



ALL THE TIM MILES
DIFFERENCE
HOW TO MAKE A LIVING BEING CREATIVE



ABOUT

“The goal of life is to take everything that made you weird as a kid and get people to pay you for it when you’re older.”

—DAVID FREEMAN

A bestselling author and international speaker, Tim Miles has spent a lifetime studying people and the way they think, act, and view the world.

As Founder & CEO of Miles & Company, Tim Miles helps family businesses across the US and Canada communicate more powerfully.

Their successful work with hundreds of these companies over the past 20 years has helped subsidize Miles & Company's mission to speak to, and work with, more than a thousand nonprofits across the world.

To quote John Prine, he's "a young man from a small town with a very large imagination," and he hopes you enjoy this book.



*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made **all the difference.***

The Road Not Taken

ROBERT FROST

“The Road Not Taken” from the book
THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST.
Edited by Edward Connery Lathem.
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How will you measure success?

MEASURE

What's your scoreboard? You can measure success by money, fame, or by making a difference. Experience has taught me that focusing on the latter will take care of the first two one way or the other. Making a difference will either bring you money and fame, or it'll change your opinion about both.

SUCCESS

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Find someone who will tell you the truth.

FIND

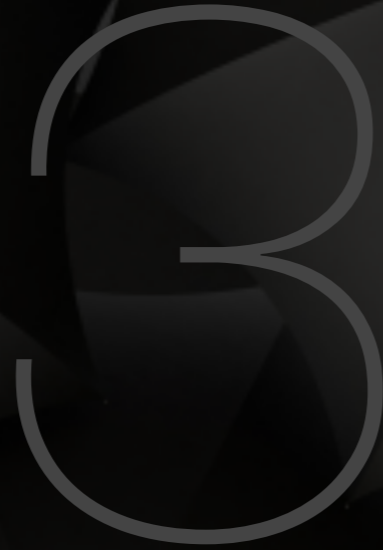
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I'm not saying affirmation is bad. It's great. It's just not very hard to find. As you get more successful using this magical power of creativity, more people will start to treat you like a wizard. You're not. Don't believe your own press or their hype. A bunch of awards don't mean you're a genius. Find people you can trust to tell you the truth about your work and about your life. Hang on to them. They're infinitely more valuable than money.



Resist getting pigeonholed.

RESIST



If you're not careful, you can get comfortable being known for one particular skill or trait. I say "fight it." Just when you're starting to get comfortable using one tool or skill, pivot onto another. Keep growing. There's magic out on the skinny end of the branch.



Figure your cost of staying power.

FIGURE

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Always know the number you need to make each month to pay your bills and have a little bit of fun money. Knowing and respecting that number is your key to freedom. Strive to keep that number as low as possible so you can take more risks in your life and in your work.



Ask “why?”

ASK



You learned the most important question in the English language — “Why?” — when you were three or four years old. Use it early. Use it often.

Answer questions as asked.

ANSWER

A hand holding a pen is positioned over a surface of interlocking puzzle pieces. The puzzle pieces are mostly grey, but several are highlighted in a bright yellow color. A decorative, light grey swirl graphic is overlaid on the right side of the word 'ANSWER'.

People will respect you if you look them in the eyes and answer their questions as asked. Too often, creative types either get sidetracked or go out onto the warning track of tangents and random interests. Sometimes, it's okay to do that (depending on the person who asked you the question) but only after you answer their question as asked.

Understand the differences in psychological type.

UNDERSTAND

Not everyone thinks, acts, and sees the world like you. It's one thing to say it, and it's another thing to truly believe it. Once I learned we're all hard-wired to prefer different styles of communication, my eyes were opened. Read Keirsey's *Please Understand Me*, and you'll understand, uh, me... and yourself... and everyone you know.



Practice your critical thinking skills.

PRACTICE



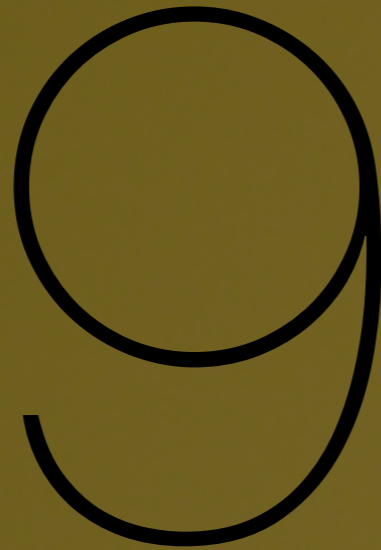
You think something's awesome? Great! Why?

You think something sucks? Okay. Why? I have no problem with your opinion as long as you can articulate it. Train your critical thinking muscles by being aware when some stimulus makes you feel something. Practice being able to say why you feel the way you do.

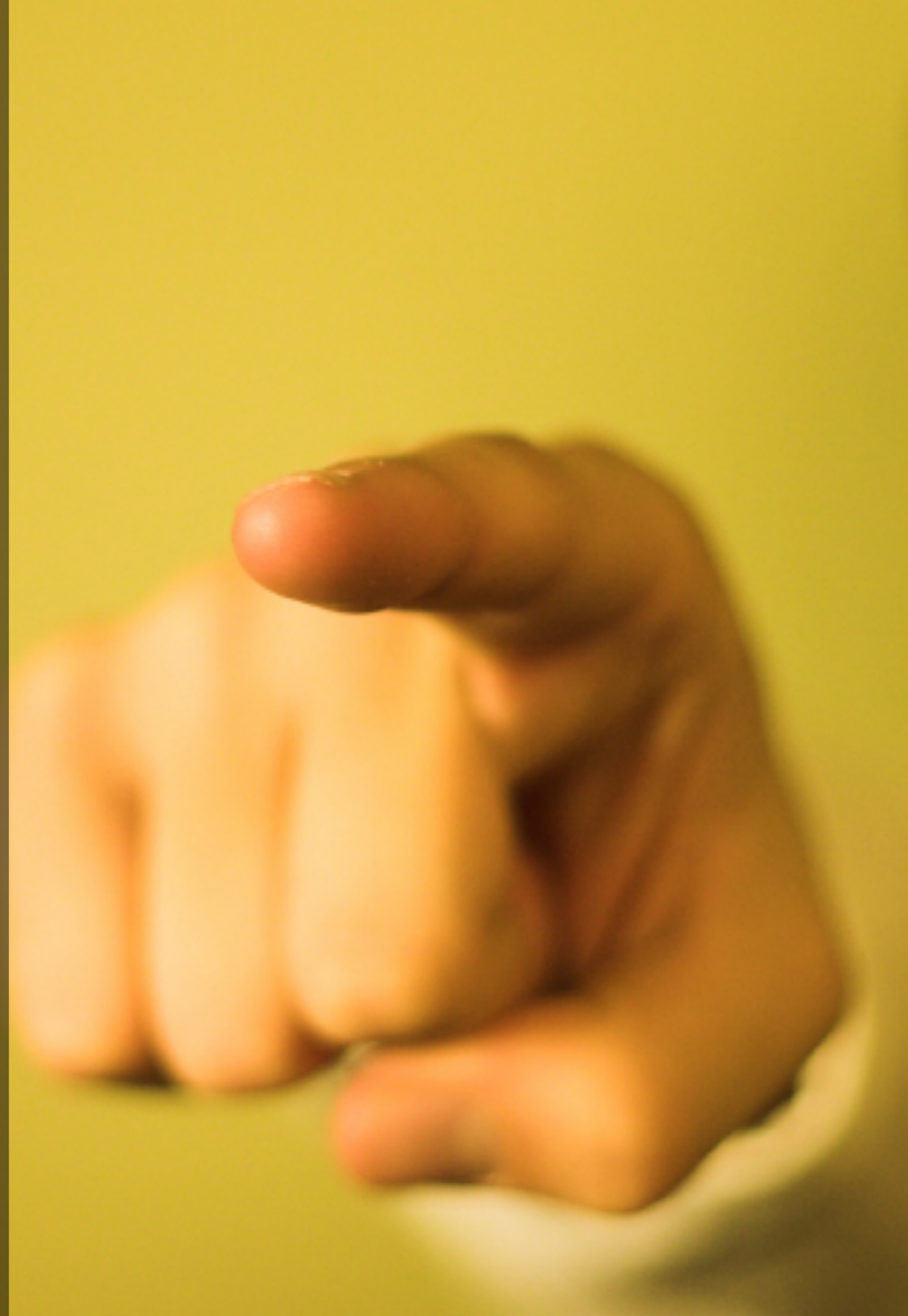


Point out what people do well.

POINT




Yes, number eight is important, but watch how often you're being critically negative... especially publicly. No one's ever accused someone of being too kind or thoughtful. Look for opportunities to genuinely compliment others. They'll remember you for it. Everyone will remember you for it.



Know the law of attraction.

KNOW



If you use your creative powers to make stuff, know that what attracts also repels. It's the dull middling work that gets ignored. Don't let the haters get you down. Remember Teddy's advice: **It's not the critic who counts.**



Surround yourself with complementary people.

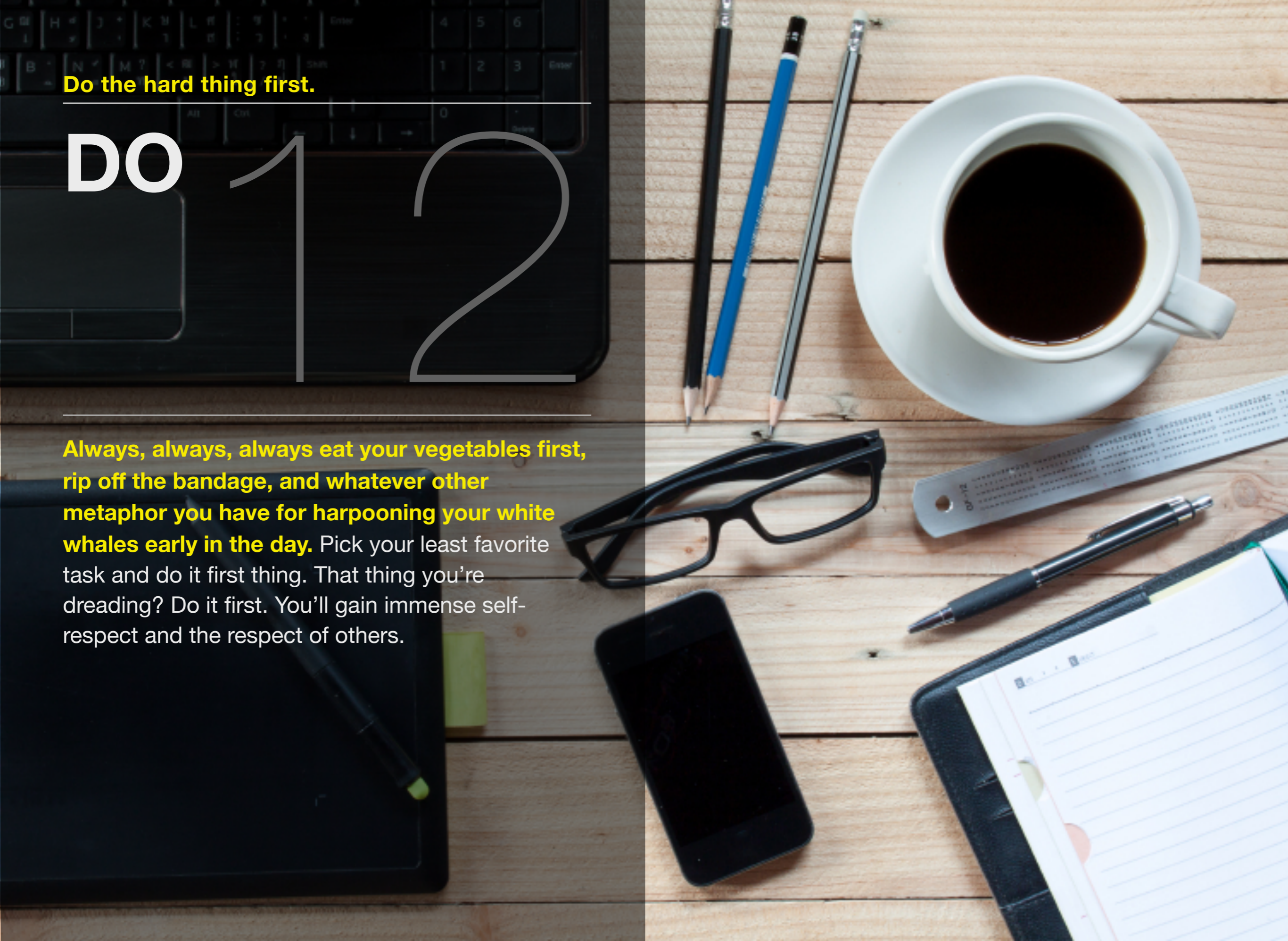
SURROUND

Complementary, as in “pairs well with,” not “says lots of nice stuff to you.” I’ve learned that people who are profoundly good in some areas of their life are profoundly bad in others. If you live over in the depths of your right brain, you need people in your work and in your life who live in the left. Be wary of spending too much time with people just like you, and for heaven’s sake, make sure you don’t work with only them.

Do the hard thing first.

DO 12

Always, always, always eat your vegetables first, rip off the bandage, and whatever other metaphor you have for harpooning your white whales early in the day. Pick your least favorite task and do it first thing. That thing you're dreading? Do it first. You'll gain immense self-respect and the respect of others.



Give your full attention.

GIVE 13

In this age of rapid distraction, is there anything more valuable than another person's complete attention? Attention is a muscle you can strengthen and develop. Practice actively listening and making eye contact with others. Like doing the hard thing first, you'll gain tremendous self-respect and the respect of others.



Give more than you receive.

GIVE 14

No one's ever said "Man, she is too generous."

Find reasons to be giving. Ask for very little. We can all name the takers in our lives, and we usually do so with heavy sighs. Then, watch as your mood lightens and improves as you think about the generous, gracious people in your life. Be like them.



Avoid multitasking.

AVOID



Multitasking is a myth. Focus. Do one thing well, then do another.

Introduce people to each other.

INTRODUCE



Be a connector. There's real equity in being the only bridge between two great people. It's tremendously satisfying, and in this age of interconnected social media, it's never been easier.

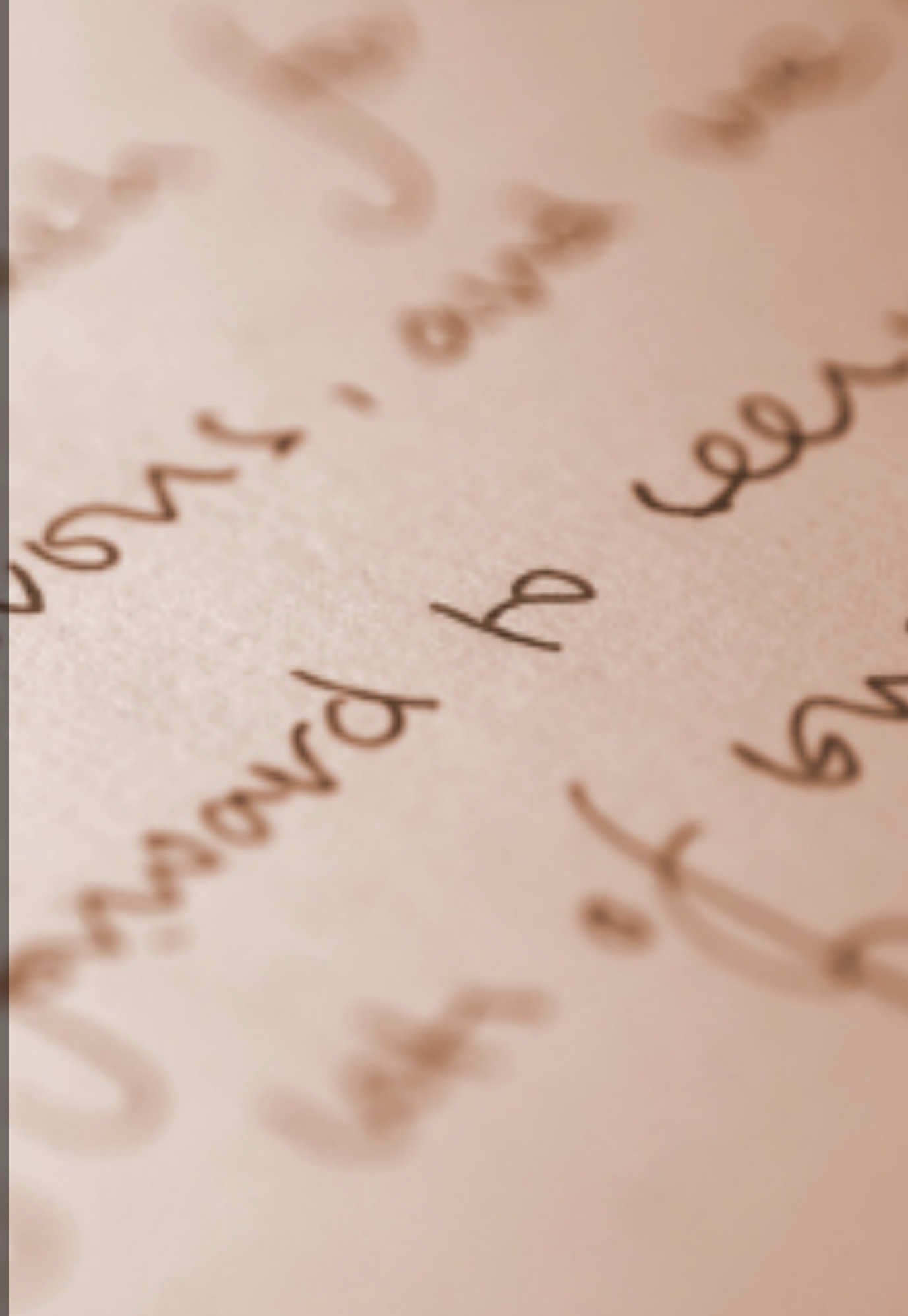


Write one handwritten note to someone every week.

WRITE



Just because communication is easier than ever, it doesn't mean you should limit yourself to tap-tap-tapping. Follow our late, great Grandma June's advice and hand-write and hand-address one letter to someone every week. It'll change your life.



Read everything.

READ

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As you read, so shall you write. The better writing you read, the better your own communication will become. In this age of binge-watching and tabloid media, there's no shame in winding down your evenings or starting your day with just words and your imagination. Please don't let that part of your brain atrophy!

Volunteer for a nonprofit.

VOLUNTEER



When you're younger, you'll notice you have more time than money. Invest some of this time to not only develop your creative crafts, but also to make a difference in the lives of people who really need it. As you get older, it gets harder to make this time. It's not impossible, but it is harder. While you're young, and while you have the time, go make a difference. Lend your time and talents to the difference makers.

Invest to your career.

INVEST 20

I've done this for twenty years. Take a portion of your paycheck and invest it into making yourself better at your craft. Do it every week. If you're not growing, you're dying. The choice is yours.



Show gratitude.

SHOW 21

Our parents taught us this, and Lynn, John, and I made it a habit that we've passed onto our children. No one's ever said, "Man, she is waaaay too polite." At least, no one you want to spend time with...

Thank
You!

CREDITS

MILES & Co.
CONNECTING
GOOD COMPANIES & CUSTOMERS

100% percent of the profits from this book will be donated to the Helping Hands Program benefiting Gifford Grade School's teachers. Forty years ago, the roots of the author's creativity took hold at GGS. In November of 2013, a tornado ravaged the small central Illinois town. While it destroyed much of its property, it did not destroy its spirit. This book is dedicated to those who got up, dusted themselves off, and went back to helping their friends and neighbors the same way they always had.

Each weekday, Miles & Company sends The Daily Blur—a short email featuring free, concise, actionable advice on marketing, motivation, productivity, and leadership, to busy, unfairly awesome people around the world. Try it out for a couple days at timmilesandco.com/email.

Thanks to Anni Poppen of [Mowgli Studio](#) for lending her enormous talent to this project.