



There are no shortcuts. There are no hacks. If you want to take the easy road, I promise you: it's longer and more painful than the hard road.

I know. I've lived it. I've ventured down the easy road at times in my life and it never led to anywhere good. The positive things in my life always came when I faced the biggest challenges.

I joined the Navy. I took the hard road in the Navy and made it into the SEAL Teams. There, I had the honor of leading men in combat. I learned some lessons along the way, lessons that have been tested on the battlefield and, when implemented, lead to success in any arena.

One of the best things I've learned is that anyone has what it takes to travel the hard road—to walk The Path that leads to success. That includes you. It won't be easy. It will demand everything you've got to give. But you can do it, and I want to give you three key principles I've learned that will help you to get it done.

Principle number one: Discipline. Equals. Freedom.

That's not a contradiction—it's an equation. Discipline might appear to be the opposite of freedom. But, in fact, discipline is the path to freedom.

Discipline is the driver of daily execution. Discipline defeats the infinite excuses that hold you back.

Some people think motivation is what will compel them to get things done. But motivation is just an emotion—a feeling, and like all feelings, it's fickle: it comes and goes. You can't count on motivation to be there when you need to get through truly challenging times.

But you can count on discipline. Discipline is something you dictate.

Motivation won't make you exercise every day; discipline will. Motivation won't stay up late and finish a project for you; discipline will. Motivation isn't going to get you out of bed in the morning; discipline will. Make discipline part of your daily life and your daily life will get better.

Principle Number Two: Stay. Humble.

In life, you are going to have to do things that you don't want to do. Maybe things that you don't think you should have to do—things that offend your precious ego.

When I got done with Basic SEAL Training and reported on board SEAL Team One,

you know what I was assigned to do? I was assigned to clean toilets. That's right—despite having just graduated some of the most difficult military training in the world, despite being assigned to an “elite” commando unit—my first mission at the actual SEAL Team was to clean toilets. Not exactly a glorious job.

But you know what? I did it. I did it to the best of my ability and took pride in doing it well. And that attitude got noticed: if I cared that much about how clean the toilets were, people knew I would do a good job with even more important assignments. After a short period of time, I got those more important assignments. But it was humility that opened the door for me.

Now, being humble does not mean that you shouldn't be confident. You certainly have to believe that you are a capable person. But don't let confidence turn into arrogance. So keep your ego in check and stay humble.

The third and final principle: Take. Ownership. Of. Everything.

I call this “Extreme Ownership.”

In the military, the best leaders and the best troops were the ones that took ownership of everything in their world—not just the things they were responsible for, but for every challenge and obstacle that impacted their mission.

When something went wrong: They cast no blame, they made no excuses. They took ownership of the problem and fixed it.

You can implement this attitude as well—not only in your job, but in your life. Let other people blame their parents, their boss, or the system. Let weaker people complain that the world isn't fair. You are the leader of your life: take ownership of everything in it.

So: be disciplined in all that you do. Don't subject yourself to the whims of motivation. Stay humble and be willing to do what needs to be done.

And: take extreme ownership of your life and everything in it.

Then: choose the hard path—the path of responsibility, hard work, and sacrifice. The Path of discipline, humility, and ownership that ultimately leads to freedom.

If you follow these principles, then nothing in the world will stop you.

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