

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INTELLIGENCE

What Nobody Told You About Your Career

The truth they never wanted to tell you.

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Audience

Anyone from 14 to 90 who refuses to sleepwalk through their working life.

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A LETTER FROM KEN LUBIN

Why I wrote the thing no one else would.

Twenty-five years. Hundreds of placements. Thousands of conversations. And the same mistakes, over and over, made by smart people who were following a script written by people who had never actually done the job.

I've been broke. I've had my confidence stripped. I've been called a rebel, a troublemaker, someone who doesn't fit the mold. And I've figured out things the hard way that most people never figure out at all, because they were too scared to try.

I'm also a parent, a coach, a husband, and the son of difficult parents. I've sat across the table from thousands of people at every stage of their career, from their first job to their last. I've watched brilliant people make catastrophic choices out of fear. I've watched so-called average people build extraordinary lives because they refused to listen to the noise.

This manual is what I wish someone had handed me at twenty-five. It is not polished corporate advice. It is not a self-help book. It is not going to tell you to wake up at 5 AM, meditate for an hour, and drink a green smoothie. That's all nonsense.

This is the raw truth about careers and life that most people are too afraid, too polite, or too invested in the status quo to say out loud.

The number one regret of the dying is not that they worked too hard. It's that they played it safe. They listened to people who didn't know. They traded the life they wanted for the life that seemed acceptable. They let fear make every major decision.

That ends here.

Read it. Argue with it. Use it.

Ken Lubin

Managing Director, ZRG Partners

CONTENTS

What is inside.

PART ONE. The Lies You Were Sold

01. Follow Your Passion Is Terrible Advice
02. School Was Never About You
03. Social Media Is the World's Largest Lying Contest

PART TWO. The Truth About Fear

04. Fear Is the Boss You Actually Work For
05. Depression, ADHD, and Anxiety Are Superpowers
06. Failure Doesn't Exist Unless You Quit

PART THREE. You Are the CEO

07. Would You Hire You?
08. Loyalty Is a One-Way Street
09. Difficult People Are Your Greatest Teachers
10. Money, Power, and Persuasion

PART FOUR. The Manual for Every Age

11. From 14 to 90: Your Career Is Not a Sprint
12. AI, Tech, and the New Rules of Work
13. The Art of the Unconventional Move

CLOSING. The Seven Truths That Change Everything

PART ONE

The Lies You Were Sold

Everything you were taught. Almost none of it is true.

CHAPTER 01

Follow Your Passion Is Terrible Advice

And other myths your guidance counselor handed you.

Here is the problem with following your passion. It only works if your passion happens to be something the market will pay for. If your passion is deep-sea fishing, rewatching *The Wire*, or collecting vintage sneakers, the advice is catastrophically bad. And yet we keep telling young people this as if it's wisdom.

The cult of passion is the cult of feelings over strategy. It tells people that the right career is the one that feels right, as if feelings are a reliable compass for a forty-year working life. They are not. Not even close.

What actually works is simpler. Get dangerously good at something valuable. Build real relationships with people who matter. Then let the passion follow the mastery. Passion is almost always a byproduct of competence, not a prerequisite for it. Nobody woke up on their first day of work and felt called. The people who love their work are the people who got so good at it they couldn't help but own it.

The second lie is that you need to have it figured out at twenty-two. You don't. The career of the future is not a ladder. It is a sprawling, unpredictable, magnificent mess of pivots, restarts, and unexpected doorways that open because you showed up somewhere with curiosity and energy.

I've placed athletes who became entrepreneurs. Teachers who became exceptional salespeople. Lawyers who found their real power as coaches. The problem was never their ability. It was the story they had been told about who they were supposed to be.

And the money question; Is money the only measure? No. But let's not pretend it doesn't matter. Being broke is not romantic. Poverty doesn't make you wise or noble or interesting. It makes you stressed, limited, and constantly reactive. Money is not the enemy of meaning. It is the prerequisite for options.

The people who say money doesn't buy happiness have usually never gone without it. A paycheck that covers your rent, funds your adventures, and lets you say yes to opportunities is not selling out. It's buying in to the life you actually want. Don't be a martyr. Standing on principle is admirable. Being broke on principle is just being broke.

★ THE ONE THING

Passion follows mastery. Get insanely good at something the market needs,

build real relationships, and the love for the work will come.

Wait for passion first and you will wait forever.

CHAPTER 02

School Was Never About You

The credential economy and what it is actually selling.

Here is what they don't tell you at graduation. Most of your professors have never done the job they are teaching you to do. Your business professor has never run a business. Your marketing lecturer has never launched a real product. Your gym teacher was probably not a college or professional athlete. Your guidance counselor chose a career in guidance because the real world felt too unpredictable.

This isn't a knock on education. Reading, thinking critically, being exposed to ideas you wouldn't encounter on your own, these things are genuinely valuable. What I'm calling out is the industrial model of credentialism that tells you more school equals more safety. It doesn't. And a lot of people use school as an escape hatch from a decision they're afraid to make.

Every year I watch smart people spend three years and a fortune on a graduate degree to delay the next move. They dress it up as ambition. I'm getting my MBA. I'm still working on my PhD. What they're really saying is: I'm terrified of stepping into the arena without a safety net, so I'm buying more time in the building.

Research is often fear wearing a respectable disguise. The person who spends six months researching their next career move is usually the same person who spends six months not making one. At some point, action is the only research that counts. You learn by doing, by failing, by adjusting, and by going again. A classroom can't replicate that.

The grades? The famous truth that every experienced hiring manager eventually discovers: A students often work for C students. The A student learned to play the game by the rules. The C student got bored with the rules and started building their own game.

Where you went to school matters far less than you think, and far less than schools want you to believe. What matters is what you did after you walked out the door.

★ THE ONE THING

A degree opens a door. What you do after you walk through it is entirely up to you.

Action beats research. Every single time.

Stop studying the pool and get in the water.

CHAPTER 03

Social Media Is the World's Largest Lying Contest

Everyone online is performing. Almost no one is actually happy.

The people who post the most are usually suffering the most. They need the world to believe they are perpetually successful, perpetually happy, perpetually grinding toward something magnificent. The curated vacation photos, the announcements, the gym selfies at six in the morning. All theater.

We have created an entire generation of professionals who benchmark their real lives against other people's highlight reels and feel inadequate as a result. Your friend posting about their big promotion at the prestigious firm is probably miserable there. The influencer selling you their morning routine is selling a course, not a life. The thought leader with ten thousand followers has often never actually built anything.

Stop measuring yourself against people you don't know, living lives you can't fully see, chasing metrics that have nothing to do with actual happiness.

Here's what I've watched over twenty-five years. The people who are genuinely thriving, the ones with real freedom and real joy in their work, post almost nothing. They're too busy actually living to perform living.

And I'll say this plainly. I know more genuinely successful tradespeople than I know successful investment bankers, lawyers, or doctors. Not because the trades always pay more, though often they do. Because the tradespeople built something real, own their time, and aren't trapped in a prestige game that has no finish line. Society told them their work was less important. The market disagreed.

★ THE ONE THING

Stop comparing your inside to everyone else's outside.

The race you're in is the one you invented.

Run your own.

PART TWO

The Truth About Fear

It is running your life. Time to talk about it.

CHAPTER 04

Fear Is the Boss You Actually Work For

And how to stop working for free.

Every bad career decision I have ever watched someone make had one thing in common. Fear. Fear of leaving. Fear of starting. Fear of being wrong. Fear of being right. Fear of what people would think. Fear of what happens if it doesn't work.

Fear is the number one thing holding people back from becoming who they actually are. And it disguises itself brilliantly. It shows up as being responsible. It shows up as doing more research. It shows up as not the right time. It shows up as I have to think about it. All fear. All of it.

The right time doesn't exist. The right time is right now or it is never.

Here's what I know from watching thousands of people make and miss their biggest moves. The people who take the leap are not braver than you. They are just as terrified. The difference is they moved anyway. Scared and did it. Afraid and jumped. Not sure it would work and started anyway.

The truth no one tells you about being afraid: it never fully goes away. You'll feel it when you ask for a raise. You'll feel it when you quit a job that is slowly taking years off your life. You'll feel it when you start the company, make the call, send the pitch, have the conversation you've been avoiding for six months. The goal is not to eliminate fear. The goal is to feel it and move anyway.

Don't be afraid to ask for a raise. The worst they say is no, and you're already not getting it. Don't be afraid to quit. Starting over is not the worst thing. Don't be afraid to walk away from a client who treats you badly. The energy you get back will go somewhere better.

Monk mode is nonsense, by the way. You don't need to withdraw from the world, cut off all pleasure, and stare at your goals written in a journal to be productive. You need to put yourself in rooms where things are happening. Talk to people who are doing things. Take on projects that scare you a little. Keep showing up. Growth mode. Outreach mode. Discomfort mode. That's what actually works.

★ THE ONE THING

Scared and doing it anyway is courage.

Scared and staying put is a slow erosion of everything you could have been.

Pick the harder option. It has a better ending.

CHAPTER 05

Depression, ADHD, and Anxiety Are Superpowers

The things that make you different make you extraordinary.

I want to say something directly. The things our culture has pathologized about the human mind are often the same things that drive the most interesting, productive, and transformative people on the planet.

ADHD means your brain is wired for novelty, urgency, and hyperfocus. The same brain that can't sit through a two-hour meeting can also build an entire product in a weekend, see connections nobody else sees, and sprint toward a deadline with a ferocity that embarrasses people who are wired more conventionally. The challenge is not the ADHD. The challenge is that we built a world designed for one kind of brain and then called it the standard.

Anxiety means you see threats before they arrive. Managed well, that is an early warning system. It keeps you sharp, prepared, and unlikely to be blindsided. Anxiety is not weakness. It is sensitivity turned up. The goal isn't to eliminate it. The goal is to channel it.

Depression, in many people who live with it, comes with extraordinary depth, empathy, honesty, and pattern recognition. A huge number of the most creative and impactful people in any field have walked through periods of serious darkness. That's not coincidence.

I'm not minimizing the real difficulty of any of this. I'm saying the story that something is wrong with you is almost never the complete story. The more complete story is that you are wired differently, and different, managed well, is an advantage. Own your wiring. Stop apologizing for it.

Your career will stall. You will be fired. Your biggest client will leave you without warning. You will be broke. You will doubt yourself at two in the morning when nothing seems to be working. What you do in those moments is the most important data about who you actually are as a professional.

★ THE ONE THING

The things that make you difficult to manage are often the things that make you impossible to replace.

Build around your strengths.

Stop apologizing for being exactly who you are.

CHAPTER 06

Failure Doesn't Exist Unless You Quit

The only real failure is the one you stop learning from.

There is no such thing as failure. There is data. There is experience. There is the thing that didn't work this way, which tells you something essential about what might work another way. Failure is a label we put on learning we didn't expect.

The only true failure is quitting. And sometimes, quitting is the smartest move you can make. Those two sentences can both be true.

Not every job deserves your energy. Not every client is worth keeping. Not every company is worth saving. There are situations where cutting your losses, taking what you have learned, and redirecting your energy is the brave and intelligent move. Knowing when to stop is a skill, not a weakness.

What it is not, is giving up because something got hard. Almost everything worth doing gets hard. The third year of building anything, a business, a career, a real skill, is almost universally brutal. The people who break through are the ones who don't confuse this is hard with this is wrong.

The most successful people I've worked with over twenty-five years are not the ones who avoided failure. They're the ones who failed fast, pulled out the lesson, and moved to the next thing with more information and less wasted time. They treat failure the way a good scientist treats a failed experiment. Data, not judgment.

One more thing. Stop looking busy to look busy. One hundred hours of unfocused work is worth maybe twenty hours of focused work. The metric is results, not effort. The person sitting at their desk until nine every night and producing nothing is not a hero. They are bad at prioritization. Get out, do the important work, and go live your life.

★ THE ONE THING

Fail fast. Pull the lesson. Move with more knowledge and less baggage.

Busy is not a virtue. Results are.

And sometimes quitting is the most intelligent move on the board.

PART THREE

You Are the CEO

Of your career, your time, and your story.

CHAPTER 07

Would You Hire You?

The most honest performance review you will ever give yourself.

Here is the exercise I give every person I counsel. Pretend you are the CEO of a small company. Your most important employee is you. The question is not whether you are good at your job. The question is: would you hire you?

Would you hire someone who is chronically late to deliver? Who deflects responsibility when things go wrong? Who waits to be told what to do instead of finding out what needs doing? Who is difficult to work with under pressure? Who coasts when no one is watching?

Now flip it. Would you hire someone with genuine curiosity who brings energy to hard problems? Who communicates clearly even when the news is bad? Who builds real relationships with the people around them? Who can sell themselves and their ideas? Who keeps showing up even when it's not going well?

Your job does not define you. What you bring to it does. The title on your card is not who you are. How you treat the people around you, your colleagues, your clients, your direct reports, your bosses, that is who you are.

And here's the one nobody talks about. If everyone around you disappeared tomorrow, if your network evaporated, your company folded, your boss left, your clients went somewhere else, could you start over? Because at some point, most of us face exactly that. The question is not whether it will happen. It's whether you are building skills, relationships, and habits that make you genuinely employable anywhere, by anyone, at any time.

Your career is yours. Not your parents'. Not your spouse's. Not your employer's. Not your grandparents' idea of what a successful life looks like; Yours. The manual you follow should be written by you, not inherited from people who lived in a completely different world with completely different rules.

You make more money leaving than staying. This is true in most fields, most of the time. Companies give their best compensation packages to the people they are trying to recruit, not to the people they already have and take for granted. The market rewards mobility. The people who told you that changing jobs too often makes you a job hopper are often the same people

who have been in the same seat for twenty years, making the same salary, wondering why nothing has changed. Leave when leaving serves you. Stay when staying serves you. Be honest about which is which.

★ THE ONE THING

Your job does not define you. Your choices do.

Own your career the way a CEO owns a company.

If you wouldn't hire you, become someone you would.

CHAPTER 08

Loyalty Is a One-Way Street

And you're the only one who doesn't know it.

Let me save you years of confusion and disappointment. The company you work for does not love you. I know that sounds harsh. I know some of you are reading this thinking, but my company is different. It's not. When the numbers change, when the strategy shifts, when a new CFO comes in looking for places to cut, your loyalty will not protect you. Your tenure will not protect you. Your perfect performance reviews will not protect you.

I have seen it hundreds of times. People who gave fifteen years to an organization. People who turned down other opportunities because they believed in the company. People who worked weekends, took the difficult assignments, and were genuinely committed. And then, in a quarter where the earnings missed, or an acquisition changed the org chart, they were gone. A brief meeting with HR. A severance package if they were lucky. The company moved on by the next Monday.

This is not me being cynical. This is me telling you how the game actually works so you can stop playing it like it doesn't.

Loyalty to a company is a strategy that only benefits the company. You stay longer than you should. You don't negotiate as hard as you could. You turn down opportunities because you feel a sense of obligation to people who would not feel that same obligation to you if the spreadsheet told them to cut your role.

Be loyal to yourself. Full stop. That means staying current in your field even when your company doesn't require it. It means maintaining your network even when you're not looking. It means keeping your resume updated even when things are going well. It means never letting your entire professional identity become wrapped up in the name of one company, because that company can take it from you without a second thought.

Be loyal to your colleagues, to the people who have genuinely earned your trust over time, to the relationships that run deeper than an org chart. Those are real. The institutional loyalty that companies ask for is not a two-way agreement. It is a one-way extraction.

Here's what I've noticed about the people who get hurt the most when a company lets them go. They are almost always the ones who were most loyal in the way companies ask you to be loyal. They identified deeply with the brand. They defined themselves by the job. They made the company their entire professional universe. And when it ended, they had nothing outside of it.

Don't let that be you. Build skills that belong to you, not to your employer. Build relationships that exist outside your company's Slack channels. Build a reputation that travels with you wherever you go. That is the only loyalty that pays you back.

★ THE ONE THING

Your company will cut you the moment the numbers tell them to.

Be loyal to yourself, to your growth, and to the people who have earned it.

Everything else is a story the company tells to keep you from negotiating.

CHAPTER 09

Difficult People Are Your Greatest Teachers

The bosses and clients you survived built you.

Every terrible boss I've ever had taught me something I couldn't have learned any other way. The micromanager taught me to document everything. The narcissist taught me to never confuse proximity to power with power. The bully showed me exactly where my real limits were. The passive-aggressive leader taught me that unspoken conflict is always more destructive than spoken conflict.

Difficult people are the training ground for everything else. The person who has only ever worked for reasonable, supportive, emotionally intelligent leaders is like an athlete who has only ever practiced in perfect conditions. They have no idea what they are actually capable of when things get real.

Here is the move with a difficult boss. Stop waiting for them to change. They won't. Ask yourself three questions instead. First, what can I actually learn from this person, even if they are terrible at almost everything else? Second, what is this situation showing me about what I will and won't tolerate? Third, is this worth staying for, or is this one of those moments where the brave move is to leave?

The hard conversation you are avoiding is always more expensive than the one you have. The client relationship that has gone sideways and you keep pretending is fine will cost you far more to maintain the pretense than it would to just address it directly. The colleague who is undermining you and you keep ignoring will not stop on their own.

Have the hard conversations. Be direct without being cruel. Say the true thing, not the easy thing. Do the right thing, not the thing that makes you look right. Those two things are very different, and knowing the difference is one of the most important professional skills you will ever develop.

★ THE ONE THING

Difficult people are your curriculum, not your curse.

Have the hard conversation.

Doing the right thing and needing to be right are not the same.

CHAPTER 10

Money, Power, and Persuasion

The skills no one teaches and everyone needs.

If you cannot sell yourself, nobody else will. This is not negotiable. It is the ground floor. The ability to communicate clearly, persuade effectively, and advocate for your own value is the single most transferable skill in any industry, at any level, in any economy. Period.

Sales gets a bad reputation because people confuse selling with manipulating. Real selling is different. Real selling is understanding what someone needs, demonstrating clearly that you can provide it, and removing the obstacles between them and the decision to work with you. If you believe in what you are offering, whether that is a product, a service, or yourself, selling is an act of service, not coercion.

Power is also misunderstood. Most people think it comes from title, hierarchy, or being close to the right people. It doesn't. Not the kind that lasts. Real power comes from expertise others cannot replicate, relationships others cannot access, and a reputation that walks into the room before you do. Build those three things and you will never need the title to have the influence.

Money can buy happiness. Let me say that again, clearly, because the opposite platitude has been used against working people forever. Money buys security, which reduces anxiety. It buys options, which reduces the feeling of being trapped. It buys experiences that create the memories and relationships most people identify as the real source of joy. Being poor is not a spiritual experience. It is hard and limiting and exhausting. Stop pretending otherwise.

That said, spend your money on things that actually make you happy. Not the things that make other people think you are happy. Fast cars are fun if you love fast cars. Travel is incredible if it feeds you. Buy the boat if the boat is genuinely yours and not a symbol you're purchasing to impress people you don't even like.

★ THE ONE THING

Learn to sell. Learn to persuade. Learn to ask for exactly what you are worth.

These three skills will take you further than any credential or company name.

And money matters. Build it, use it, stop apologizing for wanting it.

PART FOUR

The Manual for Every Age

From 14 to 90. You have more time than you think.

CHAPTER 11

From 14 to 90: Your Career Is Not a Sprint

Different phases. Different rules. One life.

One of the most damaging things we tell young people is that they need to have it figured out immediately. That if you're not on a clear trajectory by twenty-two, you're already behind. This is complete nonsense, and I've watched it paralyze people who had everything they needed to build something extraordinary.

Ages 14 to 22. Experiment without shame.

This is the most underrated phase of any career. You are allowed to be curious, to try things, to fail publicly, to discover what you hate, and to build skills you'll use in ways you can't predict yet. Work. All kinds of work. Lawn care, retail, construction, tech support, food service. Every job teaches you something about how business actually works that no classroom can replicate. And get outside. Move your body. Talk to people face to face. Start building the habit of showing up.

Ages 22 to 32. Build the foundation, not the facade.

Your twenties are not for performing success. They are for building the real infrastructure: skills, relationships, and financial habits. Say yes to opportunities that scare you. Change jobs when changing serves your actual growth. Take the lower-paying position at the more interesting company. Move to the city where things are happening. Get rejected. Ask someone out. Try again. This is the decade where you find out what you are actually made of when things get uncomfortable.

Ages 32 to 45. Go deeper or go wider.

By your mid-thirties, you know enough about yourself to make a genuine strategic choice. Do you go deeper in the lane you're in, becoming the best version of what you've been building? Or do you use everything you've learned to make a significant lateral move into a new industry, a new function, or your own company? Both are valid. Neither is permanent. Most people wait too long to make this decision and then make it reactively when a circumstance forces them.

Ages 45 to 60. The wisdom years.

This is when most people start to underestimate themselves. Don't. The combination of experience, relationships, pattern recognition, and hard-won self-knowledge you carry at this stage is extraordinarily valuable. The market doesn't always know it yet. Your job is to demonstrate it, loudly, confidently, and without apology. The people who coast at this stage are the ones who end up blindsided. The people who double down are the ones who have their best decade yet.

Ages 60 to 90. The reframe.

Retirement as we knew it was largely a twentieth-century construct that made sense when physical labor was the dominant form of work. It makes less sense now. The question at this stage is not when do I stop. It's what do I want to do with everything I know? Mentorship, consulting, board work, entrepreneurship, creative work, teaching. The options are real and the demand for genuine wisdom is enormous. You are not done. You are experienced.

★ THE ONE THING

You are not behind. You are exactly where the decisions you've made have put you.

The only meaningful question is: what decisions are you making next?

CHAPTER 12

AI, Tech, and the New Rules of Work

The machine is not your enemy. Complacency is.

We are in the middle of the most significant reshuffling of the labor market in a hundred years. Artificial intelligence is not coming for your job in the way the headlines suggest. It's coming for the repetitive, pattern-based, codifiable tasks within your job. What's left is everything that requires judgment, real relationships, genuine creativity, and human context that a machine cannot replicate.

This is either terrifying or liberating depending on how you approach it. The people who thrive in this economy are not necessarily the most technical. They are the most adaptive. They know how to learn new tools quickly, ask the right questions, combine human insight with machine capability, and do the things that technology fundamentally cannot do: build trust, navigate real ambiguity, and make consequential decisions in real time with incomplete information.

Learn to use AI tools. Not because they are some distant future but because they are right now. The person who can use AI to accomplish in two hours what used to take two days is not just working faster. They are operating at a different altitude entirely. They are doing thinking work instead of task work. That is a real and significant competitive advantage.

The old-school fundamentals still matter more than the tech evangelists admit. Relationships built over a meal still outperform relationships built over LinkedIn. A handwritten note still stands

out. Showing up in person, when everyone else is Zooming in from their couch, still creates a different kind of impression. Presence, curiosity, genuine interest, follow-through. These have not been disrupted. They've become more valuable because they are rarer.

Start a side hustle. This is not lifestyle advice. It's strategic advice. The person with one income stream is fragile. The person with a skill-based side project that generates even modest income has a laboratory, a safety net, and a signal to the market that they are serious about building something real.

★ THE ONE THING

AI will not replace you. A person who uses AI well might.

Stay curious, stay adaptive, and build more than one way to create value.

The new rules reward people who combine human judgment with machine capability.

CHAPTER 13

The Art of the Unconventional Move

The path no one told you about is usually the best one.

I was called a rebel for most of my career. I figured out things that people in my field had decided couldn't be done. Not because I was smarter. Because I refused to accept the consensus about how things were supposed to work.

Team sports are great for many things. They build camaraderie, commitment, and physical toughness. What they often don't build is independent thinking. They build rule-following, hierarchy-accepting, consensus-seeking behavior. The best systems thinkers and builders I have ever met were often the kids who didn't quite fit the team. Too curious. Too contrarian. Too likely to ask why are we doing it this way.

We live in a world of false expectations that most of us have never examined. The expectation that you should stay in a job for at least two years or people will think you're unstable. The expectation that you don't talk about money with colleagues. The expectation that you shouldn't reach out to a senior person directly. The expectation that you should wait to be promoted rather than asking clearly for what you want. These are social norms pretending to be rules, and like most social norms, they benefit the people who are already comfortable, not the people trying to move.

Question every expectation you have inherited. Ask who does this rule actually serve. Ask who decided it was a rule in the first place. Ask what happens if I break it. In my experience, what usually happens is nothing bad. And often something surprisingly good.

Get outside. Move your body. Talk to real people in real life. This is not a wellness suggestion. The research on cognitive performance, creativity, and decision-making quality is unambiguous.

People who exercise, spend time outdoors, and maintain real human relationships outperform people who don't. This is performance advice.

You are on this planet once. One life. One shot at finding out what you are actually capable of. The regret of the unlived life is real and it is heavy. The risk of the life fully attempted, including the failures, the losses, the hard years, is nothing by comparison.

Don't play it safe. Safe is the most dangerous move you can make.

★ THE ONE THING

The conventional path was built for average outcomes.

If you want an extraordinary life, you need to be willing to take unconventional routes.

The rebel is usually the one who was right.

CLOSING

The Seven Truths That Change Everything

If you take nothing else from this manual, take these.

One. You own your career. Nobody else does.

Not your company, not your boss, not your spouse, not your parents. The career you have is the product of the choices you've made. The career you want is the product of the choices you're about to make.

Two. Fear is the signal, not the stop sign.

When something scares you, that's data. It usually means it matters. Move toward it with your eyes open. That's what living actually looks like.

Three. The person who can sell themselves wins.

Not the most credentialed. Not the most connected. Not the most pedigreed. The person who can clearly, confidently, and authentically communicate their value wins. Learn this. Practice until it is natural.

Four. You are not like anyone else. This is your advantage.

Your specific combination of experiences, wiring, failures, obsessions, and relationships is completely unique. The person who told you to be more like everyone else was wrong. The market rewards people who are genuinely distinctive.

Five. Failure is the curriculum.

The most expensive lessons are the most useful ones. Don't avoid failure. Manage it. Fail fast, pull the learning, and keep moving.

Six. Action beats research. Every time.

The person who launches the imperfect thing beats the person perfecting it forever. Start. Adjust. Start again.

Seven. You are here once.

One planet. One life. One shot at finding out what you are actually capable of. The regret of the unlived life is real and it is heavy. The risk of the life fully attempted, even the failures and the hard years, is nothing by comparison.

Go be a Rockstar.

You already have everything you need.

Ken Lubin

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