

## THE BIG IDEAS

**The Experience of...**  
Freedom. Aliveness. Love. Peace.

**Gratitude**  
The #1 practice.

**You're NOT a Big Deal**  
And that's a VERY big deal.

**Find the Fun**  
PLAY!

**The Ultimate Game**  
Is spelled: L.O.V.E.



# This Book Will Make You Dangerous

The Irreverent Guide for Men Who Refuse to Settle

BY TRIPP LANIER · ANIER CREATIVE SERVICES, INC. © 2020 · 171 PAGES

“For the purposes of this book, being dangerous is about cultivating self-awareness, leadership, and the guts to steer directly into the situations that most are trying so hard to avoid. It’s a willingness to occasionally rock the boat in order to live fully during our short time on this planet.

And to those that are committed to the illusion of everlasting comfort, safety, and measuring up, this way of living will seem downright dangerous.

Is This Book Only For Men?

Yeah. Is this book only for men?

The short answer is: it’s not.

The longer answer is: I’ve primarily taught and coached and facilitated groups of men for well over 15 years. Working with certain types of men is what I know best. That said, the ideas and concepts and practices in this book are available to anyone and everyone who wants to take them for a test drive.

Everyone’s welcome to the party, but keep in mind that the language and tone are geared towards helping the types of men I know best.”

~ Tripp Lanier from *This Book Will Make You Dangerous*

My friend Tripp Lanier has been coaching guys for the last 15+ years. He’s the host of [The New Man podcast](#) and has interviewed a *ton* of people we talk about all the time—from [Phil Stutz](#) and [Barry Michels](#) to [Steven Kotler](#) and [David Emerald](#).

He is a *very* funny guy. He’s also a *very wise* guy.

If you (or the man in your life) like to laugh deeply while joyfully getting your Optimizing on, I think you’ll enjoy his “Irreverent Guide for Men Who Refuse to Settle.” (Get the book [here](#).)

Note: This book is *not* for those who don’t enjoy some colorful language. And... It very much IS for those guys who DO. In fact, although I think anyone not easily offended will enjoy the book, I think this is the PERFECT book for the kind of guy who \*doesn’t\* *usually* like “self-help.” Tripp is such a funny, self-deprecating (yet wise!) guy that “normal” guys love.

As Phil Stutz (who has coached both of us) says: “*You become dangerous, not when you’re a threat to others, but when you become a threat to the excuses and bad habits that have held you back in life. Tripp’s book lives up to its title; it’s a practical guide to a victory over yourself. Only then are you truly dangerous.*”

Side note: It’s funny because when I thought about how we both came to work with Phil, I realized that it started when I sent Tripp [The Tools](#). Then he interviewed Phil and Barry. Then he introduced me to them so I could interview them. Then I hired Phil. Then I reconnected Tripp and Phil. And, here we are.

*“Bottom line: instead of committing to success—whatever that might mean—let’s recognize the opportunity to commit to what strengthens us. Let’s commit to what empowers us to experience greater freedom, aliveness, love, and peace.”*

~ Tripp Lanier

*"When we understand that we're playing for the experiences we most want, then we want to be willing to destroy the path or the vision or the picture in our mind if it becomes a limitation. We want to challenge our preconceived ideas of how things are supposed to be or how we should be. Why? Because it would all be for squat if following our 'big plan' deprived us of experiencing freedom, aliveness, love, and peace."*

~ Tripp Lanier

I especially loved the book because Tripp does such a GREAT job at making this whole Optimizing game FUN. He calls us on our nonsense AND makes it all a big game—encouraging us to PLAY more as he gives us the practical tools to experience the freedom, aliveness, love and peace we're all looking for. Not in some abstract future fantasy world. TODAY.

It's packed with Big Ideas and I'm excited to share some of my favorites, so let's jump straight in!

## THE EXPERIENCE OF: FREEDOM + ALIVENESS + LOVE + PEACE

"Now, if you do this exercise, if you write down all of the outcomes you think you really want to have in your lifetime, you can begin to connect the dots between your desired outcomes and the experiences you most want to have *right now*—not just *one day* in the future. For example...

*If I had \$20 million in the bank, then I'd feel relaxed and free to do or buy whatever I wanted.*

*If I was having sex more often, I'd feel alive and excited and desired.*

*If I had my own company, then I'd feel really proud and satisfied.*

*If I had more time with the kids, I'd feel that love that was there when they used to fall asleep in my arms.*

Regardless of the outcomes and the events and accomplishments you wrote down, if we look close enough we can start to see what we ultimately want—more than to simply survive or be comfortable or accepted—is some combination of these four basic experiences:

Freedom. Aliveness. Love. Peace."

Welcome to the chapter called "What are we really playing for?" in which Tripp walks us through the main thesis of the book.

Most us (most of the time) THINK we'll feel a certain way when we achieve certain outcomes. And... We often proceed to burn ourselves out and miss the very things we were striving for in the first place.

Tripp helps us solve this riddle by the distinction between Outcomes vs. Experiences. He tells us to get clear on the difference between the two and know the game we're *really* playing. (Aka: To EXPERIENCE certain states of well-being not to achieve specific "someday" outcomes per se.)

Tal Ben-Shahar echoes this wisdom in [Happier](#) where he reminds us about "the ultimate currency." He tells us: "A human being, like a business, makes profits and suffers losses. For a human being, however, the ultimate currency is not money, nor is it any external measure, such as fame, fortune, or power. The ultimate currency for a human being is happiness."

Tripp defines the four essential "experiences" of happiness as Freedom + Aliveness + Love + Peace. He tells us to choose our own words to describe those basic states of wellbeing, but get clear that THAT's what we're after.

And, most importantly, he encourages us to take action to create more of that goodness NOW. Helping us do that is, of course what the book is all about.

P.S. Tal provides some nice parallel wisdom on this theme as well when he juxtaposes the four archetypes of happiness: "The rat racer's illusion is that reaching some future destination will bring him lasting happiness; he does not recognize the significance of the journey. The hedonist's illusion is that only the journey is important. The nihilist, having given up on both the destination and the journey, is disillusioned with life. The rat racer becomes a slave to the future; the hedonist, a slave to the moment; the nihilist, a slave to the past.

*Attaining lasting happiness requires that we enjoy the journey on our way toward a destination we deem valuable. Happiness is not about making it to the peak of the mountain nor is it about climbing aimlessly around the mountain; happiness is the experience of climbing toward the peak."*

~ Tripp Lanier

*"I found a Bruce Lee quote that says... 'Freedom discovers a man the moment he loses concern over what impression he is making or about to make.'"*

*"This means that throughout our lives, the purpose of what we want to experience—freedom, aliveness, love, and peace—will stay constant. But the missions—the pathways and practices that empower those experiences—will change. Missions change, but the purpose of our missions does not."*

~ Tripp Lanier

P.P.S. Back to Tripp. He tells us: "So what can we take away from all of this? When we understand that we are ultimately playing for experiences instead of outcomes, we step into an empowered, creative way of living. It's liberating. It helps us see that all of our efforts and worries and concerns are not really about the car or the money or our kids' test scores or... whatever thing or outcome or event we may have previously fixated upon. It helps us see these things for what they are—theories about what will make us feel free, alive, loved, or at peace.

When we're aware of the experiences that are out of balance, we can do something about them today. This means that instead of waiting until we've crossed some finish line or we finally earn X amount per year—we can ask ourselves:

What would allow me to experience greater freedom **today**?

What would allow me to experience greater aliveness **today**?

What would allow me to experience greater love or connection **today**?

What would allow me to experience greater peace **today**?

We can experience the enjoyment of our lives as we also create a future that we want. It doesn't have to be either/or. It can be both/and. We can take full responsibility for our state of being. We can be aware of our choices, align our actions with our deepest values, and allow those experiences into our lives **now**.

No more waiting. No more excuses. No more fantasies. This is how we get stronger."

## GRATITUDE: THE #1 PRACTICE

"In fact, oftentimes it's the striving and pursuit of happiness that blocks us from having the experiences we most want. Why? When we fixate on what's missing—like six pack abs or hot sex with a co-worker or everlasting happiness—we can enter a dynamic that has us dismiss what we've already got. As part of the hedonic adaptation discussed earlier, we take what's already happening in our lives for granted. If we never learn how to truly appreciate who we are and what we've got *today*, then it doesn't really matter what we achieve or create tomorrow. And by doing this, we train ourselves to keep fulfillment out of reach.

So does that mean we give up creating the future that we want? Not at all. That said, we can learn to recognize and appreciate how good we've already got it today while *also* creating what we want tomorrow. So let's take a minute to talk about appreciating what we've already got.

When I ask most of my interview guests, 'What's one thing a guy could do today that would make a big difference in his life?' most often the answer is a gratitude practice. Period. Now, this doesn't have to be a big deal. Just set a reminder on your phone to go off several times a day, and then take a few seconds to pay attention to the seemingly minute, mundane things that are going well.

*The car started. Excellent.*

*They got my order correct at the coffee shop. Sweet.*

*I woke up again this morning. Even better.*

... By doing this practice, we're challenged to shift our focus away from the boo-hoo baloney that keeps us stuck in the negative 'not enough-ness' of life. This simple shift in our awareness will have a major impact on the way we experience our lives and find opportunities."

Practice #1 to the experience of joy? GRATITUDE.

Good luck finding consistent joy today OR in that hoped-for-someday scenario if we can't appreciate all the awesome in our lives TODAY.

Science agrees here as well. (So does Socrates, btw. He says: "He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have.")

*"I want this book to be a reminder to laugh at our fears and mistakes and shortcomings. It's a reminder we don't need to be perfect. That even if we fall off the horse often, the key is to simply get back on."*

~ Tripp Lanier

*"Now, here's the deal ... we don't want to be like that moron at the gym who thinks he's going to turn around seven years of sitting on the couch in one afternoon. Pick one area and just focus there. Start small. Go slow. Stretching and pushing ourselves too much and too quickly is a recipe for misery and anxiety."*

~ Tripp Lanier

In her book *The Myths of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky walks us through the science of hedonic adaptation (or, as she puts it: "felicific stagnation"). Basic idea: Taking things for granted is a GREAT way to make ourselves miserable.

Which brings us to another scientist, Robert Emmons. As we discuss in our Notes on *Thanks!* and *Gratitude Works!*, grateful people are a LOT happier than not-so-grateful people. In fact, simply keeping a gratitude journal in which you make a note of five things for which you're grateful ONCE a week for six weeks will boost your happiness by 25% (!!!). (And... You'll sleep 30 minutes more. Exercise 33% more. And, well, get an uptick in basically every other wellbeing measure you can think about.)

So...Whether it's jotting down a few things you're grateful for once a week (or once a day) or setting that alarm on your phone Tripp recommends, BE GRATEFUL!!! **TODAY.**

P.S. Gratitude is also the fourth Tool from Phil Stutz and Barry Michels' *The Tools*. They call it Grateful Flow and it's our antidote to ick. Feeling less than super-snazzy? Stop. Look around. See all the amazing "little" things you take for granted. And APPRECIATE them. Voila.

As Robert Emmons tells us (regarding gratitude journaling, although the same process occurs in Grateful Flow): *"This promotes a shift in consciousness from what we are lacking to the abundance that surrounds us. Gratitude leads us to affirm and acknowledge the good things in our lives. ... And because you can't be grateful and negative at the same time, it counteracts feelings of envy, anger, greed, and other states harmful to happiness."*

## YOU'RE NOT A BIG DEAL (AND THAT'S A VERY BIG DEAL)

**"When we think of big—and I mean really big—we usually think of the sun. It's massive, right? In fact, you could fit 1.3 million Earths inside the sun. Let that sink in.**

**But according to astronomer and scientist Michelle Thaler, if you were to shrink the sun down to the size of the dot in this letter 'i' right here on the page—that tiny-ass little dot—if you made the sun that big, then the relative size of our galaxy, the Milky Way, would be the size of the Earth. Take a minute to visualize that.**

**But let's not stop there. A while back, astronomers found a tiny section of the night sky that appeared to be empty. And 'tiny' means the size of the head of a pin if you held it out at arm's length. If you were to hold that tiny pinhead up to the sky, then that little, tiny portion of the sky appeared completely void of celestial light. So they focused the Hubble Telescope up there, and let it absorb light for ten days.**

**And in that tiny, tiny dark part of the night sky, which looked completely empty, they ended up discovering 3,000 galaxies.**

**Holy. Shit.**

**So what does this all mean? You, me, all of us—our daily crises and dramas and getting pissed off because the barista forgot to put 3.5 soy vegan [ahem] sprinkles in our lattes—when we start to imagine this massive universal perspective, we start to see that no matter what we are thinking or doing, it's really just not that big of a deal. And it never will be."**

That's from a chapter called *Find the Fun*.

I don't even know what to say about this passage other than "WOW." My mind is officially blown.

In fact, I loved this perspective-building frame so much that I've actually already written a couple +1s on it and I'm working on a Tool to go through this process. Something like this...

Imagine whatever "big deal" problem-challenge you're dealing with right now. (Got it?)

Now, go to the moon and look at that problem in the context of the size of the Earth. (Got it?)

*"We don't have to make everything such a big deal. After all—comparatively speaking—we're basically just a speck of dust on an infinitely small rock hurtling through one of trillions of galaxies in what is ultimately just a blink in a span of time our brains can't even begin to comprehend. Maybe—just maybe—whatever that mouth-breather Jerry has to say about your presentation isn't such a big deal."*

~ Tripp Lanier

*"We don't have to be overwhelmed or crippled with stress because we've taken on too much. And we certainly don't have to stay stuck because we're avoiding it either. We don't even have to analyze or try to figure out why we have resistance. Instead, we can simply ask ourselves, What's the very next simple step I could take? Then go do it—let's see if it makes us stronger."*

~ Tripp Lanier

Now, while still somehow hovering around the moon as some jumbo-huge version of you pick up the Earth in your jumbo-huge hand then take a trip (it's only about 92 million miles) to the sun.

Throw the little pebble Earth into the sun. Watch it disappear. Then ask yourself how many Earths you'd have to throw into the sun to fill it up. Recall: 1.3 MILLION Earths could fill the sun. (Pause. Reflect on that.)

Then... Come back to Earth. Right to this page. Look at the dot in this "i." That's the size of our 1.3-million-Earths-eating sun relative to the Milky Way galaxy if it were the size of Earth. (!!!)

Finally, grab a pin. Hold it out at arm's length at the darkest part of the night sky. That pin head? It holds something (crazy) like 3,000 galaxies. (Uh... Yah.)

Now... What "Big" problem did you have again? (Isn't that a wonderful perspective-builder?)

To recap: I'm not a big deal. You're not a big deal. And neither are any of our problems. Let's keep that in mind Today, shall we?

## FIND THE FUN

"Years later, I was at a weird gathering for artists and art-types and noticed this older guy standing around, chewing on a cigar. I walked up to him and struck up a conversation.

'So, uh, what kind of art do you do?'

'You could say I'm into mixed media.'

'Oh, okay. And what kind of materials do you use?'

'I do collage. I find ways to put businesses together.'

Boom. Mind blown. *You can f\*cking do that?*

Yeah, apparently you can. Here was a guy who had an artistic approach to life, but instead of farting around with paints and clays and crap he found in a junkyard, he created artful ways to combine companies and products and offerings. And while it looked like 'doing business' from the outside, he was very clear that it was art. It was *play*.

I've met quite a few of these inspiring folks over the years, and I always have the same response when I see how they approach their lives with a playful mindset. *You can f\*cking do that?* These are the folks who are able to clarify what they want, be bold enough to actually own it, and then do the work to make it happen. They challenge their fears and the voices that say, 'That's not how you're supposed to do it' and they take some risks in service to what feels enlivening and fun for themselves. They don't wait around for a winning lottery ticket. They don't wait around for permission from god-knows-who. Instead of getting mired in someone else's game, they have the guts and discipline to play their own."

As you might've guessed, that's another Idea from the "Find the Fun" chapter. As a super-serious Optimizer, I can afford to work out my Play muscles a bit more consciously—which, as we discussed, is one of the reasons I LOVED this book so much.

Remember: PLAYFULNESS IS A VIRTUE. (In fact, it's one of Alexandra's Top 2 virtues.) Tripp? He's a Playful exemplar.

As I read this, I thought of wisdom from a leading scholar on play named Stuart Brown. In his book, aptly named *Play*, he tells us JUST how important play is for our wellbeing. He encourages us to discover and engage in our own particular play style and says: "When people know their core truths and live in accord with what I call their "play personality," the result is always a life of incredible power and grace."

For curious souls: I'm a combo of what Stuart calls a Competitor and the Artist. The competitor loves to play by creating games and playing to win—whether it's solo or social, they love keeping



"Bottom line: We get stronger when we relax our attachment to expectations, comparisons, and achievements, and instead focus more on the activities and relationships and processes that have us feel more expansive. Striving to be the best is a trap, but bringing our best to what we do allows us to live with greater freedom and possibility. Especially if we're willing to get over how we may appear to others."

~ Tripp Lanier

score and coming out on top. Artists/creators love making things—whether that's painting or sculpting or knitting or sewing or gardening, they're playing when they're creating.

My playful game? Aiming for 4.5 hours of Deep Work each work day (25+/week with 30 as the super-fun almost-out-of-reach target) as I create a new +1 every day and PN every week and (currently) our Mastery Series classes. <- When I simply REMEMBER that it's all a game, my joy quotient goes through the roof.

What's YOUR play style? You engaging in it?

## THE ULTIMATE GAME IS SPELLED L.O.V.E.

"So this book is a reminder that, more than 'succeeding,' the most rewarding thing we can do is love. And while choosing love certainly isn't safe, if we're willing to be bold, playful and get over ourselves, then expressing our genuine care and concern for others opens us up to the deep sense of freedom, aliveness, and peace that we most want *today*. Not later. Not once we've got XYZ handled. Not once we've earned this or proven that. If we're willing to challenge our fears, we can find opportunities to practice loving right now. We don't have to wait.

Because it's love that allows us to live with a deep appreciation for all that we already have. It's love that allows us to forgive and accept ourselves and others simply as we are. It's love that allows us to set firm, fierce boundaries against anything that makes us weak. It's love that allows us to recognize and draw out the best in ourselves and one another. It's love that allows us to be who we truly are.

And it's love that allows us to be one of the rare, extraordinary men on this planet who live with brains, balls, and a big, open heart.

So here's to a life of freedom, aliveness, love, and peace. Thank you for joining me on this ride. It doesn't last long, so let's play."

Those are the final words of the book from a chapter called "Meaning—Play for Something Bigger Than Yourself."

The ultimate game? LOVE.

Let's have fun playing it. TODAY.

B

**Brian Johnson,**  
*Philosopher in Residence*

## About the Author of "This Book Will Make You Dangerous"

TRIPP LANIER



Tripp Lanier is a professional coach and host of *The New Man Podcast: Beyond the Macho Jerk and the New Age Wimp* which — for over a decade — has been downloaded millions of times. Over the years he's designed several businesses to support a simple lifestyle focused on freedom, ease, meaning, and fun. As Host of *The New Man Podcast*, Tripp Lanier has conducted hundreds of interviews with experts and authors from all walks of life.

## About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives so they can actualize their potential as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + practical tools. Learn more and optimize your life at [optimize.me](https://optimize.me).

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