

THE BIG IDEAS

Inspired? Take Action!
Law of Diminishing Intent.

The Key to Perseverance
= Purpose beyond yourself.

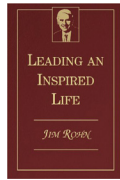
Unlock Your Potential
One Idea at a time.

The Plateau
Love it. Learn on it.

Character = Chisel
Remember Michelangelo.

Formula for Success
The two easies.

Dreams w/Pull Power
Are where it's at. (How're yours?)



Leading an Inspired Life

BY JIM ROHN · NIGHTINGALE-CONANT © 1996 · 460 PAGES

“You’re going to learn a great number of ideas as you go through this book... ideas that have helped successful people accomplish their goals, achieve certain wealth, and experience greater joy and satisfaction in their lives. My hope is you’ll find these ideas very useful.

I don’t know you personally; I’m not familiar with your dreams or problems. But I don’t need to be, because the ideas you’re about to discover are fundamental to the art of winning. They are guaranteed to help you achieve your most inspiring dreams.”

~ Jim Rohn from *Leading an Inspired Life*

In my interview with [Daniel Harkavy](#) about his book [Living Forward](#), he told me that this book was a must read. So, I read it and here we are.

This is the second book on [Jim Rohn](#) we’ve done so far. Check out the first on [The Five Pieces of the Life Puzzle](#).

Rohn was one of the 20th century’s leading personal development gurus—influencing everyone from [Tony Robbins](#) to [Darren Hardy](#). He wrote and taught in a simple, conversational, down-to-earth style.

Reading this book feels like sitting down and having an inspiring chat with one of the best old-school coaches out there. (Get a copy [here](#).) (If you’re looking for a Rohn book to start with, you might want to go with *Five Pieces* as it’s a more concise intro to his style.)

This book is packed with Big Ideas and I’m excited to share a few of my favorites we can apply today so let’s jump straight in!

FIRE UP? TAKE ACTION! (LAW OF DIMINISHING INTENT)

“Engaging in genuine discipline requires that you develop the ability to take action. You don’t need to be hasty if it isn’t required, but you don’t want to lose much time. Here’s the time to act: when the idea is hot and the emotion is strong. ...

Take action as soon as possible, before the feeling passes and before the idea dims. If you don’t, here’s what happens. You fall prey to the Law of Diminishing Intent. We intend to take action when the idea strikes us. But if we don’t translate that intention into action fairly soon, the urgency starts to diminish. And a month from now the passion is cold. A year from now it can’t be found.

So take action. Set up a discipline when the emotions are high and the idea is strong, clear, and powerful.”

The Law of Diminishing Intent.

It’s pretty straight forward. When you’re FIRED UP about an idea, take action.

“The only way life gets better for you is when you get better. Better is not something you wish for; better is something you become.”

~ Jim Rohn

"If there is one magic word that stands out above all the rest, it is discipline."

~ Jim Rohn

Close the gap between that inspired intention and your action consistent with it. You can take a tiny step or, as Tony Robbins would say, MASSIVE ACTION. But don't just sit there.

Remember The Law of Diminishing Intent—the longer you wait to take action after feeling inspired, the less likely you are to actually do something.

And, while we're talking about hot emotions, let's bring in a parallel truth. When you're all *fired up* to engage in sub-optimal, less-than-inspired, addictive behavior, COOL THAT IMPULSE down by observing your desire and seeing that engaging in that behavior will NOT benefit your future self. We talk about this a lot in [Willpower 101](#). It's a key aspect of developing self-control.

So, two facets of discipline: When feeling hot in pursuit of a noble ideal, GO FOR IT. When feeling sub-optimal heat, cool it down.

And, repeat. Build the discipline.

THE KEY TO PERSEVERANCE

"But even this isn't putting it strongly enough. It isn't just that you'll do better if you feel you're working for others in addition to yourself. You absolutely MUST find reasons outside of yourself to persevere if you want to keep going when the going gets tough.

Hemingway wrote, 'A man alone hasn't got a chance.' This means that you need people to help you in life. It also means that *you* need people to help. You need people who can become the real reasons for perseverance beyond material possessions or your financial success. 'What's in it for me?' can take you only so far. 'What's in it for *somebody besides me?*' can take you as far as you need to go."

[Angela Duckworth](#) echoes this wisdom almost precisely in her great book [Grit](#). So does [Michelle Gielan](#) in [Broadcasting Happiness](#).

We'll start with Michelle. She tells us about research done with her husband Shawn Achor in which they discovered the three key factors that account for as much as 75% of work success.

In addition to being realistically optimistic and actively engaged in their work, the people who helped others the most were the most successful. She calls them "work altruists" and reminds us that it's not about GETTING help, it's about GIVING help. Powerful stuff.

Then there's Duckworth's wisdom on grit.

Recall that the scientific definition of grit is intense passion + intense perseverance. The passion is fueled by two things: 1. Interest and 2. Purpose.

We need to be personally interested in what we're doing if we want the passion to persevere through inevitable obstacles. But, as Rohn says, that's simply NOT enough.

We need to combine our personal interest with a purpose bigger than ourselves. Period. Without that, Duckworth says, we will not have the grit required to truly rock it over the long haul.

Back to Rohn. He asks: "Who are you working for besides yourself? Who is depending on you? Who will benefit if you persevere and succeed? Who will suffer if you give up and stop trying? Who can you reach out to and help once you've achieved your goals?"

Let's take that out of the abstract and make it concrete.

I am working for these people besides myself: _____

_____.

Awesome. Use that purpose beyond yourself to fuel your grit!!

"All the possibilities of greatness—great wealth, great reputation, great satisfaction—come if you turn your attention away from yourself to others."

~ Jim Rohn

UNLOCKING YOUR POTENTIAL ONE BIG IDEA AT A TIME

"The consistent, disciplined, purposeful, constant search for knowledge: it's where the life-changing ideas are. Pursue knowledge with high expectations."

~ Jim Rohn

"Ideas can change your life. And sometimes all you need is just one more good idea in a series of good ideas. It's like dialing the numbers of a combination lock. After you've dialed five or six numbers, the lock may not come open. But you probably don't need five or six more numbers. Maybe you need just one more number, one more idea. Maybe a seminar or a sermon can provide it. The lyrics from a song could do it. The dialogue from a movie could do it. Conversation with a friend might do it. If you keep your eyes and ears open, you'll find that one last idea you need.

Once you find that idea, the lock comes open, and there's the door for you to walk through. Just one more idea, no matter where you get it, may be all you need to open that door of opportunity."

Any ONE Big Idea can, quite literally, change our lives.

Which is why I have so much fun reading and creating these Notes and sharing these Ideas.

As I've shared before, my intention before I create one of these Notes or record a PNTV or Optimal Living Class is simple: I hope ONE person gets inspired by ONE Idea that can make a significant difference in their lives.

BAM! The lock opens.

And, of course, once we figure out that final number in the lock we've been working on, the process doesn't end there. That's when it just gets going.

We see how that little Idea opened up a whole new way of being and then get fired up about opening more little locks and finding tiny little 1% marginal gains that we can aggregate and compound and have fun seeing just how far we can go!

[Jim Afremow](#) talked about this yesterday in our interview on his great books [The Champion's Mind](#) and [The Champion's Comeback](#).

He told us that the champion is having fun seeing just how far they can go and he shared this gem from six-time cycling gold medalist Chris Hoy: "For me the most potent motivational fuel was not ambition, I think, but curiosity. I wanted to see how far I could go."

So: How far can YOU go?

Here's to unlocking your potential one Big (and little) Idea at a time! :)

LOVING AND LEARNING FROM THE PLATEAU

"Take the time to reflect while you're enjoying your plateau. And while you're reflecting back on your past accomplishments, think about something else. Think about the potential within you that's still untapped. Consider the following two questions during your time of reflection.

Number one: what could I have achieved in the past, had I been more diligent? Could I have been more disciplined? Worked smarter instead of harder? Said 'no' more often to social functions and community commitments? What could I have achieved in the past, had I tried things a little differently? ...

Here's number two: how can I achieve more in the future? If you take some time to thoughtfully answer question number one, you'll probably have a clue as to what's needed in the future.

Do you need to work more diligently? Do you need to be more disciplined? Do you need to work smarter instead of harder? Do you need to say 'no' more often? Do you need to manage your time better?"

That's from a chapter in which Rohn talks about [George Leonard's Mastery](#).

"Hear or read something challenging, something inspirational, at least 30 minutes a day, every day. You can get along without some meals, but you can't get along without some ideas, examples, and inspiration."

~ Jim Rohn

"Instead of worrying, concentrate on doing the best job you've ever done in your life."

~ Jim Rohn

"Remember, the best money spent is the money spent to cultivate the genius of your own mind and spirit. Make sure you don't spend more for frivolous comforts and conveniences than you do for education. The money is a small price. The promise is unlimited potential."

~ Jim Rohn

One of the key themes of that book is the fact that our society is in an all-out war against mastery and promises one climax after another—with no plateaus.

Leonard tells us that the Master learns to LOVE the plateau.

—> *"Goals and contingencies, as I've said, are important. But they exist in the future and the past, beyond the pale of the sensory realm. Practice, the path of mastery, exists only in the present. You can see it, hear it, smell it, feel it. To love the plateau is to love the eternal now, to enjoy the inevitable spurts of progress and the fruits of accomplishment, then serenely to accept the new plateau that waits just beyond them. To love the plateau is to love what is most essential and enduring in your life."*

When we find ourselves on a new plateau, Rohn tells us to ask ourselves a few questions.

Question 0: What do you appreciate about yourself and all you have done? What's AWESOME now that wasn't quite so awesome a year ago or 10 years ago? Start with that.

Question 1: What could you have done differently in the past that would have helped you achieve even more success?

Question 2: What WILL you do differently in the future to help you rock it more consistently and truly step into your fullest potential?

Let's love and learn from our plateaus as we enjoy the journey to our next peak!

CHARACTER, CHISELS, MICHELANGELO + YOUR LIFE AS ART

"There's no failure in pouring your heart, soul, and energy into something that doesn't work. Rather, failure is not trying at all. If success is the steady progress toward your own personal goals, then failure is no progress at all."

~ Jim Rohn

"Personal success is built on the foundation of character, and character is the result of hundreds and hundreds of choices you make that gradually turn who you are at any given moment into who you want to be. ...

Character comes from a Greek word meaning 'chisel,' or 'the mark left by a chisel.' Of course, a chisel is a sharp steel tool used for making a sculpture out of a hard or difficult material, like granite or marble. ...

Character isn't a magic wand; *character* comes from *chisel*, and I hope you'll remember that. You've got to chisel your character out of the raw material of yourself just like a sculptor has to create a statue. The raw material is always there, and everything that happens to you, good or bad, is an opportunity for building your character."

Character.

It's not a magic wand. It's a CHISEL.

We forge our character like a sculptor working on a hard material like granite or marble.

Imagine Michelangelo working on *David*. Remember that he said that inside every block of stone or marble dwells a beautiful statue. We just need to *see* it and then remove the excess material to reveal the work of art within.

What's YOUR ideal vision of yourself? Who are you? How do you live?

"If you want to be a leader who attracts quality people, the key is to become a person of quality yourself."

~ Jim Rohn

Take a chisel to everything that's getting in the way of that.

And, remember, we're talking about a chisel, not a sledgehammer. You can't get rid of all the little "excess" material (aka bad habits) in one swing. You've gotta slowly, steadily, patiently, delicately work at it day after day.

So, see the work of art within your rock. And chisel. Choice by choice by choice by choice...

P.S. Remember that Michelangelo also said: *"The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."*

We've gotta be willing to dream. And, then back to chiseling: *"If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it would not seem so wonderful at all."*

HERE'S THE KEY FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

"It all comes down to a philosophical phrase: the things that are easy to do are also easy *not* to do. That's the difference between success and failure, between daydreams and ambitions.

Here's the key formula for success: a few disciplines practiced every day. Those disciplines have to be well-thought out. What should you spend your time doing? You don't want to waste your time on things that aren't going to matter. But a few simple disciplines can change your whole economic future. A few simple disciplines can change your future with your family, your business, your enterprise, your career. Success is a few simple habits—good habits—repeated every day. ...

You've got the choice right now of one of two 'easies.' Easy to do, or easy *not* to do. I can tell you in one sentence how I got rich by the time I was thirty-one: I did not neglect to do the easy things I *could* do for six years. That's the key. I found something easy I could do that led to fortune, and I did not neglect to do it."

Rohn tells us success is NOT hard. In fact, it's easy.

Let's repeat this: *"Here's the key formula for success: a few disciplines practiced every day."*

The challenge is that there are two easies. It's easy to do the things we know would most benefit us. AND... It's equally easy to **not** do those things.

[Jeff Olson](#) wrote a whole book on this. It's called [The Slight Edge](#). [Darren Hardy's Compound Effect](#) is basically a treatise on this idea as well.

Here's how Olson puts it: *"The things that take you out of failure and up toward survival and success are simple. So simple, in fact, that it's easy to overlook them. Extremely easy to overlook them. It's easy to overlook them because when you look at them, they seem insignificant. They're not big, sweeping things that take huge effort. They're not heroic or dramatic. Mostly they're just little things you do every day and that nobody else even notices. They are things that are so simple to do—yet successful people actually do them, while unsuccessful people only look at them and don't take action. ...*

You could call these 'little virtues' or 'success habits.' I call them simple daily disciplines. Simple productive actions, repeated consistently over time. That, in a nut shell, is the slight edge."

Tiny things. Aggregated + compounded. Over time. = Awesome.

Back to our formula for success: *"a few disciplines practiced every day."*

What are yours?

P.S. *"Here's the formula for failure: errors in judgment repeated every day. All you've got to do is have a few errors in your judgment and repeat them every day, and I'm telling you, they'll spin out of control in ten years."*

"Here's another question: 'What can I do to achieve my goals that I'm not doing now?' What things do you need to work on that you're not working on now? Remember, it's easy to do the little things, every day. It's also easy not to do them."

~ Jim Rohn

Let's focus on the good stuff. Prune the bad. Fertilize the good. Repeat.

DREAMS WITH PULL POWER

"Nothing can resist a human will that will stake its very existence on its purpose."

~ Benjamin Disraeli

"Dreams are a projection of the kind of life you want to lead. Dreams can drive you. Dreams can make you skip over obstacles. When you allow your dreams to pull you, they unleash a creative force that can overpower any obstacle in your path. To unleash this power, though, your dreams must be well-defined. A fuzzy future has little pull-power. Well-defined dreams are not fuzzy. Wishes are fuzzy. To really achieve your dreams, to really have your future plans pull you forward, your dreams must be vivid."

In *Living Forward*, [Daniel Harvaky](#) calls this "Pull Power."

He tells us: *"Keeping your eye on the future is essential for making the most of today. You need to acknowledge where you are, but you also need to see clearly where you are going. ... What's important is that the future be enticing enough to stay focused. We call this pull power."*

A goal needs to draw you. ... Pull power is essential to reach our goals. You need to see a future with such clarity and desirability that you will go through all the uncomfortable things life throws at you to attain it."

Does YOUR future have pull power? How can you add a little more clarity + pull to it?

Get on that. :)

Let's dream big and have the discipline to chisel away as we give our gifts to the world and lead an inspired life!

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

If you liked this Note,
you'll probably like...

[The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle](#)

[Think and Grow Rich](#)

[Tony Robbins](#)

[The Compound Effect](#)

[The Slight Edge](#)

[How to Stop Worrying and Start Living](#)

[Psychology of Winning](#)

[Mastery-Leonard](#)

[Lead the Field](#)

About the Author of "Leading an Inspired Life"

JIM ROHN



Jim Rohn was an American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker. His rags to riches story played a large part in his work, which influenced others in the personal development industry. For more than 40 years, Jim Rohn honed his craft like a skilled artist—helping people the world over sculpt life strategies that have expanded their imagination of what is possible. Those who had the privilege of hearing him speak can attest to the elegance and common sense of his material. Connect: jimrohn.com.

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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.