



APPRENTICESHIP MANIFESTO

APPRENTICESHIPS ARE THE EMBODIMENT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Try this on for size:



WHEN WE STOP LEARNING,
WE STOP LIVING.

CLICK TO TWEET

How does that feel?

When we say “learning,” we’re not talking about the simple acquisition of more facts and data. We’re talking about the kind of learning that touches every part of your life. **Transformational learning.**

Many of us go to college to learn, and we do a lot of learning there. But what’s next? How do you *keep* learning once you leave the academic setting? Should you be content with how far you’ve come, and slow down the pace? Once you’re ready to get serious again about learning, there’s always grad school, right? For now, it’s best just to grab the highest paying job you can and get rewarded for all that hard work in school.

We don’t think so. We suggest another path: **apprenticeship.**

Why do we emphatically advocate the new apprenticeship mindset? Because we strongly believe it’s the answer to the disrupted world of work. We’re witnessing a dramatic reinvention of the technology of management: we’re doing our work in an environment of exponential change.

Rather than simply figuring out the best way to efficiently do something over and over, today’s managers must figure out how to continuously adapt and learn faster than the competition.

The most important question for companies today is, are we changing as fast as the world around us?

Connected to this macro shift in the business environment is also a shift in how we learn. **Learning must now be embedded in the workflow.** It’s continuous and ongoing. Therefore, the apprenticeship mindset is more important and relevant than ever.

APPRENTICESHIP MINDSET



THE WAY WORK WAS

Traditionally, society assumed that young people would find their calling, then find a mentor, and then learn their craft. In that order.

It was absurd to think that if you just teach people something long enough, they eventually will get excited about it. That's not really how it works, but that's how the worlds of education and work have been for the past 100 years or so.

The apprenticeship that ties together calling, mentors, and craft can be highly rewarding, but also extremely demanding. Not something you can "kind of" do, or do "a little bit of". And while millennials have been given the reputation of being lazy and self-serving, we don't buy it.

Instead, we see a significant number of young people who are firmly committed to making their mark on the world. Maybe you see them, too. Maybe you're one of them.

This manifesto is part of a bigger movement to restore meaning, joy, and value to work.



Are you ready to see a complete revolution in your attitude to work?

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DEFINING APPRENTICESHIP

The traditional image of apprenticeship may be familiar to you from stories about the Middle Ages: an apprentice was “a person who learned a job or skill by working for a fixed period of time for someone who is very good at that job or skill.” Think the blacksmith’s apprentice who studied under the master craftsman for a time, until he was ready to take the shop over or start his own.

Apprenticeships are as old as the trades they were designed to serve. Passing on one’s skill to the next generation was seen as both a moral imperative and a good business practice. An apprentice learned highly marketable skills, and they were also trained to think about their work in terms of it being a craft or a calling, rather than just a job. Over time, apprenticeships became formalized into a learning community, with its own hierarchy: apprentice, then journeyman, then master.

We don’t advocate a return to the craftsman’s workshop of old – instead, we advocate a rediscovery of the same values and principles, and their relevant application today in light of our own context.

Using those long-established principles of viewing work as a craft or calling, today’s apprentice seeks out opportunities for learning by doing work within a community of practice – often this looks like a job with a company that promotes a culture of learning. The essence of this new apprenticeship mindset is to arrange work and life so both are focussed on the need to grow.

The apprenticeship model has much to teach us, and we believe this generation is ready to learn.

HOW TO SUCCEED AS AN APPRENTICE

It's clear that apprenticeship has a lot to offer, but is it right for you?

Well, how ready are you to grow?

We've identified five core qualities rooted in the classical wisdom tradition, observed in the craftsman's workshop, and borne in the lives of some of the greatest learners (apprentices) of all time, many of whose names you'll recognize.


Regardless of your craft or calling, embracing these five aspects of the growth mindset will serve you well in work and in life. They all require **humility – something the millennial generation has been accused of lacking, but**

something we believe is simply going unrecognized because it's playing out in new, less familiar ways. 

The key to approaching your work with humility is to recognize where you are on your journey. "I'm still just getting started" is the mantra of the apprentice, and it's the mantra of millennials throughout the workforce. As you get started in your career, this time in your life (more than any other time) requires you to be adaptable and willing to change.

“I'm still just getting started”


IT'S ALL ABOUT CONTINUOUS GROWTH

 Before you can be truly successful, you must learn first to grow yourself. *Learn how to learn.* “Teach a wise man and he will grow still wiser,” an ancient Proverb says. And this isn’t referring to classroom learning – the kind you do in a formal academic setting.

There’s a substantial difference between being a perpetual student – degree program after fellowship after post-doc – and being a self-motivated worker with a growth mindset. And while some people can find ways to have valid student ID cards forever, [spoiler alert] that isn’t the route most of us will take.

Here’s the thing. *The age of graduating is gone.* Learning is no longer a once-and-done event. There’s an urgent need for extreme self-education; not continuing with rigorous growth and learning is a recipe for disaster. Because that’s average, and “average is over”. It’s a new age, demanding more than ever before, and average won’t cut it.

It’s up to you to craft a vision for your success. The path is no longer straight and it’s not going to be laid out for you. The highly skilled who genuinely invest themselves in learning with a sense of urgency will undergo a meteoric rise to the top.

 Master learning and relearning, and you’ll become the master of your destiny.

So where are you going?

We’ve distilled the new apprenticeship mindset into 5 Ways of Growing. Embrace them and you’re sure to go far. And once you’re ready, you’re invited to join with others in declaring your commitment to embracing the 5 Ways of Growing.

5 WAYS OF GROWING: #1 PERSIST WITH STUBBORN SELF-DETERMINATION

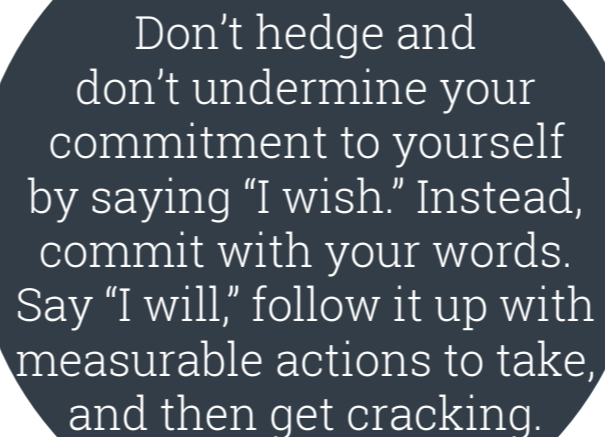
Self-determination is a critical element of your ability to grow and learn. **The outcome of your learning is up to you, and you need to be the one making it happen.** No one should be doing your thinking for you, and no one should be protecting you from the consequences of your decisions.

In other words, put your helmet on. It's time to be a grown-up.

And because the responsibility for your outcomes lies on your own shoulders, you need to take control of your own apprenticeship. While joining a cohort of other apprentices is possibly one of the most amazing experiences you'll ever have, you can create your own apprenticeship, with or without a formal program. Internalize the apprentice mindset and craft your own learning journey. Do whatever it takes. The outcome is yours, remember?

We've all heard that this generation is lazy. And while we disagree wholeheartedly with that sweeping generalization, it's clear that the incapacity for independent action is causing many millennials to get left behind. But we won't let it happen to us – we won't leave our own destinies to well-wishing, high hopes, and chance.

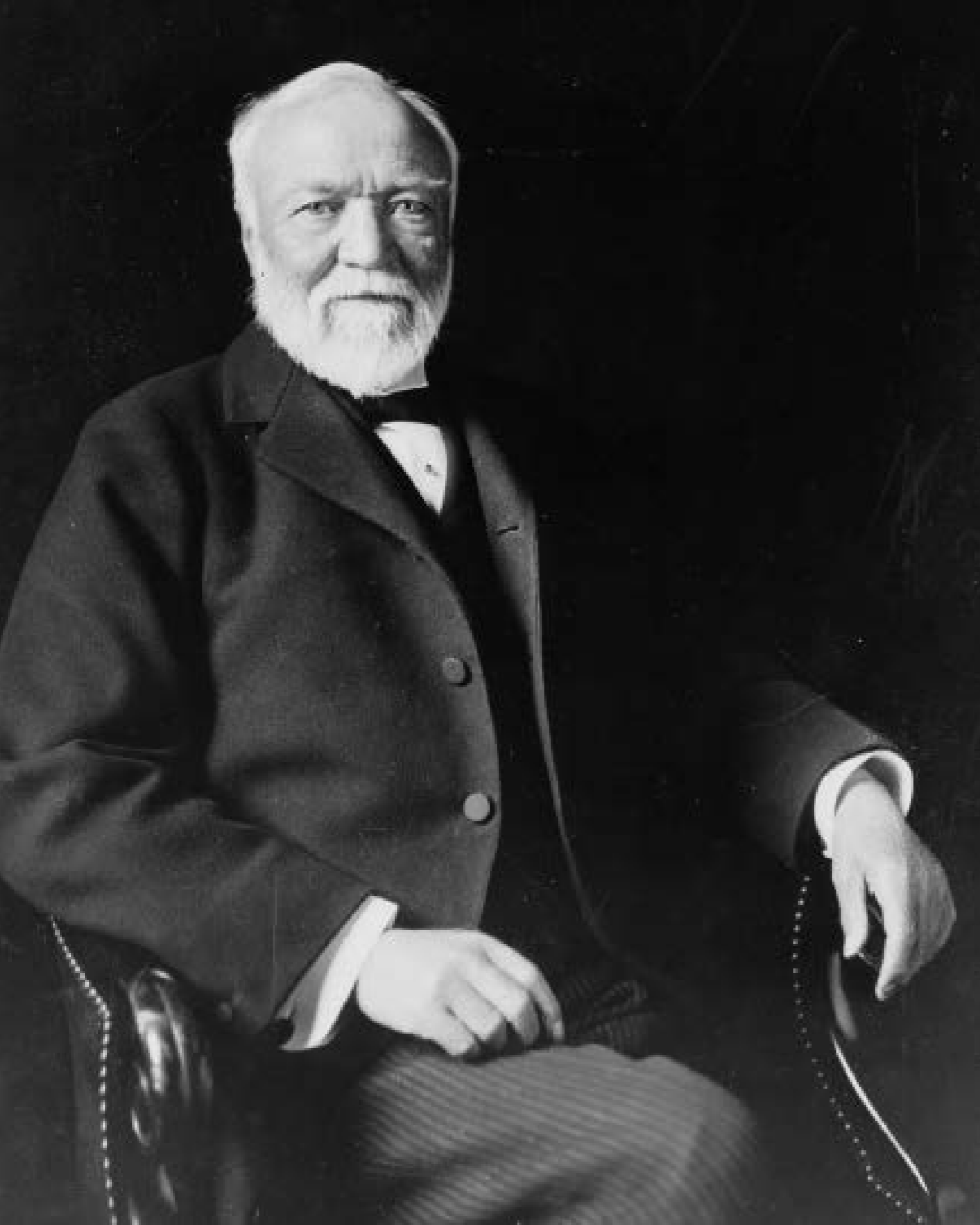
We won't wait for someone to give us the answers. Instead, we'll go out into the world and find the answers ourselves.



Don't hedge and don't undermine your commitment to yourself by saying "I wish." Instead, commit with your words. Say "I will," follow it up with measurable actions to take, and then get cracking.

You must know this: whether you win or lose depends entirely on your capacity to learn, relearn, and learn again; on your strength of character; your dedication and perseverance; and your commitment to hard work. None of this self-determination business is easy.

But is not doing it really an option?



MODEL APPRENTICE: ANDREW CARNEGIE


Carnegie's "apprenticeship and graduation as a businessman" as we think of it paints a vivid picture of stubborn self-determination. Although he immigrated to America with nothing as a small boy and was completely self-educated, his thrift, diligence, and tenacity resulted in astonishing business success. Even today he's regarded as the most influential philanthropist in American history.

"There was scarcely a minute in which I could not learn something or find out how much there was to learn and how little I knew."


5 WAYS OF GROWING:

#2 TAKE ACTION

Paired closely with stubborn self-determination is the necessity that you take real action. Not just busy-work, not just thinking or planning, not just “figuring it out.” Real, actual, hands-on *doing*.

 In reality, *doing is almost always better than planning*. Getting things done today, however imperfectly, is better than future perfection, because you’re making progress. Practice a bias toward action and doing, and take the initiative. Challenge yourself to start doing real things, now.

“Genius is initiative on fire,” Holbrook Jackson once said (and he did a whole heck of a lot of *doing*, himself, as a writer and editor in early-20th-century England). That means you can be a genius. Seriously. Or at the very least, you can *stand out* by being someone who does something, rather than sitting around waiting to “figure out what to do.” Not sure where to get started? Decide what the most important thing to do is, and then do it. From there, move on to the next most important thing, and do that. Keep paying attention, keep making progress, and see what happens.

Flawless execution isn’t the aim. (It’s not even really attainable on any kind of consistent basis, anyway.) We embrace mistakes as a path for future learning. *No amount of theorizing and hypothesizing and planning can replace doing the actual work, as far as learning goes.* 

To be able to keep going, even when it isn’t perfect and even when you aren’t sure, requires you to be willing to

fail. Learn to reject the fear of failure as a deterrent for action. By dropping the need to “look good,” you’ll make incredible progress incredibly quickly because you won’t be bound by the (unrealistic) expectation that you’ll never, ever screw up. Freeing yourself of the need to be right all the time will give you every advantage when it’s time to grow.



Play with the way things are and could be – taking a new approach to old problems leads to breakthroughs. So think playfully outside the box, proceed without fear of failure, and see just how far you’ll go. (Hint: you’ll go far!)

You’ll be able to test and experiment – the greatest outcome of which will be seeing what you’re good at. Unleash your inquisitiveness, and start questioning everything. Another thing you need to **reject is the notion of doing well with little effort**. Work hard, invest fully, and be all in. Find ways to challenge yourself – challenge-based learning that accelerates growth. That’s competency-based learning for the real world – not useless “learning” for the exam, grade, or credential.

The secret to winning at this game of not-overplanned action and anticipated failure is to win by “working long in advance.” Advance working trumps advance planning. The mistakes you make along the way will shape the success of your outcome more than the hands-off pre-planning most of us do, and you’ll be making more progress, earlier on, than you would be if you took all the time you thought you needed to get fully prepared.

MODEL APPRENTICE: TEDDY ROOSEVELT

From the time of his youth, Teddy Roosevelt had a penchant for action and adventure. Although Harvard-educated, it was his “apprenticeship” as Governor of New York that profoundly equipped him to later lead the United States as the 26th President. He took on risks, employed innovative approaches, and took action – a course that resulted in losing a bid for a second term as Governor, but ultimately set the stage for becoming one of the most influential Presidents in American history.

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no



effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

5 WAYS OF GROWING:

#3 SEEK OUT THE MASTER



Next time you come across a particularly skilled and effective person, ask **who their mentors are**. Invariably, you'll hear about life lessons learned from careful observation of the lives of others. A bonus: establishing this connection and asking a thoughtful question will shine a light on *you* as someone who is inquisitive, driven, and otherwise awesome.

We often make the mistake of thinking we can “try hard enough” and get wherever it is that we want to go. And sure, over time we might be able to figure out enough of what we need to know to get there, eventually. But learn to give the hairy eyeball to the idea that we are each islands and that we can single-handedly blaze our own trails. We must strive for self-determination, yes, but we can't be the obstacles to our own success.

There are fonts of wisdom around us, offering insights, good advice, and long-term vantages that can make the difference between accelerated growth and years of “trying.”


What do we call these veritable life-changers?

MENTORS

And you need to find some for yourself.

Training with mentors will ensure that your efforts are focused and that your time is well spent. Take up with masters of the craft who have been around longer than you, who know more than you do, and who are willing to give feedback on what you're doing. Those feedback loops are critical – you won't always be able to figure out what's going wrong when you fail, but someone with some distance from the problem and with more experience can often see it.

If you're unsure where to start, look for a community of practice. A community of practice essentially is a group of people doing the same thing together – practicing their art, craft, skill, or discipline in the same setting and offering help or guidance to each other as necessary. The mutual feedback is constructive, the many vantages and varieties of experience offer a wide range of insights, and the environment is supportive, making communities of practice a highly effective mechanism for growth.




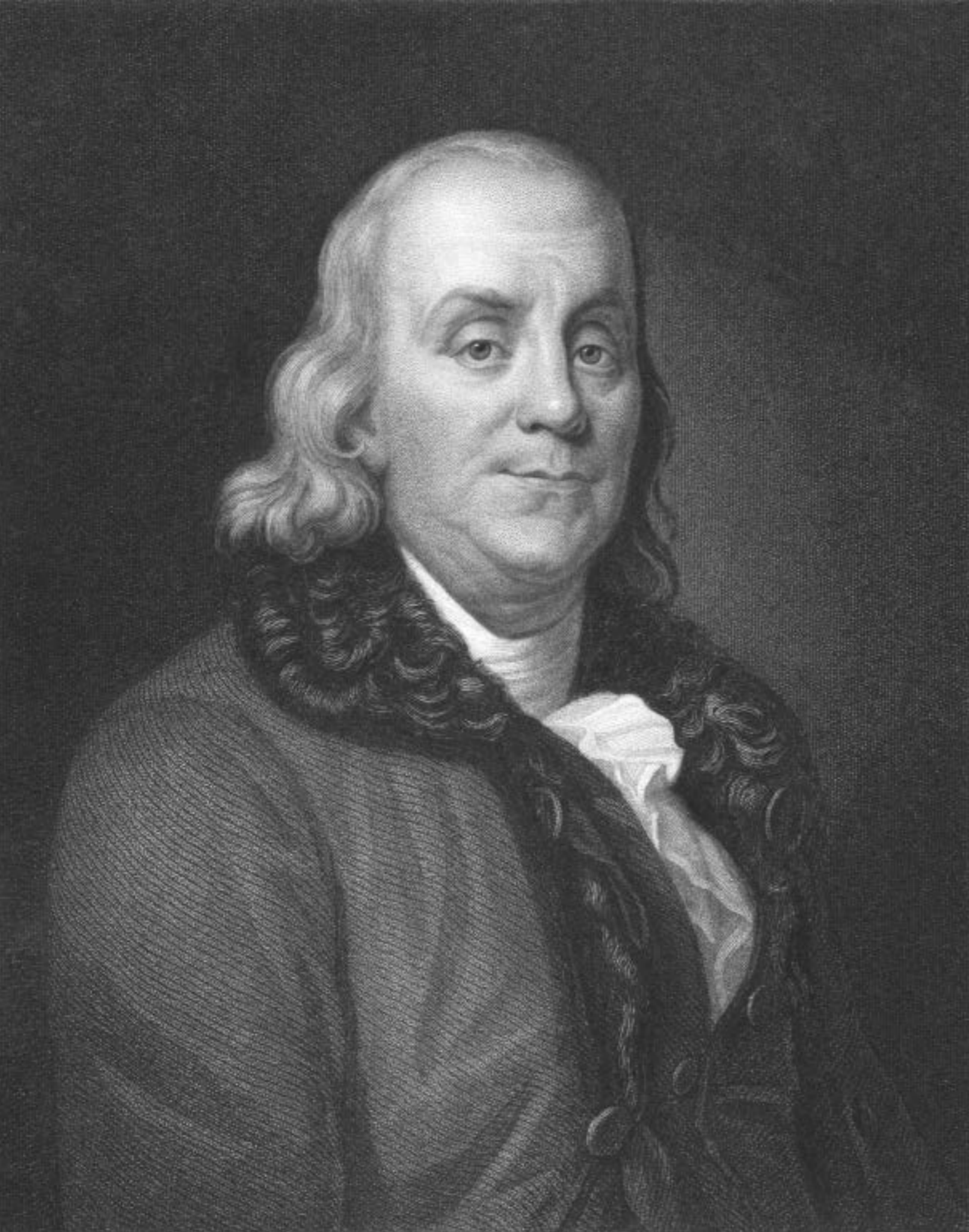
In fact, we believe the smartest way to learn is in the context of relationships – when you’re on the receiving end of knowledge, and on the giving end. There’s no better way to master something than to teach it to someone else. Don’t know where to find a community of practice? Start one yourself and spread the word.

Another way you can “seek out the master” is by steering your work toward situated learning – in other words, learning that takes place in the same context in which it’s applied.

For example, in situated learning you’d learn to bake bread in a kitchen with your hands in a bowl of dough rather than by sitting in a chair memorizing a recipe. In a professional setting, you may learn how your company’s orders are fulfilled by spending the morning fulfilling them yourself, or you may be asked to learn your organization’s design software by creating a newsletter template. This way of learning is most effective when you have access to experienced mentors in the work context

who are willing to guide you through the process as questions come up.

 **By seeking out the masters, you’re building yourself a team of coaches and mentors** – and the key action here is that you are seeking out these mentorships. Chances are, mentors aren’t going to come to you. So don’t wait for someone to magically appear waving the keys to your success. You need to find them for yourself.



MODEL APPRENTICE: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Old Ben's formal education only lasted long enough for him to learn basic writing and arithmetic. Many of the qualities we admire most about him were developed during his apprenticeship as a printer. The immense energy he poured into his own self-education combined with his habit of surrounding himself with mentors resulted in his astonishingly rapid development – and his lasting reputation and regard. In fact, at just 21, he formed the Junto club as a means of systematically learning from the experience of others. Seeking the master was a lifelong habit of his that directly contributed to his becoming one of the most influential of the American founding fathers.

“I had formed most of my ingenious acquaintance into a club of mutual improvement which we called the Junto.”

5 WAYS OF GROWING:

#4 GIVE MORE THAN YOU GET

The modern workplace has stripped the notion of generosity out of the work we do. Many in today's workforce have come to believe that the purpose of work is to be paid. We are bargaining with our work – doing the least in exchange for whatever we can get. This conviction leaves us with a grudge against society, rooted in the mindset that we have an inescapable obligation to a task-master whose goals and outcomes have no real role in our own priorities.

Instead, we're answering the question "Why work?" differently. We advocate the idea of serving our work and bringing whatever we can to what we're doing. In other words, we challenge you to be a generous steward of your work.

As a worker of any sort, your focus needs to be on the ways you provide value. If you're an employee, you want your paycheck to be the best check your employer writes. If you do any work for yourself (for example, as an entrepreneur or a consultant), you need to be looking for ways you can generously provide value for your clients. Reject entitlement in all its forms – you don't have anything "coming to you" and you aren't entitled to anyone's time, money, or attention. Instead, get in the habit of asking yourself,

 **"What can I give here? How can I create exceptional value?"**

In other words, what we do shouldn't be about us.

Not only is this generosity mindset going to be more fruitful in terms of establishing an excellent reputation for yourself and making you an exemplary coworker, it will further fuel your own development. We learn most when we create value that improves people's lives.

Here's the idea: put value into your work, see that value recognized, and benefit from that recognition by providing even greater value to others.

What's more, generosity inherently drives out wastefulness, because it removes the focus from consuming and places it on producing for the sake of giving.

When that's the perspective you use to view your activities, it ends up making the most sense to become efficient and streamlined – that's how you'll be able to squeeze the most benefit out of your efforts, after all. And the more efficient you are, the more “space” you have to assume greater responsibilities – and see a more significant return for your work.

In the same way, collaboration helps us refine our work. If we approach work with a sense of generosity and of assisting our coworkers and organizations, we'll be more inclined to be efficient, because efficiency allows everyone to do their jobs better and more easily.

Ultimately you will get the sense that work isn't about the money. The most successful individuals (and organizations) are the ones who first figure out how they can bring something great into the world to improve the lives of their fellow human beings. When meeting the need becomes the focus and is done well, success (by the common definition) follows. So don't fall into the trap of pursuing the highest paycheck you can get today. Instead, learn all you can and give all you can, with people who are doing the same. In the end, you'll prosper while experiencing the kind of fulfillment that money can't buy.

Developing this mindset of generosity becomes easier when you're able to “pull back” and see that

you've already been given far more than enough. No matter what setbacks and disappointments you've faced, there are countless people all over the world facing far more difficult circumstances. Think about the things that are going well for you – about the problems you *don't* have – and it will be much easier to see your work from the perspective of generosity.



By approaching work with generosity, we're able to satisfy the deep longing for work that is worth doing, and in which we can take pride. When we first serve the work, our teams and communities are generously helped. In this, good work done well becomes our reward. By it, we grow and our teams prosper.



**HE IS NO
LONGER
BARGAINING
WITH HIS WORK,
BUT SERVING IT.
~DOROTHY L. SAYERS**

MODEL APPRENTICE: CLARA BARTON

FOUNDER OF THE RED CROSS

Clara Barton was solely focused on her desire to help people in need. From a young age, she set out to be of service rather than a burden to her family, and at age 10 she nursed an injured brother back to good health long after doctors had given up on him. Later, during the days of the Civil War, she saw it as her duty to help the soldiers. What began as an effort to collect medical supplies became a campaign to serve as a nurse on the front lines. After a lifelong “apprenticeship” of working to serve others, this became her true calling as she rolled her care efforts, experiences, and related popularity after the war into a campaign to establish the Red Cross Society in America. Giving more than she ever received became her way of life, and she continues to be recognized for this, more than 100 years after her death.



“You must never so much think as whether you like it or not, whether it is bearable or not; you must never think of anything except the need, and how to meet it.”

“Economy, prudence, and a simple life are the sure masters of need, and will often accomplish that which, their opposites, with a fortune at hand, will fail to do.”

5 WAYS OF GROWING: #5 WORK WITH PASSION

Passion. That word gets talked about a lot these days. But how can passion contribute to your growth?

Find a way for your work to tap into your natural passionate energy, and you'll see. The impossible that stretches you beyond your preconceived notions is made possible when you embrace each task, relationship, and opportunity with energetic passion.

If you don't engage your work with a passion, you won't have the courage required to take risks and tackle big challenges. Author Seth Godin suggests that it's a shame to die before you've left something great for the world. With that in mind, what difference do you hope your life might make? Use the answer to that question as a starting point to connect your passion with your work.

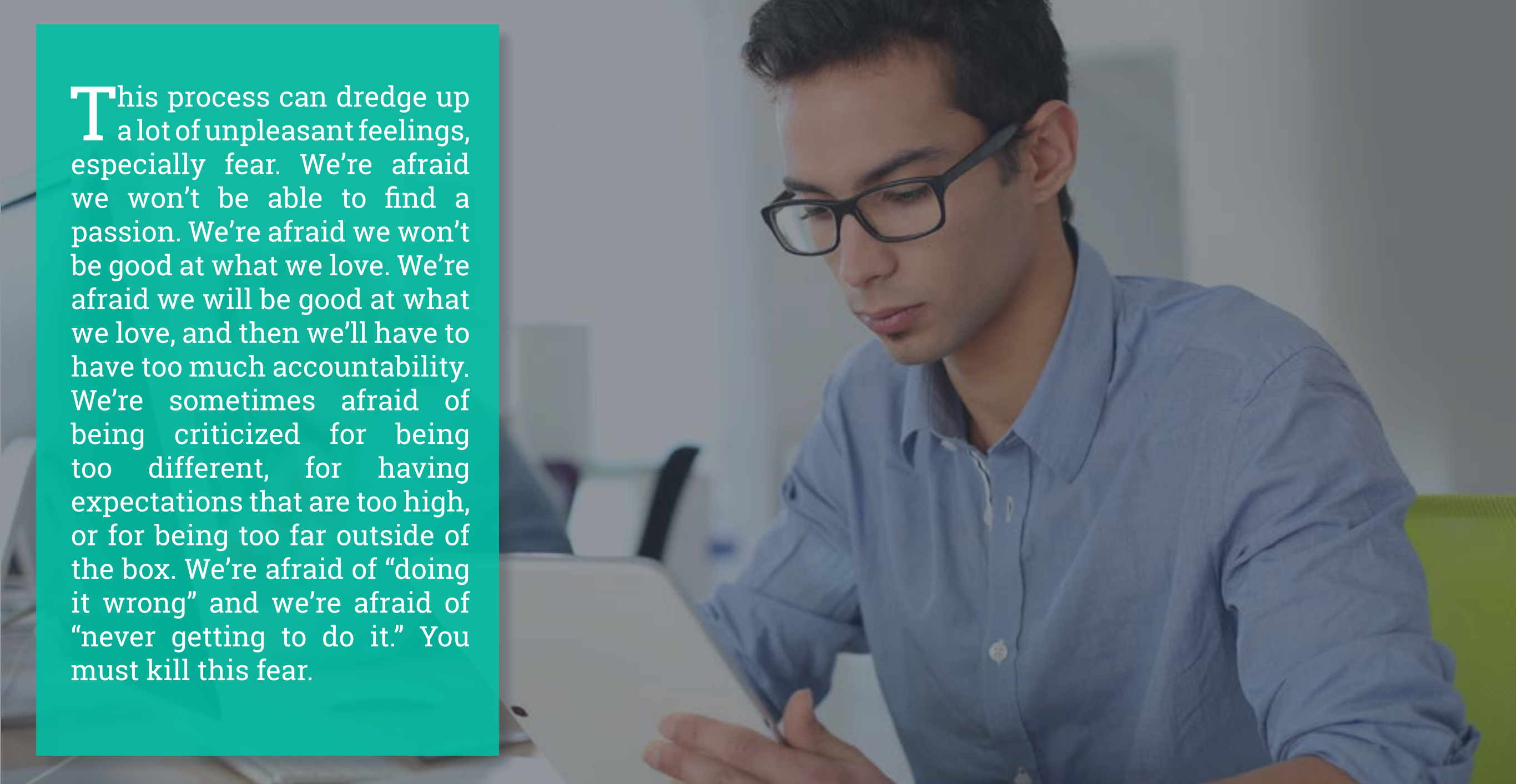
Cultivate playful curiosity when you approach your work. Become fully vested in the work you do – it's more than just a job, it's your calling. Leaning into the challenges that are over your head will be stressful when you're indifferent, but exhilarating when you really care.




No matter what, don't stop looking until you find what ignites you!

The idea is to become so passionate about this subject – your craft – that you're on fire about learning for the rest of your life. If you become engrossed in the work you're doing, fully engaging your creativity and embracing the work, there will be an unending supply of topics, approaches, and new developments to learn. You may be able to develop this passion about your current work, or you might need to keep exploring.

No matter what, don't stop looking until you find what ignites you. You might discover it anywhere, at any time, in any context. This is a messy process and it requires some effort on your part, but it's the kind of effort that's exciting and productive. You're learning more about yourself as you prod your environment.




This process can dredge up a lot of unpleasant feelings, especially fear. We're afraid we won't be able to find a passion. We're afraid we won't be good at what we love. We're afraid we will be good at what we love, and then we'll have to have too much accountability. We're sometimes afraid of being criticized for being too different, for having expectations that are too high, or for being too far outside of the box. We're afraid of "doing it wrong" and we're afraid of "never getting to do it." You must kill this fear.

 Fight the pressure toward conformity with your passion to do what others dare not do. Fear drives out passion, so you must drive out fear if you're going to love what you do. Only then will you be able to do something insanely great.

When you do find your passion – and you will – put all your might into mastery. Don't be content with the basics – go deeper, ask more, branch into related fields.

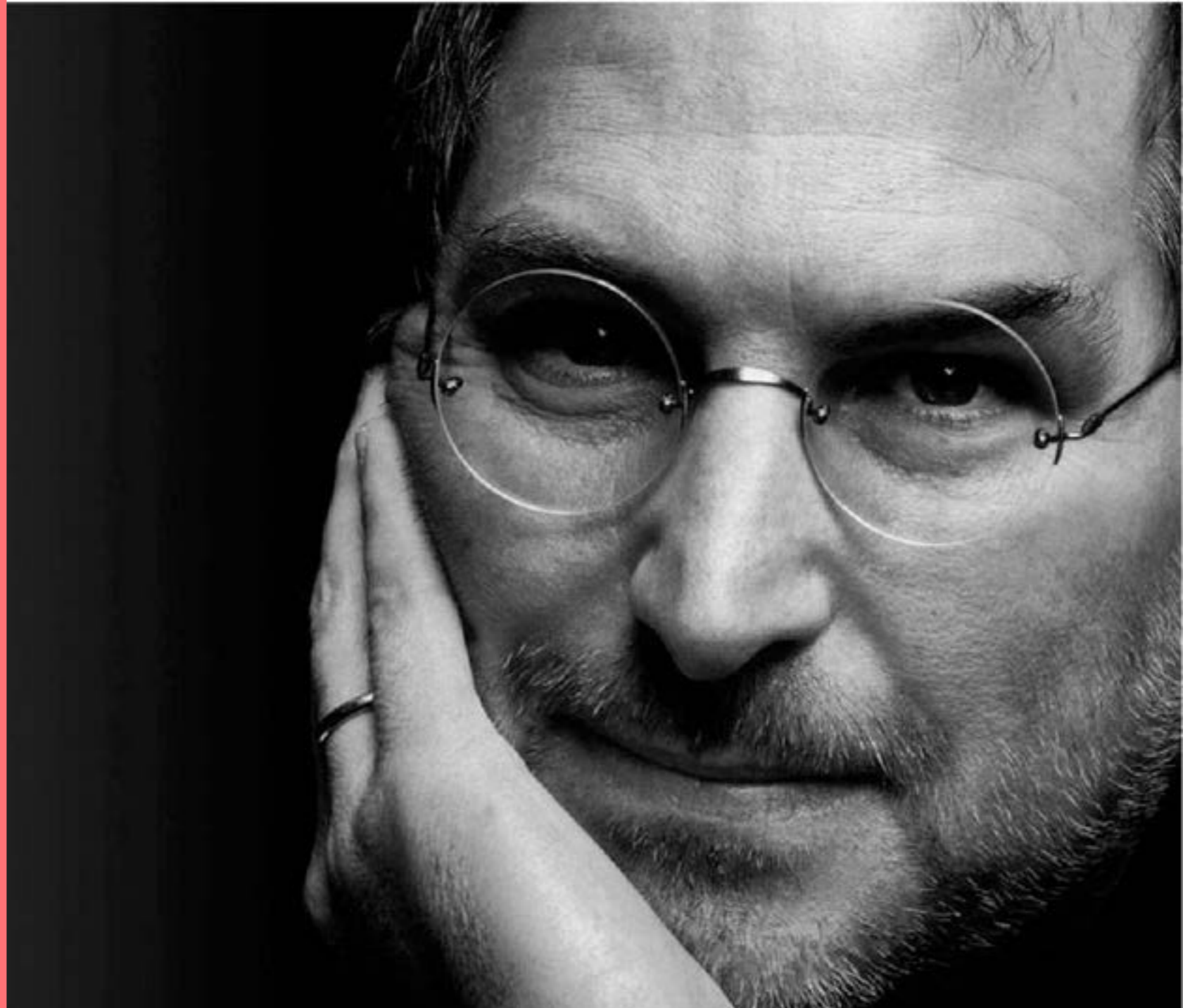
This is a gift – you've found the intersection of your skills, your interests, and a real need. Not everyone finds that. The best thing you can do is share this gift by developing it.

 Ultimately, you'll find that when you love something, it reveals its secrets to you. And once that starts happening, you and the other learners around you will be able to do more than any of you thought possible.

MODEL APPRENTICE: STEVE JOBS

Perhaps no one in today's pop culture represents following your passion as much as the iconic Steve Jobs, the co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Apple Computer. He dropped out of college after six months but had been tinkering with electronics since childhood. Eventually, as Jobs audited classes that seemed interesting to him, he discovered his passions and combined them to co-found what became the most valuable publicly traded company in the world.

He was a true student of life and experience rather than the classroom, seeking out knowledge in unconventional and often surprising ways and then funneling it into his work, using new approaches and making connections between ideas that conventional thinkers would never make. In a famous address he made at the



2005 commencement at Stanford University, Jobs spoke of his journey finding his passion and turning that into a fulfilling career, urging all of us to do the same.

"You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers... If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."

DEFINING APPRENTICESHIP

ARE YOU READY TO EMBRACE THIS NEW APPRENTICESHIP MINDSET?

Are you ready to practice the 5 ways of growing? They're best done in the context of real work, with the daily opportunity to evaluate your progress.

CAN YOU MAKE THAT COMMITMENT?

You must love this, treasure this, own this. The inevitable convergence of learning and work mandates that you do.

If you're ready, curious and committed, you'll be opening yourself up to be embraced by the rest of the world. Managers around the world are looking for people like you – people who live the apprenticeship mindset. The world is crying out for craftsmen.

It needs you.



THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE CURIOUS - WILL YOU STEP UP?

THE NEW APPRENTICESHIP MINDSET IS A SET OF BELIEFS OR PARTICULAR WAYS OF DOING WORK WHEN FOCUSING ON YOUR NEED TO GROW. AT ITS CORE ARE THE 5 WAYS OF GROWING.

WE'VE DEFINED THEM THIS WAY:

- 1 Persist with Stubborn Self-Determination:**
Instead of depending on and blaming others, I will take responsibility for my future, think for myself, and find my own answer.
- 2 Take Action**
Instead of theorizing, I will act. I will take initiative, learn from failure, and do my best to produce results *today*.
- 3 Seek Out the Master**
Instead of going it alone, I will surround myself with coaches and mentors to receive their guidance and wisdom.
- 4 Give More Than I Get**
Instead of getting more than I give, I will take pride in the work I do and generously bring great things into the world that create exceptional value for others.
- 5 Work with Passion**
Instead of indifference, I will love what I do and pour my creativity and energy into it.

CLICK TO TWEET



I enthusiastically embrace the 5 Ways of Growing.



Signature

Date



The New Apprenticeship
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