



THE SCIENCE OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT

WORKBOOK

a 31 day crash course for improving your life

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Day 1 - Getting Started

Welcome to the first day of your self improvement crash course. These are just a few simple starter exercises to help get you thinking in a more "self improvement" direction.

- Write 3-5 sentences on the one area in your life you want to work on the most (and explain why).

- For a short confidence booster, list 5 things you like about yourself and reflect on times in your life when you exhibited those characteristics.

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- End the day by speaking this affirmation out-loud to yourself 5 times in the mirror - *"I am a good person. I deserve happiness and success in my life."*

Day 2: Identify Core Values

Our core values are the things in life that we really live for and make us happy. Knowing your values is one of the first real steps toward building a happy and successful life.

- List 3 of your core values in life.

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- Name one small thing you can do each day to fulfill each of these core values.

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- Choose one of those small things and do it today.

- Write 2-3 sentences reflecting on the small thing you did. How did it make you feel? Happy? Is this something you can continue to do in the future to fulfill this value?

Day 3: Practice Reframing Beliefs

Reframing beliefs is the ability to take a negative or destructive belief and then change your perspective on it in a way that makes it more positive and helpful.

- List 3 negative beliefs you have about yourself.

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- Challenge each of those beliefs. How might they be wrong? Can you think of any examples when they weren't true?

- Reframe those 3 negative beliefs into something more positive and realistic (see the reframing techniques in chapter 1 of *The Science of Self Improvement*).

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- Think about how these new beliefs make you feel. Do they inspire you or motivate you? If not, try reframing them again until they resonate with you at a deep level.

Day 4: Change Your Self-Talk

How we speak to ourselves on a daily basis has a huge impact on our happiness and success. Watch how you talk to yourself on a daily basis.

- Take your newly reframed beliefs from Day 2, repeat each one of them 5 times in a meaningful and confident way. This will help build this new way of thinking into your brain.

- Put a rubber band on your wrist for the day. Whenever you catch yourself thinking or saying something negative, snap the rubber band on your wrist to remind yourself to minimize this kind of thinking. This will help monitor your self-talk better.

- Write 3-5 sentences describing the "ideal you." This will continue to get your mind thinking in new ways about yourself.

Day 5: Meditate

Meditation is one of the most scientifically-supported techniques in self improvement. If you aren't practicing it already, today is the day to get started.

- Find 15 minutes in your day and practice the "Breathing Meditation" from your *Meditation Guide*.

- Take 5-10 minutes afterwards to write about your experience. What difficulties did you experience? Did you get anything positive from it?

- When first beginning meditation, you're going to get easily distracted and/or bored. Don't be too hard on yourself. Sometimes the first step to being more focused and aware is realizing just how unfocused we can be sometimes.

Day 6: Discover a Passion

Finding something to be passionate about is a huge motivator of happiness and success. We often need something that drives us deep-down in order to find fulfillment in our lives.

- We rarely have just one main passion in life, but many smaller ones. Name 3-5 things (interests/hobbies/jobs) that you have a strong liking for. For example, I personally am very driven by writing, music, and political activism.

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- If you're having any trouble, try to think of activities you used to enjoy as a child, or try to imagine something in your life that you can't live without. These are often signs of something that we have a true passion for.

- Ideally, we would like to be able to apply this passion at a professional level and make it into a lucrative career. But that's not always possible, so sometimes just pursuing a passion on the side is enough.

- Try to find 20-30 minutes today to do something you really love (even if it's just playing video games or doodling on your guitar, especially if you haven't done these things in awhile).

Day 7: Focus on Positive Relationships

Our relationships play a big role in our lives. We can't ignore the importance of having loyal, supportive, and positive people to surround ourselves with.

- Name 3 positive people in your life who give you love and inspiration.

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- Reach out to these 3 people in your life and see how they are doing. Even just a small conversation shows you are thinking about them and you appreciate them.

- Spend 10-15 minutes tonight to reflect on all the relationships in your life. Which have a positive influence on you? Which are more negative and may need fixing?

Day 8: Meet New People

Whether we have many positive relationships in life or not, it is always beneficial to be willing to meet new people and build new connections.

- Start a meaningful conversation with a stranger today. It doesn't matter if it's someone from school, work, a bar, a party or even just a store clerk.
- During your interaction, try your best to have a positive attitude, smile, laugh, and find the good things about that person. Socializing is meant to be fun and enjoyable for everyone.
- I know some people really struggle with meeting new people, so I really just want you to focus on initiating one conversation. You never know when a new person is going to become a long-time friend, having an open mind about new relationships is key to a healthy life.
- Write 3-5 sentences about your interaction. What did you learn? Did the person seem like a cool person? Can you imagine yourself connecting with a person like that more in the future?

Day 9: Learn from Failure

Pain and failure is often an unfortunate but necessary part of self-improvement. We can't push ourselves to the next level unless we challenge ourselves, make mistakes, and learn from those mistakes.

- Write 3-5 sentences about a time in your life where you made a big mistake or failed at something. Write about the event in a non-judgmental way.

- Write 3-5 sentences about something positive you can learn from the experience. How might it make you a better person in the long-term

- Remind yourself that every failed experience can have something valuable in it. Instead of trying to ignore these failures or beat yourself up over them, practice being honest about them and using them as motivation to improve yourself into the future.

Day 10: Reflect on Your Accomplishments

Self-improvement can always feel like it's about pushing forward, but sometimes the most powerful thing we can do is reflect on all the things we've already accomplished in life. While pursuing our goals, it's important not to lose sight of how far we may have already come.

- List 3-5 of some of your main accomplishments in life so far.

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- Choose one of your accomplishments above and write 3-5 sentences on how you worked toward that goal and how good it felt once you made it.

- How might these past success stories motivate your goals in the future? What have you learned from them?

Day 11: Eat Healthier

Physical health and mental health are intimately connected. A lot of our mind is dependent on the health of our brains, and naturally a healthy body includes a healthy brain. One of the first steps to improving both physical and mental health is eating healthier.

- Practice giving up just one small unhealthy drink or snack today. Try replacing it with a healthier alternative. Cutting out unnecessary junk food is the first real step toward eating healthier.

- Choose the one drink or snack you're going to replace: _____
- Choose the one drink or snack you're going to replace it with: _____

- Try your best to stick with this new habit for just one whole day. Just taking one small step in the right direction can give you momentum going forward.

- I think we'd be surprised just how much a simple, real change can benefit us. I made it a point to switch my entire soda intake with water for a month, and it had a great impact on my overall health and confidence.

- Make a list of 3 other small changes you could make to improve your diet.

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Day 12: Exercise

Exercise is another popular scientifically-supported technique to help improve your mental health and confidence. Research shows it can help increase your stamina, motivation, and focus, while minimizing stress and negative emotions.

- Practice a small exercise routine this morning. Begin with 10 minutes of stretching, then do 10 pushups, 10 sit-ups, and 30 jumping jacks.

- This is just a start in getting you to live a more healthy and fit lifestyle. However, it can be the beginning of more sustainable, long-term improvement.

- An important thing to remember is that you don't always need to join a gym or a sports club to exercise. Often there are plenty of things we can do at home to stay fit, even without equipment.

- One day of exercise won't make any huge changes, but this can give you a better idea on just how easy and convenient it can be to start engaging in healthier activities.

- Make a list of 3 other exercises or physical activities you can do at home.

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Day 13: Understand Your Emotions

Emotions play a big role in our happiness and success, but many people don't know the best ways to manage emotions effectively. Here are some ways to become more emotionally intelligent.

- First, understand that emotions serve an important function in our lives. Whether they are "positive" or "negative," emotions can guide us on how to understand our world more intimately and make better decisions.

- Take 15 minutes today to reflect on your emotions and what you are feeling. Every moment comes with a kind of emotional flavor, so the more we are aware of these emotional flavors, the better we understand ourselves.

- Use the space below to write about these emotions. How would you label what you're feeling? Is it a mix of different emotions? What might be triggering these emotions? What might these emotions tell you about how to improve your life?

Day 14: Collect Motivational Images & Quotes

Motivational images and quotes can be a great source of inspiration when we need that extra boost.

- Create a digital folder (or Facebook, Twitter or Tumblr) to collect images and quotes that really resonate with you.

- Here are some places you can begin finding motivational material:

- [Get Motivated](#)
- [Quotes Porn](#) (not actual porn, just inspiring quotes with nice images)
- [Quotes](#)
- My [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) page (where I'm always sharing new motivational content)

- Whenever you find some new motivational image or quote, remember to store it in your digital folder for future use. As time goes on, you're going to have rich reservoir of inspirational material to draw from when you need it.

Day 15: Be Grateful

Gratitude is a very important aspect to our happiness. Often we can't live our lives to the fullest until we've learned to appreciate all the things we already have in life.

- Write a list of 5-7 things you are grateful for in your life.

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- Choose one of the things from above. Now write 3-5 sentences on why your life wouldn't be as great if you didn't have this thing in your life.

- Print out a list of the things you are grateful for and place it somewhere where you will see it every morning or night.

- End the day by looking at the list and pausing to reflect on all the good things you have in your life right now.

Day 16: Express Creativity

Creativity allows us to make meaning in our lives and express our thoughts and feelings in a way that we don't always get the chance to. I believe everyone should have some kind of creative activity that they practice on a regular basis.

- Name 1-3 creative activities you like to do:

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- Name 1-3 creative activities that you would like to try:

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- Choose one of the creative activities from above and spend 20-30 minutes indulging in that activity.

- Write 3-5 sentences explaining how you feel after your creative session. Is this something you should do more often?

Day 17: Make a Plan to Achieve a Big Goal

Being able to plan for the future is a huge component to long-term success and happiness. We should always try to have big goal in mind that we are working toward.

- Name 1 big goal in your life right now (something that will take several months or years to accomplish).

- Write a rough outline of the steps it would take to achieve this goal. Try to name at least 5-7 stepping stones it would take before you get to this goal.

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- Name 1-3 things you could start today to get you closer to this goal.

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- Writing a rough outline for your goals can be tremendously helpful in getting your mind geared toward the future. If you have a big goal in mind that you currently don't have time for, just write a short outline and save it somewhere for later use.

Day 18: Keep Gradual Progress in Mind

All big goals are a series of smaller goals. Having success in mind is important, but taking small actions toward success is just as essential.

- Name 3-5 things you do on a daily basis that you are continuously making progress in.

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- Name 3-5 things you would like to start making more progress in.

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- Remember that we don't change completely, or all at once, but we change in parts. Some periods of our life are focused on improving one particular dimension in our life, while other periods are more focused on another dimension.

- Repeat these affirmations 5 times each.

- *"I am changing in small ways each and every day."*
- *"A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step."*
- *"I focus on progress, not perfection."*

Day 19: Tell Someone You Love Them

When we have positive relationships in our lives, it's important that we let people know that we love and appreciate them.

- "Love" is a particularly strong word we use in our relationships. Not just romantic ones, but also family and friendships. It's important to our relationships that we are comfortable expressing this word to the people we really care about.

- Today, just tell one person you love them. Choose anyone, but make sure it's someone that really means something to your life. It doesn't have to be too serious or anything, just use say the phrase "I love you," even if it's in a light-hearted tone.

- Write 2-3 sentences reflecting on the experience. How did you feel? Can you become more comfortable using this word in the future?

Day 20: Practice Visualization

Many successful people, including athletes, businessmen, musicians, and actors, use visualization (or “mental rehearsal”) to improve their ability to build new habits and achieve their goals.

- When we imagine ourselves doing something in our heads, it activates many of the same brain regions associated with actually doing it. Therefore, we can practice certain habits and behaviors by first mentally rehearsing them.

- Choose one new habit you would like to have:

- Take 5-10 minutes to imagine yourself acting out this new habit in a specific situation. Start imagining from the very beginning all the way until the end, in a step-by-step sequence.

- Try to integrate all of your senses into the imagination, including sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.

- The more specific and detailed your visualization is, the more effective the mental rehearsal will be. But don't be too hard on yourself, building a strong imagination can take time and practice.

- The more we mentally rehearse certain habits and behaviors, the more prepared our minds will be to actually act out these habits and behaviors in the real world.

- If you want, take 2-3 minutes to write about your visualization experience. What did you learn? How might you be able to improve it?

Day 21: Educate Yourself

Education is an important part of a growing mind. Just because you graduated high school or college doesn't mean you should stop reading and educating yourself on new things.

- Name 1-3 topics you would like to know more about.

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- Choose just one of those topics, and then do a search on Google and/or Wikipedia to find 5 related articles.

- Read those articles, and then write 5-7 sentences explaining something new that you learned about that topic.

- There are many different articles, books, documentaries, and videos you can find all over the internet that allow you to educate yourself in new things. Take advantage of these resources when you need them.

Day 22: Find Role Models

Every happy and successful person has role models that inspire and motivate them.

- Name 5 figures in your life that you greatly admire.

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- Name one reason why you find each of these figures influential.

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- Choose a specific situation in your life that you want to work on. Describe in 3-5 sentences how one of your role models would act in that situation.

- No one is perfect, we all have our good and bad traits. Try your best to learn from your role models without idolizing them or putting them on a pedestal.

Day 23: Do Something Nice for Someone

Being nice and exercising kindness toward others is a huge part of not only building healthy relationships with others, but also building our own self-esteem and self-worth.

- Choose 3 acts of kindness from the following list that.

- Give a genuine compliment
- Do something nice for a stranger.
- Donate to a charity you believe in.
- Be a good listener if someone needs to vent.
- Create a mix CD for a friend.
- Dedicate a song or poem to someone.
- Say "please" and "thank you" – and really mean it.
- Pass along a great book you've just finished reading.

- Try your best to fulfill these 3 acts of kindness at some point during your day.

- Write 3-5 sentences describing your experiences of being kind. How did it make the other person feel? How did it make you feel?

- List 3 other acts of kindness that you could do more often to be a nicer person.

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Day 24: Do Something Nice for Yourself

It is just as important to be kind to others as it is to be kind to ourselves. Make sure you find time in your life to treat yourself.

- List 3-5 activities you like to do just for the pleasure of it.

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- Schedule 20-30 minutes in your day to indulge in one of these activities.

- Write 3-5 sentences describing your experiences being nice to yourself. How did it make you feel? Why is it important to indulge yourself in these simple pleasures every now and then?

- Remember that spending quality time with yourself, and actually giving yourself permission to enjoy life and do fun things every now and then, is a huge part of happiness. Don't be afraid to do some things in life for the simple reason that they make you feel good.

Day 25: Ask the Right Questions

Humans have the incredible power of introspection. This allows us to question our thoughts and beliefs, and search for what we're really looking for in life. Knowing yourself is the ultimate step in improving yourself. To do this, we need to practice asking ourselves the right questions.

- One of the most fundamental questions we can ask ourselves is why we have a particular belief about the world. Name one belief that you think plays a huge role in your life.

- Try to analyze this belief at a deeper level by asking yourself these questions. Think about the answers to these inside your head.

- Why do I have this belief?
- What evidence do I have to support this belief?
- How does this belief affect the way I think?
- How does this belief affect the way I feel?
- How does this belief affect the way I act?
- How might this belief be wrong or unhelpful?
- What other possible beliefs may be true?
- What kind of evidence would change this belief?
- How might looking at the situation from a different perspective change my belief?
- What other possible beliefs may be more beneficial?

- Don't worry if your questioning doesn't lead to perfect answers. The main point of this exercise is to just give yourself a clearer understanding of why you believe the things you do.

- Often to get the right answers in life we need to first ask ourselves the right questions. Don't be afraid to interrogate yourself and try to understand yourself at a higher level.

Day 26: Try Something New

One of the biggest roadblocks in self improvement is always following the same routine and patterns, but never trying new things. We have to be willing to step outside of our comfort zone and expand our horizons to new people and experiences.

- Practice embracing diversity in small ways. Choose one activity below and find 20-30 minutes of your day to engage in it.

- Listen to a different type of music.
- Watch a different type of movie or TV show.
- Start a new hobby. If you've never played a musical instrument before, try it. If you've never painted before, try it.
- Go to a place you've never been before. Maybe check out a new restaurant, or bar, or museum. If you have the money, travel to a different country.
- Try hanging out with a new crowd of people every now and then. You'd be surprised how many new things you will learn if you expand your social circle.
- Take a course in something you know nothing about.
- Use the [random article](#) function on Wikipedia. Who knows the types of things you will come across.
- Try a new type of food or cuisine than what you are used.

- Write 3-5 sentences describing your new experience. What was it like? Did you like it or not like it? How did it feel trying something new?

- You're not going to like every new thing you try, but that's part of the process of learning about yourself. Often it's still better to try something new and find out if it works for you or not, rather than to never try new things at all.

Day 27: See the Bigger Picture

Every experience in our life unfolds in the present moment, but that doesn't mean we can't have the "bigger picture" in mind when we take action. Looking toward the future allows us to consider the larger effects behind our actions, beyond just the immediate feedback we get from our world.

- Take a moment to reflect on how your actions may affect you over time into the future. Are you only acting for instant gratification or do you have some long-term goals in mind?

- Take a moment to reflect on how your actions may affect people in ways you don't immediately realize. What about people you don't even know or may never meet? Also, consider how your actions affect other aspects of your world too, including the environment and nature.

- One of the biggest factors to happiness and success is being able to see the "bigger picture" behind our actions. This allows you to see beyond your immediate impulses and take action that leads to long-term benefits.

Day 28: Forgive Yourself and Others

Forgiveness is so important to letting go of the past and putting our best foot forward. Holding grudges against people usually only hurts ourselves, and it inhibits our ability to repair our relationships if someone makes a mistake or does something wrong.

- Name one grudge in your life that is holding you back. If you can't think of one, then name a grudge you used to have in the past.

- While people may have hurt us in the past, it's important that we don't hold it against them. Everyone has the capacity to make mistakes, or even become a terrible person in the wrong circumstances. Accept that no one is perfect.

- Write out a statement expressing your forgiveness toward the person who hurt you. For example, "I forgive X for what they did to me. I hope X finds happiness and success in their life." Write out your own version below.

- To forgive others, we must also be willing to forgive ourselves. We are capable of the same mistakes as others, so we shouldn't hold ourselves at some unrealistically high standard.

- Name an event in your life when you hurt someone.

- Write out a statement expressing your forgiveness toward yourself. For example, "I forgive myself for what I did to X. I will learn from my ways and improve myself in future relationships." Write out your own version below.

- Remember that forgiving others doesn't mean you have to continue a relationship with them. You can choose to end a relationship, but still wish the best for that person and that they eventually learn from their ways.

Day 29: Wish that Everyone Finds Happiness

I find that one of the most positive beliefs we can have in the world is the wish that everyone eventually finds their own happiness.

- Accept that despite all of our individual differences, all human beings share a universal desire to be happy and enjoy life at the end of the day.

- Recognizing this universal desire among all human beings gives us a deep sense of interconnectedness with everyone. It shows us that we are not so different at a core level.

- With this understanding, we learn to treat everyone with respect, kindness, and compassion.

- Repeat this affirmation 5 times in a meaningful way - *"I desire happiness and success for all human beings."*

- Write a paragraph describing your own desire for happiness, and then relating it to other people's desire for happiness. How are they the same? Does this make you feel more connected to everyone as a whole?

Day 30: Keep Doing What Works

Throughout this workbook I've shared all different kinds of advice, suggestions, and exercises. Some of these things will work better for some people rather than others. The most important thing you can do throughout your self improvement is to find what works for *you* and get rid of what doesn't work for you.

- List 3 things you learned in this workbook that you found the MOST helpful.

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- List 3 things you learned in this workbook that you found weren't that helpful.

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- Always make sure you give advice an honest chance before you dismiss it completely. However, if you give it an honest chance and it doesn't work out, then be willing to change things up until you find something that works better for you.

Day 31: Make the Best of Life

This is your last day of the 31 day crash course, but it's important to remember that this is just the beginning of your self improvement journey.

31 days alone can't change your life completely, but if you made it this far then you are at a wonderful starting point in making your life as happy, successful, and awesome as possible.

Don't hesitate to re-visit these days and do them again. Even though I've been practicing this stuff for 8 years now, I still make it a habit to re-visit this stuff on a regular basis to keep my mind fresh and sharp.

As Zig Ziglar said, "People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily."

Remind yourself that the primary goal in life isn't money, fame, or sex. True happiness comes when we make the most of whatever life offers us.

- Write a paragraph describing your whole 31 day crash course experience. How will you use this information to motivate and inspire yourself into the future?

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