

THE BIG IDEAS

GPS vs. INS

Knowledge vs. wisdom.

Do It w/Your Whole Heart

Or don't do it.

The Firsts You

Is always best.

Quit Being a Hardaholic

Pretty, please.

Three Fact of Life

Take note.

Embrace the Human

To liberate the divine.

Are You a Pre-crastinator

Or a procrastinator?

Desires vs. Tantrums

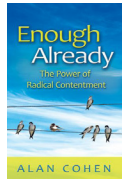
Good to know the difference.

The Terrorist

In your mind.

*"To keep pain from becoming suffering, minimize resistance. Quit trying to manipulate others and manipulate your *viewpoint.*"*

~ Alan Cohen



Enough Already

The Power of Radical Contentment

BY ALAN COHEN · HAY HOUSE © 2012 · 239 PAGES

“Try this experiment: For one day imagine what you have and what you are is enough. When you look in the mirror, decide to like what you see. When you connect with your friend, date, spouse, or boss, notice what you like about that person rather than what bugs you. When you go over your credit-card bill, instead of complaining about the high price of gas and groceries, thank all the people who brought your fuel to you and your food from seed to your table. When you go to work, celebrate the customers and accounts you have rather than wringing your hands over those you are missing.

If you do this experiment sincerely and continuously for even one day, your life will change. You will feel better, and things will start to work more in your favor. You will recognize that you have far more riches at your disposal than you realized. You will realize that you have not just enough, but plenty.”

~ Alan Cohen from *Enough Already*

[Alan Cohen.](#)

Alexandra and I love him!

This is my fourth Note on his books. We also have Notes on [A Daily Dose of Sanity](#), [Why Your Life Sucks](#) and [Relax into Wealth](#).

Alan's grounded, spacious presence and wisdom is incredibly refreshing. Plus he's a GREAT story teller. If you haven't gotten one of his books yet I really think you'll dig them! For now, let's jump in and have some fun with some of my favorite Big Ideas from this great book!

GPS VS. INS

“Knowledge is what you learn from the outer world—facts, information, and techniques to manipulate your environment in order to survive. Wisdom is what you know from your inner world—how to connect with yourself, others, and a Higher Power; how to deliver your unique contribution; and not simply how to survive but how to *thrive*. Knowledge helps you navigate the earth, but wisdom helps you navigate the landscape of your soul. Knowing how to get from Tucson to Los Angeles is important, but knowing how to move from fear to love is more important. Use your GPS when you need to, but make sure your INS (Internal Navigation System) is functioning at all times.”

Knowledge vs. Wisdom.

As Alan says right before this passage, the values of our society are a little wonky. “*Students in our society are rewarded lavishly for knowing trivial facts, but not for knowing how to live.*”

Knowledge of our world is obviously important. But it's time to invest some more energy in getting our Internal Navigation System rockin'. :)

DO IT W/YOUR WHOLE HEART (OR DON'T DO IT!)

"Behold mind over matter: If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

~ Alan Cohen

"The most self-defeating thing you can do is to take action with divided intention. If you are doing something while resisting, resenting, or complaining about it, you are ripping yourself off, along with everyone else involved. Nothing is more annoying than someone doing something and kvetching and whining as they do it. Either do something with a whole heart or don't do it. If you agree to do something, then really do it. If you don't agree to do it, then really don't do it. *Be total.*"

Love that.

"Either do something with a whole heart or don't do it. If you agree to do something, then really do it. If you don't agree to do it, then really don't do it. Be total."

Reminds me of the [Buddha](#), [Seneca](#) and [Osho](#).

Buddha tells us: *"If anything is worth doing, do it with all your heart."*

While Seneca advises us: *"There is nothing the wise man does reluctantly."*

And Walter Russell puts it brilliantly: *"There should be no distasteful tasks in one's life. If you just hate to do a thing, that hatred for it develops body-destructive toxins, and you become fatigued very soon. You must love anything you must do. Do it not only cheerfully, but also lovingly and the very best way you know how. That love of the work which you must do anyhow will vitalize your body and keep you from fatigue."*

He adds: *"A menial task which must be mine, that shall I glorify and make an art of it."*

Osho goes off on the importance of being total in his [Book of Understanding](#) (see Notes). He tells us: *"I don't teach the middle way, I teach the total way. Then a balance comes of its own accord, and then that balance has tremendous beauty and grace. You have not forced it, it has simply come. By moving gracefully to the left, to the right, in the middle, slowly a balance comes to you because you remain so unidentified."*

Plus: *"When you are total, it is good; and when you are divided, it is evil. Divided you suffer; united, you dance, you sing, you celebrate."*

Got something to do?

Do it or don't do it.

But if you're going to do it, do it with ALL your heart!! :)

THE FIRST YOU

"When a reporter asked child tennis prodigy Jennifer Capriati, "Would you like to be the next Chris Evert?" she answered, "No, I would like to be the first Jennifer Capriati."

Such confidence in one's unique gifts is rare in a world obsessed with comparison. From an early age, you were taught that your value is measured against the achievements of others; that life is a competition and a popularity contest; and that the more you fulfill externally prescribed standards, the more successful you will be.

None of this is true."

Love that.

Our world is all about external markers of success. But we KNOW philosophically and scientifically that chasing *signs* of success (like fame, wealth and hotness) isn't where it's at.

In fact, comparing yourself to people is one of the quickest ways to drop into Ickland.

*"If you know how to *do* without knowing how to *be*, you have not learned life's most poignant lesson. Merge action with inner clarity and you become the master of life."*

~ Alan Cohen

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is more people who have come alive."

~ Howard Thurman

Here's how the research scientist, [Sonja Lyubomirsky](#) puts it in her great book [The Hows of Happiness](#) (see Notes): "We found that the happiest people take pleasure in other people's successes and show concern in the face of others' failures. A completely different portrait, however, has emerged of a typical unhappy person—namely, as someone who is deflated rather than delighted about his peers' accomplishments and triumphs and who is relieved rather than sympathetic in the face of his peers' failures and undoings."

She continues: "You can't be envious and happy at the same time. People who pay too much attention to social comparisons find themselves chronically vulnerable, threatened, and insecure."

And concludes with: "The happier the person, the less attention she pays to how others around her are doing."

How are you doing with that? Time for a little (or a lot!) less comparison? :)

P.S. [Leo Buscaglia](#) comes to mind. He tells us: "You are the best you. You will always be the second best anyone else."

Ultimately, as Alan tells us: "All you need to know is how to be you."

QUIT BEING A HARDAHOLIC

"How do you overcome hardaholicism? Begin by questioning your belief that what you find hard has to be hard. Ask yourself, "How much of this is hard because of the situation, and how much of it is hard because I am seeing it as hard or I am making it hard?" You might be surprised to find that struggle is the offspring of perception and projection more than reality. Then ask yourself, "If I were willing to let this be easy, how would I be approaching this differently?" If you can discover a vantage point even a bit freer than the one you have been holding, you will take a significant step from struggle to peace."

Are you a hardaholic?

Me, too. Way too often.

Let's take a quick look at how it's showing up and what we can do about it, shall we?

What's your #1 challenge in your life right now?

Are you making it harder than you need to?

As Alan encourages, ask yourself: "If I were willing to let this be easy, how would I be approaching this differently?"

Well, how would you be approaching it differently? :)

Seriously. How can it be easy?

P.S. Here's another cool idea on that theme: "When an airplane encounters turbulence, the pilot seeks another altitude. If the aircraft tries to buck through the resistance, it will be racked with chop. So the pilot rises to a higher altitude or drops to a lower one where the skies are clear and navigable. Eventually the plane will pass the turbulent zone and be able to reclaim its normal cruising altitude."

Back to us... Here's to changing our altitude and attitude! :)

THREE FACTS OF LIFE

"Three facts of life: (1) We all make mistakes, (2) the experiences we call mistakes offered us benefits at the time, and (3) the lessons we learn from the mistakes and the growth we gain far outshine any temporary losses."

"There is more to life than increasing its speed."

~ Mahatma Gandhi

"All experiences in life are to either be enjoyed or learned from."

~ Alan Cohen

"When you finally trust yourself, you will know how to live."

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Amen to that!!

Made any mistakes lately?

(Laughing.)

Me, too. :)

Something magical happens when we embrace the fact of life that, as Alan tells us, we ALL make mistakes. And the good news is that the lessons we learn from those mistakes FAR outshine any temporary losses.

Do you have any mistakes you've made several years ago that you can now see as a huge stepping stone to a new way of being? Feel into the gifts that mistake has given you.

Now, feel into any current mistakes you might have some regrets about and KNOW that in a matter of time you'll be able to see all the amazing growth you experienced from the setback.

Adds a little more spring to your step and trust in your soul, eh?

P.S. I love how Walter Russell puts it in [The Man Who Tapped the Secrets of the Universe](#) (see Notes): *"I have had my share of what one calls defeat, in plenty. I have made and lost fortunes and seen great plans of mine topple through my own errors of judgment or through other causes... But I do not recognize these as defeats. They are but interesting experiences of life. They are valuable stepping stones to success. Defeat is a condition which one must accept in order to give it reality. I refuse to give it reality by accepting it. In my philosophy I have written these words: Defeat I shall not know. It shall not touch me. I will meet it with true thinking. Resisting it will be my strengthening. But if, perchance, the day will give to me the bitter cup, it will sweeten in the drinking."*

EMBRACE THE HUMAN TO LIBERATE THE DIVINE

"It is wise to reach for perfection, but unwise to beat yourself up if you don't attain it. Striving for perfection creates excellence, but addiction to it creates frustration and depression. There is perfection in the journey that is not obvious until the end of the journey. Enjoy the process and let your flaws become your friends. Your beauty is not earned by changing. It is revealed by accepting all of you. When you embrace the human, you liberate the divine."

So much goodness in there.

First: **"It is wise to reach for perfection, but unwise to beat yourself up if you don't attain it. Striving for perfection creates excellence, but addiction to it creates frustration and depression."**

Going for perfection is awesome provided we *know* that we're never actually going to hit it. As [Tal Ben-Shahar](#) tells us, we need to treat our ideals more like guiding stars than distant shores.

And: **"There is perfection in the journey that is not obvious until the end of the journey."**

Reminds me of [Joseph Campbell](#)'s wisdom (see Notes on [Pathways to Bliss](#)): *"In a wonderful essay called 'On an Apparent Intention in the Fate of the Individual,' Schopenhauer points out that, once you have reached an advanced age, as I have, as you look back over your life, it can seem to have had a plot, as though composed by a novelist. Events that seemed entirely accidental or incidental turn out to have been central to the composition..."*

Another astonishing way to look back is to pick up some diary entries or notes that you kept a long time ago. You'll be astonished. Things you were convinced you had realized more recently will all be pinned down there. These are the driving themes of your life."

This is great: **"Enjoy the process and let your flaws become your friends."**

Reminds me of some more Campbell wisdom: *"I think it was Nietzsche who said, 'Be careful lest*

*"Confidence speaks louder than words. If you are selling something, your customer will be more impressed with your energy than your pitch. Your energy *is* your pitch."*

~ Alan Cohen

"While improving ourselves and the world is a noble intention, if we get so caught up in fixing that we lose our ability to enjoy, work becomes our master rather than our servant. When obligations overshadow inspiration, we need to stop and revisit our priorities."

~ Alan Cohen

in casting out the devils you cast out the best thing that's in you."

The specific Nietzsche thought Campbell's referencing there is worth sharing: *"The great epochs of our life come when we gain the courage to rechristen our evil as what is best in us."*

Think about that. What within you have you tried to get rid of that you just need to embrace?

And, finally: **"When you embrace the human, you liberate the divine."**

Here's to embracing the human and liberating the divine!! :)

ARE YOU A PRE-CRASTINATOR OR A PROCRASTINATOR?

"While some people are procrastinators and put off until tomorrow what they can do today, I find more people who are pre-crastinators, trying to jam into today what they can do tomorrow. If you feel stressed about time, it is not because life, the universe, or God is making undue demands on you. It is because you are making undue demands on yourself. Either (1) you have stacked more items on your to-do list than you can reasonably accomplish; (2) you have set unreasonable deadlines for yourself (the word *deadline* is apt if you kill yourself in the process); (3) others have imposed demands or deadlines on you, and you have accepted them; or (4) you have developed a worry habit that you apply to time.

In my seminars I suggest an affirmation to people who believe they do not have enough time:

I always have enough time to do the things that my Higher Power would have me do."

Hah. Love it.

Are you a pre-crastinator? (Me, too. :)

Here's to lightening up and taking this wisdom to heart:

"What is it that I really need to do now, or today, and what can I do later (or not at all)?"

Plus:

"I will do whatever I can do with a sense of ease, flow, and inner peace; and trust that all will get done. If my task requires any sense of struggle, fear, conflict, hurry, or worry, I will not go there."

Amen to that! :)

DESIRES VS. TANTRUMS

"Buddha taught nonattachment, not nondesire. He realized that desire happens. Suffering is caused by attachment to desire. The thought *I would like that* is natural. The idea *I will throw a tantrum if I don't get it* is what gets you into trouble."

That's the best, most succinct description of desire vis-a-vis attachment I've discovered.

Remember: Having desires is not the problem.

Being ATTACHED to getting everything you want when you want it is when we suffer.

(Fun.)

"Integrity means that the life you are living in the outer world is an expression of your inner truth."

~ Alan Cohen

THE TERRORIST IN YOUR MIND

"When you create an enemy in your mind, everything you do to destroy it will destroy you. Wars against terror are wars of terror. The way to end terror, personally and globally, is to not be terrified. The place to end terrorism is within yourself. Inside your mind lives a terrorist in some ways more insidious than those you read about in the news. Every time you tell yourself a frightening thought and act on it, you are contributing to terrorism in the world. Every time you supplant a frightening thought with a sense of trust and inner peace, you defuse terrorism in the world."

All the great teachers echo this wisdom.

[Buddha](#) tells us: "One who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand men on the battlefield."

While Jesus points out: "He who rules his spirit has won a greater victory than the taking of a city."

And [Rumi](#) offers: "The lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself."

While Socrates tells us: "I desire only to know the truth, and to live as well as I can... And, to the utmost of my power, I exhort all other men to do the same... I exhort you also to take part in the great combat, which is the combat of life, and greater than every other earthly conflict."

The fact is that the war on terror begins in our own minds.

Let's win the battle and be the change.

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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[A Daily Dose of Sanity](#)

[Why Your Life Sucks](#)

[Relax into Wealth](#)

[A Joseph Campbell Companion](#)

[The Dhammapada](#)

[Rumi Daylight](#)

About the Author of "Enough Already"

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Alan H. Cohen is the author of 23 popular inspirational titles, including the bestseller *A Deep Breath of Life*. A frequent guest on television and radio, he conducts life mastery seminars in Hawaii and on-line, and is an acclaimed keynote speaker for educational, health, church, and corporate groups. He lives on Maui, Hawaii. Visit www.alancohen.com to learn more.

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.