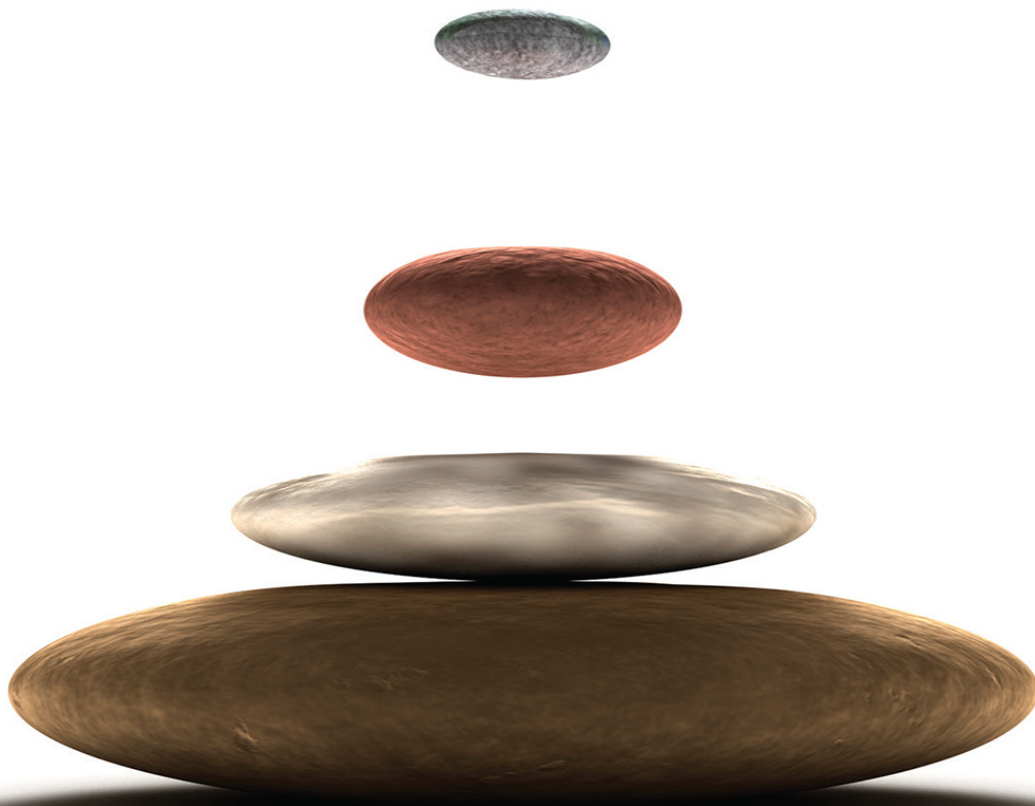


Wu Wei Comes Alive

Make Every Step A Winning Step



tekson teo

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WU WEI COMES ALIVE (EDITION 2)

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Preface

Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished. There is a natural ebb and flow to everything you do. By aligning yourself with this rhythm, you can achieve things effortlessly.

This principle resonates in simple actions like walking, speaking, or writing an email. The more natural you are, the better your results are. Pushing it too hard upsets the natural flow, putting you at risk of losing more than you gain.

This is known as downstream effort, comparable to rowing a boat downstream or cutting wood along the grain. It is a testament to the wonder of wu wei, a practice rooted in ancient wisdom that teaches us to harness the natural flow of energy to achieve our goals with effortless ease.

You harness the power of nature to achieve more with ease rather than relying solely on your own efforts. Nothing is forced or imposed, yet everything falls into place. This realization can be transformative and life-changing.

Making Wu Wei a Way of Life

How do you make wu wei work for you? That's precisely what we'll explore together in this book. Our focus will be on the practical aspects of this philosophy, aiming to help you achieve tangible results in your life with greater ease.

Although wu wei translates to "doing nothing," its practice is far from passive. Paradoxically, it holds incredible power. We will delve into

philosophy, but our primary emphasis will be on practical application rather than delving too deeply into theoretical concepts.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to learning and incorporating wu wei into your life. The path we explore in this book is just one of many ways to embrace this practice. However, I have personally verified its effectiveness through my own experiences and witnessed its transformative impact on the people I have worked with. By following the learning path outlined in this book, you will have the opportunity to experience firsthand how wu wei can enhance various aspects of your life, including your work, business, relationships, and health.

The good news is that incorporating wu wei into your life is simpler than you might imagine. It is not a skill to be acquired but rather a process of allowing your innate capabilities to work in harmony with nature. This enables you to accomplish your goals with a sense of calm and ease.

Every individual is unique, and so is their journey with wu wei. By learning the underlying principles of this practice and applying them to bring out your best qualities, you will develop a personalized wu wei practice that is uniquely yours.

Through this book, I aim to provide you with the guidance, tools, and insights necessary to embark on your wu wei journey. Together, we will explore how this ancient wisdom can transform your life and empower you to navigate the world with grace and ease.

Verifying the Wisdom

In this book, I will share the philosophical principles, drawing from my own experiences and observations of those who have successfully applied them in their lives. Teaching wu wei poses unique challenges because it is an inner work that requires personal exploration and discovery.

My relationship with the philosophy of wu wei spans several decades, during which I have immersed myself in the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu and other Taoist literature. However, my engagement with these texts goes beyond mere reading. I have delved deep into their transformative potential and continually reflected on my personal experiences to verify their teachings. Furthermore, I have had the opportunity to observe the impact of these teachings on high achievers, including individuals I have worked with as a management consultant across different continents.

Additionally, I have been fortunate to practice tai chi chuan for many years, an ancient art that epitomizes the principles of wu wei. This practice serves as my laboratory, providing immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the teachings. I am grateful to my tai chi grandmaster, Wu Tunan, and master, Sim Pooh Ho, for their invaluable guidance in this ongoing pursuit.

As this book is primarily intended as a guide for practitioners, I will reference the Tao Te Ching as necessary, without delving into extensive theoretical treatments of the philosophy. For a more in-depth exploration of the philosophy itself, I will direct you to my other books.

By combining these various sources of knowledge and experiences, my aim is to provide you with practical insights and guidance that will empower you to develop your own unique approach to wu wei. Together, we will embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery and personal growth, harnessing the wisdom of the Tao Te Ching and integrating it into your daily life.

A State of Being

To fully embrace wu wei as a way of life, it is important to recognize that it goes beyond being a mere technique or skill. It is a state of being and an approach to quality living. By aligning your actions with the natural rhythm

and flow of the universe, it allows you to achieve your goals and find fulfillment in life.

The key to practicing wu wei lies in finding harmony between your inner self and the external world. It is not about acquiring new information or mastering specific techniques; it is about letting go of inhibitions to the natural flow and embracing authenticity. By doing so, you tap into your innate capabilities, such as creativity, intuition, and resilience, which naturally emerge and guide you along the path of least resistance.

However, for many people, behaving naturally can be challenging. Often, our desire to be natural leads to self-consciousness and clumsiness. Yet, approaching it through the lens of wu wei can make it more accessible and manageable. As Lao Tzu famously wrote, “By letting it go, it all gets done.” By surrendering our attachments and striving to be in harmony with the flow of life, we can experience noticeable progress and growth.

I’m confident you’ll see noticeable progress, starting from reading the initial chapters.

Introduction

1

The Philosophy

The term “wu wei” translates to “doing nothing,” but its true meaning goes beyond the conventional interpretation of passivity or inaction.

In the context of wu wei, “nothing” does not imply a state of complete inactivity or indifference. Instead, it refers to a state of effortless action, where you act in perfect alignment with the natural flow of the universe.

Mystery of the Invisible

There is an invisible force that significantly impacts our lives, even if we are not consciously aware of it. It impacts our thinking, shapes our behaviors, and provides us with what it takes to live a life of abundance.

No one can tell what this force exactly is. However, it’s so important we can’t afford to ignore its impact. To illustrate what it is, Lao Tzu gives the invisible force a name. He calls it the Tao, although you can give it any name you like.

While the Tao is hidden from our view, knowing it helps us better understand ourselves and our world. If we can leverage it, it can help us to be more effective in everything we do.

Since the Tao is invisible, Lao Tzu uses another word, “nothing,” to describe its state of being. It’s how the concept of wu wei come about. When we say that wu wei is doing nothing, the “nothing” is, in fact, the

behavior of the Tao. The Tao is powerful. If we can integrate it into things we do, we'll be able to achieve success with ease.

Power of Nothingness

Lao Tzu uses a few analogies to illustrate the importance of nothingness. An example is a pot. If the purpose of the pot is for cooking, it is useful not for its physical attributes, such as its body, handle, or cover, but for its emptiness, where you can put the content. The emptiness, though invisible, is the pot's reason for existence.

Similarly, no matter how magnificent a house is, it is the space within that makes it livable. If the house is without space, no one can live in it, and it can't serve its intended purpose of habitation. Therefore, it is not a house.

To live a life of purpose, we must know our "emptiness" as well. We must be able to appreciate the invisible in the visible. It is our Tao of existence.

While the Tao is hidden from our view, we must recognize and understand it to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world we live in. Better still, leverage it to help us live a better life.

See the Invisible in the Visible

Let's learn to identify the invisible in the visible.

When meeting someone for the first time, see beyond their physical appearance and verbal communication. By seeing the invisible aspects, such as the unspoken intentions and underlying emotions, we can know more about the person and connect with them on a deeper level.

Similarly, when we pursue financial goals, it's important to consider the invisible aspects of money. Instead of solely focusing on the numerical value, explore its deeper meaning in our lives. By knowing the true value of

money in the context of our goals and aspirations, we can align our actions with our broader purpose.

In the face of rejection, don't succumb to discouragement. Instead, see beyond the surface-level rejection and seek the invisible elements that influenced the decision; in so doing, we gain a more accurate perspective. It helps us learn from the experience, adjust our approach, and navigate future challenges more effectively.

By consistently practicing to identify the invisible within the visible, we're more aware of the interconnectedness of things. It enables us to make wiser decisions, foster better relationships, and lead a more fulfilling life in alignment with the underlying truths and dynamics of the world.

2

Why Is Wu Wei Important?

The power of wu wei lies in its deep respect for nature.

In whatever we do, we're guided not by our desires alone but by the invisible principle of Tao underlying it. So we go with the flow of nature.

If you observe carefully, you'd realize that much of what we do are results of not what we do. When we walk, we depend on the stability of the ground beneath our feet. When we breathe, we need the atmosphere to provide us with life-sustaining oxygen.

We're not the sole actors; we depend on nature for support and success.

Things happen through us, not by us.

Recognizing this interdependence allows us to approach our goals with humility and gratitude and cultivate a deeper connection with the universe.

It's the essence of wu wei.

Ego often gets in the way of the flow of nature. When driven by ego, we tend to overthink, overwork, and overestimate our ability to influence outcomes.

By embracing wu wei, we recognize that we play different roles in different situations. We may sometimes play a central and pivotal role but are insignificant in others. The roles we play are based on the natural flow rather than the perceived importance of our contribution.

It implies accomplishing our goals; it doesn't mean that the harder we work, the better the results. Similarly, achieving our goals does not have to come at the expense of our family or health.

It enables us to avoid exhaustion and enjoy the fruits of our labor without sacrificing the things that matter most to us in life. By balancing effort with ease, we can have our cake and eat it too.

Benefits of Wu Wei

With the support of nature, wu wei offers us a variety of benefits. These are some examples:

Effectiveness: By aligning with the natural flow of things, you reduce wasteful effort by avoiding excessive control or forcing outcomes.

Health: By going in tandem with the natural rhythms of life, we avoid physical and emotional strains. Rather than rushing or pushing yourself to extremes, you listen to natural rhythm to sustain a high level of vitality.

Relationships: You respect and work harmoniously with people, making you a better leader both at home and at work.

Fulfillment: You are driven by your passion and live your purpose and meaning in life. It brings you greater satisfaction and contentment in life.

Wu Wei helps us access an intuitive and spontaneous state of mind and brings out the best in us. It allows our innate qualities, from curiosity and creativity to resilience, to play a bigger role in our life while unleashing our hidden potential in the process.

It Takes Discipline and Perseverance

While the benefits of wu wei are apparent, going with the flow of nature is not as easy as we like it to be.

Due to disruptions such as our egos, it can be challenging to remain true to ourselves and in harmony with the world around us.

In situations like insomnia, we know it's time to let go of anxiety so that our bodies can be in a natural state of energy regeneration, but the more we want to relax, the more alert we become, keeping us awake all night.

Similar challenges arise in other aspects of life. We recognize the importance of spending quality time with our loved ones, yet work demands can easily distract us from doing it. We know remaining calm and composed is essential in conflicts or arguments, but in the heat of the moment, emotions can easily overpower our ability to remain calm.

What are we going to do?

One approach is to simplify things by focusing on the principle of wu wei. Before delving deeper into it, however, I'd like to clarify some confusion surrounding the practice.

3

Confusion About Wu Wei

To truly grasp the essence of wu wei, knowing what it is not is useful.

While wu wei embodies simplicity and elegance, its connection to the invisible Tao often obscures its true nature, leading to confusion. Allow me to shed light on some common misunderstandings:

Wu Wei Is Not Just About Doing Less

Wu Wei revolves around the principle of downstream effort, like rowing a boat downstream or cutting wood along the grain. By aligning ourselves with the natural flow of things, we effortlessly accomplish tasks without forceful striving.

As a result, many people associate wu wei with the notion of doing less. The phrase “do less to achieve more” has become a common expression used to capture this practice.

However, it is important to recognize that wu wei is not just about doing less; it’s about finding the right balance between effort and ease. In everything we do, there exists an optimal point where our efforts are best exerted. It is crucial to find that sweet spot.

By striking this balance, we tap into the power of nature and enhance our performance. When a task demands greater effort, we apply ourselves

accordingly. Nevertheless, once we reach the point of optimal effort, we refrain from expending unnecessary energy to avoid diminishing returns.

Having said that, I still believe doing less is a good way to begin the practice of wu wei. Because we desire to have more, we are inclined to overthink, overanalyze and overwork. In this case, doing less is a good place to start as far as practicing wu wei is concerned.

It Is All Right To Have Non-Flow

The essence of wu wei lies in harmonizing with the natural flow of life. When we are in a state of flow, we experience a profound sense of balance, focus, and presence, enabling us to accomplish tasks with utmost effectiveness.

It does not, however, imply that non-flow is necessarily a bad thing in and of itself. In fact, it is often a necessary precursor to experiencing flow. However, for you to enjoy the flow, you must be ready to embrace non-flow.

When you learn to cycle a bike, for example, trying to balance and pedal the bike at the same time can be awkward, and it's normal to struggle. The state of non-flow is an essential part of progressing towards the state of flow, or wu wei.

In fact, you may intentionally increase the level of non-flow in preparation for a more effective flow later. Athletes, for example, add extra weight to their training regimen. While this may slow them down during training, once the weight is removed, they can flow more effectively, and it can mean better performance during competition. Similarly, entrepreneurs deliberately seek challenges to toughen themselves up so that they can tackle even greater challenges in the future.

At the same time, while we strive to achieve a state of flow, it's important to acknowledge that life is not always a smooth journey. We sometimes feel upset, fall ill, or lose motivation. During these moments of non-flow, don't lose heart. Instead, accept the situation and seek ways to tap into the power of nature to restore the flow.

Time To Stop the Flow

Not every mountain is worth climbing, and not every flow is worth your effort. Stop the flow if it's not something that matters.

For example, when you're halfway through a movie, but it's already past midnight, should you continue watching? While the flow of watching the movie may be enticing, it's important to consider the impact on your health and your flow the next day. Going with this flow, in this instance, can negatively affect the effectiveness of a bigger or more important flow. Therefore, if a flow is not worth pursuing, redirect your focus toward a more meaningful or productive flow.

Don't forget the big picture. Wu Wei is not just about individual flows but rather about how those flows fit into the larger cycles of life. Each small cycle must be aligned to make the big cycle effective. When faced with a flow that won't contribute to the big cycle, it's wise to think twice before going with it.

Time To Detach From Flow

Wu Wei is about going with the flow of nature. There're, however, occasions when you must stay detached to produce a better result. It's, I'd say, the most difficult form of wu wei to practice.

Just imagine that you're in a negotiation. If you're too engrossed in the flow, you could be drifting along the other party's line of thoughts and

compromise your target outcomes as a result. To stand firmly, you'll have to stay away from the immediate flow to gain clarity.

You're deeply involved and yet not involved.

When you are held in captivity for some unfortunate reason, you'd need to stay detached to stay clear-minded. Otherwise, you may succumb to fear and do what your captors tell you to do, putting yourself in a more disadvantaged position. If you can stay detached, you're likely to jump out from the flow and begin a new cycle, spotting opportunities and repositioning to find an escape route in the process.

You'll be in the flow and yet not in the flow.

Stillness as a Form of Flow

To attain harmony with the universal, you must be connected to it. The better the connection, the better the alignment. When you're in stillness, you're meditative, putting you in a frequency where you can communicate with the universe more effectively. You may appear to be doing nothing, yet you are, in fact, engaged in a profound activity of listening to the flow of the universe. Despite being motionless, you're actively interacting with the universe with an invisible movement of flow.

4

How To Use This Book

I have written this book with a simple objective in mind: to guide you in making wu wei a way of life.

It serves as an action-oriented guide that allows you to put the principles of wu wei into practice and validate your understanding of its teachings. Action is crucial when learning wu wei, much like swimming, where theories alone serve little purpose. By actively applying what you learn, you can truly witness the results and deepen your understanding.

The concepts of wu wei may seem deceptively simple. It is easy to assume that you already grasp them at a conceptual level, but in reality, true comprehension requires a practical application.

An example is not forcing. Understanding the idea of not forcing outcomes is insufficient. The challenge lies in telling the degree of force that constitutes “forcing.” For example, if you lead a team, should you completely step back and let them handle everything, or should you periodically check their progress? Finding the right balance can only be achieved through active engagement and practice.

While understanding the principles is important as they provide depth to the practice, it is the combination of theory and action that allows for genuine progress. As Lao Tzu wisely expressed in chapter 48 of the Tao Te Ching, “Learning of knowledge, we add something every day. Learning of

wisdom, we let go of something every day. Let go, and let go to the state of wu wei.” The practice of wu wei entails an ongoing process of letting go of things that no longer serve us and attaining a state of alignment.

Throughout this book, you will find practical exercises, reflections, and techniques that encourage you to embody the principles of wu wei in your daily life. By actively participating in this journey of self-discovery and transformation, you will cultivate a deeper understanding of wu wei and its profound influence on your well-being and interactions with the world around you.

The 7-step Roadmap

A 7-step path of this book was developed to guide you on the journey of integrating wu wei into your daily life. Each step focuses on a specific area and aims to help you let go and achieve more.

1. **Find your flow:** You’ll learn about what flow is and what it means to you. You’ll also learn how you can accept what is and reframe your perspective to make the most of every flow.
2. **Optimize your energy:** You’ll learn how to generate positive energy, such as how to navigate more effectively by being soft and yielding; how to attract a massive inflow of energy through positioning; how to achieve balance, effort, and ease; and how to fuse the yin and yang energies.
3. **Make things simple:** You’ll learn how to make your life simple by managing time and cycles of movement. You’ll learn about the constant changes that make it easier to make changes.
4. **Keep to your center:** You’ll learn about the power of passion and how you can leverage it to achieve life balance and excellence in the things you do.

5. **Quiet confidence:** You'll learn the secret behind quiet confidence and how you can cultivate it to bring out your hidden potential.
6. **Manage timing:** You'll learn about the power of timing and how you can use it to impact what you do.
7. **Go with the flow:** You'll learn the five forms of wu wei and how you can tap into each to make wu wei work more effectively for you.

Whether you are using this book as a companion to my training courses or simply as a guide, I am confident you will benefit greatly from the guide.

The Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu is the most valuable guide for wu wei practice, and it is what I based this book on. However, our focus here is to put the wisdom to work, so I would quote the ancient book only sparingly, leaving the theoretical aspects to my other books.

STEP 1

Find Your Flow



5

What Are the Elements in a Flow?

Wu Wei is about going with the flow of nature.

We may define flow as a state of continuous and effortless movement, like the fluidity of water or the gentle breeze of wind. It is a state of being that embodies freedom and flexibility.

When you find yourself in a state of flow, your focus becomes heightened. Your mind, body, and spirit align in perfect harmony, working together seamlessly. There is no need for force or imposition because everything seems to effortlessly fall into place.

In this state, you let go of self-imposed limitations and attune yourself to the natural rhythms of the universe, much like the way wind and water move in harmony with their surroundings. You fully embrace the present moment and allow events to unfold naturally without trying to control or manipulate them.

Being in flow brings about a profound sense of joy, ease, and liberation. It's a feeling that can be likened to the elation you experience when your loved one accepts your marriage proposal or the exhilaration that comes with successfully completing a challenging marathon.

Ultimately, embracing the concept of flow and practicing wu wei allows you to tap into the inherent harmony of the universe and live in alignment with its natural rhythms. By surrendering to the flow, you find yourself

immersed in a state of joyous connection, where effort gives way to effortlessness, and life unfolds with grace and ease.

Are You in the Flow?

Let's assess the level of flow in your life. Begin by observing how you exert your energy. Are you allowing things to unfold naturally, or are you forcing them to happen? Consider the following examples:

Exercise: You know it's important to exercise regularly to keep fit. However, if you find yourself dragging your feet to the gym or dreading your runs, it suggests a lack of flow. You're forcing yourself to engage in these activities.

Persuasion: Imagine you're trying to convince a customer to accept your offer, but they're not yet ready. If you repeatedly push your viewpoint without considering their perspective, it indicates a forceful approach that hinders the flow of communication.

Writing: Suppose you struggle to find the right words while working on a report. If you persist without giving yourself the space to overcome the mental block, you risk forcing the process and disrupting the flow of creativity.

So, what can you do in these situations to restore the flow?

The TPP

To better understand how flow operates, it's beneficial to familiarize yourself with the principle of TPP - timing, place, and people. These three factors play a crucial role in facilitating the occurrence of any event or activity. Without their alignment, things may not happen, or they may be compromised in some way.

Holding a meeting requires proper timing, a suitable venue, and the participation of attendees. If any of these factors are lacking, the meeting cannot take place successfully. Similarly, cooking a meal requires a cook, a functioning kitchen, and appropriate timing. Without these elements, there is no meal.

When flow is absent or disrupted, it's essential to assess how you can manage the TPP to improve the situation.

Let's explore how this can be applied to the first example of not wanting to force yourself to go to the gym:

Timing: Consider adjusting the timing of your exercise routine. Exercising first thing in the morning before the day's demands arise may help you avoid feeling forced or overwhelmed.

Place: If going to the gym feels like a hassle, explore alternative venues. Can you find a nearby park or recreation center where you can engage in activities that align better with your preferences?

People: Reflect on your motivation and whether the gym environment truly suits you. Perhaps exploring different physical activities, such as brisk walking or swimming, can provide a more enjoyable and sustainable fitness routine.

In the second example of forcing your view on a customer, observing the TPP can help improve the interaction:

Timing: Have you allowed the customer sufficient time to understand the offer? Have you built rapport and addressed their concerns before attempting to close the deal? Can you offer time-limited incentives at critical decision points?

Place: The place in this context doesn't have to be confined to physical places. It can be viewed from the perspective of positioning as well. Is the positioning of the offer right? Do the pricing and service packages take into consideration the customer's needs and expectations?

People: Do you sound more like a salesperson or an advisor? What about the customer? Could it be that you're talking to the wrong person? Can the person make a purchase decision? If the audience is wrong, it is difficult for you to close a sale, no matter how hard you try.

In the third example of being stuck while writing a report, adjusting the TPP can help reignite your flow:

Timing: If you have been working for a while, your mind may no longer be functioning properly anymore. It's probably the time to take a break to recharge your energy.

Place: What about changing your physical location to stimulate your thinking? Relocate to a different area of your office or venture to a nearby cafe that offers a different ambiance. A change in environment can often inspire new ideas.

People: If you're struggling due to a lack of information, seek out the necessary resources or consult with colleagues who can provide the insights you need. Collaboration and gathering relevant input can be strategies that help you move forward with your report.

By adjusting the TPP factors in these situations, you can create a more conducive environment for flow to resume and overcome the challenges you're facing.

Finding the Harmony

The principle of TPP is essential to understanding how flow works. It's clear that for things to happen, all three factors - timing, place, and people - must be present and work together. You are just one factor in the whole, and your role is to work with the flow rather than forcing your desires onto it. By recognizing this, your ego takes a backseat, leading you to a state of wu wei.

Practicing this principle in the little things you do every day can help remove obstacles that hinder the flow. Whether it's brushing your teeth, conducting a meeting, or driving a car, you can make the flow more effective and serve you better by aligning yourself with it.

As Lao Tzu said in the Tao Te Ching, "Hold fast to the Tao and wander the world. Wander and suffer no harm. Fill the heart with peace and calm." Staying connected to the flow allows you to navigate the world with more ease and inner tranquility.

6

Accepting What Is

Life is not always smooth sailing, and sometimes things don't go according to plan. It can be frustrating when people dislike us for reasons we can't comprehend or when our projects fail in unexpected ways. When the timing, place, and people, or TPP, involved are not ideal, it can disrupt our natural flow and make us feel like everything is working against us.

So what can we do in these situations? One powerful strategy is to simply accept what is happening. Acceptance means acknowledging and coming to terms with the reality of the situation without trying to fight against it or deny it.

Despite the obvious reasons for accepting reality, we often do the opposite. We refuse to accept, feel angry, blame the world, or drown ourselves in despair. However, denying or resisting reality only prolongs our suffering and prevents us from moving forward.

Unfortunately, what has happened has already happened. We cannot change reality through denial. It won't go away simply because our ego doesn't want it to be there. Not accepting reality is like fighting against it, and fighting against reality is a losing battle. Acceptance can be painful, but not accepting it can be even more painful.

Learning to accept reality is a powerful way to cope with whatever has happened. Acceptance doesn't mean hiding our heads in the sand but rather

repositioning ourselves for change. It is the first step we must take. If we don't accept, we can't engage. If we don't engage, we won't understand what has actually happened, and it will be difficult for us to change things for the better.

To effect any change, we must begin with acceptance. For example, if we do not accept that our bodies are no longer as healthy as they once were, we may not take any action to improve them. When we accept that it's a problem, we can explore ways to bring back its vitality. Similarly, when we accept that our relationship is in trouble, it can prompt us to have an honest conversation with our partner and work together to rebuild trust. When we accept that we're unhappy in our current job, it can motivate us to update our resumes and apply for a new position.

Acceptance brings us a step closer to what's happening. Knowing what has happened eliminates our resistance to flow and can even generate a new flow to help us deal with the situation. By accepting reality as it is, we can begin to shift our focus toward finding solutions and opportunities for growth. This can bring a sense of relief and inner peace as we release the negative emotions and stress associated with denial or resistance.

Bring Back Your Flow With Acceptance

In my experience, acceptance is the fundamental step toward practicing wu wei. Without acceptance, it becomes difficult for the flow to manifest. When you truly accept a situation, you can begin to engage with it, and the flow naturally emerges.

However, accepting reality is not always easy. It can be uncomfortable and even painful. Despite these challenges, it's important not to give up on the practice of acceptance. Consider the tremendous benefits it brings, such as helping you persevere and navigate through life's challenges.

Start by cultivating acceptance in small aspects of your life and make it a habit. Admit your mistakes when you've made them and acknowledge your true emotional state, even if it's not a positive one.

As acceptance becomes a habit, you'll notice how it positively impacts your ability to handle various situations in life. Here are a few examples to prompt your thinking:

If you've made a mistake, rather than wasting effort on justifications or cover-ups, be honest with yourself and quietly admit the mistake, even if social considerations prevent a public admission.

Remember that perfection is unattainable. Do your best, but if the outcome falls short, acknowledge it. Reflect on how you can improve in the future and move forward.

When faced with an unfair remark about you, avoid judging it. Instead, try to find any merit within it. If it's intended to harm, minimize its impact. If it's sincere feedback, accept it with gratitude.

When something has changed, accept that change has occurred. While it's natural to feel upset about losing a hundred dollars, dwelling excessively on the loss only makes it worse.

Practice forgiveness, even when someone has caused you harm. It's natural to feel anger, but holding onto grudges and resentment only harms your own mental health. Recognize that what has happened cannot be changed and focus on moving on rather than dwelling on negative emotions.

By embracing acceptance in various aspects of your life, you cultivate a mindset that fosters inner peace, resilience, and a harmonious flow in your actions.

7

Let Things Flow

To fully embrace the essence of wu wei, know the biggest driving force behind the flow. In my view, that force is passion.

Passion has the remarkable ability to facilitate a natural and effortless flow. When you are passionate about something, there is no need to exert force or push things forward. Consider the experience of being in love—there is an inherent motivation to be with your sweetheart without the need for external prompts. Similarly, when you savor a delicious meal, there is no call to action necessary to indulge in its flavors. The passion within you guides the flow.

Passion Generates Flow

When there is passion, there is flow.

In the practice of wu wei, passion serves as a powerful catalyst. By tapping into its energy, you can effortlessly accomplish tasks and achieve desired outcomes.

Never underestimate the importance of passion. Discover how you can harness its power to elevate every endeavor. Even when faced with activities you may not naturally enjoy, you can reframe your mindset by infusing them with your passion, ultimately transforming your experience.

For instance, if exercise feels like a burdensome chore, explore ways to make it enjoyable through the injection of your passions. What about listening to your favorite music during workouts? You may also experiment with different forms of exercise until you discover one that truly ignites your passion. Exercise doesn't mean going to the gym. It can be a brisk walk in a park or part of a social group activity like cycling with cherished friends.

Even activities as unappealing as cleaning can become interesting if you can infuse your passion into it. You may set a timer and challenge yourself to complete the cleaning within a specific timeframe to make it more exciting. You may also transform the chore into a mindful exercise by attentively observing your movements and the positive impact they have. One of my friends turns cleaning into a passion when he sees removing dust as an achievement. Amazing!

Passion has the remarkable ability to invigorate and elevate any activity. Embrace its transformative power, and you will witness how effortlessly you can immerse yourself in the flow of life.

Passion Gives You Courage

Passion not only serves as an impetus but also makes you courageous.

Just observe how a mother hen defends her chicks. Despite being no match for you in terms of physical strength, her passion for protecting her offspring compels her to confront you fearlessly.

With passion as your driving force, you're resilient in your pursuits, even in the face of adversity and risks. It fuels your determination, propelling you forward despite obstacles. Throughout history, we witness revolutionaries who exhibit unwavering passion in their struggles, ready to sacrifice their lives for their causes.

When you allow passion to guide your actions, nothing can deter you from achieving your goals. The state of wu wei naturally arises within you; there is no need for deliberate learning.

It's for this reason that I'd suggest that you refrain from engaging in activities for which you lack passion unless you can reframe your mindset and link it to your passion. It may sound realistic, but it is not really difficult if you can go deeper and find a way.

Find Your Passion

Discovering your passion is not always easy. If you find yourself unsure of what truly ignites your soul, turn to your heart for guidance.

While the brain serves as a valuable tool for logic and reasoning, it doesn't always lead you to your deepest passions. By allowing your heart to take the lead, you tap into the core of your being.

Passion connects you strongly with the flow of life. There is a natural harmony, devoid of resistance or friction, between yourself and the tasks at hand. It feels as though fulfilling these passions is the very purpose of your existence.

When you immerse yourself in activities that fuel your passion, time seems to slip away unnoticed, and you lose yourself in the present moment. You are fully engaged and energized, with an overwhelming feeling of being alive. Distractions fade away as you become captivated by the experience.

Whether it's the pages of a compelling book, a meaningful conversation with someone, or engaging in an activity that resonates with your passions, the power of passion can captivate your attention and enrich your encounters. You are completely present and focused, unaffected by external concerns.

When you discover passion within the pages of a book, you feel compelled to devour it from cover to cover, unable to put it down until the final page is turned. Similarly, when you encounter passion in a person, an intense connection is formed that draws you in and enchantingly captivates your senses.

While passion holds great importance, it is vital to remember that it cannot be forced. It must arise naturally from within you. When you allow passion to guide your life's journey, it has the transformative power to unlock hidden potential, transcend personal limitations, and inspire you to reach new frontiers of achievement.

While it's valuable to be aware of your passions, it's not uncommon to lack clarity about them. If you find yourself in this situation, consider pondering these questions:

What activities absorb you to the extent that you lose track of time? What tasks can you engage in for hours without noticing time passing?

Which topics ignite a spark of excitement within you? If you enjoy conversations, what subjects can you discuss tirelessly? If you have a passion for teaching, which subjects do you feel compelled to share with others? If exploration captivates you, what areas of interest do you continuously research and delve into?

If you possessed unlimited financial resources and complete freedom to choose, how would you spend your time? Envision yourself in this scenario and contemplate the activities that resonate most deeply with your desires. Additionally, reflect on the kind of people you would choose to surround yourself with in such a circumstance.

What kind of legacy do you wish to leave behind? Consider how you want to be remembered after your passing. Reflect not only on general

qualities like being a caring friend or devoted parent but also on the specific actions and impact you aspire to have on the lives of those around you.

Once you have identified your passions, it becomes important to tap into them to live a more fulfilling life. By harnessing your passions, you can fuel your practice of wu wei and attain improved outcomes in all areas of your life, including your business endeavors, career growth, relationships, and spiritual pursuits.

The Biggest Obstacle Is Ego

While passion is the biggest impetus to flow, ego is its biggest obstacle.

When consumed by self-centered desires, you disregard the natural rhythm of things, disconnecting yourself from the flow of nature. It's important to recognize that ego itself is not inherently negative; a healthy sense of ego helps maintain momentum. However, it can become a hindrance if it goes unchecked.

When your ego is unhealthily strong, you're defensive. You dislike hearing opposing points of view and seeing things that are not to your liking. Resistance takes hold, impeding the flow. You're stubborn and cling to your singular definition of success. It obstructs the influx of new energy and stunts personal growth. Opportunities pass you by while you shy away from taking risks.

Moreover, an inflated ego causes rigidity and stifles your innate qualities, preventing them from serving you freely. If you find that your spontaneity wanes, check to see if your ego has become so overpowering that it obstructs the flow. Reflect upon questions such as:

Am I attempting to control the uncontrollable? Am I insistent that things must be done exclusively my way?

Do I impose my views on others without allowing them adequate space to understand my perspective?

Why am I impatient? Have I allowed enough time for things to unfold naturally?

Why do I react angrily to feedback? Am I overreacting because it challenges my self-esteem?

Why am I feeling stuck? Am I open-minded enough to listen to the unknown?

Similar to clearing a clogged drain, the most effective approach when feeling stuck is to remove the obstruction. Often, ego is the culprit. Take decisive action to eliminate it and restore the flow. It's not always easy. I, too, have been trying to tame my ego, and it still intrudes every now and then. Embrace simple victories along the way and celebrate each small triumph.

Remember, the more you can detach from ego-driven desires and align with the natural flow, the closer you come to experiencing the state of wu wei.

8

Reframe the Mindset

Passion has the power to light up everything you do - even those that you don't enjoy doing.

By aligning your actions with your passions, you unlock a profound source of energy and inspiration that propels you toward your goals. Whether you're pursuing a hobby, engaging in a project, or simply carrying out daily tasks, infusing them with your unique interests and talents can result in surprising levels of enjoyment and fulfillment.

When there is passion, there is flow. You are in the state of wu wei effortlessly.

What if You Don't Enjoy What You Are Doing?

If you find yourself engaged in activities that you don't particularly enjoy, see how you can make a difference by reframing your mindset and connecting them to your passions.

Start by reexamining your current situation. Instead of seeing obstacles as hindrances, see how they can help you in other ways. By remaining open to possibilities and embracing the unknown, you may uncover hidden blessings in unexpected places.

By linking what you do to your passion, even the most challenging circumstances can be transformed into valuable experiences that contribute

to your personal growth and ultimate success.

For instance, imagine your true passion is writing, and you have a deep desire to become an author. However, your current job involves working as a waiter in a restaurant to make ends meet, which may be frustrating and seemingly unrelated to your passion for writing.

Such mismatches between passion and reality are all too common in life. Instead of succumbing to frustration, ask yourself, “Can I do anything to change this situation?”

Consider how you can connect what you do to your passion. While you may not be able to write during your working hours, perhaps you can make use of the opportunity to observe people and draw inspiration for the characters in your next novel.

By aligning your work as a waiter with your passion for writing, you can view your role from a fresh perspective and infuse it with newfound interest and creativity.

Apply the same approach to redefine any situation you find yourself in, and you’ll be able to embrace the state of wu wei on every occasion, making it more fulfilling and rewarding.

Remember that nature is a wellspring of inspiration. By keeping an open mind, one thing will naturally lead to another. Allow things to unfold organically, and you’ll be pleasantly surprised by the opportunities that arise along the way.

Turn Your Ego Into Passion

While ego can be a significant obstacle to flow, it is possible to transform it into something rewarding by reframing your mindset and linking it to your passion.

For example, if you're a person who likes to impress, rather than constantly comparing yourself to others, you can redirect your competitive drive towards challenging your development. Let's say you work in sales. Instead of setting ambitious targets solely to outperform others, you can channel that drive towards improving your personal qualities such as curiosity, intuition, and creativity. Use each sales opportunity as a measure of your growth in these areas that genuinely excite you. By focusing on personal improvement rather than external competition, you're likely to achieve both personal growth and better sales performance.

By shifting your mindset and harnessing your ego-driven tendencies towards your passion, you can become more effective and productive in all aspects of your life. This approach allows you to transcend the limitations imposed by your ego and tap into your true potential, resulting in a more fulfilling and successful journey.

Stay in the Present

By reframing your mindset and aligning the situation you're in with your passion, every moment can become a productive moment filled with purpose and fulfillment.

Take a moment right now to pause and assess your current state. Ask yourself, "Am I truly happy and engaged in what I'm doing at this very moment?" This self-reflection allows you to become aware of any disconnection between your actions and your passion.

Next, consider how you can make the present moment more interesting and fruitful by aligning it with your passion. Explore ways to infuse your unique interests, talents, and values into the task at hand. Whether it's finding a creative solution, approaching it with enthusiasm, or seeking

opportunities for growth and learning, reframing your mindset can transform even the simplest of tasks into meaningful experiences.

Don't overlook the significance of the little things you do. Though individual moments may appear transient and insignificant, they are the building blocks of your life. Recognize that each moment holds the potential to contribute to your personal growth and ultimate greatness. By valuing and embracing these small moments, you cultivate a mindset that appreciates the journey and understands that greatness is not achieved in one grand gesture but through the accumulation of countless meaningful moments.

So, put the book down and see how you can make this moment great by aligning it with your passion. Embrace the power of reframing and recognize the immense potential within every transient second of your life.

STEP 2

Optimize Your Energy



9

Energy Never Die

To make the most of what you do, you need energy. But not all energy is created equal.

We can broadly categorize it into two types: The positive and the negative, and each impact you in very different ways. It explains why a happy person tends to become happier and an angry person angrier.

To fully embrace and make the most of each moment, it is important to be aware of the dominant type of energy present within us. Positive energy has the ability to brighten our day and uplift our spirits, while negative energy has the potential to cast a shadow and dampen the moment.

To allow positive energy to permeate our lives, let us turn our attention to an inspiring quote from the Tao Te Ching, the profound philosophical text.

"Spirit of the Valley Never Dies"

Lao Tzu begins chapter 6 of the Tao Te Ching by saying, "The spirit of the valley never dies. It is called the mysterious feminine."

What do you think the message intends to convey?

Let's begin with the first part of the quotation: "Spirit of the valley never dies."

A valley is a low-lying area encircled by higher ground, often with a river or stream flowing below. The metaphor represents a receptive and open

space where energy flows naturally and freely.

When you shout into the valley, what do you hear? You hear not only your own voice but also its echo bouncing back to you. In a way, the echo is your voice and not your voice. It's a reflection of your voice, but not exactly your voice. Philosophically, it suggests that the universe responds to the energy you emit by reflecting it back to you.

The key lesson from this metaphor is that the energy we receive from the universe is closely connected to the energy we emit. If we release positive energy into the world, we attract positive energy in return. Conversely, negative energy rebounds as negative energy.

It's, therefore, very important to know the type of energy that you carry with you.

Let's take stock of the energy that you're carrying. Are you filling yourself with positive or negative energy?

Positive energy, rooted in emotions such as love, gratitude, and empathy, creates a sense of liveliness, peace, and joy. It connects us harmoniously with others and nurtures our hearts.

On the other hand, negative energy stemming from emotions like anger, hatred, and jealousy weighs us down and hampers our growth. It creates rigidity and unhappiness, leading to stress and stagnation.

Cultivate and release positive energy, and you attract more positive energy from the universe. As the universe is vast and abundant, the positive energy we receive multiplies, creating a virtuous cycle of positivity in our lives.

Remember to release positive energy. It allows us to tap into the wonder of the universe and attract more positive energy, brightening our days and enriching our existence. This is a marvel of wu wei.

"It Is the Mystical Feminine"

The second half of the quotation is equally, if not more, perplexing, “It is the mystical feminine.” What does it mean?

To understand this part of the phrase, you must know what “*femininity*” means. It extends beyond gender associations and encompasses the characteristics of yin energy - gentleness and receptivity. It is important to note that anyone, regardless of gender, can embody these qualities.

Femininity, in this sense, represents an approach that attracts and harnesses energy to work in your favor. For instance, when you are soft and relaxed, these qualities open up your body’s sinews and meridians, facilitating the smooth flow of energy and nourishing your physical being. Conversely, rigidity and stiffness disrupt this flow, potentially leading to blockages and ailments.

If *femininity* is powerful, then “*mystical femininity*” takes it to a transcendent level. The term “mystical” translates from the Chinese character “xuan” 玄, denoting something profound and beyond ordinary human comprehension. While femininity primarily deals with energy within life, mystical femininity connects us to a pure, primordial source of energy from the universe itself.

By embracing and harnessing the power of *mystical femininity*, you can establish a profound connection with the universe and tap into its vast wellspring of energy. It transcends personal limitations and expands consciousness to new dimensions.

Through this expanded awareness, one gains access to spiritual and mystical realms, aligning with the universal consciousness.

Moreover, the practice of mystical femininity elevates the practice of wu wei to new heights. Wu Wei is about harmonizing with nature, and femininity optimizes the way we utilize and cultivate our energy. By connecting with the intelligence of the pure, primordial energy of the

universe, mystical femininity nourishes us with wisdom. Together, they deepen the practice of wu wei, making it ever more profound.

10

Power of Softness

To optimize energy, stay soft.

Softness is a source of vitality, as beautifully expressed by Lao Tzu in chapter 76 of the Tao Te Ching, “A person is born soft and supple. At their death, they are hard and stiff. Green plants are born soft and tender. At their death, they are brittle and dry.”

In the human life cycle, infancy is the phase of greatest softness and rapid growth. Conversely, as we near the end of our journey, rigidity and hardness tend to prevail. However, by consciously embracing and cultivating softness, we can promote and maintain our health.

One way to nurture softness is through physical practices such as stretching. By keeping our bodies supple, we allow the free flow of life energy, ensuring its smooth circulation and vitality throughout our being. Additionally, softness promotes healthy blood circulation, enhances metabolism, and reduces the burden of stress. At an awareness level, cultivating softness enables us to tune into our inner wisdom to address our physical and emotional needs. This holistic self-care approach allows us to age gracefully and embrace the fullness of life.

In a world that often values hardness, rigidity, and forcefulness, embracing softness may seem counterintuitive. However, it is through the gentle power of softness that we can tap into our inner resilience,

adaptability, and well-being. By intentionally incorporating softness into our lives, we honor the natural cycles of growth, maintain our vitality, and live with greater grace and harmony.

Like Water, Soft and Powerful

To experience the power of softness, learn from water.

Water is a favorite analogy of Lao Tzu. He uses it so often that the Tao Te Ching is sometimes referred to as a philosophy of water, and wu wei an approach of yieldingness.

Water is soft. Simply open a tap, and it gracefully yields to the resistance of your hands, gently enveloping them. It's so adaptable that it can take on any shape. When it's in a cup, it's in the shape of a cup. When it's in a pipe, it's in the shape of a pipe.

While soft, water can penetrate the hardest of substances. As Lao Tzu wrote in Chapter 43, "The softest of all things can overcome the hardest. That without form penetrates that without space."

Although rock is hard, water is able to penetrate through it to create a hole. By being soft and adaptable, water wears the rock away slowly and eventually shapes it into a beautiful canyon and cave. Although the transformation doesn't happen overnight, progress is made with every encounter, no matter how small it is.

By observing the nature of water, we can begin to comprehend the immense power that lies within softness. Through adaptability, perseverance, and a patient approach, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome, leaving behind a mark of beauty and resilience.

To understand how the quality of softness can help you in challenging situations, let's explore a case study together.

Let us consider Peter, who has found a new job that he truly enjoys. However, he faces the difficulty of an unreasonable boss. This boss is picky and pushy, making it nearly impossible for Peter to meet the expectations, regardless of his efforts. If you were in Peter's position, what would you do?

Peter has two options: to emulate a rock or to behave like water. Let's examine the potential outcomes of each choice and explore how learning from water can be more advantageous.

What if You're a Rock?

If Peter chooses to behave like a rock, he is likely to resist and confront his boss directly. This clash has the appearance of two unyielding rocks colliding. The likely result of such a confrontation is harm or even the breaking of one or both parties involved. Given Peter's disadvantaged position, even if he has a legitimate case, he is likely to suffer more.

Learning From Water

Alternatively, Peter can choose to learn from water and adopt a more flexible approach.

Water is adaptable and responds to the demands of different situations while remaining true to its nature. By embodying the qualities of water, Peter can choose to yield rather than resist. Yielding does not mean surrendering his position; instead, it allows Peter the space to listen, observe, and gain a better understanding of the situation, including his boss's intentions.

What if Peter discovers his boss's behavior is a tactic to test the endurance of new recruits? With this insight, Peter can engage with his boss

more effectively, armed with a deeper understanding of the underlying motivations.

When faced with any challenge, having space to react and reflect is crucial. It provides the opportunity to listen before deciding on the most appropriate course of action. Similar to water flowing around a rock, the act of yielding allows gradual influence to be exerted.

It doesn't mean Peter must endure bullying or humiliation indefinitely. While water is soft, it always maintains its center. When its center is disrupted, water quickly regains balance, sometimes even causing a powerful tsunami that sweeps away towns and farms. Like water, Peter can be fluid and pliable while staying true to his core values and goals.

As mentioned by Lao Tzu in chapter 33 of the Tao Te Ching, "Losing not our center, we shall endure." Like water, we can remain focused on our goals while remaining open to new opportunities. We can embody both softness and strength, finding a harmonious balance that allows us to navigate challenging situations with resilience and grace.

Let Softness Make a Difference

To truly grasp the transformative power of softness in your life, take a moment to observe how it can make a significant difference. Consider these examples:

Staying composed and calm: When anger takes hold, both your mind and body become tense. Practice softness by taking deep breaths and consciously calming yourself down. Be patient with yourself, as it may take time to soften. Avoid taking any actions until you feel the softness has permeated your being. Observe how this process can grant you clarity and create space for developing better-coping strategies.

Soft communication: When faced with resistance to your viewpoint, even when you believe you're right, avoid bulldozing your opinions. Forcing your ideas creates tension. Instead, emulate the yielding nature of water. Listen attentively to the other person's perspective, including the underlying tones. Present your own viewpoint only when you have a good understanding of the situation. Notice if approaching communication with softness brings about a positive shift in the dynamics.

Managing chores with softness: If you find yourself resisting mundane tasks such as cleaning, the resistance can harden your mind and body. Explore how you can reduce resistance through softness. For instance, transform the task into an exciting challenge by celebrating each removal of dust as an achievement. Alternatively, approach it as a mindfulness exercise, attentively observing and embracing every movement. By infusing softness into the task, you can shift your perception and make it more manageable.

Bouncing back from setbacks: Softness allows you to accept the current circumstances and view setbacks in a new light. When faced with unpleasant situations, strive to remain soft, flexible, and open. Embrace the setback as an opportunity for growth and learning. With a soft and adaptable mindset, you can transform setbacks into advantageous situations.

The beauty of softness lies in its ability to remove resistance, reducing the need for force. It facilitates the flow of life. With flexibility and openness, you can navigate chaos and turn circumstances to your advantage. Embrace the power of softness and put it into practice in your life. Observe the positive changes it brings as you embrace its transformative influence.

11

Position for Energy

To optimize your energy and unlock your potential, learn how you can position yourself for energy.

A stationary rock lacks the capacity to generate energy. However, once it starts rolling, the energy it releases can be tremendous. The impact it creates is influenced by factors such as the steepness of the incline or the weight of the rock. Similarly, you can tap into your own energy by initiating movement.

Start moving for energy.

Take action to release energy. If you don't take action, you can't unleash the energy in you, no matter how remarkable your hidden potential may be. Whether it's as simple as creating a to-do list or as complex as designing a new engine, the key is to start moving and taking action.

Begin with small steps. When faced with uncertainty about what to do, even the smallest action can set things in motion. Start by standing up and taking a walk. By initiating movement, you trigger action. Movement creates momentum. A cycle of a few minutes of action can lead to another cycle, eventually transforming short bursts of activity into hours or even days of progress.

Use triggers for action. Triggers serve as catalysts for movement, just like pushing a rock down a slope. Standing up can be a trigger, as can reminders

on your calendar. Develop the habit of responding to these triggers promptly, reducing hesitation and increasing your readiness for action.

By positioning yourself for energy and embracing movement, you unlock your potential and create a positive impact in your life. Embrace the power of action and build momentum, using triggers and small steps to consistently move forward.

Position To Attract Energy

Don't just exert energy; see how you can position for more energy.

Stand on the shoulders of giants. Learn from those who have mastered the skills you seek to acquire. Seek out mentors who can guide you in your work. By leveraging the knowledge and expertise of others, you can avoid reinventing the wheel and accelerate your own growth. Look for success models and learn from their experiences and insights.

Emulate seas and rivers. Position yourself to attract energy to flow to you. As Lao Tzu says in chapter 66 of the Tao Te Ching, "Why are seas and rivers rulers of streams of hundreds of valleys? It is because of their low positions."

Although seas and rivers have more water than the streams in the valleys, the water doesn't belong to them. They do nothing more than position themselves low so that water from nearby streams can flow to them. Similarly, if you want to receive more energy and opportunities, adopt humility and position yourself in a way that allows them to come to you. By attracting increased energy, you can accomplish things beyond your individual capacity.

This is the power of humility in the practice of wu wei. Let's try to put it to work.

Ask Smart Questions

A way to position for energy is to ask smart questions and seek advice.

If you don't know, ask.

Seek guidance from experts. You can read their books, attend their training programs, or directly approach them for advice. Simply by asking, you'll allow their energy to flow to you and nourish your growth.

You can learn from non-experts as well. Don't overlook people who appear insignificant. It could be a cleaner who directs you to the route of safety during a fire escape. By remaining open and receptive, you can learn from unexpected sources and expand your understanding.

Even people you don't like can be a useful resource. They may challenge your thoughts, point out your weaknesses, or provide critical feedback that helps you identify areas of improvement you might have overlooked. By embracing feedback with humility, you can uncover hidden weaknesses and grow in unexpected ways.

Attract the energy of others. When you approach learning and growth with humility and a willingness to accept assistance, you create an environment that attracts the energy and support of others. This abundance of collective energy, like "hundreds of streams in the valleys," can help you expand your capacity and achieve greater success. Great leaders tap into the universe's abundance by integrating the energy of others, recognizing that their accomplishments stem from collaboration and integration rather than their own effort.

Remember, seas and rivers are voluminous not because they generate water but because they are receptive to the streams that bring them water. By staying humble, receptive, and open to the energy and wisdom of others, you can tap into the abundance around you and achieve remarkable growth and success.

12

Balancing Effort and Ease

Is wu wei about doing less to achieve more?

The answer is yes and no. Strictly speaking, wu wei is not just about doing less. It's about finding an optimal balance between effort and ease. But because it's a human tendency to do more than necessary, more often than not, we can achieve a lot more simply by doing less.

Avoid Diminishing Returns

It is a commonly ingrained belief that the harder we work, the greater our chances of success. However, this oversimplifies the dynamics of achievement, often leading people to work hard in a misguided manner.

Bear in mind that when it comes to accomplishing tasks, our efforts are just one piece of a larger equation. We may feel like we are walking on our own, but without the support of the ground beneath our feet, we lack the very conditions necessary for movement.

When we set out to achieve something, our actions are only a fraction of the overall picture. The key contributing forces of timing, place, and people, i.e., TPP, play the primary roles. No matter how hard we work, if these primary factors are not aligned, we cannot attain the desired outcome.

Wu Wei is about aligning ourselves with the natural flow of things. To achieve optimal results, it's not a matter of putting in more or less effort but

how we can ensure that the effort that we exert is just right. Not too much, not too little.

If we can find the sweet spot of effort exertion, we'll work in harmony with the natural flow of things to get done effortlessly. Breathing is an example. There is a natural rhythm to our breath. Pushing ourselves to breathe harder does not necessarily yield better results. In fact, it can disrupt the flow and leave us feeling lightheaded. By relinquishing excessive control and returning to the natural flow, we regain our balance and breathe with ease.

Even when using techniques such as controlled breathing to enhance skills like singing or running, it is essential to avoid forcing it. Instead, observe and align with the natural flow. The more we harmonize ourselves with nature, the more effective our mastery of these skills becomes.

Don't Overstretch

In today's fast-paced and hyperconnected society, it is all too easy to fall into the trap of overdoing. We often take on more than we can handle and stretch ourselves thin. However, by finding a balance between effort and ease, we can avoid the pitfalls of overexertion.

Have you been overstretching?

Look for telltale signs.

Look into the mirror. For example, if you're unusually haggard, ask yourself whether you've been overstretching.

Watch out for a loss of interest or passion in activities that once brought you joy. This could be a sign that you have exceeded the optimal point of effort exertion and need to reassess your approach.

Nip it in the bud before it spirals out of control.

While there are times when pushing ourselves beyond our limits is necessary, such as during endurance training, in most cases, overexertion is not only counterproductive but also detrimental to our overall well-being.

By following the ebb and flow of nature and aligning our actions with the optimal balance of effort and ease, we can make the most of what we do without wasting our energy on the non-essential or spreading ourselves too thin. It is through this harmony with nature that we can maintain our well-being and achieve sustainable success.

Not Every Mountain Is Worth Climbing

With only 24 hours in a day and limited energy at our disposal, we must be mindful of how we allocate our time and energy. Think not only about what we want to do but also what we don't want to do or must not do.

Don't fight battles that are not worth the fight. Are you trying to argue over trivial and insignificant matters? Are you trying to change a person's behavior overnight? Are you seeking approval and validation from everyone around you? Are you harboring grudges and seeking revenge that consumes your energy and happiness?

Use your energy wisely. If the battle is not worth fighting, let it go. It saves your precious time, energy, and resources for things that really matter. It eliminates unnecessary frustration, stress, and a sense of unfulfillment.

Think Not of Control

To achieve the right balance between effort and ease, shift your focus from a mindset of control to one of flow. Instead of constantly striving to control every aspect of our lives, learn to accept what is and embrace the present moment with honesty. It helps you assess situations objectively and respond

in a way that is appropriate rather than trying to forcefully manipulate or impose your will.

The interconnectedness of the universe is vast and intricate, with many connections that are beyond our comprehension. Rather than wasting our time and energy on things we cannot control, we can redirect our focus toward making the most of what is within our control.

If you were a kite, you would have no control over whatever you do, so enjoy the flight and make adjustments to optimize your trajectory. If you were the kite flyer, enjoy your control of the kite, but do bear in mind that you have no total control as well. You'll have to negotiate with wind or gravity to optimize the flight.

In life, we must recognize that we cannot control everything. However, by directing our attention to what we can control – our actions, attitudes, and choices – we can navigate and adapt to ever-changing circumstances. By working in harmony with the flow of nature and the interconnectedness of the world, we will find that things naturally fall into place. We experience less resistance, stress, and frustration, and instead, we cultivate a sense of ease, joy, and fulfillment.

By embracing the concept of flow and letting go of the need for excessive control, we open ourselves up to the possibilities and opportunities that exist in each moment. We learn to trust the unfolding of life and find greater peace and harmony within ourselves and our surroundings.

Stepping Out of the Comfort Zone

Although overstretching is a problem, stretching itself isn't always bad. In fact, stretching beyond your comfort zone is often necessary to scale new heights.

In this aspect, it's important to understand the difference between overstretching and stepping out of your comfort zone.

When you overstretch, you push beyond your limits to the point where you lose balance and risk negative consequences. It is unsustainable and can lead to burnout or failure.

On the other hand, when you step out of your comfort zone, you venture into uncharted territory. It involves taking calculated risks and requires that you accept discomfort and temporary imbalance while exploring new possibilities.

The key is to understand the distinction between the two and find a healthy balance.

At the heart of wu wei lies the acceptance of what is and embracing the unknown. It allows us to explore new horizons while remaining true to our natural selves. By relinquishing excessive control and fear, you can discover new horizons, deepen self-awareness, and gain a sense of purpose. It is a process of finding a new center of growth and expanding your capabilities.

Overstretching involves going beyond your limits to the extent that you lose balance and risk falling. You can't go on like this for long. Stepping out of your comfort zone, on the other hand, means shifting to a new center of growth. While you may feel uncomfortable at first, the imbalance is transient. If you can overcome the initial fear, you achieve progress.

Let's look at that as an example.

If you're suffering from stage fright, getting you to speak to a live audience is like asking you to jump off a cliff. If you stay in the same psychological zone and remain fearful, the stress and anxiety can push you off-center. You are overstretching with fear.

But if you can think differently and move on to a new center, you step out of your center and find your new balance. It's quite different from losing your balance. If you can, instead of seeing the live audience as a cold and demanding crowd, you see it as a person who is your most supportive friend. It takes you to a new center, and you regain your balance in no time. When the fear vanishes, you are natural in your speech, and you have scaled a new height by moving on to a new center.

In a scenario of overstretching, once you regain your balance, you go back to your original center. In contrast, when you have stepped out of your comfort zone, you shift your mindset and move on to a new center.

In the case of overcoming the fear of public speaking, you don't hide in the darkness of fear in the backroom and overstretch yourself with fear. Instead, you accept the challenge and go find a new frontier.

Knowing the difference is very important. Stepping out of your comfort zone helps bring out the hidden potential in you. In contrast, overstretching stifles it. So don't overstretch, but be ready to step out of your comfort zone.

13

Fusion of Yin and Yang

To achieve a balance between effort and ease, it is important to understand the concept of yin and yang.

Within the universe, there exist two opposing yet complementary forces: yin and yang. Yin represents the passive and negative aspects, while yang represents the active and positive aspects.

“All things carry yin and embrace yang. By blending their life breath, they produce harmony,” says Lao Tzu.

For a person, his front is yin, and his back is yang. When it comes to day, night is yin and day is yang. When we see the human race as one, then women are yin, and men are yang. When you talk of emotion, sadness is yin and happiness yang.

Although yin and yang are opposing forces, they're two facets of one thing. If there is no front, there is no back. If there's no day, there is no night. If there is no man, a woman doesn't exist. If there's no happiness, sadness is hard to envisage.

Yin and yang deals with the nature of things, so they are not descriptions of value. Neither yin nor yang is inherently good nor bad. Anything that goes to the extreme is bad. The key is to find harmony by balancing the two forces.

For example, thinking is important, but excessive analysis can lead to overthinking and paralysis. Working hard is beneficial, but overexertion can result in burnout and inefficiency. Love is valuable, but an excessive attachment can become suffocating.

What is right now may not be right later. When things change, so does the composition of the yin and yang energies within them. What used to be a state of balance can disappear without you knowing.

Life is a constant flux. Weakness has the potential to become strength, and misfortune has the potential to become happiness. Feeling the yin and yang is to feel the dynamics of changes, making them more manageable.

“What is perfect look lacking, so there is always renewal. What is complete look wanting, so its use is not exhaustive,” says Lao Tzu. The key to maintaining vitality is to stay moderate and avoid extremes. By merging the yin and yang energies and keeping them in balance, we sustain vibrancy and harmony.

Architects use the yin and yang to balance the design of the building. Nutritionists use it to balance diets. A sailor uses it to balance their ship. The concept of yin and yang is applied in various fields. By understanding and embracing the principles of yin and yang, we can strive for equilibrium and enhance our overall well-being.

Solving Problems with a Fusion of Yin and Yang

To bring a solution to the problem, we resort to the fusion of the yin and yang forces.

Yang energy is creative and vibrant, while yin energy is contemplative and sedate. When there is an excess of yang energy, it can lead to impulsive and hasty decision-making, potentially hindering clear thinking. By

injecting more yin energy, we can counterbalance the rashness and achieve a state of equilibrium that allows us to find better solutions.

Achieving a healthy balance involves integrating both yin and yang energies.

If you find yourself exhausted from constant high energy and pushing yourself too hard, it indicates an overabundance of yang energy. In such cases, seek to introduce more yin activities into your routine, such as meditation, rest, or spending quality time with loved ones. These activities help restore balance and replenish your energy levels.

On the other hand, if you are feeling lethargic and unproductive, it may signify a lack of yang energy. To address this, consider incorporating more yang activities into your life, such as engaging in physical exercise or seeking social interactions. These actions can stimulate your energy and motivation, helping you regain focus and productivity.

The fusion of yin and yang energies also plays a significant role in improving communication. During arguments or conflicts, check whether you have been overly assertive with excessive yang energy. Are you being pushy or arrogant? By introducing more yin energy, you can tone down the over-assertiveness. This may involve actively listening to the other party, being empathetic, and allowing them to express their thoughts and perspectives clearly. Recognizing that others may not possess the same background information or perceive the problem from the same vantage point fosters understanding and facilitates productive dialogue.

Yin and yang energies are present in all aspects of life, influencing our actions and decision-making processes. By learning to adapt and balance these energies, we can uncover unexpected opportunities, foster harmonious relationships, and approach problem-solving with clarity and wisdom.

STEP 3

Make Things Simple



14

Streamlining Your Flow

Keep things simple.

Simplifying helps us declutter and eliminate unnecessary burdens, allowing us to focus our energy on what truly matters. By reducing complexity and distractions, we can make better decisions, improve our well-being, and move with greater ease toward our goals.

To make things simple, begin by making decisions in advance whenever you can.

Make Decisions in Advance

Make decisions in advance: Streamline your decision-making process by making decisions ahead of time whenever possible. This can include simple choices like what to eat or wear, as well as more complex decisions related to work or personal life.

It doesn't mean that you don't use your discretion when you're in action. It's just that by planning ahead and considering different scenarios, you minimize last-minute confusion or stress, freeing up mental capacity for more important tasks.

Identify and optimize routine tasks. Take note of regular tasks you perform and find the most efficient ways to handle them. Incorporate these tasks into your daily routine to reduce decision fatigue. By establishing a

consistent approach, you can avoid indecisiveness and stress that may arise from constantly making small decisions.

The habit of making decisions in advance optimizes your use of energy. By freeing up mental energy from decision-making, you can direct your efforts toward more meaningful pursuits. Your energy is a precious resource, and the more you can conserve it, the more you can focus on making yourself more effective.

Group Tasks by Physical Movements

When organizing your work, try grouping tasks that require similar physical movements. For example, while writing emails and making phone calls are communication tasks, they involve different physical movements and can disrupt your workflow if done interchangeably.

By dedicating specific blocks of time to tasks with similar movements, you minimize the need to switch between different types of actions, improving your workflow and maintaining a smoother, more consistent flow. For instance, you could dedicate a specific time to respond to emails or make a series of phone calls in a single sitting. Not only does it improve your workflow, but it also enhances the consistency and effectiveness of your work.

Smoothen the Transitions

By making decisions in advance and organizing your work by physical movements, you can reduce the frequency of pauses between tasks and make transitions smoother. This minimizes interruptions and saves energy, allowing for greater focus and higher-quality work. Take advantage of this practice to maintain momentum and maximize productivity.

By implementing these strategies, you can simplify your life, conserve mental energy, and optimize your workflow. Embracing simplicity not only enhances efficiency but also brings a sense of calm and clarity to your daily activities, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and balanced life.

15

Don't Fight With Time

Don't complicate your life by fighting with time. Make time your friend, not your enemy.

As the renowned military strategist Sun Tzu once said, “Those who win seek to win first and then go to war, while those who are destined to defeat go to war first and then try to win.”

Just as preparation is essential in warfare, it holds true for all aspects of life. By anticipating and preparing for what lies ahead, you can minimize uncertainties, avoid last-minute rushes, and make informed decisions. Preparation empowers you to handle challenges more effectively and reduces the need for reactive, hasty actions.

Rather than scrambling to figure out what to do, take a proactive approach to ensure that you are always ready.

Although life may not always be a matter of life and death, like on a battlefield, the value of being prepared cannot be overstated. It helps you ensure a smoother and more efficient flow in all areas of your life.

Many people equate busyness with importance, but it's often a result of poor time management and lack of prioritization. Being constantly busy doesn't necessarily lead to success or fulfillment. Instead, focus on managing your time efficiently, identifying your priorities, and streamlining

your tasks. This allows you to accomplish more with less stress and have time for activities that truly matter.

Rather than emphasizing how busy you are, shift your focus to the outcomes and results you achieve. Productivity and effectiveness should be measured by the value you create, not by how much time you spend on tasks. By managing your time well, setting clear goals, and allocating resources appropriately, you can accomplish your objectives without being overwhelmed by a constant sense of busyness.

Effective time management doesn't mean working non-stop. It's crucial to find a balance between productivity and personal well-being. By managing your time effectively and prioritizing your tasks, you can achieve your goals while also having time to enjoy things that truly matter. You can have your cake and eat it too.

Make Time Your Friend

Preparation is key to making time your friend.

You never arrive late for meetings and never put more on your task lists than you can chew. You move through your day with ease and grace. Time is your enabler of success, not a monster that you have to struggle with to move forward.

When time is your friend, you flow naturally. By being well-prepared and making decisions in advance, you optimize your time during action. You can, for example, address hidden concerns, read between the lines, and discover new opportunities along the way - something that you would not be able to do when you're fighting with time.

When there is a flow, transitions between activities are smooth and effortless, enhancing your overall experience with a sense of calm and ease. It allows you to flow full-heartedly and embrace changes with grace. You

don't just manage time; you manage timing so that you can do the right things at the right time.

Flow With the Flow of Time

Now, it's time to take action and implement strategies to make time your friend, not your enemy. Follow these steps to optimize your productivity and achieve a smoother flow in your day:

First, start your day by identifying the top three tasks that need to be completed. Try to tackle them early in the morning. It's an application of the 80/20 rule. It allows you to make significant progress on important tasks, reducing stress and creating space for other essential activities.

Such top three tasks don't necessarily need to be the most important. Even seemingly trivial tasks, such as confirming the location of a meeting, can have a significant impact on the overall flow of your day. For instance, if you're unsure about the location of your first meeting, it is hard for you to commit to subsequent appointments. Although they don't look important in nature, they can significantly impact the flow.

Second, prioritize the toughest and most time-consuming tasks of the day. By completing them first, you'll remove the weight from your shoulders and pave the way for a smoother workflow. This proactive approach sets a positive tone for the rest of your day and helps you maintain momentum.

Third, don't hesitate to ask for help when needed. If you anticipate requiring support from others, communicate your needs clearly and early on. By raising the flag and seeking assistance, you can avoid miscommunication and ensure everyone is on the same page, fostering a collaborative and efficient work environment.

Fourth, take control of your time by blocking off your calendar. Managing your timing is crucial to maintaining a steady flow throughout

the day. By allocating specific time slots for tasks and objectives, you can visualize the flow of time and ensure you have sufficient time for important activities. This approach eliminates the stress of missing deadlines or constantly fighting for time.

Remember, your life is a journey, and accomplishing long-term goals requires taking one step at a time. Break down your long-term tasks into manageable short-term work, and appreciate the cumulative effect of consistently completing small tasks. Similar to how nature operates, you're not in a hurry, but things get done.

Make time your friend, not your enemy. Proactively prepare for the days, weeks, months, and even the year ahead. Review your calendar and task lists regularly. By adopting these strategies, you can optimize your productivity, achieve a smoother flow in your day, and ultimately create more space for what truly matters.

Of Course, You Can Never Be Fully Prepared

It's important to find a balance between being prepared and taking action. On the one hand, it's important to be adequately prepared for what's to come. On the other hand, waiting till you're fully prepared may cause you to miss out on opportunities or experiences.

So, while it's important to prepare, keep in mind that you can never be fully prepared. Instead, approach life with an open mind and be ready to adapt to whatever comes your way. Every step, even the ones that don't go as planned, can be an opportunity to learn and grow.

Remember, time is a valuable resource, so make sure to use it wisely. Don't let the fear of the unknown hold you back from taking action. Life is full of surprises, and it's the unpredictability that makes it exciting.

Embrace the uncertainty and make every step a winning step. By doing so, time can become your friend rather than your enemy.

16

Moving in Cycles

Everything in the universe moves, even the majestic mountain that seems immovable. The movement may not be perceivable to the naked eye, but it exists nonetheless.

Not only do things move, but they also move in cycles.

Knowing the cycle, we can anticipate what lies ahead. While life's changes are often unpredictable, recognizing the recurring patterns provides us with a sense of stability. These constants are as reliable as the changing of the seasons. The awareness helps us to plan our actions more effectively and make decisions with stronger confidence.

What Is a Cycle

Often, we see movement as a linear progression from point A to point B. The day begins in the morning and ends at night, and writing a report starts today and concludes with its submission tomorrow.

Unlike linear movement, cycles have no distinct starting or ending points. While a day ends at night, it also marks the start of a new day. Similarly, submitting a report may signal the completion of one task but initiates a new cycle of events, such as feedback from your teacher or boss.

Viewing things in the eye of cycles provides a profound insight into the dynamics of development.

New opportunities: by recognizing that every ending is also a beginning, we open ourselves up to a world of fresh opportunities. Situations that may seem final can actually serve as launching pads for new starts and possibilities.

More manageable: Breaking down complex projects into smaller cycles makes the pursuit of greatness more manageable. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, we can approach each step with ease and comfort.

Manage failures: Adopting a cyclical mindset reduces the fear of failure. Mistakes and setbacks can be contained within smaller cycles, enabling us to learn, adapt, and move forward with confidence.

Cumulative effect: Cumulative effect of successfully completing one cycle after another can have a tremendous impact. When we approach tasks in a cyclical manner, each successful completion builds on the last, resulting in a multiplying impact that can propel us toward our goals. Going to the gym becomes more than just a single exercise session; it becomes a consistent effort toward achieving fitness. Similarly, writing a book can be approached as a daily endeavor, with each hour of writing contributing to the overall completion of the manuscript.

So, take action now. Take a look at a major undertaking you are currently pursuing. Break it down into a series of cycles of action, and tell yourself what you're going to do today and tomorrow. Embrace the power of cycles to propel you forward on your journey of accomplishment.

Pattern of Cycles

It is not just that things move in cycles, but each cycle also follows a predictable pattern. This pattern is characterized by four distinct phases: birth, growth, peak, and decline.

When you breathe, the stages of birth and growth happen when you inhale, and peaks and declines happen when you exhale. Upon completion of one breath, you inhale again to begin a new cycle.

Whatever you do, whether it's brushing your teeth or launching a product, you go through the four phases.

The birth can be compared to the sprouting of seeds in the spring, as we plant the seeds of our ideas or projects and begin to nurture them. The growth can be likened to the vitality of summer as our ideas or projects take root and begin to flourish. The peak can be compared to the harvesting of crops in autumn, as we reap the rewards of our hard work and enjoy the fruits of our labor. Finally, the decline is similar to the conservation of winter as we reflect on our accomplishments and prepare for a new cycle to begin.

By recognizing these phases in our daily lives, we can approach our tasks and projects with a greater sense of purpose and intentionality. We can take the time to nurture our ideas and watch them grow, celebrate our achievements when we reach our goals, and reflect on what we have learned when a cycle comes to an end. In this way, we can make the most of each cycle and continue to grow and thrive in all aspects of our lives.

Knowing the phases of a cycle, you know when to do what.

Mary spent the entire day planning the perfect family vacation and eagerly awaited her husband's return from work to share her excitement. Her enthusiasm was like the warmth and vitality of summer. Unfortunately, her husband was in the decline stage, his spirits dampened by a frustrating experience with a client who had canceled an order, and it was like the cold and barren season of winter.

The two were operating on different cycles, and their natural rhythms were out of sync. When Mary excitedly shared her vacation plans, her

husband was not in the right mindset to receive them. As a result, he snapped at her, leaving Mary feeling hurt and disappointed. Despite her hard work and effort, the conversation escalated into an argument, leaving both of them feeling tense and unhappy.

By recognizing the different cycles that they were in, Mary and her husband could have approached the situation with greater understanding and empathy. Mary could have taken the time to check in with her husband's emotional state before sharing her news, while her husband could have acknowledged Mary's enthusiasm and made an effort to respond positively. By doing so, they could have avoided the argument and enjoyed the excitement of planning their vacation together.

From the cyclical perspective of wu wei, the argument between Mary and her husband is unnecessary because there is no real disagreement, only a mismatch of their cycles.

This principle of cyclical movements can be applied to all aspects of life, from health and leadership to productivity, in order to improve everything we do.

Building on Cycles

To fully leverage the power of cycles, it's important to tap into their momentum. Instead of viewing the end of a cycle as the end of a project or task, see it as an opportunity to move on to the next cycle.

Use this momentum to put a series of follow-up actions in place. You can create a mind map, design a process, or simply add a note to your diary, calendar, or to-do list. You can also make a phone call to set up an appointment or take any other action that will keep the momentum going and help you transition smoothly into the next cycle.

Even if you don't take any action immediately, make a note about what should be done, or you may forget it altogether, and you can't build a new cycle based on the current one. If you need information, think about how you can read up or seek advice. If it requires you to obtain a tool, plan for its acquisition.

There are opportunities hidden in every cycle. When you complete one with a follow-up action, it unfolds a second, and then a third, and so on. It's a journey of discovery.

Don't overthink. It's unlikely that you're able to tell what the small cycles are all the time. But if you can consciously follow up upon completion of critical cycles, the subsequent action would become apparent.

Importance of Pauses

Take a moment to notice the subtle pauses that naturally occur between your breaths — the brief stillness between inhaling and exhaling and vice versa.

Pauses are important for maintaining the flow of your breath. They serve as a reminder that even amidst constant movements, moments of pause are crucial for sustaining the momentum of cycles.

The principle applies to all aspects of life, where taking a moment to pause, reflect, and regroup is crucial for sustaining progress and achieving success.

Pauses are necessary for regulating the flow and ensuring the sustainability of cycles. They provide a chance for reflection, rest, and rejuvenation, which can ultimately lead to more effective and efficient progress in the next stage of the cycle.

Pauses in a cycle can take many forms, and it's important not to skip them even when they may seem unproductive. In some cases, doing nothing is actually doing something. These pauses could be moments of stillness, reflection, or even boredom. They all serve the purpose of allowing you to progress from one cycle to another.

Work Hard and Rest Well

Pauses typically take place during a last phase of a cycle, be it a project or a task. It's the moment to evaluate your progress, identify areas for improvement, and strategize for the next stage. It helps ensure that you are well-prepared and positioned for success as you transition into the subsequent cycle.

Taking regular breaks and ensuring sufficient rest is crucial for overall well-being and productivity. This can involve short breaks throughout the day, setting aside time for exercise or relaxation, and prioritizing adequate sleep. By doing so, you recharge and rejuvenate, returning to your tasks with renewed focus and energy.

Unfortunately, many people overlook the importance of pauses, particularly when caught up in the frenzy of activities. Moreover, those in non-physically demanding fields, such as planning or creative work, may underestimate the need for pauses. However, disregarding pauses can be detrimental, potentially leading to burnout.

Unless there is a specific reason, like endurance training, it is best to avoid skipping pauses.

Allow pauses to take place throughout your day. If we see a day as a big cycle, there are many smaller cycles within it, and it is crucial to incorporate pauses at the end of each small cycle to replenish your energy. For example, you could allocate 45 minutes to work on a task and then take a 15-minute break to recharge. During the break, engaging in activities like taking a walk or pursuing a different interest can give your body the rest it needs.

Pause To Move Forward

Pauses serve other important purposes as well.

It's time for you to reflect. You can take a moment to look back at what you've done and take stock of the gain and loss. You can reflect on your goals and see whether you should speed up or slow down to stay on track.

It allows you space for creativity. When you step away from what you are at, you can see things from a fresh perspective. The insight can trigger innovative ideas that you would not have been able to think of when you don't allow yourself the pauses.

Pauses also help balance your efforts, redirecting attention not only to work but also to other significant aspects of life, such as exercise, connection with loved ones, socializing, and engaging in activities you enjoy.

Follow the ebb and flow of cycles and honor the importance of pauses. You make the most of your endeavors. Paying attention to pauses builds strong cycles one after another, enhancing productivity and fostering a sense of happiness and fulfillment.

18

Changing What Is

While accepting reality is important, it doesn't mean that you must not seek improvement. Change is an inevitable aspect of life, and failing to adapt to it can lead to obsolescence or missed opportunities.

In the philosophy of wu wei, not only do you adapt to changes, but you also strive to make changes easy. Interestingly, the first step towards effecting change often involves the unchanging. Rather than hastily diving into immediate changes, you identify the unchanging aspects of the change.

In every facet of life, there exist underlying principles that don't change, even in the face of change. Lao Tzu refers to these principles as the "constant." To effectively navigate the complexities of change, it is vital to not only acknowledge the change itself but also know the unchanging principles at its core.

The Book of Changes, known as the I Ching, holds the distinction of being one of the oldest books in existence, with a history dating back at least 6,000 years. Its renowned status stems from its ability to predict changes by utilizing 64 hexagrams that depict various change scenarios.

One of the book's crucial teachings revolves around managing change, emphasizing the importance of the unchanging constant amidst the flux. It directs our attention to three areas within every change: the unchanging, the changing, and the ways to make changes easy. By considering these three

factors, we can gain a profound understanding of the current situation and effectively implement changes.

This approach, central to the practice of wu wei, highlights the significance of embracing change while staying rooted in the enduring principles that underpin it.

Look for the Constant

In dynamic ball games like basketball or football, changes occur incessantly as the ball moves around the court. How can you turn each change into an advantage?

The most skilled players don't simply chase the ball; instead, they carefully observe its trajectory, anticipate where it is likely to land and position themselves accordingly. In other words, they align themselves with the constant rather than solely focusing on the changes.

By aligning with the constant, they minimize the need for constant movement, thereby making changes more manageable.

Recognizing the constant is pivotal in effecting any change, although it may not always be easy. It requires patience, focus, and agility. Nonetheless, it simplifies the process of change.

For instance, by patiently waiting for the ball to come to them, players conserve their energy and execute more precise plays at the opportune moment. We can approach managing changes in a similar fashion.

By doing so, we become less susceptible to being swayed by the opinions of others. An instructive fable recounts the story of a farmer and his son traveling to the market with their donkey. Initially, people ridicule them for not riding the donkey, so they mount it. Subsequently, others criticize them for being cruel to the animal, prompting them to carry the donkey on their shoulders. When they attempt to cross a river, the donkey struggles falls

into the water, and drowns. In their earnest attempts to please others, the farmer and his son lose their donkey.

By prioritizing the underlying principles of a situation over blindly adhering to the opinions of others, we remain grounded in our own values and principles. This empowers us to make well-informed decisions that are less influenced by external perspectives.

Manage Changes

Let's look at the examples below and see how you would manage the changes.

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that you lose the job that you really love. The change in circumstance is devastating. Not only are you suffering financial losses, but you also lose a position to showcase your talents.

What are you going to do to manage the change?

First and foremost, acknowledge what has happened. You can't run away from the changes. You've lost your job, which affects your employment status, financial income, and social connections.

Once you have identified the changes, look for the constant.

One form of the constant is the yin-yang balance. The changes have disrupted the balance, and you have to readjust the yin and yang forces to arrive at a new equilibrium. It's natural for you to feel unsettled or sad in the process. Knowing that this is part of the constant, you should allow yourself time to grieve the loss if it helps.

Another way to look at the yin-yang balance is to stay centered. To do this, it's important that you focus on what you have rather than what you don't. In this case, what you don't have may include the job that you've just lost. What you have are likely to be your valuable experience and determination to achieve success. Link what you have to your passion and

life purpose, and you're in your center. By staying centered and recognizing the unchanging elements within the changes, you'll be able to notice new opportunities that lie ahead. By embracing the unchanging while navigating the changes, you will find it easier and more effective to implement the necessary adjustments.

Stay Unknowing

The universe is intricately interconnected. Much of it is beyond our grasp. Knowing this fundamental truth is important when we navigate the complexities of life. Despite our best effort to comprehend the world around us, there will always exist enigmas that elude our understanding.

For numerous years, I firmly believed that the path I travelled from my home to the office was the shortest and most efficient one. Who else could possibly know better than me? However, my belief was shattered when I decided to experiment with my GPS. To my surprise, it led me to a shorter and less congested route to my workplace.

This revelation brought both delight and a sense of regret, realizing how my arrogance had squandered much of my time and energy over the past few years, day after day. This experience instilled in me the invaluable lesson of embracing an open mind and a willingness to learn, even in areas where I presumed to possess all the answers.

Complacency can foster a deceptive feeling of security that leads to resistance to change. It's important that we stay receptive when our existing belief is challenged. It enables us to continuously nurture personal growth and unearth new opportunities that may have otherwise eluded us. So, be ready to stay curious and open to new experiences that enrich our lives.

The Clever Bee and the Silly Fly

There is a story about a bee and a housefly. In a transparent jar, a bee and a housefly are trapped with no escape route in sight. Desperate to find their way out, they frantically search for solutions.

As the jar is placed upside down under the sun, the bee's attention is on the bright side and assumes it to be the way to freedom. It repeatedly flies towards the shiny part, mistaking it as the opening of the jar, only to be bounced back by the glass wall. In the end, the bee dies from exhaustion and injuries.

In contrast, the housefly approaches the situation in a different manner. Without any preconceived idea, it explores all possible escape routes. The search leads it to the discovery of the opening, which allows it to fly to its freedom.

The story tells a common occurrence in life. We thought we knew, but we don't really know. But because of our complacency, we insist that we're right and refuse to consider other options. Our mindset confines our actions and limits our potential. If we're unlucky, we may end up like the bee and pay the price for our refusal to listen.

When we're reluctant to listen or change, we confine ourselves to what we already know, and this can be stifling, especially if your knowledge has lost touch with reality. It can be worse when we work hard because it can end up trapping us even deeper into the wrong things.

Complacency can turn our knowledge and experience, which should be our strengths, into obstacles to growth. By embracing the unknown, we can enjoy what we know while benefiting from exploring new possibilities.

Embrace the power of not knowing. Remain curious and inquisitive. Life is a journey of constant discovery. By staying open to new ideas, you can enrich your life in ways you never thought possible.

To avoid complacency, be willing to discard outdated knowledge and be open to new possibilities. Life is dynamic, and what worked before may not work now. Stay agile and adaptable by tapping into the flow of nature. This will help you avoid pitfalls and lead you to opportunities that you may have never considered.

How To Stay Unknowing

The unknown doesn't have to be elegant. A simple road direction from a friendly local can be worth more than gold when you lose your way in unfamiliar terrain. Stay humble. Listen to ideas, and give attention to not only those that are pleasing to your ears. Here are some actions you can take to cultivate these qualities:

Ask questions: Keep your curiosity alive. Whenever you encounter something new or interesting, ask questions.

Explore new topics: Learn things that are new in areas that interest you, whether it's reading a new book, watching a documentary, or attending a lecture.

Embrace uncertainty: Learn to thrive on uncertainty and the unknown. Instead of shying away from uncertainty, embrace it as an opportunity to learn and explore.

Try new things: Trying new activities or experiences, whether it's learning a new skill, trying a new hobby, or traveling to a new place.

Keep an open mind: Be open to new ideas and perspectives, even if they challenge your existing beliefs. You don't know what you don't know.

Connect with others: Engage with people who have different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Interacting with diverse individuals can broaden your perspective and spark new ideas and interests.

Keep learning: Lifelong learning is a key habit for staying curious. Challenge yourself to learn something new every day, whether it's a new word, a new fact, or a new skill.

It's interesting. The universe seldom gives you all the information you need at once, as in a Q&A session. Instead, it reveals itself gradually. Don't expect to receive all the answers in one fell swoop. Stay open to not knowing, and the information will come to you in pieces. It's like parents giving candy to their children. They give you one piece, see that you enjoy it and make the most of it, and then give you another. So, be patient, remain curious, and be prepared to be amazed by what the universe has to offer.

STEP 4

Keep To Your Center



Know Your Center

Passion is the biggest impetus for achieving a state of flow. When there is passion, there is flow. You're naturally in the state of wu wei.

When fueled by passion, you're deeply committed, even in the absence of external obligations. You're so engrossed in the task that time seems to fly by unnoticed. You're fearless in the face of challenges. What seems daunting to others is met with ease and confidence.

While passion is incredibly potent, it becomes even more so when you can integrate it with your life purpose.

Passion vs. Life Purpose

To effectively integrate your passion with your center of life, it is important to understand the difference between passion and life purpose.

Passion is a strong emotional connection to a particular activity or pursuit, which can include hobbies, careers, or causes. It may change over time, and you're likely to have multiple passions throughout your life.

In contrast, your life purpose involves a deeper sense of meaning and direction and is more permanent. It's rooted in your core values and beliefs and provides a sense of direction and fulfillment that goes beyond the enjoyment or excitement of pursuing a passion.

Passion provides energy and motivation, while life purpose provides a sense of direction and a reason for being. Integrating your passion with your life purpose brings you a deep sense of meaning and fulfillment.

Integrating Passion With Life Purpose

When you align your passion with your ultimate calling, the resulting synergy is powerful. It takes you to the center of your being.

You find your true place in the universe.

You're liberated, like a fish released into the water or a bird set free from captivity. You soar to new heights and tap into your fullest potential, attaining a profound sense of fulfillment and joy.

You vibrate with a frequency that connects you to the vast energy of the universe. The alignment allows the cosmos to flow through you, working its miracles and enabling you to achieve extraordinary things. You become a conduit for this energy, and as a result, people who can assist you in your journey seem to appear out of nowhere, offering their invaluable help and support. Resources that you need to fulfill your purpose begin to emerge one after another, guiding you along your path.

As you act with faith and commitment, things naturally fall into place. This alignment allows you to tap into the infinite potential of the universe, leading to a sense of ease and abundance. With this alignment, you become an unstoppable force capable of achieving anything you set your mind to.

Emptiness in a Cup

While passion is lively and warm, purpose is, in a way, cool and pragmatic. A useful analogy for this is Lao Tzu's comparison of the purpose of existence to the "emptiness of a cup." When we observe a cup, our attention

is typically drawn to its physical characteristics, such as its shape, color, and material. However, the real value of the cup is found in its emptiness.

If the purpose of a cup is to contain a substance, like a drink, it can only fulfill this purpose with its emptiness. Without the emptiness, the cup would not be able to serve its intended function and become useless, no matter how visually appealing it may be.

To find your center means to discover your ultimate position in the universe, much like the emptiness of a cup. It is a space where you can connect with your inner wisdom and the universe. This discovery provides a deep sense of purpose and meaning, which can serve as a guide on your journey toward greater fulfillment and happiness.

Discovering your center allows you to understand the value of your existence. When you live your purpose, it brings joy and unlocks your hidden potential. As Lao Tzu eloquently stated, “Those who know others are wise; those who know themselves are enlightened.” When you truly know yourself and stay true to your center, you can discover the true meaning of your life, radiate a natural charm, and bring out the best in yourself.

In Quest of the Center of Your Life

Discovering the center of our life is a crucial yet challenging task that demands time, effort, and self-reflection. If you are still searching for the answer, know that you are not alone. It is common to struggle with it even after an extended period of searching.

It is important to note that you cannot find the answer by simply seeking the opinions of others. Only you hold the key to this discovery. Keep exploring, and the journey of self-discovery will be rewarding. Do not give up easily. A sudden realization may dawn upon you at any moment.

When you do discover your purpose, hold onto it tightly. It will illuminate your path and unleash your hidden potential, propelling you toward a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

The “why’s” technique is a powerful tool that can help you discover the purpose of your life. By asking a series of “why” questions, you can peel back the layers of your desires and uncover your true motivations. For example, if your goal is to become an author, asking “Why do I want to become an author?” may lead to the answer: “Because I want to share my knowledge and experience with others.” Continuing to ask “why” can help you reach a deeper understanding of your motivations.

This technique is helpful in making informed decisions and focusing your efforts. By aligning your actions with your beliefs, you can live a more purposeful life. Utilizing the “why’s” technique can help you uncover your true purpose and lead a more fulfilling life.

However, it’s important to remain open and flexible to the universe’s guidance, as your plans may not always unfold in the way you expected. This is natural because you do not have the same intelligence and perspective that governs the events of the universe. Along the way, you’ll need further guidance and support, which can come in the form of synchronicities, intuitive nudges, or unexpected opportunities. In these moments, it is important to follow where your heart leads you, trusting that the universe is guiding you toward your highest good. By surrendering control and trusting in the universe, you can navigate the path to your purpose with greater ease and grace.

This experience has been witnessed by many, including myself and those around me. It may be difficult to imagine the power of such alignment, but when these elements work together in harmony, the state of wu wei occurs naturally and in a potent way.

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Achieve Life Balance

Even if you are deeply passionate about life, there will be moments when you feel off-balance and unlike your usual self.

You may feel upset, irritable, or lack motivation. These feelings can be a signal that you have lost your balance and are out of alignment with your passion and purpose.

Don't turn a blind eye to the signals, even if they seem small and insignificant. Do something about it. Take action to regain your balance.

Realign your mind, body, and spirit.

If you're experiencing negative thoughts and emotions like fear, hopelessness, panic attacks, or mood swings, find out the source of the problem and see how you can replace them with positive thoughts and enthusiasm.

If you feel that your physical health is slipping, find out why. Is it because you've been staying up too late or skipping your exercise routine due to a heavy workload? Address the issues before they worsen.

If you've lost interest in things you used to be passionate about, find out why. It's time to do self-reflection, practice gratitude, and do some mindfulness exercises to bring back your passion and purpose in life.

Cyclical Checks

It is an irony. We plan things years ahead but forget to do the important things today. How often do we miss things that matter, such as our workouts or calling our loved ones, because of work?

Be proactive. It's easy to become so engrossed in one area of life that we neglect others. Set up a cycle to conduct regular checks. Ensure that important areas of your life are taken care of so that you'd not go off-center.

To do that, you must identify the areas of life that are most important to you. They keep you to your center. Take some time to create your own list if you're yet to do so. These are some examples to help your get started:

- Physical health and well-being
- Mental and emotional strength
- Positive relationships with family and friends
- Meaningful work or passion projects
- Financial stability and security
- Engaging in hobbies or interests
- Learning and personal growth
- Spirituality or connection to something greater than yourself

Armed with this list, prioritize your time and energy accordingly. Ensuring that you keep to your center, you'll be able to maintain your peace of mind even when life gets hectic.

For some of you, it can sound daunting. How are you going to balance so many different areas of life at once. Do you have the energy to take care of so many things?

In fact, it's easier than you'd think.

To begin, you must understand that balance is not an equal distribution of time and effort. There's no need for you to give an equal amount of time to every area of life on the list.

It's not just the quantity of time that counts. What is critical is attention. Maintaining a strong relationship with your family, for example, doesn't mean that you have to spend every moment with them. It could be as simple as having breakfast together every morning or setting aside an hour each week to catch up on the phone.

Don't be confined by traditional forms. Think creatively, and incorporate different areas of life into your daily routine. If you can't find time to exercise regularly, you may walk up the stairs instead of taking the elevator at work. By approaching balance in a flexible and creative way, you can give attention to all the important areas of life without feeling overwhelmed or having to stretch yourself too thin.

In a nutshell, don't just plan your work; plan the balance as well.

Regular Reviews

Achieving balance isn't a one-time accomplishment. By conducting regular reviews and making adjustments as needed, you'll be able to ensure that you're staying on track to achieving your goals and maintaining a balance in life.

Set up a cycle to review the list that you have come up with.

If there are seven items on the list, you may go through all items in one sitting. Alternatively, focus on one area at a time. The strategy varies from individual to individual. It also depends on the complexity of the item. For example, financials may take more time to review than your exercise routine. What is important is that you don't overlook any important area of life.

With the balance, there is no need for you to lower your bar for your achievement. You will not be overwhelmed with work, and you'll be able to

pursue your dreams and build your career without neglecting other important areas of your life.

Let's put it to work immediately. You'll be amazed at how this simple habit can transform your life.

Think Not of Greatness

Success is neither always glamorous nor a result of one spectacular stroke. While there are stories of overnight fame, most successes are achieved through years of accumulative efforts. Although each action can be insignificant when viewed in isolation, they can be mind-boggling when added together.

As Lao Tzu said, “A tower nine stories high is built from a small heap of earth; a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Journey of a Thousand Miles

To achieve greatness, think not of greatness.

Break the journey into small steps. If completion of your goals is a giant cycle, then within the cycle are countless small cycles, each aligned to the whole. The small cycles are discrete but interconnected, aligned with the overall goal in mind to your goals. Every step is firmly grounded and purposeful.

While the goals are clear, you're attuned to the actual situation, which can be as fluid as the moving waves or as familiar as the path you take to the grocery store. You're firm yet agile and flexible, ready to do modifications as and when necessary.

The small cycles make the journey to greatness less stressful and more achievable. Like Lao Tzu says in chapter 34 of the Tao Te Ching, “By not thinking of being great, the Master achieves greatness.”

You instill your passion into each small cycle and make the most of it. It makes every cycle a good cycle and every step a winning step, carrying over the momentum to the next cycle and beyond. The knock-on effect is fundamental to your eventual success.

Worry Not About the Outcomes

The outcomes happen only in the future, and fixating on them can be unsettling. You, therefore, bear the goals in mind but are not obsessed with them.

It's like running a marathon. While the goal is to win the gold medal, there are countless variables along the way that can impact your performance, from the weather and terrain to competitors. If you allow the uncertainty to consume your primary attention, you're going to compromise your performance by diluting your attention from the present moment.

Focus your attention on the steps that you're taking, and make the most of each. The small steps are easier to achieve. If you do each of them well, they add up to create marvels.

Let It Go and It Opens You Up to Opportunities

When you're obsessed with the outcome, it narrows down your choice. When you set yourself free from its constraints, it opens you up to opportunities.

You no longer confine your achievement to what you're targeting. It is clearly in the background, but by focusing on the present, you open yourself up to more possibilities.

Let's look at an example.

You're attending a job interview. The stake is high. It's your dream job, and you want the job badly.

Unfortunately, like any other job interview, you have little control over the outcomes. The company has all the say about whether they would employ you, and you don't know who you're competing with.

When you're fixated on the outcome, you get nervous. Will they like me? Will I be saying the right thing? Without you knowing, a tinge of your self-doubt is detectable, and that can adversely impact the interviewer's impression of you.

What if you focus not on the outcome but on what you can do at the moment? It takes away the anxiety, and you're natural. It allows you to talk with enthusiasm and exude quiet confidence. When you're authentic, you sound convincing.

Not only that but being in the present allows you to feel the dynamics of the situation. By observing the facial response of the interviewer and the tone of their speech, for example, you can be more in-tuned to what they want. It helps you stay relevant to win the trust.

When you are focusing on the outcome, you think about the outcome. When your attention is on the present, you're focused on the flow. It allows you to engage more and make the most of the situation.

Let go. Think not of greatness, and you achieve greatness.

Apply the principle to everything you do, whether you're exploring solutions to problems, creating a piece of art, or carrying out your routine of the day. Focus on the present and what you can control, not the outcomes that you can't know with certainty, and you're nearer to greatness.

STEP 5

Quiet Confidence



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Quiet Confidence

Confidence plays a vital role in the practice of wu wei. With confidence, there is no self-doubt, and external distractions can't sway your focus. The state of composure enables your natural qualities to surface, allowing you to perform at your best.

Confidence comes in various forms, but we may group them into two major categories: quiet and loud. Both are important to the practice of wu wei.

Most people are familiar with loud confidence. It's also the type of confidence that would come to their mind when we talk about self-assurance. With loud confidence, you're assertive, bold, in control, and ready to be heard. In social interactions, you tend to dominate conversations.

While loud confidence is helpful in some situations, it can backfire if you are perceived as overbearing, arrogant, or insensitive to the feelings of others.

Quiet confidence is a different experience altogether. Those who possess it are not pretentious or showy. In fact, they tend to be subdued because there is no need for them to rely on external validation or attention to feel self-assured. They're driven by an inner sense of calm and don't overtly express their confidence.

People with quiet confidence are often comfortable in their own skin and exude a subtle sense of self-assurance that radiates from within. They do not seek the spotlight but are with no doubt about themselves when they need to speak up and act with purpose.

Both loud and quiet confidence have their place in the practice of wu wei. But it's the quiet confidence that allows us to achieve a deeper sense of inner harmony and balance.

Quiet yet Powerful

To develop quiet confidence, you must tap into your innate capabilities and unique character traits. These gifts are seeds of greatness that can help you excel in your field and allow your natural self to emerge.

How strong is your quiet confidence? Let's get some indications by going through these scenarios:

- When you say or do something wrong, do you take responsibility for the mistakes and have no problem admitting them?
- Do you compare yourself to others? Are you comfortable with your strengths and weaknesses and happy to be who you are? Do you need to boost your self-esteem by comparison with others?
- Although you're always prepared, are you willing to take risks and ready for failure because you know that you can never be fully prepared?
- Do you need external validation for your self-worth? Are you open to listening to feedback? Can you take criticism in your stride?
- Are you ready to ask for help when you need them? Do you feel inferior for things that you don't know?
- Do you listen more than you speak?

- Do you feel comfortable when you're left alone? Do you see independence as your inner strength?
- Are you calm, collected, and patient all the time?

Of course, there are just some indications of quiet confidence. Use it as a starting point to help you make your practice of wu wei even more rewarding.

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You Are Truly Rich

How do you develop quiet confidence?

The good news is that it's simpler than most people think. It all starts with knowing what you have. Like Lao Tzu says, "When we realize we have enough, we are truly rich."

If you know that you have enough, quiet confidence comes naturally to you—without you having to force it.

The good news is you're far richer than you'd think. Of course, your wealth doesn't have to be material possession such as the money you have in the bank or your investment in the house you own. The biggest wealth you have is in you. It's the qualities that are uniquely yours, such as passion, intuition, and leadership. They're as if a goldmine in your own backyard awaiting you to tap.

Recognizing these qualities builds a strong foundation of inner confidence that is not dependent on external factors. When you are fully aware of your strengths and talents, a sense of quiet confidence will arise within you, effortlessly and organically. It helps you approach challenges with calm and ease.

You Have vs. You Have Enough

To make the most of what you have, know the difference between “have” and “have enough.”

The two perspectives sound similar but impact very differently on what you do. When you know that you “have” money, for example, you’re not necessarily happy. In contrast, when you know that you “have enough” money, you’re contented.

Knowing that you “have” can still bog you down by the feeling of lack and the desire to have more and more, leading you to always chase after the next big thing without ever feeling truly fulfilled.

When you realize that you have “enough,” you’re grateful for what you have. With gratitude, there comes a feeling of contentment. It’s the feeling of having enough that will make you happy and truly rich.

The subtle shift in perspective can have a profound impact on your mindset and overall sense of well-being.

Realizing That You Have Enough

Do you feel that you have enough?

Still, many people give me a negative answer. It’s not difficult to understand. In a society obsessed with material wealth and social status, it is easy to fall into the trap of always wanting more, no matter how rich or poor you are.

When you have earned the amount of money you targeted, you want to have more money. When you have achieved the social status you aspired to, you begin to think of something higher. You never feel enough, not to mention truly rich. These can lead to two problems.

First, if you constantly think that you don’t have enough, you always feel inadequate, regardless of how much you have or how successful you are.

Although you have a car, you feel inferior in the presence of someone who has a better car than yours. You can never feel truly happy.

Second, when you rely on external validation to gain self-confidence, your belief in yourself goes up and down. It takes away your focus on the present.

It Is Not Conceit

One might argue the feeling of having “enough” can lead to complacency and a lack of motivation to improve.

It doesn't have to be so. Feeling “enough” doesn't mean you should stop striving for better things in life. Rather, it is about finding a sense of stability and security in the present moment while still keeping an eye on the future.

To use a metaphor, it's like climbing a cliff. You want to reach the summit, but you need a solid foothold to go higher. You need something to hold onto for support to achieve the next step. Feeling “enough” is like finding that foothold — it provides a sense of stability and confidence that allows you to take the necessary risks and make progress. Otherwise, the climb will not be consistent.

The feeling of having “enough” is crucial to quiet confidence. When you feel that you have enough — be it in terms of material possessions, personal qualities, or accomplishments — you have a launch board to pursue new challenges and opportunities.

While external factors can certainly contribute to the feeling of “enough,” it ultimately begins with an inner drive and a sense of purpose. If you have a strong inner drive, you will seek out the necessary external anchors to support your journey toward growth and improvement. On the other hand,

without a strong inner drive, even the most solid external anchors can be of little use.

In the pursuit of our goals, it's certainly helpful to have cheerleaders to support and encourage you along the way. However, it's not always possible. If you can find your own inner anchor, the motivation is going to be with you all the time. You'll feel grounded while moving forward.

To find your inner anchor, learn to appreciate what you already have and the fact that it's enough to propel you forward. It's always there for you to tap into when scaling the next new height. With deep trust in yourself, you feel a sense of ease that radiates a natural confidence that is difficult to miss. The aura of calmness is a powerful asset in both personal and professional settings, helping you connect with others and achieve your goals with ease.

What's more, with the feeling of having "enough," you don't constantly search for external validations. It allows you to stay focused and make the most of the present moment, and strengthen your quiet confidence at the same time.

Practice Gratitude

Suppose you find yourself struggling with feelings of inadequacy, practice gratitude. By intentionally focusing on things you're grateful for, you can shift your perspective from what you lack to what you have and begin to appreciate the positive aspects of your life.

When you're grateful for what you have, it unlocks your innate strengths. You tap into the resources you already have. It cultivates a sense of peace and contentment that will help you move forward with confidence and grace.

Take stock of what you have and feel happy about having enough of them. The following are some examples to help prompt your thinking:

Do you take good health for granted? Many people fail to feel grateful and come to realize how precious good health is only when they have lost it.

Are you thankful for the time you have? When you're looking forward to the time ahead, are you grateful for the moment you have now and make the best use of it?

Are you grateful for the relationships you have? Your family and friends are among the most valuable things you have in life. Have you neglected them in your pursuit of material possessions?

Are you grateful for the basic provisions in life, from food and water to shelter? It's easy to forget how lucky you are. Many people around the world do not have constant access to them.

Are you grateful to nature? Nature is all around us, but we often fail to appreciate its beauty because we are simply too busy.

Are you thankful for the knowledge and experience you have? Do you belong to the group of people who keep learning new things but think little of how they can create value with the knowledge and experience they already have?

Are you thankful for your inner peace? Inner peace is a fountain of strength and essential to the practice of wu wei. Cherish it, and it can help you do wonders.

These are just a few examples, and there are countless others. Taking time to appreciate what you have can make a true difference.

The Master Boatman

“The skilled warriors of ancient times made themselves invincible first and then waited for opportunities to defeat their enemies,” Sun Tzu once said. This highlights the importance of preparation in achieving victory in battles.

However, this principle is not limited to warfare. It also applies to all aspects of life. When you’re well prepared, you’re naturally confident.

To get yourself ready for challenges in life, I’m sure you’ll find the tale of a master boatman told by Chuang Tzu inspiring.

Secret of the Master Boatman

One day, a disciple of Confucius meets a master boatman known for his superb mastery of boating. Amazed by his complete confidence in controlling the boat, the disciple asks, “Can anyone learn to handle a boat like you?”

“Certainly,” says the master boatman. “And it’s very simple. If you want to be an excellent boatman, don’t worry about controlling the boat.”

The disciple was dumbfounded. “Not worry about controlling the boat? But how can I handle a boat if I don’t control it?”

“Well, you don’t worry about the boat. You just make sure that you can swim,” says the boatman. “If a man can swim, he’ll master boating after

some practice. If he can dive, he'd know how to handle a boat, even if it is the first time he sees the boat.”

The disciple finds the boatman's explanation perplexing, so he goes to Confucius for advice.

“A good swimmer can master boating after some practice because he's forgotten water,” says Confucius. “A diver can master boating in no time because he sees water as dry land and capsizing of a boat as overturning a cart.”

“Whether it's capsizing, backsliding, or whatnot, nothing perturbs him. He remains calm inside. And this is the case. How can he not be at ease?”

The story teaches us a valuable lesson. To position ourselves in an infallible state, we must identify the key factors that we can anchor on for success. Whether we are navigating a boat, building a career, or establishing a business, we must ensure that these anchor points are firmly in place. Find out what they are and master them.

The boatman, for instance, understands that he can swim well, and that gives him a sense of security. Knowing that he can handle the worst-case scenario of the boat capsizing strengthens his confidence. With this confidence, he can focus on the present and row the boat with excellence.

Think of what you want to achieve in life, and see what the key factors that you must anchor on.

Think of what you're going to achieve in the next five years. To ensure your success, what are the anchor factors that you must put firmly in place? They could be the skills that you need or the network that can help you grow.

Are you ready for them? If not, what are you going to do now?

For example, if you plan to take your coaching business online, you may need to develop skills such as speaking to the camera and conducting

webinars. Even if you don't feel comfortable doing them, it is crucial to devise a strategy to acquire these skills and lay down a plan to take the necessary actions, one step at a time.

Learn from the master boatman. Learn how to swim, and you would be naturally ready for boating.

It Is Fine To Have No Flow

Although wu wei is about going with the flow of nature, it's quite all right that you have no flow.

In fact, the concept of yin and yang applies to the actions within wu wei as well. Similar to the existence of day and night and high and low, there is a duality inherent in wu wei. While flow is fluid, spontaneous, and tranquil, there is also a counterpart known as non-flow, which is rigid, awkward, and unsettling. They, however, complement and support each other. Non-flow serves as a catalyst for flow, enabling its manifestation.

Failure is an example of non-flow, where things don't unfold as intended. However, it's precisely through failure that we learn valuable lessons, enabling us to improve and eventually find our flow with confidence. When learning a new skill, we inevitably experience a phase of non-flow, where we feel awkward and unnatural. Yet, it is by embracing this learning process that we can ultimately attain mastery and perform tasks with ease and composure. Without enduring the initial challenges and non-flow, we would be unable to reach a state of flow.

If the flow is a state of wu wei, then non-flow is a state of “you wei.” While the “wu” in wu wei conveys a formless quality, the “you” in *you wei* implies substance and form. Unlike wu wei, which is effortless and in harmony with the natural flow, *you wei* involves purposeful action and

conscious decision-making. They contrast each other in terms of acting without force versus acting with intention.

Wu Wei and *you wei* are two facets of existence. The aim is to transcend *you wei* and attain the state of wu wei whenever possible.

In general, when we engage in activities that align with our natural abilities and inclinations, we experience a state of wu wei. We act spontaneously, effortlessly, and in perfect harmony with the task at hand. Our actions flow naturally, guided by intuition.

However, when confronted with unfamiliar or challenging tasks, we often find ourselves in a state of *you wei*. We struggle to find our rhythm or confidence. It is a state marked by effort, conscious thought, and a sense of being out of sync with the task.

To achieve growth and mastery in any domain, you must undergo a phase of non-flow. While it can be daunting and demanding as we navigate uncharted territory, it is through this very process of non-flow that we can develop and hone our skills, eventually reaching a state of smooth and effortless flow.

An example is learning to ride a bicycle. It may feel awkward and uncomfortable as we grapple with attaining balance. Similarly, when we learn to swim, we must be ready to struggle in the water.

It is through the phase of non-flow that we build resilience, acquire new knowledge, refine our techniques, and open ourselves up to the transformative journey of growth and mastery in any endeavor.

Resisting or avoiding the inevitable discomfort of *you wei* can hinder progress and deprive you of the benefits that come with mastering a skill and achieving a state of flow.

Non-flow, in fact, complements flow. When immersed in a state of non-flow, you adopt the mindset of a learner. Conversely, when you find

yourself in a state of flow, you adopt the mindset of a performer.

Think Like a Learner

When you find yourself in a state of non-flow, it is common to experience struggles, feel awkward, and even appear foolish. Think like a learner during this phase to maximize your growth and learning potential. While *wu wei* emphasizes non-forcing, it is natural to use force during the stage of *you wei*. It's where you figure out the right balance between exertion and ease.

You're in a beginner's mindset. You ask basic questions and do basic acts. You do more to achieve less. However, it's an investment of time and effort, which enables you to do less to achieve more later.

Don't think of winning and immediate achievement when you are in the learner's mindset. Instead, you learn, accept, adapt, and change. Things may not go according to plan but remain open to the unfolding of the unknown. It helps you develop an effective strategy to cope with the challenges.

With the learner's mindset, you're not afraid to make mistakes. In fact, you may intentionally make mistakes to verify and reinforce your knowledge, ensuring that you will not falter when going with the flow later on. Through these mistakes, you gain a deeper understanding of yourself, identifying both your strengths and weaknesses. By capitalizing on this knowledge, you can enhance your ability to achieve a state of flow.

For example, when preparing to address a large audience, it can be beneficial to practice beforehand with a smaller group. This allows you to gauge responses, invite challenging questions, and ultimately better prepare yourself. By exposing yourself to the experience on a smaller scale, you gain confidence, refine your delivery, and develop strategies to handle

potential difficulties, enabling you to give an impactful presentation to a larger audience.

With the learner's mindset, you're not afraid to do more. With more experience — be it a good or bad one - you expand your horizons and widen your exposure. As you become more proficient, you can then see how you can cut down the excessive. By then, you'd already know what being excessive means. It prevents you from cutting down on the wrong things.

The Performer's Mindset

In contrast, when you're in a state of flow, think like a performer.

You move in tandem with the rhythm of nature. Nature doesn't hesitate, and neither do you. You don't overthink, judge, or doubt yourself. You are a part of nature, and you let go of anything that would impede the flow.

You excel by balancing effort and ease. Like a skilled skier gracefully descending a slope, you execute each move with precision and efficiency. The movements are so spontaneous and inevitable it's a sight to behold. You're oblivious to the immense pressure that you're under. The focus has transformed it into an impetus.

You do what you are called for, and thoughts of failure never enter your mind. Mistakes do not disrupt your progress; rather, you navigate around them effortlessly, much like water flowing around rocks. It doesn't mean that you ignore or disregard potential errors, but you choose to reflect on them at a time when it does not hinder the flow.

You embrace imperfection and let go of the pursuit of an ideal.

When you accept what is, there's no need for you to force things to happen. Instead, you respond to the true demands of situations, even when they're not what you have planned for.

While you have a goal in mind, you're not obsessed with it. When you're easy with the outcome and think not of failing, you're calm and natural. You make adjustments as you go along. If adjustment is not realistic, you're ready to discard it altogether if need be. You embrace the outcome, whatever it may be.

It applies not only to competitive sports or the performing arts but to whatever you do.

See Things in the Seed

If you intend to grow oranges, only to realize you have been growing apples all along, how will you feel?

Truly devastating, right?

While this scenario may sound absurd, it has happened to many ambitious men and women. They become so consumed by their pursuits that they lose sight of their original intentions. Unknowingly, they veer off course and find themselves on an unintended path, only realizing their mistake when it's too late to course-correct.

It's an unenviable position. To avoid falling into it, it's of critical importance that you're mindful of the seeds that you're planting.

Like Lao Tzu says in chapter 64 of the Tao Te Ching, "From a tiny seed, a towering tree grows." Every day, we sow seeds through our thoughts, words, and actions. These seeds grow into trees and can change our lives, whether it's our careers, relationships, or businesses. Nurture the right seeds and remove the bad ones so as to ensure that you're on the path to a successful and fulfilling life.

Choosing the right seed requires patience, but people often skip this step. In martial arts classes, it's common to see students enjoying throwing punches and kicks without truly understanding the essence behind them.

They don't realize that they could be reaping the wrong fruits because they are yet to plant the right seeds for the acts. They could have missed the mechanics and principles behind the technique and executed the movements with poor form.

Only by planting the right seeds and nurturing them with the right attention can students execute the punch and kick off a true master. It takes dedication and patience, but the end result is worth it: a deep understanding of the art and the ability to execute techniques with power and precision.

Find the Right Seeds

Identify the seeds that can help you grow mentally, physically, and spiritually so that you can progress effortlessly in the pursuit of a fulfilling life.

If you want to reap apples, sow and grow the seed of an apple. If you want to harvest oranges, nurture the seeds of an orange tree. If you want to earn the trust of people, don't sow the seeds of dishonesty or deceit.

Think about it. To be who you want to be and achieve your mission in life, what seeds do you have to plant, and when are you going to plant them?

Indeed, even the right seed, no matter how promising, will not grow if it is not planted. Talent alone cannot unlock your full potential if not nurtured and cultivated. However, by planting the seed with dedicated attention and care, its potential for growth becomes exponential. The harvest from a single seed can far surpass what was initially planted. An apple seed can develop into an apple tree that produces a bountiful harvest season after season.

While a seed may appear small and unremarkable, its latent potential is truly extraordinary. It holds within it the blueprint for growth and

abundance that surpasses our imagination. By recognizing and embracing this potential and by consistently tending to the seed through diligent effort and nurturing, we can unlock and maximize its transformative power.

After planting the seed, exercise patience and allow it the necessary time and space to grow. Growth occurs in distinct stages, from the initial sprouting and budding to the eventual fruition of bearing fruit. During this process, it may appear as though nothing is happening, but beneath the soil, the seed is quietly and steadily developing day and night.

Similarly, the development of one's talents and abilities may require time and perseverance. It is not uncommon for progress to be gradual and not immediately visible. During these times, it is important not to give up prematurely. Just as the seed needs time to establish its roots and grow, your talents require a nurturing environment and consistent effort to fully manifest.

Stay dedicated and persistent in your pursuits. Trust in the process of growth. Embrace the journey with all its ups and downs. It takes time and effort to achieve meaningful results. It is through consistent effort and resilience that your talents and abilities will gradually unfold and flourish.

Plant the Seeds

Now, let's get to work. See what seeds you'll have to grow to nurture quiet confidence.

Look at your goals. What are the habits that you have to form to achieve your goal? For example, If you want to build an enterprise, what are the habits that can help you learn to organize, motivate and lead? What about curiosity? What about decision-making?

Think about the skills. What are the skills that you have to nurture? If you are weak in financials, what about brushing up on your skills for

numbers? Do you have to pick up the basics of marketing?

Think about the network. Do you have to build up a good network of peers where you can learn and grow together? What about identifying a good mentor?

Think about your character. What do you have to do to strengthen your character? What about cultivating gratitude, generating positive energy, and being ready to give? It's also essential to learn from your mistakes and be open to feedback.

Think about your health. What do you have to do to nurture your physical and mental health so that you'll have the energy and strength to focus and work towards achieving your goals?

Once you have determined your needs, find and sow the right seeds for growth. The process may require stepping outside of your comfort zone, embracing new experiences, taking risks, and challenging existing beliefs. These are the investments you must make to provide the necessary conditions for the seeds to thrive.

Similar to preparing the land for cultivation, you must put in the hard work of plowing, tilling, and nurturing the seeds. This process may not be glamorous, but if you remain dedicated and persistent, the seeds will gradually bear fruits, enabling you to grow and exude quiet confidence.

Remember, this is not a one-time event; it requires regular attention and care. Continually evaluate and ensure that you have planted and nurtured the right seeds while removing any hindrances to your growth.

Seeing life as growing seeds allows you to discern what truly matters and goes beyond surface-level appearances. By delving deeper, you can uncover the essence and potential of your endeavors, unveiling fresh opportunities for growth.

Just as a tiny seed can grow into a flourishing enterprise or a motif can blossom into a symphony, cultivating the right seed empowers you to chart a course toward greatness. Embrace this process wholeheartedly, and over time, you will witness the transformative power that shapes your journey to success.

Give To Receive

To develop a strong sense of quiet confidence, know the law of gain and loss.

A fundamental principle that governs the universe is balance. When we gain something, there is an inherent trade-off where we inevitably lose something else in the process. Rarely do we experience pure gain or pure loss.

When you pour water into a glass, the glass gains water but loses the empty space. As you add more water, the amount of space in the glass decreases. Similarly, when you hold an apple in your palm, you have to let go of your palm to allow the apple to land. Every action we take has an equal and opposite reaction. Gain and loss are intertwined.

It is similar to the economic concept of opportunity cost. When you choose to build a factory on a plot of land, you are also giving up the opportunity to build a school on the same plot of land.

Understanding the interplay between gain and loss is empowering. It helps you cultivate a sense of equanimity that enables you to remain composed and resilient in the face of both adversity and success. When you encounter setbacks, you are better equipped to stay grounded and maintain your sense of balance. Likewise, when things are going well, you remain vigilant and aware of potential challenges that could arise in the future.

As Lao Tzu wrote in chapter 77 of the Tao Te Ching, “The Tao of Heaven is like bending a bow. The high is pressed down, and the low is raised up. Take from the excess and give it to the lacking.”

Practicing Gain and Loss

While the law of gain and loss is not difficult to grasp conceptually, putting it into practice can be challenging.

Not all gain and loss are detectable with our capability, and their impact is not always easy to measure. Losing a hundred dollars, for example, is a loss of a hundred dollars. But if you allow the incident to ruin your day with regret, you end up with the lost opportunity of enjoying a good day. Such hidden losses are not always obvious and can obscure the true impact of gain and loss.

While it's not always possible to control the outcomes of gain and loss, we can manage the trade-off to minimize losses. Learn to transform loss into gain and prevent the reverse from happening.

Examples are to see failure not as a loss but an opportunity to learn and grow and rejection as an occasion to train your personal resilience.

When you recognize that even setbacks can lead to benefits, you can approach tough choices with greater ease and confidence. For example, if fear of rejection is holding you back from seeking help from a friend, reframing your mindset to see how you can gain even if your friend says no can make a difference.

The Law of Giving and Receiving

Here we learn another profound insight: If you want to receive, give.

In this aspect, we can learn from companies that thrive by providing exceptional value to their customers. Apple's iPhone transformed the

smartphone industry with its innovative touch screen and intuitive interface, while Airbnb created a platform that allows people to enjoy more affordable, authentic, and immersive travel experiences. By focusing on the value they provide, these companies have thrived and grown.

Applying this principle in our own lives can bring about improvements in everything we do. The more we give, the more we can receive. When we give freely and generously, we open ourselves up to new possibilities and experiences. Conversely, when we're reluctant to give, it's difficult to expand our horizons and grow.

By embracing a mindset of generosity, we can enhance our relationships, advance our careers, and deepen our personal fulfillment. What we put out into the world often comes back to us in unexpected and positive ways.

Lao Tzu recognizes this when he says, "The Sage does not hoard. The more they do for others, the more they have. The more they give to others, the greater their abundance."

If you want to feel fulfilled, be ready to give. It doesn't always have to involve grand gestures. Small acts of kindness can make a big difference. For example, by giving your teacher attention and respect, you can motivate them to share more knowledge with you. The reward can be valuable information that you might not have been able to find elsewhere.

The act of giving enriches the giver as well. Giving and receiving are two sides of the same coin. When you give, you create an opportunity to receive, and you can end up gaining more than you give. You also create a ripple effect of positivity and abundance that can benefit everyone involved. By embracing a mindset of generosity, you can attract more positivity and abundance into your life.

What if I Give but don't Receive?

Give to receive is a law of nature rather than a moral obligation.

“Yield to preserve the whole, bend to become straight, empty to fill, decay to renew. Less is gain, more is in disarray,” says Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching.

But not everybody seems to agree.

It is not uncommon to give passion only to receive a cold shoulder in return. Giving and receiving are not always reciprocal. What should we do when this happens?

The workings of energy in the universe are complex and often beyond our control. Although we may expect something positive in return when we give positive energy, it is not always the case. There are many factors at play between giving and receiving.

Is the Timing Right?

One of the factors is timing. If we offer something when it's not needed or at the wrong time, it can be useless or even counterproductive. Chuang Tzu's wisdom applies here: when the sun is shining, there's no need for a torch, and a bucket of water won't help when it's pouring rain.

There are also cases when the benefits of our giving take time to manifest. It's like planting a seed and waiting for it to grow. Sometimes, the advice or help we give may not be appreciated immediately, but it could prove invaluable later on.

I can relate to this from my experience of learning tai chi. My master gave me advice that I only truly appreciated years later when I was more ready to receive it. Had he been impatient, he might have been disappointed with my progress, and I wouldn't have gained the competence I have today.

So, when we give, and the response is not what we expect, don't jump to the conclusion that the other person is ungrateful. Instead, we should check

to see whether the timing is right and whether the person is ready to receive our help or advice.

Is the Approach Right?

Equally important is the approach you take when giving. If you advise your team with an air of superiority, for example, they may focus on your attitude rather than the merits of your advice. Even if your advice is good, they may fail to see it or choose to ignore it because of how it was presented.

In this case, you did receive what you gave — the reaction to your air of superiority. However, it's different from your expectation. You want them to be grateful for your advice. The universal rule doesn't fool you, but the fact is you don't get what you expect to receive.

Is the target Right?

You may be giving to the wrong person. If you introduce the concept of rocket science to someone who has no interest in technology, it's unlikely that you will receive the response you desire. Similarly, if you attempt to communicate with someone who is unwilling to listen, you may feel as though you're wasting your breath. It's important to consider the recipient's interests and receptiveness when giving to maximize the chances of a positive outcome.

When you do not receive the things you want, it's easy to jump to the conclusion that the universe is not supporting you. Check to see whether you have given enough and in the proper manner.

Giving and receiving is an inherent law of nature that operates in the background of everything we do. It is also an art. It involves the consideration of how you can give the right thing at the right time and in the

right manner. Otherwise, even your well-intentioned actions can have negative repercussions, resulting in you receiving negative energy in return.

The law operates irrespective of whether we are aware of it or not. By aligning our faith with it, we can witness positive transformations in our lives. Let's embrace it and experience its full potential by applying it to things we do in our daily lives.

Your Hidden Power

In the context of wu wei, you are not just a component of the universe; you are a miniature version of it.

Just as a drop of water contains the essence of the ocean, you, too, contain the essence of the universe within you.

If the universe were a house, you're not just a window, door, or ceiling in the house. You are a house in its own right, with its proper structure and all the features that a house is supposed to have.

You are not just a manifestation of the Tao but a unique expression of it. However, due to human limitations such as ego and self-doubt, our ability to fully embody the essence of the Tao is often obscured. Nevertheless, the potential resides within us. As beings, we are designed to experience success, abundance, and happiness. The true test lies in unleashing this innate potential and becoming a miniature universe that is deserving of such greatness.

With quiet confidence, you have a deep sense of self-worth and do not feel lacking. You recognize yourself as a miniature version of the vast universe, possessing all the vital elements that it encompasses.

The practice of wu wei serves as a critical tool in this process. By exploring every angle and letting go of what's holding you back, you can allow the Tao within you to manifest.

For that, we must do two things:

First, we must look within ourselves for strength. We are a miniature universe, so why seek strength elsewhere? We need external resources to grow, but the driving force must come from within us. In this regard, it's crucial that you recognize the potential in you and let go of the doubts and inhibitions that separate you from your true nature.

Like Lao Tzu says in Chapter 33 of the Tao Te Ching, "Knowing others is clever; knowing ourselves is truly wise. Mastering others is strong; mastering ourselves is mighty."

Second, return to the source.

The support of the larger universe is crucial to the growth of the mini-universe within you, but it all starts with self-discovery. You must cultivate a receptive attitude to integrate and harness the energy of the universe. Absorb its wisdom and nourishment like a sponge so as to unleash the potential of your inner universe.

Seeing Your Potential in a New Light

Now that you have come to understand that you are a miniature universe, it's essential to recognize your inherent strengths and discover how you can unlock your hidden potential with newfound confidence. Here are some examples:

Take a look at your strengths and weaknesses. Identify your natural talents, especially your innate capabilities. Have you allowed them to come forward to help you in the things you do? Have you developed skills to let it flow naturally in your work?

Review your goals. Do you set your goals simply by following social trends or desires for financial gains? Can you tap into something that is uniquely yours to create value and differentiate you from others?

Do you release your potential with a growth mindset? Do you embrace challenges, learn from failures, and stay committed to being yourself despite the obstacles ahead?

At the same time, see how you can integrate your miniature universe with the power of the larger universe to unleash your potential and achieve greater success in life. Here are some ways to do that:

Attract more positive energy into your life. Practice gratitude so as to nurture the power of the miniature universe that is already in you. Practice mindfulness to stay in the present and connect your thoughts and feelings with the vibrancy of the universe.

Spend time in nature to experience the simplicity of energy flow and stay connected to the universe. Take a walk in the jungle, listen to the burbling of streams, or feel the wind that caresses your face.

Trust the universe. Allow it to support and guide you toward your highest potential. Let go of your fears and doubts, and trust that everything is working out for your highest good.

By integrating yourself with the power of the universe, you can tap into the limitless potential within you and unleash your full potential.

STEP 6

Manage Timing



Working With Timing

To optimize the impact of wu wei, master the art of timing.

Most people are good at managing their time but often overlook the importance of timing. This can lead to missed opportunities and going around in circles without making progress.

Timing is about being in the right place at the right time and taking the right action when the opportunity arises. It requires a heightened sense of awareness and the ability to read the unspoken.

Mastering the art of timing helps you avoid wasting time and energy on actions that are misaligned with the natural flow of the universe and take action only when the conditions are optimal.

Difference Between Time and Timing

To master the art of timing, you must know the fundamental difference between time and timing.

In a way, time is hard, and timing is soft.

Time is fixed and rigid. After 9 am always comes 10 am, and after Monday, Tuesday. Adherence to it creates structure and discipline. Timing, on the other hand, is fluid and dynamic. You can be trying to reach out to a person for months to no avail. With the magic wand of timing, you bump into the person in the street all of a sudden.

You can't force timing. When the timing is not ready, you can work your sock off, and nothing happens. If it's ready, things happen the way you want, sometimes without you having to do anything.

While powerful, timing is elusive. We don't know when exactly it's going to arrive, and so we often attribute it to fate or luck.

In the eyes of wu wei, timing is not pure luck. Everything happens for a reason. If you know the cause, you can predict the results. Many things, nevertheless, happen in the dark web of interconnectivity without our knowledge, so it can appear that they happen at random.

However, not everything happens without a trace. Things in the universe move in a cycle. By knowing the cycle, we know the ebb and flow and can track the movements and the associated timing. Even if the prediction is not perfect, we can use it to enhance what we do. It helps you anticipate the right timing and act with it.

Walk Before You Run

To enhance your ability to manage timing, it's best to start with small steps.

If you're already proficient in time management, incorporate timing into your practice. Look for the low-hanging fruits. Begin by looking at your daily routine and ask yourself, "Can I improve what I do with the change of timing?" Then, experiment by moving things around and see if the results are better.

Not every hour is equal. Develop the habit of managing timing in everything you do, not just when significant decisions are made, like buying a house or planning for a holiday. Even when running errands, think about how you can do it better with timing. Honing your skill with little things will come in useful when you manage something important later. Here are a few examples:

In addition to planning your time, think about what you can do to make the most of the time. For example, before meeting a person, think about things that you can do to make the meeting more productive. Can you get the participants to be better prepared by asking some pointed questions?

With practice, you can develop a keen sense of timing and apply it to different scenarios.

Knowing the importance of timing, I'd do my exercise early in the morning before anything else. In normal circumstances, I'd complete a full session that lasts for at least an hour. However, if my schedule doesn't permit it, I'd still make sure to squeeze in even just ten minutes of exercise. This way, I avoid the risk of skipping it altogether. I have learned that giving in to excuses and planning to do the exercise later in the day usually result in it being forgotten amidst the demands of daily routines.

I like to arrive at meetings early. It helps me avoid last-minute rush that can disrupt my flow and leave me feeling flustered. When I arrive early and get settled in, I'm much more relaxed and able to contribute more meaningfully to discussions. Additionally, arriving early can help ensure that meetings start and end on time, which is a sign of respect for everyone's time and can lead to more productive outcomes.

Sometimes, I allow timing to add colors to what I do. Bringing home freshly baked pastries on your way home is not in my plan, but the small surprise can brighten the day of my family.

Listen To Movements in a Cycle

To truly master the art of timing, it's important to listen to the natural rhythm of life and know its cyclical patterns. By aligning with the ebb and flow of momentum, one can adapt the pace to our advantage.

Unlike time management, timing requires a deeper understanding of the natural world. Everything has its season, and it's essential to know when to plant the seeds and when to harvest the crops. Failing to do so could mean missing opportunities altogether. To make the most of your efforts, you must be aware of the season and adjust your actions accordingly.

Let's see how you can apply timing management to the things you do. Here, I'd like to use presentation as an illustration.

Like many other processes, a presentation goes through four phases — birth, growth, peak, and decline. By optimizing these phases, you can improve the quality of your delivery to keep your audience engaged.

When starting a presentation, it is important, to begin with the phases of “birth”. This is the time to pique the audience's curiosity and capture their attention. It is not the time to overwhelm them with too much information, no matter how excited you may be about the content you are about to share. Keep the focus on creating interest and intrigue in what you have to say.

Then, move on to the phase of growth, where you share exciting details and insights while observing how momentum builds. Once you reach the peak, it's time to harvest the fruits of your labor. If you're selling a product, it's time to close the sale. If you're educating the audience, provide them with key takeaways to bring home.

Having reached the peak, the cycle enters into its final stage of decline. This is the time to conserve your energy and prepare for the renewal of a new cycle. In a presentation, this is the time to provide a summary of the key points and allow the audience to reflect on what they have learned. You can also use this time to explain any follow-up actions that are required. By properly managing this final stage of the cycle, you can leave a lasting impression on your audience and set the stage for future engagements.

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Ready To Strike

If you enjoy listening to stories, you probably would be like me. I don't like people to tell me the ending of the story prematurely. It takes away the suspense and excitement of anticipation. Ultimately, it dilutes the impact of the story.

For a master storyteller, the timing of when to reveal certain plot points is just as important as the plot points themselves. If you want your listeners to be fully engaged in your story, you must strategically unveil the outcomes at precisely the right moment, creating a powerful impact.

To do that, timing is crucial.

This principle applies to all aspects of life. Think timing. If you want to create impact, it is not enough to just accomplish tasks; you must also complete them at the right moment. Being mindful of when to act, not just what to do, is essential.

As Sun Tzu, the ancient Taoist military strategist, once said, "Engage people with what they expect, but strike at the extraordinary moment that they cannot anticipate." This advice is applicable to both storytelling and war. By waiting for the perfect moment to deliver a surprise or twist, you can leave your audience captivated and eager for more. In all things in life, do not hesitate to break away from the norm, create opportunities, and take decisive action when the timing is right.

To achieve maximum impact, wait for the right moment to act. Begin by putting people in a predictable state, then catch them off guard with the unexpected and impactful. Disrupting patterns through unexpected actions or words increases engagement and can lead to greater success.

In situations where things do not seem to be ready, see whether you can create opportunities by taking some proactive actions. There are many ways to do this, and one of them is to ask questions. Asking questions, especially the difficult ones, can lead to feedback that can reveal alternatives or the right timing to strike.

When the timing to strike finally arrives, do not hesitate or doubt yourself. Instead, go with the flow and take decisive action. Remember, timing is crucial, and indecision can result in missed opportunities. By being proactive and taking action, you can create the opportunities you need to achieve success.

These are some examples of how you can manage the time to strike to create a better impact:

Knowing that your friend intends to learn how to play the guitar, you give them a beginner's guitar as a surprise gift and sign them up for an online course.

Your child is struggling to solve a math problem. Don't be too eager to help. Instead, provide a hint at the critical moment, sparking their curiosity and leading to a successful solution. The turn of events makes the process more enjoyable and rewarding. The impact is stronger than you guiding them all the way from the beginning.

During your product demonstration, make an unexpected announcement that there is a twenty percent discount for anyone who makes a deposit in the next half hour. The timing of the bonus makes taking up the offer more compelling.

The art of striking at the right moment can lead to a much greater impact, all while expending the same amount of effort. It's an important practice of wu wei.

Every Moment Is the Right Moment

While it is important to wait for the right time to arrive, it is equally important to realize that every moment is a good moment.

Although the moment may not be right for a task you have in mind, it is right for something else. What the thing is depends on how you can take advantage of it with an open mind.

For instance, when waiting in a line, rather than idly waiting, consider turning this moment into an opportunity to serve your interests.

If you're planning your next social media post, you can observe people's behavior to find inspiration. Similarly, if you're in marketing, you can observe how the queue is managed and use what you've learned to improve your customer care. By taking advantage of every moment, you can increase your productivity, creativity, and effectiveness.

In the words of Lao Tzu, "Watchful, as if crossing a river of thin ice; Wary, as if surrounded by hostile neighbors; Cordial, as if receiving a guest." By staying present and attuned to the timing of things, you can uncover opportunities that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Rather than passively waiting, engage with the moment and make the most of it. Remember, you can always find opportunities to do something worthwhile. Every moment is the right moment.

STEP 7

Go With The Flow



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Five Forms of Wu Wei

To apply wu wei, understand the five forms you can put into practice. They include *don't do*, *not now*, *going with the flow*, *detachment*, and *stillness*.

Don't do: Refrain from taking wasteful actions or making unnecessary changes. This involves being mindful of your actions and avoiding actions that don't serve a purpose.

Not now: Wait for the right moment and take action only when the timing has arrived. This requires patience and the ability to recognize when the timing is right.

Going with the flow: Be as fluid and flexible as water, and flow without hesitation or self-doubt. This involves trusting the natural flow of events and staying flexible and adaptive.

Detachment: Stay out of the situation even when the outcomes mean a lot to you. By staying detached, you prevent the intrusion of emotions from maintaining clarity of mind. It allows you to do the right things at the right time.

Stillness: Stay in a state of tranquility. Remain easy and calm. Don't allow distractions and noise to intrude. The state of stillness generates a frequency that facilitates interaction with the universe.

By observing the five forms of wu wei, you can cultivate a deeper understanding of the principle and apply it with greater ease and confidence in your daily life. Let's take a closer look at each of these forms and how they can help you live in harmony with the flow of nature.

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Don't Do

The first form of wu wei is *don't do*.

You accomplish your goals by saying no. By refraining from doing things that hinder your natural flow, you do by not doing.

For instance, when it comes to matters of health, there are certain things you must not do so as to preserve its integrity. An example is to resist the temptation to stay up too late. By not doing this, you'd allow your body adequate time to rest and restore its balance. You don't do, but you achieve.

Saying no establishes healthy boundaries. Not only does it help prioritize your tasks, but it also prevents others from pushing you beyond your limits. It helps you strike a balance between work and rest, and safeguards you against problems like stress and burnout.

Saying no brings you clarity by preventing rashness from clouding your judgment. Instead of making hasty decisions, you take a step back to cool down and make more thoughtful choices. It prevents you from making impulsive decisions. You don't do, and you accomplish what you need to do.

Saying no allows you to cultivate quiet confidence and avoid the trap of comparing yourself to others for the wrong reasons. You don't have to do what other people do if it doesn't make sense. By not doing, you're focused

on your own goals and priorities. You *don't do*, and it brings back your focus.

Here are some examples of *don't do* that may prompt you to develop your own list of *don't do*.

Don't rush. By refraining from rushing, you align yourself more effectively with the current flow of the moment. It diminishes the likelihood of errors and alleviates stress levels. When your mind is clear, your creativity flourishes, and the quality of your work improves significantly.

Don't get distracted. By saying no to distractions, you can dedicate your focus to the things that hold the highest priority for you. By minimizing interruptions to your thought processes, you make sounder decisions. It facilitates smoother progress toward your goals.

Don't mix around with negative people. When you say no to negative influences, you create space for positive energy and inspiration to flow into your life, allowing you to focus on your passions and life's purpose.

Don't join the hype. By not joining the hype, you can resist herd mentality and stay true to your values and goals. This allows you to cultivate your unique perspective and approach to life rather than getting swept up in trends or fads that may not be in line with what matters to you.

Don't judge. When you don't judge others, you tend not to judge yourself, leading to more self-assurance. By not judging, you can also develop a greater sense of curiosity about the world around you, leading to new insights and discoveries.

Don't doubt yourself. Self-doubt can create a negative aura around you, which can repel positive energy and opportunities from flowing to you. By not doubting yourself, you radiate quiet confidence that attracts more success and abundance to your life.

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Not Now

The second form of wu wei is *not now*.

Not now differs from the first form, *don't do*, in that it involves delaying action until the conditions are favorable rather than outright refusal.

When we practice *don't do*, we consciously refrain from actions that hinder our natural flow. On the other hand, *not now* emphasizes the importance of TPP in taking action. For something to happen, three primary factors — timing, place, and people (TPP) — must align. If any of these factors are absent or compromised, the desired outcome will not be the way we want them to be.

If the timing is not right, for example, you'd refrain from acting now but will do so at a later time when the timing is better.

Not now allows you to prioritize and channel your energy to other matters that are more timely. By practicing patience and waiting for the right conditions, you can achieve more success and avoid wasting your efforts on matters that are not yet ripe for action.

Patience for the Right Actions

A good reference to the practice of *not now* is chapter 15 of the Tao Te Ching, where Lao Tzu poses the question, “Who has the patience to wait till

the mud settles and the water is clear? Who can remain unmoving till the moment of action arises by itself?”

By having the patience to wait until the mud settles, we gain clarity of mind. This can help us perceive the situation accurately and make sound decisions based on the natural flow of events. It avoids hasty or rash decisions that are not in harmony with the natural flow of things.

By remaining unmoving until the right moment, we can ensure that our actions are not forced or contrived. It means that we are acting in a way that is aligned with the natural flow of the universe rather than based on our own preconceptions or biases.

These are some examples of the practice:

Waiting for the right moment to act: If the timing is not right, doing nothing can be just as important as taking action. For example, if your employer offers you a position that you are not yet prepared for, it may be better to decline the offer than to accept it prematurely. By waiting until you are better equipped to handle the responsibilities of the position, you can increase your chances of success and avoid jeopardizing future opportunities. Taking a step back to evaluate the situation and waiting for the right moment to act can ultimately lead to a more positive outcome.

Taking a break: When feeling overwhelmed or stressed out, don't push further if possible. By taking a break, you can recharge your energy and refocus your attention. Stepping away from a task allows you to clear your mind and return with renewed energy and clarity. When you return, you can go with the flow more effectively, leading to better outcomes and more efficient use of your time and resources.

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Go With the Flow

The third form of wu wei involves *going with the flow* of nature and fully immersing yourself in the present moment. When we're in tune with the rhythm of nature and fully engaged in what we are doing, we can move effortlessly along with the flow of life, free from resistance, hesitation, judgment, self-doubt, and fear.

You're easy with your movements, and the peace of mind helps you execute every action with maximum skill and efficiency. By letting go, you open yourself up to a greater sense of creativity, joy, and fulfillment.

You think like a performer, not a learner. You don't hold yourself back by constantly second-guessing or scrutinizing your every move. Instead, you trust your abilities and let your instincts take over. By surrendering to the flow, you achieve a level of ease and grace that can't be reached through sheer effort alone.

Even when faced with immense pressure, you remain centered and move seamlessly with the natural flow of things. You navigate obstacles with the fluidity and adaptability of water without judgment or hesitation. Mistakes don't shake you. You embrace imperfection and let go of the pursuit of perfection that holds you back.

Rather than forcing outcomes, you respond to the true demands of situations, even if they differ from your plans. By staying present and open,

you adjust your strategy as needed to achieve the best possible outcome.

Although you're driven by a deep sense of purpose, you're not attached to any particular outcome. This allows you to remain calm and focused, even in the face of uncertainty or setbacks. You understand that success is not just about achieving your goals but also the journey you take to get there. By embracing the present moment and responding to the true demands of each situation, you achieve success while remaining true to your values and vision.

Your adaptability and responsiveness allow you to harmonize with the ever-changing rhythm of life. Rather than resisting or trying to force outcomes, you embrace what is while remaining focused on your goals. You move with intention and purpose yet stay grounded in the present moment.

Like a chameleon, you adjust your approach to fit the situation at hand. You embody the duality of resolve and flexibility and are able to be both firm and yielding. You navigate life's twists and turns with ease and grace, trusting the natural order of things.

When you let go of the need for control, you tap into greater power, flowing effortlessly with the universe. You speak and act with clarity and simplicity, like water embracing the rocks. Your mind, body, and soul are in harmony, working together like a symphony. You focus on the process rather than the outcome, letting go of the need to "do" and allowing things to happen naturally.

Staying Detached

Staying detached is probably the most challenging among the five forms of wu wei. It requires a high level of emotional intelligence and self-awareness. You maintain a sense of inner calm and detachment, even when the outcomes that matter to you are being threatened.

When we can stay detached, we behave as if the outcome doesn't affect us at all. Although we are engaged and fully present in the moment, we are not attached to any particular outcome.

It's reminiscent of scenes from thriller movies. A hostage is held captive but remains remarkably calm despite the watchful eyes of his captors and the danger lurking behind. The detachment allows the hero to stay alert and jump into action when an opportunity arises. With lightning-fast reflexes, he disarms his captors and even turns the tables on them.

The state of detachment that allows you to remain calm under pressure doesn't have to be limited to that of action movie heroes or life-threatening situations. In fact, it can be a valuable skill in everyday life, such as managing a difficult conversation or dealing with the loss of a car key. By cultivating a sense of detachment, you can approach challenging situations with a clear and level-headed mind.

Detachment doesn't mean being apathetic or disinterested. The key is to strike a balance between being indifferent and fully engaged. You detach

yourself from the outcomes while remaining fully engaged with the situation. It is the state of calm awareness that allows you to respond to situations with clarity and focus.

Martial artists embody this approach with great skill. They remain composed and serene, even in the midst of battle, and are acutely attuned to their opponent's every move. By remaining detached from their desires and emotions, they are able to respond to whatever happens without preconceived notions or plans. This allows them to move fluidly and adaptively, with precision and grace.

With detachment, non-essential emotions like anxiety and fear don't intrude, allowing you to maintain flow and focus on softness and patience. This allows you to engage with the natural flow of events and find your way forward without being held back by unnecessary emotions or distractions.

To achieve a state of detachment, try the three-step approach.

Step 1: Embrace the problem

Accept what is. Even if the problem involves something unpleasant, accept it. Be like water, soft and yielding. Greet the problem instead of pushing against it. If it's a hurtful comment, for example, you listen with an open mind.

Step 2: Stay neutral

Next, don't judge. Avoid hasty conclusions or assumptions. View yourself as a third party without any personal attachment or bias. You separate yourself from emotions. Tell yourself, "It's not about me."

When you're held hostage, the true motive of the captor is likely to be the ransom, not you. When people are passing an unfair remark on you, tell yourself, "It's not about me." They're just trying to please their ego.

Tell yourself, “It’s not about me, it’s about...” Then, complete the sentence with something like “Bring back my flow.” By using this technique, you can detach yourself from the situation and avoid getting bogged down by emotions.

Step 3: Harness the energy

With a clear view of the problem, use the energy to your advantage. Channel the energy to enhance your actions. Find a solution or leverage the problem. By not being consumed by the problem, you can remain calm and clear-headed. It allows you to make better decisions and take more effective actions.

Detachment is a powerful tool for managing difficult situations. By following these three steps, you can separate problems from emotions, stay neutral, and harness the energy of the situation.

Stay in Stillness

Hearing the word *stillness*, what comes to the mind of many people is meditation. *Stillness* and meditation, however, are not the same thing.

Stillness is a state of inner calm, tranquility, and quietude, while meditation is a practice that helps us access this state of mind. One is an outcome, and the other is an approach to achieving the outcome.

While meditation can help bring *stillness* to you, it's only one of the several approaches. You can experience stillness, for example, while walking in nature or sitting quietly watching the sunset. The activities can be meditative, but not necessarily the meditation that you practice.

Like a basketball player taking a shot, we can experience *stillness* as a split second of calm before a big moment. It can also be a longer period of peace and tranquility during a graceful swim.

Stillness is a fundamental aspect of wu wei, serving several important purposes:

First and foremost, *stillness* promotes clarity of thought. Our thoughts tend to be scattered and unclear when our minds are agitated or disturbed. However, by cultivating stillness, our minds can achieve a state of tranquility, much like allowing sediment to settle in a glass of water. This process makes our thoughts clearer and more reflective, allowing us to approach situations with greater focus and rationality.

Second, stillness facilitates meaningful inner dialogue. When our minds are at peace, we can listen to our inner voice without the interference of external noise or distractions. This enhances our ability to understand ourselves on a deeper level and discover our purpose in life. By engaging in introspection and self-reflection during moments of *stillness*, we gain valuable insights that can guide our actions and choices.

Furthermore, *stillness* connects us with the universe and the formless Tao. The tranquility of *stillness* aligns our frequency with that of the universe, enabling us to interact with it more harmoniously. It allows us to open ourselves up to the vastness of the cosmos and humbly recognize our place within it. Through *stillness*, we can tap into a profound sense of interconnectedness and draw inspiration from the universal flow.

Last but not least, *stillness* nurtures creativity. In a state of *stillness*, we enter a realm of nothingness that allows us to access our inner wisdom and intuition. It is within this space of quietude that innovative ideas can emerge, enabling us to think outside the box, find novel solutions to problems, and experience creative breakthroughs. By embracing stillness, we create the conditions for inspiration and imagination to flourish.

Listening to Wisdom Trickling In

Cosmo has a unique way of passing on its wisdom to us. When we communicate with it, intelligence and insights trickle to us little by little. It's unlikely to be a single session where we receive all the answers at once. Instead, it's more like parents giving out candies to their children. We accept one piece, savor and apply it, and then another piece will come. It requires patience and a willingness to be amazed. When we cultivate stillness, we create a space within ourselves to receive these insights and opportunities for learning and growth.

Cultivating *stillness* is not an easy feat, but the benefits are immeasurable. By making it a habit, we can experience profound changes in our lives, both on a personal and spiritual level. *Stillness* allows us to tap into the natural flow of the universe, fostering clarity, inner dialogue, connection, and creativity. It also provides us with the space to receive and learn, making us more adaptive and open-minded. So let us embrace *stillness* as a vital component of a balanced and fulfilling life, and witness the wonders that it can bring.

Epilogue

The Three Treasures

To summarize our discussion, I would like to conclude this book with reference to Lao Tzu's Three Treasures.

Wu Wei teaches us to harness the power of nature and achieve a state of ease and calm to get things done effortlessly.

To truly go with the flow of nature, we must let go of any inhibitions that hold us back. Our mind, body, and soul are to be in oneness. This means releasing our tendencies towards overthinking, control, judgment, and negative emotions. We cultivate a single-minded focus while also remaining adaptable and fluid like water.

To cultivate the state of wu wei, we can draw inspiration from Lao Tzu's Three Treasures, which he says he holds dear to his heart. These treasures have been translated in various ways, but the original Chinese characters provide a clearer understanding. They are *compassion* (慈), *thrift* (慈), and *not daring to be ahead of the world under heaven* (不敢为天下先). By embracing these values, we can align ourselves with the natural flow of the universe and live a life of balance and harmony.

Compassion

Compassion is characterized by feelings of empathy, kindness, and concern for others. It allows us to connect with others on a deeper level, to see the

world through their eyes, and to respond with care and support. This powerful emotion can manifest in various forms, including love, empathy, and humility, and is an essential aspect of a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Compassion is a positive energy that sets things on the right footing. With compassion, you're ready to listen and give. It enables you to connect to the universe for vitality and growth. Positive energy attracts good energy, and you surround yourself with supportive people who, in turn, reward you with more positive energy, which is often many times over. It puts you in a state of vitality with ease and calmness that enables you to "do nothing and leave nothing undone."

Thrift

The second treasure is *thrift*, which is sometimes misunderstood as frugality or living a spartan lifestyle. However, *thrift* encompasses a broader meaning.

In this context, *thrift* means being mindful of your resources and using them wisely. It is not about being stingy or depriving yourself of necessary things, but rather making conscious choices to optimize the use of what you have.

To achieve optimal results in whatever you do, it is important to find a balance between effort and ease. Your energy is a valuable resource that must be managed with care. Instead of simply working hard without consideration, you view your effort as a component of the natural flow of which you are a part. You apply just the right amount of energy necessary to accomplish your tasks.

Thrift involves focusing on what truly matters and avoiding distractions. It is about staying grounded and not being easily swayed by the superfluous.

By doing so, you generate a smooth flow of energy that allows you to work effectively in harmony with nature.

Not To Be Ahead of the World Under Heaven

The third treasure is *not to be ahead of the world under heaven*.

The world is interconnected and interdependent. Rather than seeking to control or dominate it, we must work in harmony with it and accept our place in the grand scheme of things.

It is important for us to recognize that, in any pursuit, things are accomplished through us, not by us, at least not by us alone. Even in things as simple as walking, we need the support of the ground beneath our feet to enable movement.

For anything to happen, there must be a convergence of timing, location, and people (TPP), which runs as a flow. Since you can't control each of the primary factors, when you interfere inappropriately, you'll disrupt the flow and end up compromising the results.

We are not always the central figure in every situation. There are times when we play key roles, and there are times when we are but a dot in the background. To get things done effortlessly, it's important that you know the role you play and play it well.

You go with the flow rather than trying to *stay ahead of the world*. You follow the current of what is rather than being driven solely by your desires. If the conditions are not ready, doing nothing is doing something. While you may work on improving the conditions, you don't force things to happen. Rather than staying ahead, you work harmoniously with the world. You let go of control, listen to the flow, and play your role well in allowing nature to perform marvels.

You're natural as a leader. When you're working with people, you listen to the voices deep in them. When they create results by following their hearts, they find ownership in the results. They say, as Lao Tzu puts it, "We did it all naturally."

By embracing the Three Treasures and holding them dear, Lao Tzu said: "Heaven will come to our rescue and protect us with compassion." It instills a quiet confidence in us that can give us strength to overcome any obstacle, no matter how great they are.

With the Three Treasures as our guiding principles, we cultivate a gentle focus that allows us to gracefully navigate the currents of life. We surrender any inhibitions and immerse ourselves in the flow, unhindered by resistance. As a result, each step we take becomes effortless, and every action we undertake yields results without the need for forced outcomes. This is the essence of wu wei, where we harmoniously coexist with the world around us, effortlessly progressing toward our aspirations.

About the Author

Tekson Teo finds wu wei's immense power fascinating and is eager to share its transformative potential. Having immersed himself in the profound teachings of Taoist philosophy for a few decades, he finds great intrigue in the tremendous impact that aligning with the natural flow of nature can have on how we achieve success and fulfillment in life.

In addition to his familiarity with scriptures such as the Tao Te Ching and the I Ching, Tekson is privileged to be a disciple of an ancient tai chi lineage, which allows him to gain invaluable insights and wisdom into the philosophy.

Moreover, Tekson's extensive experience as a management consultant, which has given him the opportunity to traverse continents, has provided him with invaluable perspectives on the practical application of this timeless wisdom. It enables him to integrate the principles of wu wei into everyday work and life.

Tekson was awarded BSc (Econ) Hon by the University of London and an MBA, DIC by Imperial College London.

Keep the conversation going, contact him via Tekson.Org