should be celebrated. You've earned it.



Part 3: Become an Expert

Anyone can do it, but expertise takes time. It takes commitment and deliberate practice. Many of us are already expert TV watchers, food critics, or book readers.

This guide's instructions will make you better at anything, even if you don't desire expertise. Honestly, time will pass anyway. You may as well make something of it.

Why waste another 10 years?

I started my premed career in 2006 and suffered countless failures along the way. I gained entry to medical school in 2012. By 2016 I had my degree in hand and completed a 3-year residency. That's ten years of concerted effort.



I'm sure you won't want to spend 10 years pursuing medicine, but mastery in any field takes time. I had the luxury of following a predetermined path. If you're developing your own path to expertise, it may take even longer.

Don't let this deter you, though. You'll be spending the time doing something anyway.

What do you have to lose?

Making of a Master

A master is someone who has developed expertise in a certain field. These high performers have an elite level of skill, knowledge and produce superior results. They outperform their peers and often receive accolades and rewards for their contributions.

Becoming an all-knowing guru begins with your decided purpose. What aspects of life give you fulfillment? In what field are you looking to become a master? Consider your own experiences and unique talents and gifts.

You are blessed with a particular combination of abilities and intelligence, which will enable you to succeed in some fields but not in others. Not everyone can become a master in every field. That's why your choice matters. If you chose the wrong field, you might not live up to your full potential.

Mindset Matters

Mindset is $\frac{2}{3}$ of the battle. Anyone can become an authority at something. You have greatness inside you. It just needs to be tapped. I can't stress this enough. Believe in yourself.

You don't always have to be right. Each attempt at progress won't succeed, but you will keep moving forward as long as you learn.

Anyone can learn and become more skilled. Dedicate yourself to learn all you can. You will not begin as an expert, but no one starts that way. Everyone starts from nothing.

Don't let your starting point determine your ending point. Begin where you are. The process of building yourself from the ground up will make you a master. You will know all the intricacies of the topic or field because you started from nothing.

Immerse Yourself

Utilize every resource you can to develop. Your future depends on it. You'll need to soak up all the knowledge and experience that you can. Look at all new information objectively and think creatively to come up with solutions. Your skill, knowledge, and problem-solving will make your career unique and attract business.

In the age of information, you can learn in many ways. Online articles, books, courses, YouTube, podcasts are easy to access. There is no right or wrong. Just gather information and organize it as you see fit.

Once you learn a ton of information, then you develop your plan. What product or service are you offering? How are you optimizing your output? Results matter. Put all that new knowledge to good use. Then execute and keep learning.



Experts are made

What does it take to make an expert? You should utilize skills that you were born with or learned early in life. But know that mastery takes time; 10,000 hours or more. 10,000 hours equates to ~10 years, but mastery may take up to 25 years of dedicated work. Experts don't wander for 10,000 hours. They exhibit deliberate practice.

Athletes and piano prodigies often start very young. They utilize abilities given to them early in life to succeed, but they still work hard. Think of Michael Jordan or Kobe Bryant.

Deliberate Practice

Deliberate practice takes the saying “practice makes perfect” to the next level. Studies by Anders Ericsson show that deliberate practice makes experts.

There are a few components of deliberate practice. It involves goal setting, consistency, struggle, sacrifice, and (self) assessment.

1. Goal Setting

Goal setting is necessary for continued improvement. Of course, you need big long-term goals. These include becoming an expert, maintaining a growing business, or making a certain income. Between now and then, you’ll need countless, bite-sized goals.

You will set small achievable goals to stimulate steady growth. If you keep moving the finish line a few yards down the track, then you'll never stop moving. Make these small goals just outside of your current knowledge or know-how. This will help intermix some sense of achievement with the discomfort.

And trust me, you will have discomfort and growing pains. Understand and respect this fact. If you're comfortable and having fun, you're probably not pushing yourself enough. Get accustomed to being uncomfortable.

2. Consistency

Consistency is a disciplined effort to learn and develop new abilities. Remember the 10,000 hours? You can only dedicate that much time if you are consistent and deliberate.

You may only commit to 1–2 hours of work each day, but you will reap the benefits over time.

3. Struggle

The struggle may look several different ways. You will be bored. You will want to skip days because you're tired or distracted. You may struggle with developing certain techniques and have to practice and research more than expected. Overcoming struggle is vital to becoming an expert.

4. Assessment

Assessment is a necessary component of your improvement, as well. You'll need some method of feedback and evaluation. This can be self-evaluation or from a mentor. You can use quizzes, challenges, or track your real-time performance. The results will drive your continued work. Testing yourself or evaluating your performance in-field will identify your weaknesses. With this information, your next set of goals should strengthen those weaknesses and sparking continued growth.

5. Sacrifice.

Sacrifice all the wasteful and useless aspects of your life. Doing this will open up time, money, and mental capital to focus on your goals.

Find Your Peers

Find a group of like-minded people. This may be a professional society or just an interest group. When you meet similar people, you'll learn through regular meetings and discussions. You may even meet future business or project partners.

Get a Coach or Mentor

Through all your learning and networking, you've undoubtedly met people who have more expertise than you. Tap into their knowledge and experience. Allow them to judge and critique you. They'll help identify your areas of improvement. And you will build lasting bonds.

Teach Others

In your networking efforts, you've also likely met folks who are below your level of expertise. Take the time to teach them new concepts and techniques. As you teach and mentor, you'll see your own work in a new light. You'll also learn concepts better because you'll be tasked with teaching them, too.

Challenge Yourself

Accept an assignment above your level of expertise. This will accelerate your improvement.

Accept a contract just larger than you're comfortable with. Or play against a team much better than yours. The challenge will encourage you to step-up your performance. Under pressure, you will learn and grow quickly.

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Part 4: Get to Work with Discipline



What is self-discipline?

The definition of discipline is summarized as the steady work dedicated to advancement. Self-discipline consists of avoiding actions that work against your goal. Thus, discipline training is the challenge of both orienting your life toward your objectives and limiting distractions.

How does discipline work?

Discipline does not work like a credit card. It works like a savings account. Let's say you want a big-screen TV to watch the World Series, Super Bowl, or World Cup. You need to save money consistently over time to afford it before game time.

People inherently understand the meaning and benefits of discipline. The trouble arises when living with discipline.

Discipline is self-love and self-respect.

This is not about will power or making yourself wildly uncomfortable. It is about planning and making better decisions. You will not be comfortable, and your emotions will fluctuate. Don't give in to desire. Acknowledge that you feel it. Then choose something else. Making a mistake or giving in to your desire doesn't make you a bad person. Accept yourself. It means you're human. Love yourself and keep progressing.

Make a plan.

Once you have found these things, work on setting a plan. Make a goal achievement date.

Start Small.

Then break your goal down into parts and set smaller due dates for those parts. This way, your to-do list may be lengthy, but each item is small and digestible.

Schedule the time.

Give yourself time to rest in between your tasks. It is unlikely that you'll be able to pump out task after task for seven days a week. Consider starting with 3 to 5 days a week, giving yourself ample rest in between days of work.

Additionally, make space in your life to perform your tasks. Don't over-schedule your time. Avoid forcing yourself to decide between being productive and completing chores.

Get comfortable being uncomfortable.

Practice self-control when the urges arise to embrace the distractions. Tell yourself no or at least delay giving in to the cravings. Over time you'll become accustomed to delayed gratification.

Forgive yourself.

Give yourself flexibility, but don't allow excuses. You'd forgive yourself if you canceled on a friend for a good reason. But you'd feel guilty if you flaked for a flimsy excuse. Hold yourself to the same standard.

Being tired may be an excuse if you've had an incredibly stressful week. Being tired after lying around is not a reasonable excuse. Give yourself the time and the respect that you would give others.

Remember to be your own boss.

With personal goals and personal commitments, you have to lead yourself. You set your schedule. You set the expectations.

Reward yourself.

Self Discipline is itself rewarding. But we have to celebrate the incremental victories along the way. When you practice self- control, reward yourself later. If you focus enough to suppress your impulses, then reward yourself.

Remember, you are the boss. You can give yourself a party or a raise when you deserve it.

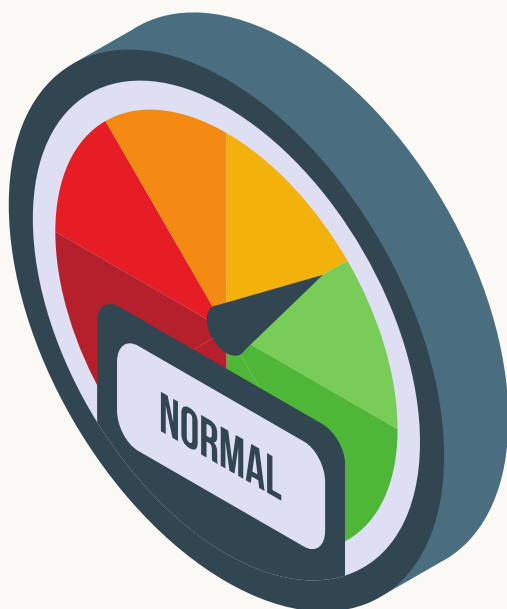
Get support.

Enlist the help of friends, family, and mentors. Speak about your passion. Reach out to people with similar goals. They'll support you when you struggle, keeping you honest.

As a start, fill in the blanks.

- I seek deep satisfaction from ____ because.
- I can attain that fulfillment by taking these actions. _____.
- My number one distraction is ____.
- I enjoy this guilty pleasure or distraction because ____.
- I can cut out ____ from my life to make room for my passion.
- There are _____ hours each week I can dedicate to my purpose.
- I can use ____ to reward myself when I achieve small victories.
- _____ are people with whom I can discuss my passions.

Part 5: Resist Being Normal



Why is being abnormal so tricky?

Impulses and emotions drive most of us. So we are accustomed to following those urges for instant gratification. We learned to procrastinate or avoid essential tasks because they are uncomfortable. We also blame ourselves harshly for mistakes. Being abnormal, is all about doing what's necessary to progress. Delayed gratification is the name of the game.

What are the consequences of being normal?

Wasted time and energy. The time passes, whether you are productive or not. Take advantage of it. If you give in to distractions and impulses, you form unhealthy and wasteful habits.

Fluctuating emotions turn you into a victim of life. You learn to be reactive, not proactive. You float through life, directed by the winds of your environment. Fight the urge to be drawn to the middle. Avoid following the Joneses.

Escape normal at all costs.

Rest, Review, and Renewal.

Rest.

Take scheduled breaks multiple times each day. Some self-improvement and time management gurus suggest taking a 5-10 min break every 1-2 hours. Schedule 1-2 hour breaks daily to renew your physical and spiritual energy.

Remember to take a vacation. Your renewed energy will allow you to return with ferocity.

Extended breaks will enable you to find new motivations or new angles to your passion. Use time off to your advantage.



Review.

Let's recap:

- You found your purpose.
- You cleared your life of distractions.
- Your schedule is made.
- You became an expert in the field.
- You know what it will take to succeed.
- You are making moves chasing after your goals.
- Now, you will have to keep up the efforts.

Reevaluate your life in these ten aspects to take personal inventory.

- health/fitness
- work/school
- hobbies/volunteering
- friendships/coworkers
- family
- romantic relationships
- Spirituality
- Finances
- Emotion
- Adventure

Ask yourself, how is my ____ life?

Where am I falling short?

What would I like to achieve?

How can I progress?

Renewal.

Stephen Covey would call this habit 7, sharpen the saw. Renewal is the process of learning new knowledge and skills. It answers the questions, how can I progress from above.

Things in your life change over time. Your continued success depends on restructuring and renewing based on new circumstances.

Maybe, you've become fatigued and need more frequent breaks.

Or, maybe you've accomplished some goals already and need to set new ones.

No matter what has changed, taking inventory, gaining new knowledge, and resetting goals will propel you toward your goals. When you do this regularly, you will always create new life. It breathes energy into your reality.

Final thoughts.

Obviously, this is just the beginning. With every step towards pursuing your passion, there are infinite smaller steps.

Congratulations. Now, you know enough to understand how much more there is to learn.

On my online blog, I tackle the life-long challenge of breaking down this book's topics so you can put them to use!

When you set habits that others will not, you get rewards, others do not deserve.

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