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The Method to a Successful * Photography Career



With **Alex Strohl**

* and
Fulfilling

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Dedicated Gallery





Welcome to

The Method to a Successful (and Fulfilling) Photography Career

This course is designed to develop a clear, sharp mindset. These strategies and routines will help you to have a successful life in photography. Whether it's your job or a hobby.

You see, most photography career advice is misleading or unfounded. I can't blame the people who put it out there because photography is not a science and is solely based on our own experiences and levels of expertise. As a result, this manual contradicts some of these recommendations. Things like 'use a lot of hashtags' or 'tag all the brands you want to work with' or that you need to invest in a 'killer website', that you need a 'pricing sheet'...

My previous workshop, Adventure Photography Pro, has been taken by thousands of people because it teaches how to build a name and a career for yourself in photography. This one goes one level deeper and builds on two simple yet essential blocks:

01 _____

Building a strong and determined mindset and the systems that support it.

02 _____

Making work that fulfills you and only you.

Throughout this workshop I support my claims by using real life examples from photographers who have a strong track record or from my own experiences.

01

If you don't have a set of life values, how are you supposed to achieve anything or be happy and fulfilled?

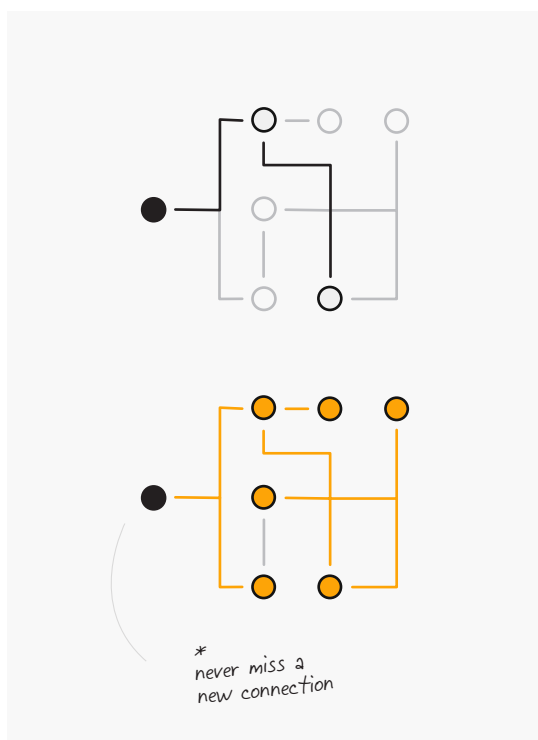
We all have some rules that were given to us by our families and friends, but have you ever taken the time to sit down to see if they really match who you are? If you have, do you still live by them?

My set of philosophies

01

Regularly reflect on the best days of your life.

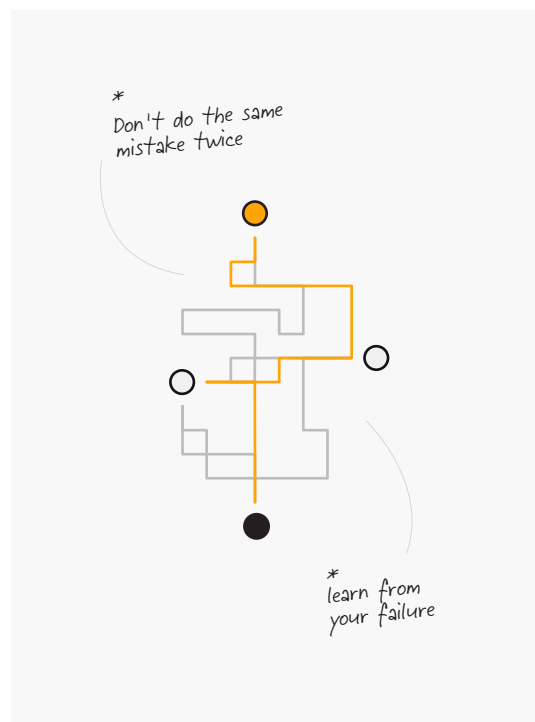
Now ask yourself, are you working towards these or away?



02

Prioritize connection.

Life is not measured by how smart we appear, but by how much we've connected with others. It's not about getting ahead of everyone else, or being the smartest, richest, etc. It's solely about connecting with others and thriving through that. We all know it: "happiness is only real when shared".



03

Failing at something = How not to do something.

That's it. No need to resent it forever, you've learned something. **Now take that insight and don't do it again!**

04

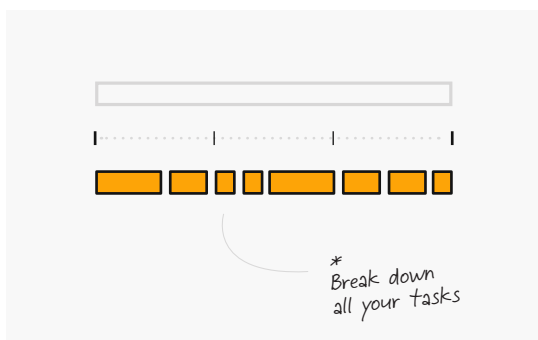
Often reflect on what you want to get done in life.

Don't only think about tomorrow, next week or next month. **Make a 10-20 year plan.**

05

Photography is a means to an end.

What's your end? Why do I do what I do? I want to work with clients I'm proud of and collaborate on projects that fulfill my creative ideas. I want freedom to live where I want to live, manage my time and not be told what to do, this fuels all of my decisions. My goal is to make good work, to help people change.



06

Make commitments short.

Best if they are in the form of regular deadlines that you have to meet. Break down the tasks into small steps and plow through them.

07

Meet people.

Especially in-person or one on one. Be reachable, but firm with your time.



08

Ask yourself the hard questions.

Why am I doing this? Am I avoiding anything in my life? Am I adrenalizing? Is this really that important? In fact, I adopted this daily checklist from Ryan Holiday, it's actually my screen saver.

09

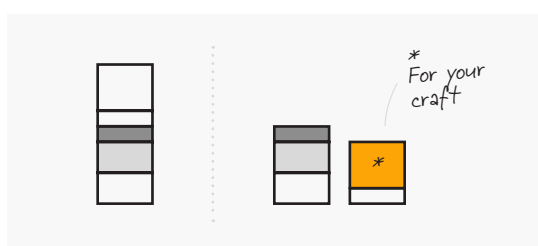
Exercise clears the mind.

It helps you think and makes you happy. You have to leave time to process life's events. If you go between your computer and phone day in and day out, when are you actually processing anything? Build an exercise routine if you don't have one.

10 —————

Pay attention to what you are paying attention to.

This may be controversial but... I don't follow the news, I only read from a few select sources and get newsletters to my inbox.



11 —————

Start a business, separate the expenses.

This gives you freedom to buy what you need for your practice. This money is not what you need to pay rent or eat, It's the one you've allocated for your craft and that makes decisions easier.

12 —————

Invest in yourself, you are the asset.

I have a yearly budget for education – I enroll in workshops just like this one, I take cooking classes, barista classes, freeski lessons, snow study lessons. Invest in yourself and continue your personal development.



13 —————

Get a log book.

The log book is where I note what is interesting in the days events. Every morning after breakfast I sit down to write about the day before: What did I do? Who did I talk to? Where did I go? Ship Captains use them to track progress in their voyages.

14 —————

Keep a journal.

Journal daily and as much as you can. It helps you process life's events and make better decisions. This is about your thoughts, feelings, and ideas. I do it every night before bed with a good cup of herbal tea (I'm 30 lol).



15 —

Don't take yourself too seriously.

In the end, we're only on earth for a few years and as I said before it's about connecting with others, no one wants to meet Dr. Bigwig. Our work may be important but it's not the most important thing in the world – so smile and laugh at yourself sometimes.

16 —

Create a healthy life and work balance.

Business and life will be intertwined as a freelancer. Decide what the balance you want is. What is the life that makes you happy?



17 —

Save your favorite thoughts/things.

Have a great idea in the shower? Put it down on paper. Read a line somewhere that resonated with you? Write it in your journal. Spot an amazing photograph? Save it on a dedicated note/board.

18 —

Have someone represent you.

This is relevant specially as an artist. Get an agent, or even a friend to represent you in front of your clients. They don't need to be pros if you're starting out. Just pick someone who has a sales background and is likable. Move away from representing yourself. You can pay them on commission. Typically agents are 25 to 35% of the total job amount. Worth every penny.

19 —

Don't focus on nailing it, focus on the technique and the form.

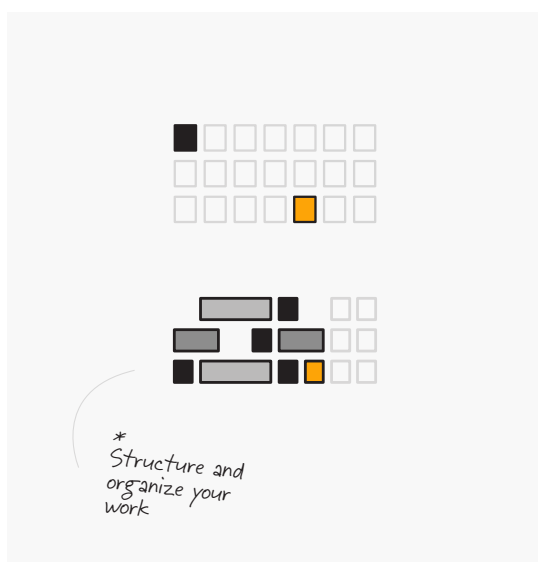
This applies to any craft, sport, game... The idea is to get out of your head and focus on the steps and movements needed to do it well. I think about it when shooting: composition, angle, focusing, all the little things that make the whole photograph great.

20

Mix Passion with methodological determination.

For anyone pursuing a creative career – passion is never too far in the equation, but it's not enough. **Without clarity and intention, you won't get much done.**

The critical work that you want to do will require your deliberation and consideration. Not passion.



21

Build a damn schedule.

This goes with what I said above - **schedules empower you to get things done.** Whenever I have a job coming up, even if it's in 6 months away I like to put a schedule down on paper. It can be loose at the beginning, but break down the steps and actions needed - you can tighten it up as you go.

22

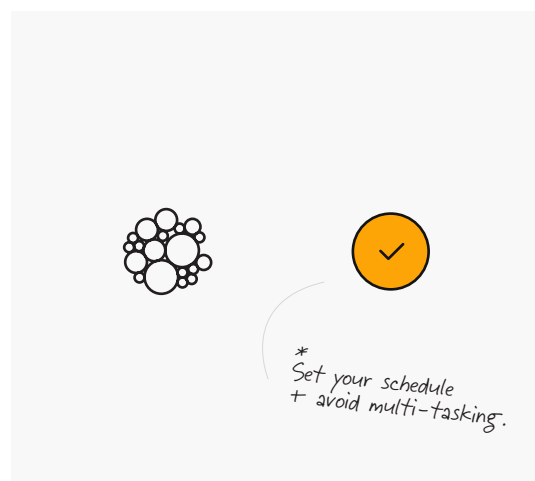
Seek people to disprove your plans and ideas.

Actively seek out people who are not afraid of saying what they think and surround yourself with them. Pick people who have an established track record in this field or a similar one, or just have plain old wisdom. Don't ask anyone who's not willing to speak up.

23

Never touch things twice.

This one is from the book Emotional Intelligence. **Never put anything in a holding pattern, because touching things twice is a huge time-waster.** Don't save an email or a phone call to deal with later. As soon as something gets your attention you should act on it, delete it or pass it on to someone who can do it. An extension to this is Tim Ferris's '2 minute rule': If something takes 2 minutes or less to do, do it now and move on, don't put it off for later.



24 —————

“Focus on the things that don’t change.”

This one is from Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon. I have it printed above my desk and it applies to a lot of things. In photography, I use it to decide what stories to go and tell. Brings me back to essential human values such as sharing experiences, constantly learning, finding shelter, interacting with the outdoors, family, love. **These things have never changed and never will and they resonate with people and always will.** Look at any Hollywood movie or tv show – they are all based upon things that don’t change.

25 —————

Visualize failure in advance.

This is well known in the business and sports world. Its simple: before you go and do the thing - whether it’s pitching a brand, printing your new photo book, or jumping off a cliff with your skis on - fast forward to the moment where not were you failed at that thing. Imagine what that is like and **try to come up with the causes before you go and do it.** This will help you make sure that your project is truly ready.

26 —————

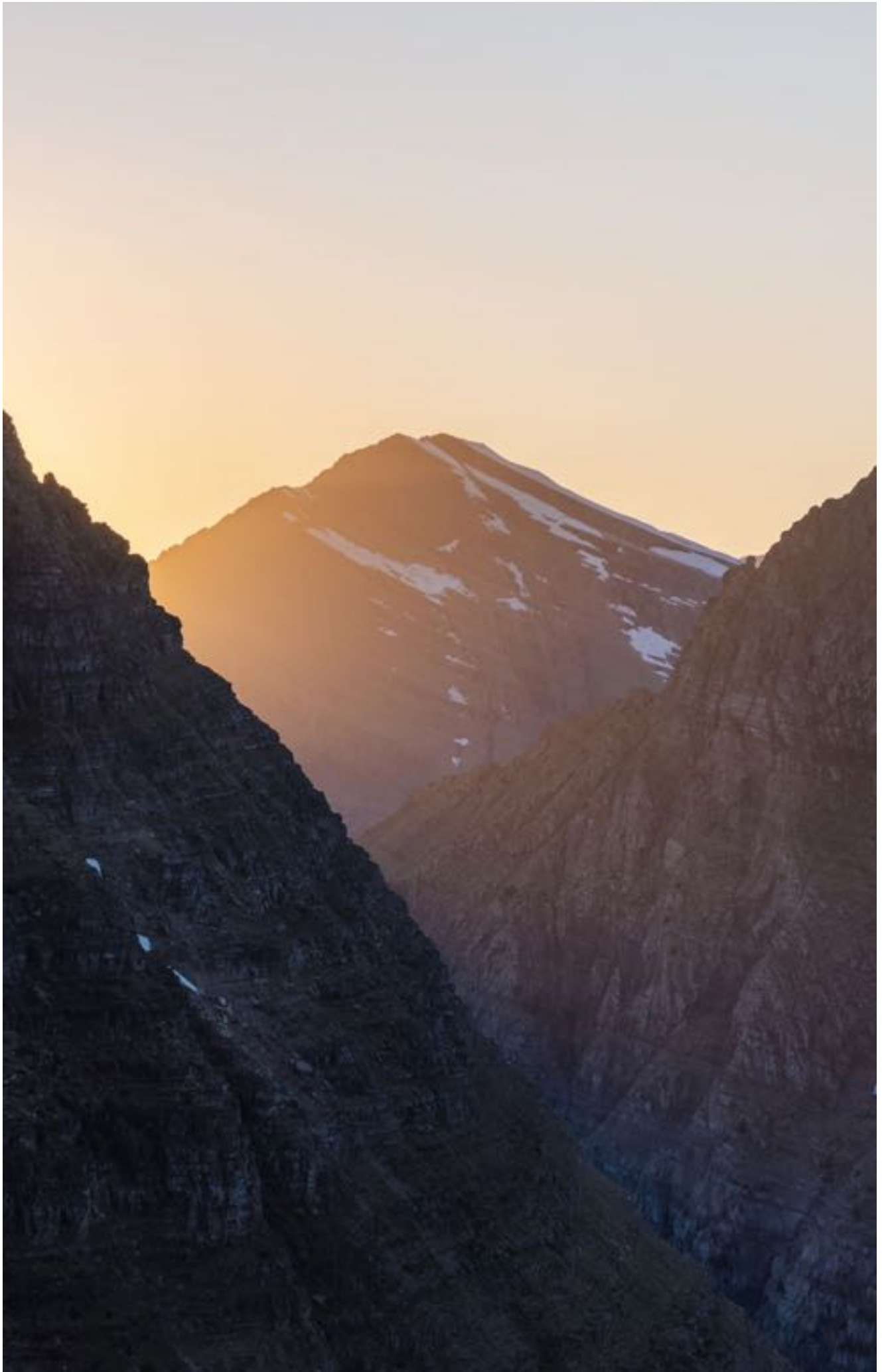
Be a perpetual optimist.

That’s it. **Focus on the positive, believe that things will work out. Always.** Even when they don’t it will keep you moving forward.

28 —————

Stay humble.

Avoid pride, avoid listening to yourself, listen to others and remember that it’s all about meaningfully connecting with those around you.



Exercise

Find your values.

The goal of this exercise is to come up with your personal values. It won't happen over a 1 hour slot of time so I recommend the following:

A

Go over the pointers below to start reflecting on what you care about.

B

Prepare a document to add your thoughts.

C

Reflect on the pointers for at least a week as you go about daily life/exercise.

Pointers:

- **Think about the best moments of your life:**
What were you doing? What was that like? Why were you happy? Draw a few themes between these moments and think, what made them possible?
- **Now the opposite**
Think about the moments where you were angry or upset. Why did you feel this way? How did you end up in that position? This will point you towards what you do and do not value.

— **Code of conduct:**

This is easier - how should people behave? What do you like and don't like in peoples behavior? Visualize events of daily life and think about what is the correct behavior according to you. Should you text someone while your friend is talking to you? Do you like speeding? Should you recline your seat in a plane? These small events will shed light in your personality and education. Take these thoughts to the document.

— **Attitude:**

Who are your most and least favorite people? Who are your friends? What do they say about you? Reflect on what you believe to be the best attitude to have in general.

— **The last day of your life:**

This one is deep — The world is ending tomorrow, what do you do today? Go over that day in detail and see what you end up doing. This will tell you a whole lot about your genuine interests.

Let a week or two go by and review these pointers every couple of days. Keep adding to the list as you have new thoughts. The goal is to get as many down as you can, you can filter them later.

Value Set

Now that your document is looking healthy, start drawing commonalities between your beliefs - delete some that are irrelevant, highlight the most important ones. Don't worry about the number, it can be 10 or 40 total, but beyond 40 I'm not sure that you could actually live by all of them!

Save / print that list somewhere you see often and whenever you're in a tough situation, or feeling down, check on it. Read it slowly. This will help get you back into a productive mindset.

02

Daily Routines & Systems of the Working Photographer

**“Excellence is an art won by
training and habituation.”**

- Aristotle

Now before I start, I'd like to address the fact that most people think of routine as a bad thing. "Routine means you have a boring life", It "kills marriages", "Keeps you from doing exciting things". I'm going to give you a totally different interpretation of routine. **In a positive interpretation, routine is no more than a system you design to suit your life and allow you to do what you set out to do.** It is a set of rules and constraint for yourself so you don't slip to lower standards. In a way, routine keeps you on track.

I'll first share my daily routine and how I've developed it for a life in photography. I'll then give you a method on how you can build a routine that works for you.

Weekdays

○ 8:00^{am} — 8:30^{am}

I rise between 8 and 8:30am.

*I don't even think about checking my phone until after breakfast.

● 8:30^{am} — 9:30^{am}

I start with a glass of cold water, then move on to doing 3 sets of Wim Hof Method breathing sessions outside if the weather is decent, otherwise inside. I'm a fan of Wim's method for breathing and cold exposure because it keeps me more calm throughout the day. It also helps me breathe better when I'm outside running/skiing etc.

Breakfast is simple: muesli, granola, with some yogurt or coconut milk + a fruit thats in season – I wash it down with 1 liter of green tea. Green tea has massive amounts of energy and antioxidants which is why I indulge in it.

Log book: After breakfast, I fill up one page of the logbook going over what I did the day before.

Phone check: After I've done the logbook I allow myself a little check on text messages and Instagram. 10-15 minutes while I finish my tea.

9:30^{am} — 10:00^{am}

Weekdays

- **Plan out the day ahead** - I write in my daily notebook a simple list of things that I want to get done today. This can include “yoga” or “get back to so and so” or “add images to media kit”. I find its easier if I build a schedule with time in there. as in what time will I get to each task. This frees me from deciding what do to at what time.

On to-do lists: A small list of 5-10 items, if completed day in and day out, will put you far ahead of everyone else.

- **10:00^{am} — 12:00^{pm}**

if this a **workout day** (Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday), I get ready and do my workout.

A: Ski or walk up my local mountain in Montana (U.S.) or Ardecche (France). I aim for the most vertical meters around because I really enjoy uphill training. Its hard but it makes me feel awesome after. It also helps cross-train with pretty much any sport you want to do.

B: If this is a non-workout day (Monday, Wednesday, Friday), I get to work and start with the list. I strive to make the hardest call of the day, or take care of the hardest thing on the list in the morning. Then its all smooth from there!

- **12:00^{pm} — 1:30^{pm}**

Shower. Lunch. Preferably with friends or family, I always try to use the simple act of sharing a meal an opportunity to spend time with someone I love. Or meet someone new.

- **1:30^{pm} — 2:00^{pm}**

Cortado o clock — Need I say more?

Have a good coffee, talk with friends, read a magazine. Permission to chill.

● **2:30 pm — 7:00 pm**

This is the first time I check emails. Usually by then all the emails for the day are in. This saves me the trouble of checking it 5 times. Take care of what needs to be taken care of, delete, archive. Then, this is where the bulk of the work gets done. I smash the to-do list. When I'm done with the list, I get on to creative things like editing, researching, working on projects. This also applies to Saturdays.



7:00 pm — 9:00 pm

Dinner / free time.



9:00 pm — 10:30 pm

This is when I feel the most creative. If I'm feeling it, I utilize the time to write out new ideas, play with old ones, edit, post to Instagram. If I'm not, I'll watch a show or a movie with my wife.



10:30 pm — 11:30 pm

Journal and reading. I spend a good half hour writing on my journal. Then I get to reading while sipping another herbal tea (mint or verbena). Then head to bed.



Weekends

On the weekends, I don't stick to a schedule unless I have to. Some of the things I do are:

- Taking care of admin stuff: bills, purchases, groceries etc.
- Going out on adventures
- Reading
- Journaling
- Personal development: learning, skills etc.

Ending notes:

Note that this is my ideal schedule, the one I fall back to whenever I can. If i'm away on a shoot or a long trip, I carve time if possible and utilize:

- The list
- Journal
- Reading

But when I'm on a shoot, the most important thing is the shoot itself, everything falls into second place so don't feel bad if you can't stick to your schedule. You're already doing important work and hopefully having a good time – that is the most important thing.

This schedule works exceptionally well for me but that doesn't mean it will work for you. Maybe you're a "morning person" and wake up at 5. Maybe you're a "night owl". Try, refine, adapt to what suits you. Again the main thing is that you feel fulfilled and that you're progressing.



PS.

This may help you in
prioritizing your life.

**A few years ago I read some
obscure writing about a monk
somewhere in Europe who
hundreds of years ago came
up with the 'ideal' way to
spend 24hrs:**



1/3 (8hrs) is for to the body:
Sleep, exercise



1/3 (8hrs) is for to the mind:
Thinking, work



1/3 (8hrs) is for socializing:
Spending time with friends, eating



**This should help you see
the idea of a schedule
from a higher view!**

Exercise

Build / refine your schedule.

**If you don't have a schedule and
want to build one follow this:**

*Remember that a schedule is something that is always moving. We change so our schedule should change over time. Don't think of it as set in stone, its a firm system but has some leniency - like a sky scraper that moves in heavy winds.

**Schedules are born out of necessity.
Its up to you to determine what that
necessity is and if its worthy of building
a schedule around.**

I can't exactly place when I built my first schedule, but it was a hap hazard attempt at getting closer towards my goals. After much trial and error I wasn't progressing as I wanted, I endlessly spent time deciding what I was going to do next. I remembered seeing Steve

Jobs always wearing the same black turtle neck and blue jeans on his old keynotes. That led me to research into his habits - he loved walks, and had a series of systems to help him through the day. I thought why not give it a try.

What matters when building a schedule:

- **Make it so that you will stick to it**
Know yourself. Don't put that you're going to rise at 6am when you actually love waking up at 8. Don't force things because you'll eventually fall off the wagon.
- **Think of it in blocks of time**
Variate between 30minutes to 2 hour blocks. Sometimes It takes much less time to do something than you thought. Break down the tasks into smaller chunks so you can feel that progression through the day.
- **Leave space for personal time**
 This was my first mistake — I didnt leave time to just be creative or hang out with the people I love. That will make you really frustrated very fast.
- **Do the hard work in the am**
 In the afternoon we get more distracted and lose our focus more easily so leave the fun stuff for the afternoon, Like working on photos. The morning is for deep work.
- **Adjust**
 Once you've tried your schedule for a week, have a quick meeting with yourself or talk to your partner about it. See were there was friction and consider adjusting. It will take a few weeks to get to that beautiful state where the day moves with less friction.
- **Help a friend build their schedule once you've understood yours**
 There's no better way to learn something than to teach it to someone so once you've got the hang of your routine, help a friend who needs it.

03

The Uselessness of Comparing Yourself

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique.

And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.”

– Martha Graham

World-class dance choreographer

This section started with questions from my workshop students:

“When you started with photography, did you ever feel you couldn’t compete with all the amazing photographers out there? And if so, what would you recommend to deal with those thoughts? How many images have you shot to get to where you are?”

Let’s start there.

Think of the ratio between the images you shoot and the ones you select...



For the better part of 8 years, I have been publishing images on Instagram on a regular basis – for 6 years that cadence was pretty much every day. Every day I would share a photo. That is north of 2000 images that I had to select, edit, and deem worthy of representing my work to the world. And that is only the tip of the iceberg. Because you see, my average hit rate is roughly 10%, which means I have to shoot 100 images to have 10 really good ones. So to produce 2000 worth-posting images I have to at the very least shoot 20,000. But in reality, the ones that end up on Instagram and website are only the top 0.2 % so that means I've shot north of 1,000,000 images over the past 8 years. Which is roughly the size of my archive - 23 million megabytes or 23TB. That's a lot of photos when I think of it...

The funny thing is that more than half these images I shared wouldn't resonate with people. I would spend hours, researching, getting somewhere to make a photo. I would edit it and think that's it, that's one of my best, and then it would be met with meager feedback. Other photos, I would make in just 30 seconds without much thought and people would love it. That made me think - I had no idea of what was good or not good. I was a poor judge of my images, and it took me time to understand that. In the end, we're all pretty bad at judging our own work. It is actually not even our business to do so.

All we have to do is day in and day out keep making images, that's it. Think, shoot, select, edit, share. Rinse and repeat. Most of you think that you're going to suddenly make a brilliant image and have all this recognition for it, but that's not how it works. It takes a lot of doing to master anything. That's the million images. If I can now produce work that gets recognized its because I've walked the line.

Do not compare yourself to me or any other hard charging photographer out there, because we haven't had the same path.





Maybe you haven't shot your million images. It would be foolish to compare and will create anger, frustration, sadness. Nothing is worse than being jealous of someone who has something that you are deliberately not pursuing, or haven't dedicated the time to.

Know why you do what you do – what your prize is and what's important to you. Otherwise you will be endlessly comparing yourself against other people, which will not only be a major

distraction, it will make you miserable. Avoid being in reactive mode constantly, adapting to what you see and hear. Try to cultivate a bit of detachment from everyone's work and be more objective. Your responsibility is to create and not limit yourself. Don't let your self judgement prevent you from creating. Like I said earlier in my life approaches: focus on the process and the technique, not on 'nailing it' because you're not the one who decides that. Fall in love with the process and you will go far.



**Remember, find your end.
Find out why you're in it.**

04

Pushing Past Self-imposed Limitation

“It’s not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.”

- Epictetus

“Most of the time, what holds us back is entirely in our heads.”

- Steve Sims

Author



Let's talk about viewing problems in a new light.

Become aware of when you're limiting yourself - aka finding excuses. Work towards the point where you can hear "no" for answer, but keep the determination to find a solution. Be convinced that the solution is there, you just have to find it.

You have to train your negotiation skills, know that you have nothing to lose, get people excited about your plan, learn

to be ok with rejection, ask the right questions, study the stories of others.

Whether you're trying to land dream clients or simply trying to convince someone to let you take photos in their house - you're going to need these tools, and you will have to practice them.

Just remember, busting down these internal walls takes a lot of practice, what matters is that you keep going.

01 _____

**Get comfortable
with negotiation.**

See the episode about negotiation.

02 _____

**Take no as an answer,
but keep going.**

This is huge - when I was a teenager I was quite insolent, never able to hear no from people. I wasted a lot of energy trying to convince the inconvincible.



03 _____

Ask the right questions.

Some questions that I ask myself whether I'm pitching a project or finding the strength to start a new personal project.

- Who do I know that has experience with this? I always start here because it can save massive amounts of research.
- How can I add intrigue, mystery and interest to my request or project?
- Am I telling them enough to get them excited?
- Am I being clear and easy to understand?
- Why would I want to help myself if I was the other person?
- How can I make the other person look great?
- How does this benefit the other person/audience?
- Why would they want to work with me/support this?
- Question everything: ask why as much as you can, even to yourself.

04 _____

Be okay with rejection.

Being rejected is part of the process. There are nearly 8 billion people on the planet and I can't collaborate with all of them. It certainly is painful to put a great amount of effort into a pitch only to see it torn to pieces by a client. But it doesn't have to hold you back.

Per example, when I send a budget my goal is to get push back, it means I'm pushing the limits. It's proof that I'm doing this thing to the fullest.

The important thing here is that you treat yourself with kindness when you get rejected - don't jump to conclusions thinking you're an idiot and you blew it. On the contrary, you just learned how not to do this thing. It hurts, but don't let the inner critic talk too long. Acknowledge failure, go for a run, give it some space, and jump back into it.

Hearing no or being rejected shouldn't hurt your self image - it does not define you.

Your self-worth has to stay intact in this process. It is only your idea or pitch that was received at a bad time, or you could have made it differently... there are 100 reasons but remember, you're more than enough.



From the book
Bluefishing

**If I try and succeed,
I succeed.
Great!**

**If I try and fail,
I will grow.
Also great!**

**If I don't try at all, I've
allowed something to
get in my way, I will be
standing still.**

Study the stories of others

Another approach to help you break down these inner walls is to study the stories of others before you.

Especially the ones with troubled pasts: **Jim Carrey** lived in a caravan broke for years, **Benjamin Franklin** dropped out of school at age 10, **Stephen's King** first book was rejected by all publishing houses, he then went on to sell 350million copies of it.

Not only do we find these success stories inspiring but they teach us resilience. We learn about the mechanics of great break throughs and that is knowledge you can apply every day in your career and photographic life.

Exercise

Break down these walls.

If you're not confident about your own work, the goal of this exercise is to have you practice breaking down these walls.

A

Show your work to close friends and family first, they will be nicer. Just tell them that you want to do a mini exhibit for them. Gather a few stories to share along with the photos.

B

Once you're comfortable with that, go **put together a little show** at your local coffee house or shop you know. Expand the circle slowly.

If you're already comfortable sharing your work with others

lets use this confidence to do something you never thought you could do.

- Reaching out to **someone you admire** and asking to meet them
- Get access to a very **unique place** around where you live
- Ask a friend to introduce you to **other people** who may need your work
- Ask **someone you barely know** (but are intrigued by) if you can make a photo set about them
- Put together a **photo collection** and contact 5 galleries to ask them to consider it for a show, tell them why.



Recommended reading:

Bluefishing, Steve Simms

05

How to Set Goals

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

- Pablo Picasso

“A goal properly set is halfway reached.”

- Zig Ziglar

“The thing about goals is that living without them is a lot more fun, in the short run. It seems to me, though, that the people who get things done, who lead, who grow and who make an impact... those people have goals.”

- Seth Godin



Goals vs. Resolutions

Resolutions are typically loose such as, “I want to be a better photographer this year”. Goals on the other hand are tighter, “I want to go on three photo trips this year to improve my skills. Notice the difference. **One is measurable, the other isn’t.**

To go on 3 photo trips in a year is going to require you to prepare – line up locations, pick up the right gear, save money, find some friends to come, book the travel, etc. That gives you something to work with. You can break all of it down into actionable steps.

So let’s begin. To set goals and start achieving them you’re going to need a method:

01

Define your goals.

If you’re lacking inspiration, look at the year that just went by and ask yourself what you would do differently. “I wish I did more of this, less of that.” **Make sure the goals are clear and measurable.**

02

Be realistic.

Don't cram your list with every random desire you have. This is not about wanting everything, it's about deciding what matters most to us and doing just that. I'd take a clear goal for the entire

year that fulfills me to my core over 5 disjointed goals that end up spreading myself too thin.

Pick your battles. Find your end.

03

Make a plan.

Once you have your 1-3 goals for the year defined, and measurable, **make a month by month schedule**. Set up targets. To take the photo trip example above:

On February 1st, I know where my first trip is taking place. February 15th - by then, I've asked all my friends if they want to come. April 1st - I've created a gear list of the things I want to take.

April 15th - I know where the second trip is. May 1st - I have a confirmed list of friends. May 15 - we've got travel booked. You get the idea.

Lay everything out with whatever tool you prefer using. For me it's a simple note on Evernote with dates. It can be a Trello board, a Google Sheet... doesn't matter, whatever you are used to using.

04

Implement.

This is when you get moving. You have a schedule. You're not in reaction mode. The game is planned ahead. Now you have a structure on how to execute the schedule.

Every Sunday or Monday, sit down for half an hour to figure out what you're going this week, this month.

That is the strategy.

Remember

First

Define your goals.

Second

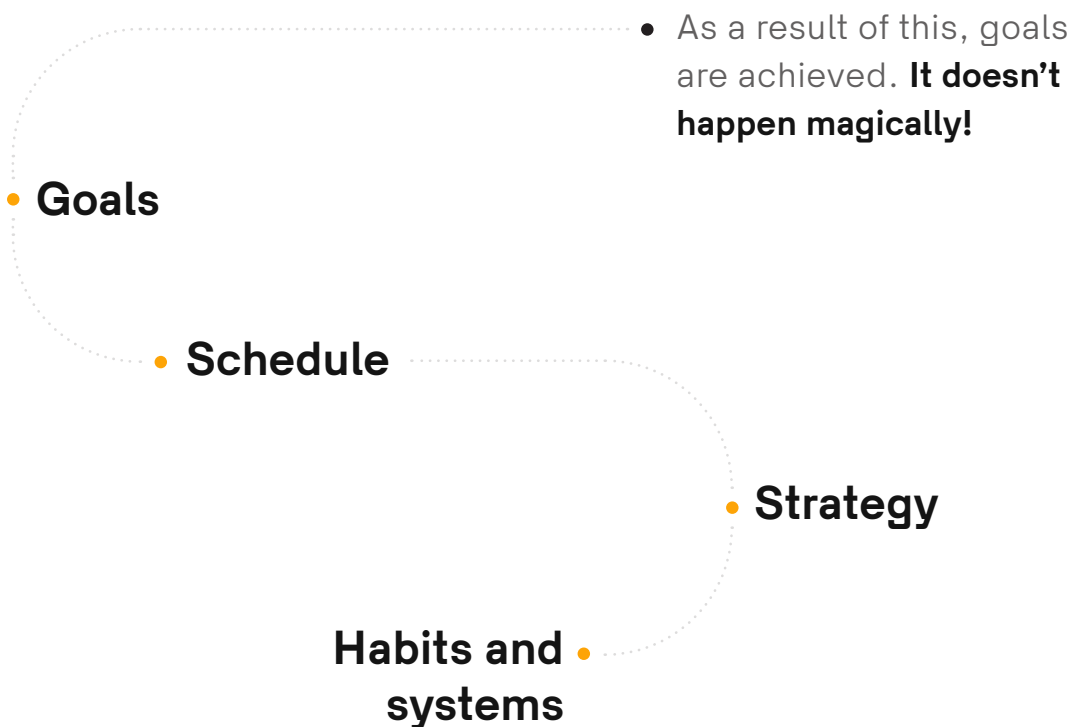
Make a schedule to achieve your goals.

Third

Devise a strategy to execute the schedule.

Fourth

Create habits and systems to execute the strategy.



06

How to find Motivation

“If you are working on something that you really care about, you don’t have to be pushed. The vision pulls you.”

- Steve Jobs

“I never dreamed about success. I worked for it.”

- Estée Lauder

“At some point, the pain of not doing it becomes greater than the pain of doing it.”

- Steven Pressfield

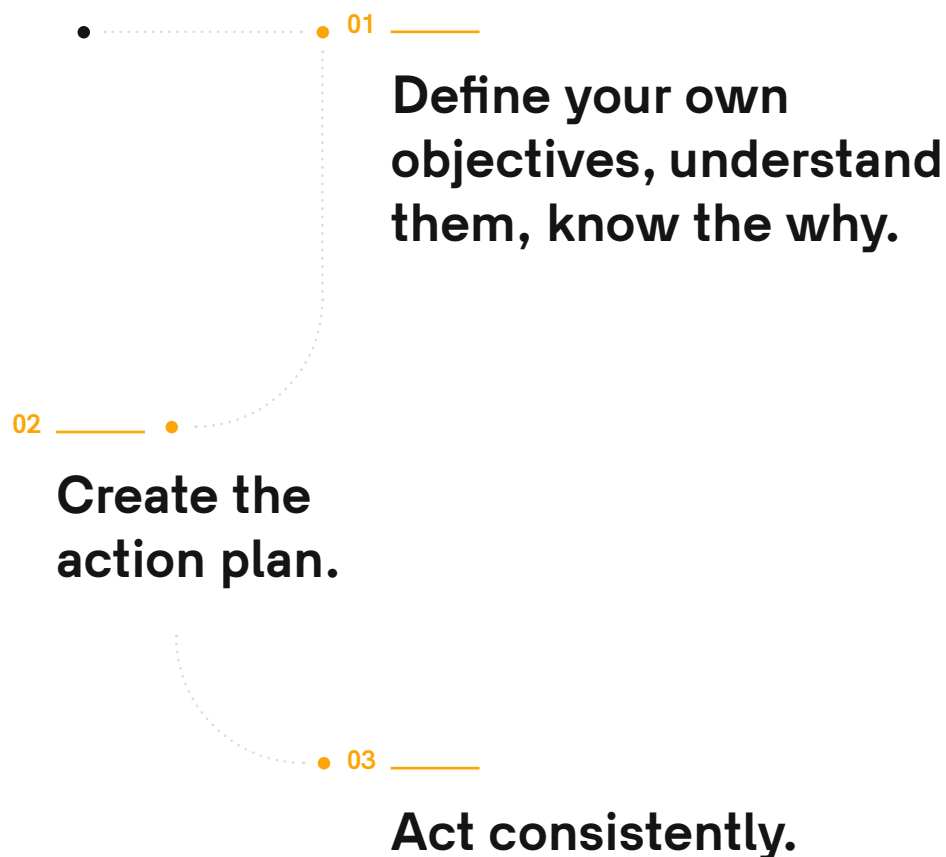
The War of Art.



Let's talk about finding motivation to act toward **your objectives and pursuits.**

This is a no non-sense action plan to get you to stop procrastinating.

Three
steps



Let's start with a real life example: when I moved to Montana, I knew I wanted to get fitter.

I wanted to be able to go fast and light in the mountains whenever I needed. Partly because I knew exercise makes me feel good, but also because I wanted to spend more time in the company of athletes. And no athlete wants to go on a shoot with a slow, inexperienced person. I didn't want to be a liability, I wanted to be at the very least a decent adventure partner.

That was my objective: I want to be fit enough to keep up with most people in the mountains so I could develop a new side of my life and career. P.s. Its always beautiful when your life and your craft intertwine!

Now I had to create an action plan. I asked around to anyone who went in the backcountry regularly, "What should I do to get fitter?" The simple answer was always "train train train". How often? As often as you can. Now some ultra athletes like Killian Jornet spends up to 1200 hours a year training. That's 3 hours a day on average. Obviously I wasn't going to go for that, but after some research I found that 200-300 hours a year would suffice to take me above the norm. That's 30-45 minute a day. Every day.

I knew that I didn't want to train every day, but instead wanted to have days where I could immerse myself in creative work and days where I would train - on and off style because that suits me. So I decided back in 2015 that I would go uphill skiing or uphill hiking 3x a week, no matter what. 2 hours in the morning every Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday.

When you build routines like this you have to expect them to fail or require adjustment. It's normal. I tried it for a week, great, I like this. One month, still hard, but i like it. 3 months, this is the best thing ever. Now 5 years down the road, my exercise routine remains pretty much the same and I couldn't live without it.

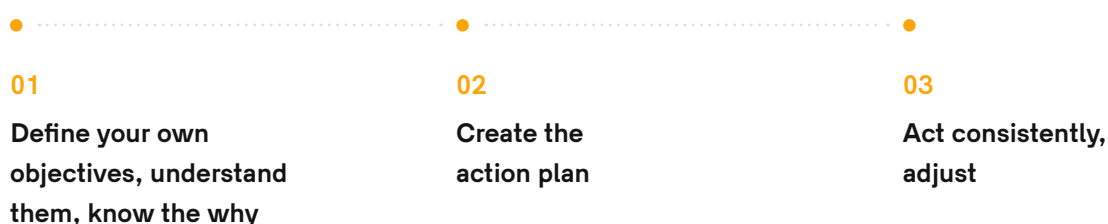
So what keeps me going?

- I catch myself trying to make excuses - that's ok, we all do it. Acknowledge it.
- I have this belief that **we shouldn't miss 'meetings' we have with ourselves**. If I needed to not work out one morning, I'd better have a good reason. If I'm sick of course I'm not going to push it, that is stupid and will only make you sicker.
- I remember that **stagnant things rot - so if i was not progressing I was stagnating**. And us humans, we thrive on progression.
- I try to **visualize that I had a handicap that would forbid me from walking** at all - and I say try because I can't even begin to imagine what that must be like. But that thought makes me instantly grateful of even having the ability to go walking.
- **I frame the activity in a new light** - instead of saying to myself 'I have to go work out' - I'll tell myself 'I get to go workout today'. Notice how changing the perspective changes your perception of it?
- Lastly, **I think about all the benefits that working out give me**. I'd miss out on those - remember procrastination is the first sign that you are encountering resistance.

I simply fell in love with the process, the beauty of the habit. Rain or shine, I knew that on Tuesdays I'd wake up, have breakfast and go up a mountain. There is beauty in that. The decision making process was gone, i just had to follow the plan, the process. That is liberating.

I also went on a lot of backcountry jaunts with people, and I would see the progress. The feeling of knowing that your body 'Has got it', that it can do what you're asking it to do is immensely fulfilling to me. That's only my opinion and interest, your goals can be entirely different.

So to reiterate:



You have to find the opportunity that **matters most** - the hole in the clouds. This can be something like I want to publish a photo book.

Why? Because I love seeing my work printed, I'm happy knowing that my work is inside peoples homes, because I need to get this project off my chest. Keep digging until you find the real why.

Ask why 3 times.
At least.
Then make the plan.

Now that you have the plan, do it for you, don't stop until you break through. Plain old perseverance will take you farther than excitement.

07

The Mindset of Negotiation

“He who has learned to disagree without being disagreeable has discovered the most valuable secret of negotiation.”

- Chris Voss

Lead FBI Negotiator

When you become a better negotiator, you can create better opportunities for yourself which will lead to a more fulfilling life in photography. I am sharing a detailed view of techniques I've found to be effective in negotiation, the ones I cannot do without.

***Note** that in creative businesses, you want to have someone represent you as soon as you can. This is for all the other times.

01 _____

How do you make sure that you get the best out of the negotiation?

Understand the outcome you need. This seems obvious but you have to know what you want out of the negotiation. Hint, these are the win-win situations. Negotiation is not win-lose. You want to both win. This means that you have to be firm, but also try to imagine the other party's position. Have empathy and understand.

02 _____

Why is listening so important in negotiation?

Always be an active listener. This means that you're listening more than you're talking. But you're not passive, you are actually helping **guide the conversation with relevant questions** so you can learn more about the other parties motives, and see if this is a fit. You may gain an edge over the other party, but as I said before victory is not the goal. **The goal is to have the other party be very happy with the deal**, and you should too. Listening actively gets you here - remember: Negotiation is about understanding the other party's position.

03 _____

Why should you always try to go second?

Never shoot first. The other party will likely be trying to do the same thing but be polite and kind and ask for a budget when they asked you for a quote. Everybody has a budget, even Apple. If they're not willing to share one, that's fine, you're the provider of services so this is when you establish a ballpark - "Typically these kind of projects range from \$5000 to \$10,000 depending on the deliverables and the production costs". This gives you wiggle room and it gives the client an idea of who they're dealing with. If they balk at \$10k then you know it was the wrong client. This leads me to my next point.

04 _____

Finances in negotiation?

Have a minimum spend. This is something that agencies and media business have, it is the minimum spend to work with them. You can be candid about it but its a good one to **mention during initial talks just so you can filter clients.** It doesn't have to be \$50,000. It can simply be \$3,000 or whatever people have been paying for your work.



05 _____

Why you shouldn't share your rates on the phone, but instead via email.

Don't quote over phone. That's it. Never quote someone on the fly, you will always regret it. You can give them the range or minimum spend but not anything else. Tell them you'll follow up after the call and them a quote by email.

06 _____

Why is it important to scale for larger clients?

It's not about how much you're worth, but how much they are willing to pay. You may be used to doing \$5000 jobs for mid-size clients, but one day, a big client comes in. You have to put yourself in their shoes. Fortune 500 companies don't spend \$5,000 on shoots, they can spend 10x that without even blinking. **Know who you're dealing with.**

07 _____

Ask your peers

Ask your friends in the industry what they charge and **be open and share** what your clients have been paying you. It keeps the rates fair to everyone and creates a healthy market standard. If you don't have friends in the industry... make that a yearly goal.

08 _____

Go big or go home...

Aim for push back when you quote. This can sound negative but let me explain: When you send a quote and it gets approved immediately, you've screwed up. Sorry. **Seek some push back on your quotes.** You want to hear things like "This is a lot of money for us" or "It's above our typical budgets". That means you're really playing at the highest of your abilities.



09 _____

Why should you think about a sin tax?

Have a 'sin tax'. This is personal, but whenever I'm approached by companies who are in any business that sells products that are known to harm health I usually pass. If it's a client that has a good name I'll consider it - such as a reputable wine or whisky brand per example - because there is an actual heritage behind. But I will **charge more** because of the industry they're in.

10 _____

Break down costs to give a clear

Explain why you cost what you cost. If a client pushes back and requires explanations on your fees, happily explain how you work, what are the costs involved - maybe you use fancy camera gear, you need a large crew, or you simply do massive amounts of prep because the job requires it. Maybe there will be 100 hours of editing. Whatever it is, **be open with the client about these costs.**



11 _____

Create scarcity

How do you create scarcity? If a client has been beating around the bush and is taking a while to get back to you, it may be time to **pull out some tactics**. Start sharing your yearly calendar, tell them that you need to finalize plans due to other jobs, and that you only have these dates to shoot now. Have them let you know 'before the end of the week'. **It will get them moving if they really want you. If they don't, then at least it pushes them into a decision.**

12 _____

Don't do discounts

Why not, how can discounts affect your work? If its for family or very close friends, I'd rather do it for free rather than offering a discount. Simple as that. Because if I charge less, I'll feel entitled because I'm 'doing a favor' but my friend will also feel entitled because they're still paying. That's not a healthy situation. If its free, I'll set some boundaries like 'I can only do one pass on the edits' and get on.

If brands want discounts they're not the clients you want. If they have a budget and they're trying to reduce the scope of the project that's different. But if they take money away, you have to take deliverables away.

13 _____

Know that you may lose the job

In any negotiation, I enter with **the** mindset that I'm totally ok with losing the job if the budget doesn't **match my expectations**. With that mental fortitude you will project confidence on the client and thus help your cause.

14 _____

Always be kind

Perhaps the most important point. **Always be gracious and make your clients feel important**. You can politely decline offers if they don't work out. Thank them for their generosity even if it doesn't match your expectations.

15 _____

Study body language and tone of voice

How does hesitation affect negotiation? This is what will help you most. Most of what we express comes out of through our facial expressions and the tone of our voice. **It is something that some of us can pick up naturally, but really it needs to be studied and practiced**. I can't count how many times I've picked up a hesitant tone of voice in a negotiation and dug in from there, politely: "Forgive me, but I sense a bit of hesitation, is this really what we want to do?"



Recommended reading:

Never Split The Difference. Chris Voss

Captivate, the science of succeeding with people. Vanessa Van Edwards

What everyBODY is saying. Joe Navarro

























