



KIND WORDS from **HEROIC OPTIMIZERS**

as of 11 / 11 / 20

We asked our community if they're excited about our upcoming book and if there's anything they'd like to share with prospective partners. From generals, bishops, and CEOs to college professors, school principals and professional moms, here's a sample of what they said:

"The best time for this book was Yesterday. The next best is Now. I can confidently say that this book will change millions of lives. The word Bestseller would not do justice to this book."

"The world is unwell, humanity needs healing, this book is part of that cure."

"We use Optimize as a foundation for all conversations; at home and at work. So this book would serve as the "bible" for so many on the Optimize path!"

"If I could only own one book, I have a feeling this would be it."

"This will be a modern classic without a doubt."

"Dear Prospective Partner, You will be proud to be part of this movement."

"The world needs Brian's work on a large scale. He's clear, relatable and likable. Please do the world this service and promote it like you've never promoted a book before. It will be a game changer."

"This book will be one of the greatest best sellers of all time due to the exponential network that Optimize is building across the Globe. Now, more than ever, the world needs this book as a further vehicle for positive change, one individual at a time."

"Brian is one of the greatest teachers of our time. He has the uncanny ability to make complex topics simple. I'm certain that his new book will be the most thorough and practical self-help book ever created. I can NOT wait to get my hands on this book so I can share this life-changing wisdom with everyone I know."

“Brian is one of the great philosophers of our time. If this book is the distillation of his life’s work then it will be worth its weight in gold.”

“Brian is my favorite teacher. He has literally changed my life dozens and dozens of times over. He’s helped me become a better husband, father, scientist, and human being in general. I’ll pre-order the book the first day it’s available.”

“Among the many beautiful souls, guides, coaches, and gurus who are doing phenomenal work in the world today, there is a handful of great thought leaders and truly selfless mentors in whom I have complete trust and faith to lead the masses through our current personal and global challenges. Brian, his life’s work, and his public benefit company are at the top of the list.”

“Brian has a strong, committed community for a reason - he’s so good you can’t ignore him AND you can’t help but adore him. I know I’ll buy anything Brian releases and I know I’m not the only one.”

“Let’s get this book to #1 for the next decade!”

“Anything Brian Johnson does is fantastic. Highest level thinker and philosopher alive today. Inspiring and elevating man who I totally admire.”

“This will be the best book in modern history for personal development. Period.”

“Humanity’s greatest wisdom for living a prosperous life condensed into ONE book - how could anyone not be excited to by this?!”

“I am a tough sell. I can not be told what to do. This is the FIRST structure that has brought theory to practice in my life to actually make positive changes... and it’s not painful. It’s actually FREEING.”

“You will see few opportunities with the scope of potential for this book. First, Brian is a talented and genuine communicator. Second, he brings with him a legion of followers from the familiar to the rabid. Third, the world is in need of this material more than ever. Optimizing is not done in a vacuum. It is dependent on healthy interpersonal relationships which are strained now more than ever.”

“Because I’ve been a student of Brian’s for years, and I am familiar with much of the content that will make up this book, I can say this for certain: the world needs this book, now more than ever... a manual that will help people to navigate these difficult times.... not only will this book be useful to every day people, I can see Brian’s book becoming a standard textbook for programs that educate physicians, teachers, counselors, business executives, athletes, and so many more.”

“I have always said, beside the scriptures, Brian is where I turn for inspiration on how to become a better person and servant to society.”

“Brian Johnson has changed my life, and that has had a ripple effect on my husband, who is a Colorado State Senator. It has impacted his health and wellness journey, and shows up in the way that he approaches public policy. Additionally, we have 4 children together and our oldest son is recovering from an addiction. Much of the help and wisdom that we’ve used to help turn him around (and support us during this stressful situation) we’ve learned from Optimize.”

“If you just spend 10 minutes on Brian’s channel, you will be a huge fan also. Have you seen how he’s teaching his own children the information that he is learning? I can definitely see myself teaching my third graders what he has to share. Priceless!”

“The Optimize community is more than just a source of potential buyers, we’re evangelists for Optimizing.”

“Brian’s work has the power to change lives and change the world. Sharing that with the people who matter most to me will be an honor and privilege.”

“This book will be like the Bible, where you just open a page and you find something that speaks out personally for you at that particular moment in your life. I imagine it to be like the silent voice inside you, leading you on your path and guiding you to greater meaning and happiness.”

“The way in which Brian distills big ideas from ancient wisdom and modern science into a simple yet holistic framework is phenomenal. It has never been easier to take action and close the gap and become the best version of yourself!”

“This book will change the world, seriously, change it for the better. It will empower the reader to be the best they have ever been and that is the only thing that will change the world.”

“We need Brian’s book now more than ever to face the current unprecedented challenges and use them as fuel to build a flourishing future for humanity.”

“Brian is the only person I have consistently followed over the years. I have faithfully followed him due to the wisdom I have gained and the quality of person I have become due to his teachings.”

“This book will be a classic training manual such as 7 Habits and How To Win Friends. Timeless principles.”

“Brian has changed my life. His enthusiasm and ability to link ideas and make them practical has lit a flame in my soul. I finally have clear and achievable steps to not just be happy, but to be happy regardless of circumstances and to thrive. I would LOVE to pass this gift on to others.”

“The work that Brian produces is simple yet effective. It’s down to earth yet life changing. It’s a unique blend yet it enables people to make it work for them.”

“I believe in Brian’s work and his and the Optimize team’s ability to distill the wisdom that is MOST needed at this time in our world in a book format! I am absolutely looking forward to assigning OPTIMIZE as a required book in my college leadership classes!”

“Brian has a way of connection that is awe inspiring. In 21 years of education, I have never met a more engaging and deeply rich human!”

KIND WORDS from **HEROIC FRIENDS**

as of 11 / 11 / 20

Advance Praise

“I have known of the sage Brian Johnson for over a decade. After first discovering his epic Philosopher’s Notes and delving into the glorious mountains of wisdom found within his brainchild of Optimize.me, I was overjoyed to discover that he was finally distilling his depth of knowledge, insight and experience into *You Are a Hero*. This book threatens to be one of the best and most timeless masterpieces of personal productivity and self-development that has existed for all time. From ancient wisdom to modern science, training the body to training the mind and soul, optimizing energy, love, sleep, work and beyond, it is a profoundly thorough treatise on everything you need to live as a full and complete human. Shove aside any books you’ve been planning to read, and move *You Are a Hero* to the front of the line. You’ll thank yourself forever if you do.”

- Ben Greenfield, Founder of Kion and bestselling author of *Boundless*

“I have interviewed a lot of great teachers in my career and Brian Johnson is he best of the best. His ability to take complex ideas and distill them down into tasty, fun-size bites is what makes him such a treasure. I still read his amazing Philosopher’s Notes and I am constantly blown away by the never-ending nuggets that I mine from its depths. Now, and once again, he is taking his vast expanse of wisdom of the mind, body and spirit and shaping it into a new book: *You Are A Hero*. No doubt this book will be an inspirational game changer on many a “must-read” list. I simply can’t wait for its release!”

- Patrick Takaya Solomon, Producer/Director of *Finding Joe*

“This book is your next read AND your training template for a life well lived. Philosophy, ethics and morality in our modern world have devolved into relativism and opinion, with little action to back up the blather. It wasn’t always this way. In ancient Greece and Rome, the Stoics understood that a personal philosophy not backed by powerful action, and habituation of virtues, simply displayed a lack of character. Brian Johnson is a Stoic reincarnate. Not only does he have a deep love for marrying ancient with modern wisdom, but also has a passion for embodying such wisdom in his own life—through daily discipline and effort. In short, he is willing to do the work of self-examination and character refinement espoused by the Stoics, Yogis, Taoists and other philosopher-practitioners of the past. In *You Are a Hero*, Brian shares this wisdom with us so that we, too, can be men and women of character and deep integrity. It is a message that is both timely and urgent. Thank you Brian for this important work.

— Mark Divine, Founder SEALFIT and Unbeatable; *New York Times* bestselling author *Unbeatable Mind*, *The Way of the SEAL* and *Staring Down the Wolf*

TABLE of CONTENTS

as of 11 / 11 / 20

YOU ARE A HERO | Here's Your Training Manual

Foreword

Phil Stutz Says ...

Objective 0: Flip the Switch

Nice to Meet You, Let's Get to Work

Welcome

The Overview

The Dojo Decision

Quick Trips to Heaven or Hell

It's Time to Flip the Switch

Objective I: Operationalize Virtue

Eudaimon-ology: The Study of a Good Soul and How to Operationalize Virtue Via Ancient Wisdom + Modern Science + Practical Tools

Know the Game (and How to Play It Well)

The 2,500-Year Old Challenge (Aka: The Choice of Hercules + WARNING!)

Meet Your New BFF (Optimus You)

Virtue Connoisseurs (4 + 6 + 4)

Science Says: The Top 5 (x2) Virtues (Unique + Universal)

Gratitude (Start Here | Return Here)

Hope (1 + 2 + 3 ← Know This)

Zest (It's the #1 Virtue, Folks!)

Curiosity (Flashlight vs. Hammer)

Love (0.0 + 1.0 + 2.0 + 3.0 + 8.0 + ∞.0)

Virtues vs. Vice (Deficiency vs. Excess)

Objective II: Forge Antifragile Confidence

Overview

Hero-ology: The Study (and Training) of a Good Hero (Note: That Would be YOU!)

Part 1 | Defining Some Key Terms of Engagement

Know the Rules of the Game (+ Meet Your Training Partner)
Antifragile (vs. Fragile vs. Resilient)
Confidence (Intense Trust)
Heroic (Strength for Two)
Courage (The Hero's Heartbeat)
Response-Ability (Stimulus - Gap - Response)
Make Your Choice (Victim vs. Hero)
Flip the Switch (Put On Your Cape)
Heroic Stamina (Power Up Via Your Protocol)
Hero Sandwiches (Eat Your Virtues!)

Part 2 | Training Like Warrior-Philosopher-Monks

Training Like Heroic Warrior-Philosopher-Monks (While Stocking Up Our Arsenals)
How to Get Perspective (Aka It's Not That Big of a Deal)
Meet Your Compass (Let Virtues Be Your Guiding Stars)
How to Make a Healing Balm (There Are No Perfect Humans)
How to Make a Hero Pill (Aka How to Suffer Well)
How to Make a Secret Weapon (Here's Your Philosopher's Wand)
How to Make a Hero Fire (Aka: Use It ALL As Fuel)
How to Make Pearls (Trade 'Em for Supplies)
How to Make a Hope Map (Remember Your 1 + 2 + 3s)
How to Make Hero Bars (+ Quit Eating Idiot Bars)

Part 3 | Scientific Target Practice

The 3 Quests (Universal + Unique + Ultimate)
Target Practice (Flourishing People Have Quests)
WOOP! (Wave the Wand + Rub It Up Against Reality)
Motivation = Energy x (Value x Expectancy/Impulsivity x Delay)
Dynamic Tension (Collecting Dominoes and Micro W.I.N.s)
Dynamic Equilibrium (Aurelius + Gumby Tightrope Walking)
Grit (Intense Passion + Persistence | Fall Seven, Rise Eight)
The Courage Quotient (Willingness to Act in the Presence of Fear)
Threat vs. Challenge (Two Physiologies + "I'm Excited!")
The Hero Gym (Buoyant Barbells + Real Weights vs. Styrofoam Weights)

Objective III: Get to Know The Big 3 (x2)

Energy + Work + Love x (Identity + Virtues + Behavior)

The Big 3: An Origin Story (Covey + Tony + Freud)

Energy (Start Here! | You at Your Best = _____)

Work (Play Your Role Well | You at Your Best = _____)

Love (Heroically Flourishing Together | You at Your Best = _____)

Identity (Start With Who)

Virtues (What Virtues Does That Version of You Embody?)

Behaviors (What Does That Version of You Do?)

Michelangelo's Studio (Optimus You x 3)

Carpe Diem - The Journal (See It. Be It. TODAY!)

You, the Walking Statue (the Studio Has No Walls)

Objective IV: Carpe Diem

Overview

Today's the Day to Become a Master of Masterpiece Days

Part 1 | TODAY'S THE DAY!

Today's the Day (to Move From Theory to Practice to Mastery)

You, the Master (of Making Masterpiece Days)

Heroic Stamina (Higher Highs + Higher Lows via Your Protocol)

Create a Canvas (Embrace Constraints + Make It a Game)

Dominate Bookends (AM + PM Is Where It's At)

Big 3 WINS (x2) (Energy + Work + Love (x AM + PM)

Prior Best = New Baseline (You at Best = _)

Wave Wand (What's Your Ideal Day Look Like?)

Your Current Reality (Sharpen Pencil + Shine Flashlight On)

Artistic Archers in a Lab Coat (Target Practice + It's All Data)

Part 2 | The PM Bookend: Your Day Started the Night Before

Today Started Last Night (PM Counts Twice)

Make the Connection (See the Bridge in the Snow Globe)

Make the Decision (to Be Actualized vs. Entertained)

Idiosyncratic Rhythms (Embrace the Constraints of Your Reality)

Energy (PM Bookend WINS)

Work (PM Bookend WINS)

Love (PM Bookend WINS)

"Shut-down Complete!" (Systematize and Ritualize)

Digital Sunsets + Sleep Math (Systematize and Ritualize)

WOOP! (Artistic Archers in a Lab Coat + Gi)

Part 3 | The AM Bookend: Pre-Input WINs

Make Two Connections (PM → AM → Day)
Pre-Input WINs (Bookends and Chainsaws)
Make Two Decisions (Actualized vs. Random-inputicized)
Idiosyncratic Rhythms (AM Bookend Edition)
Energy (AM Bookend WINs)
Work (AM Bookend WINs)
Love (AM Bookend WINs)
Virtue Meditation (Theory + Practice)
Big 3 WINs (Pre-Input WINs for the Win)
WOOP! (Artistic Archers in a Lab Coat + Gi)

Part 4 | Energy: Energized Tranquility vs. Enervated Anxiety

Today's the Day (to ENERGIZE!)
Identity Management (Who Are You at Your ENERGY Best?)
Energy Management vs. Time Management
 (→ Energized Tranquility vs. Enervated Anxiety)
Physiology (Train It!)
Psychology (Train It!)
Focus (Train It!)
Carpe Rhythms (Train Your Recovery)
Revisit Bookends (What's Working? What Needs Work? +1 = ?)
Take an Inventory (Enervating Kryptonites → Supercharging Energizers)
Your ENERGY Protocol (You As a Professional Optimizer-Hero)

Part 5 | Work: Genius Work vs. Mediocre Work

Today's the Day (to Do Genius WORK!)
Identity Management (Who Are You at Your WORK Best?)
Genius Work vs. Mediocre Work (The Equation: (E x F x WIN)C)
Energy Management (Energeia = The Capacity for Work)
Focus Management (Focus = 21st Century Superpower)
W.I.N. Management (Do You Know What's Most Important Now?)
Consistency Management (The Exponentializer)
Revisit Bookends + Energy Protocol (How're Yours? +1 +1 +1!!)
Take an Inventory: Work (Enervators → Energizers)
Decide to Turn Pro (Grab Your Lunch Pail and Let's GO!)

Part 6 | Love: Soul Connections vs. Disconnected Despair

Today's the Day (to LOVE!)
Identity Management (Who Are You at Your LOVE Best?)
Redefining Love (Soul Connections vs. Disconnected Despair)
Love 0.0 (To Say, "I Love You" Start With the "I")
Love 1.0 (The Genius Love Equation)
Love 2.0 (Micro Moments of Positivity Resonance)
Love 3.0 (Show Heroic Love via En-couragement)

Love 8.0 (How to Bring Love and Meaning to Work)
Love ∞ .0 (Infinite Love = $\Phi + O$)
Target Practice With Cupid + Apollo (Love Arrows + Love Letters)

Objective V: Master Yourself

Overview

Use Your Willpower Wisely to Install Habits that Run on Autopilot

Part 1 | Self-Mastery 101

Self-Mastery 101 = Habits + Willpower + Algorithms

Willpower (= $2x > IQ$)

Habits (Tiny + Atomic + Mini)

Algorithms (#1 Concept of the 21st Century)

The Two AI's (Meet Your Super Computer)

Play Your Role Well (Be a World-Class AI Programmer)

Install (How to 1 + 2 + 3)

Delete (How to 1 + 2 + 3)

Flashlight (Shine It on What's Working + What Needs Work)

MAP Making (+ Target Practice)

Part 2 | Install

Start With Who (Identity = Repeated Beingness)

What's Your #1? (The Optimus-Best Version of Me Does THIS: _____)

The Right Why (General + Specific)

How to Win (MAP It + ABC It + 1-2-3 It)

Anchor (Make Your Prompt/Cue/Trigger Obvious)

Behavior (Make Your Habit Tiny/Atomic/Mini)

Celebrate (Immediately + Intensely)

De-cir to Go All In (100% Is Paradoxically Easier)

Do It Daily (Don't Miss a Day + Def Don't Miss Two + Repay Debt)

Pick Your #1 (Shall We Change Your Life Today?)

Part 3 | Delete

Start With Who (You at Your Optimus Best = _____)

What's Your #1? (Optimus-Me DOESN'T Do THIS: _____)

The Right Why (See It)

How to Win (Step 1: Believe You Can)

Invisible (No Prompt, No Behavior)

Hard (Add the Extra Step or Three)

Celebrate It or Needs Work It (No Shame in This Game)

Pickles vs. Cucumbers (Addiction Danger Zones)

De-cir to Go All In (Remember: 100% Is Your Friend)

Let's +3 It (Shall We Change Your Life Today?)

Objective VI: Dominate the Fundamentals

Overview

Want to Optimize and Actualize Virtues Wise, Spirituality Wise and Peak-Performance Wise? Dominate the Fundamentals

The Big Picture

Radiantly Energized Exemplar (That Would Be YOU)
Eudaimonology vs. Psychology (#1 Question: How're Your Fundies?)
Greatness = Consistency on the Fundamentals (Wooden's Socks)
Light Bulbs in Temples of God (+ Golden Buddhas + Niagara Falls)
Tall Buildings (Deep + Wide Foundations + Flexible Structures)
States & Traits (Cannon Balls + Missing Floors + Scaffolding)
Return of the U (Universal + Unique + Ultimate)
The Fundamentals Prescription Pad (#1's x 3)
Blissipline = The Ultimate Gift (Higher Highs + Higher Lows)
The Optimize Fundies (Eat + Move + Sleep + ...)

Fundie #1 | Eating

You, the Heroic Iconoclast (Radiant Exemplar With Strength for Two)
A Profoundly Sick Society (MAD + SAD Gorillas Eating a Hot Dog with Smuckers Jam While Drinking a Soda at a Pan-CAN Event)
Food = Medicine (Symptoms vs. Systems + Spray-Painting Leaves)
The Optimize Food Rules (The Big 3 + 1)
Rule #1: Don't Drink Your Sugar (Sugar = Toxic)
Rule #2: Eat Real Food + Throw Out the Factory Food (x3!)
Rule #3: Have an Eating Sunset (13+ Hours!)
Rule +1: Eat Like Your Favorite Philosopher (Who's 300+ Years Old)
Iconoclastic Superpowers (Activation Energy + CANOEing)
Conquerors Writing Food Prescriptions (+ Pulling the #1 Lever As Heroic Iconoclasts)

Fundie #2 | Moving

Wild Cavemen in a Space Zoo (Move Your DNA)
Movement + Exercise (Are You Active AND Sedentary?)
Time Released Magic Pills (Timing Your Exercise)
Count Your Steps (Walk Like a Philosopher)
You = Perpetual Motion Machine (OTMs + 1,000 Seconds + ...)
Well-Being Tool vs. Weight-Loss Tool (Eating vs. Moving)
Aristotle's Yoga (Hormesis + Chronic Cardio = Chronic Stress)
Voices in Your Head (Give Yourself a Gift)
Create Time (Make Trades + Stack It!)
Make It a Game (1 + 10 + 100 + 1k + 10k + 100k + 30 + Trail)

Fundie #3 | Sleeping

Why We Sleep (Foundation vs. Pillar)

Why We Don't Sleep (Top 10 Sleep Kryptonites)
Well-Adjusted Sleep-Walking Blind Zombies (Baseline Resetting)
A Brief History of Blue Light (From Fire to Candles to Smartphones)
The #1 Tip: Digital Sunset (Break Icons / Smash Screens)
The Decision (Be a Hero or Watch Pseudo Heroes?)
The Five Curfews (Caffeine + Exercise + Eating + Work + Screens)
Training Tranquility (All Day Every Day)
You = Professional Optimizer (Identity → Behavior)
Conqueror Writing Sleep Prescriptions (What's Your #1?)

Fundie #4 | Breathing

O₂ = Cell Fuel (Oxygen = #1 Source of Energy)
CO₂ → O₂ (Are You Overbreathing?)
Rule #1: Nose (Your Mouth Is for Eating!)
Rule #2: Belly (#1 Most-Underappreciated Muscle = _____)
Rule #3: Exhale (Finish Strong! Flip Parasympathetic Switch)
When? (All Day Every Day: 1 + 2 + 3)
Your Count (Resonant Rate + Coherent Breathing)
Vagus Getaway (Your Ticket to Emotional Control)
The 4 S's (Superman + Spartans + Sports + Screens)
Optimized Breathing (The Big 3 (x3))

Fundie #5 | Focusing

The Soul Force Equation (T x (E x F x W.I.N.) Consistency = ∞)
Carpe Punctum (The Power of NOW!)
Spotlight of Attention (#1 Asset + #1 Skill ← Train It)
Soul Goals (+ Wildly Important Targets + WINS)
Digital Minimalism (+ Deep Living + Smartphone Effect x3)
Focus Gym (Mental Strength Training)
Finding OTFs (Micro + Macro + Burning Holes)
Targeted Thinking (The Two Questions of...)
Charismatic Exemplar (Soul Force Embodied)
Conquerors Writing Focus Prescriptions (Your #1?)

Fundie #6 | Celebrating

The Paradox of Optimizing (Guiding Stars vs. Distant Shores)
The Antidote to Soul Ulcers (Accept Yourself)
Pain Gaps + Amor Fati (Accept Reality)
Cooking Salty Hero Bars With Abe (Accept Failures)
Gratitude Works! (Science Says: Eye-Popping Stats)
Poisons + Antidotes (Entitlement vs. Humility)
Practicing Gratitude (Prayers + Letters + Journals + Flow)
Winning All Day Every Day (Starting With a Breakfast of Champions)
Conquerors Writing Prescriptions (#1's x The Big 3 (x2))
The Ultimate Target (Eudaimonic Joy)

Fundie #7 | Prospering

Prosper = To Go Forward With Hope (vs. Despair)

Vocab Lessons (Affluence + Security + Appreciate + ...)

Optimus You (Public Benefit Corporation)

Investment Strategies (Your Job = Clothe Yourself in Dignity)

Eudaimonic Accounting (Appreciate Your Assets + ...)

5-Year Prospectus (You're Right on Schedule)

Red Blood Cells + Profits (Make Progress + MVP)

Idiosyncratic Heroic FIREs (Financial Integrity Realizing Eudaimonia)

Antifragile Propellants (Fuel for the Fire)

Turn Pro (vs Amateur + Approach vs. Avoidance)

Objective VII/∞: Practice Your Philosophy

Hērō You, Practicing Your Philosophy

Apply This! Apply This! Apply This! (Wisdom from Two Phils)

Operationalize Virtue

Forge Antifragile Confidence

Get to Know the Big 3 (x2)

Carpe Diem

Master Yourself

Dominate the Fundamentals

Practice Your Philosophy

Soul Force = T x (E x F x W.I.N.)C

The Dojo Ceremony

It's Day 1

My Top 3 Books of All Time

From Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science to Nutrition and Productivity

The Hērō Dictionary

Arete to Zest...

Other Stuff

The Virtue Prayer

The Virtue Compass

The Carpe Diem Journal

The Carpe Week'em Scorecard

Thank You Notes

"God, Thank You for Blessing Me With the Gift of Such Heroic Friends"

Recommended Heroic Resources

You Might Also Enjoy...

FOREWORD

PHIL STUTZ says ...

as of 11 / 11 / 20

I've been a psychiatrist for 45 years. That's a long time doing the same thing. Many of my colleagues have retired, worn down by the grind. What keeps me going is my patients. I've been fortunate enough to have a practice comprised of unusual people. They are not unusual because they've succeeded in conventional terms—even though most of them have. They're unusual because they refuse to be defined by any single accomplishment. Their identity is based on a process of endless possibility. They don't stop creating. Working with these people can be profound but it's also a lot of fun.

Because I live in L.A., many of them are in show business—which also means they are famous. Eventually that rubbed off on me and I was designated as the “shrink to the stars.” I cringe when I hear that phrase. Yes, I have treated a lot of actors but I've treated a lot of others in business, politics, the arts, medicine etc. They all wanted the same thing: to unleash as much hidden potential as possible.

Just the way a seed holds inside it the potential to become a tree, every human being has a soul that holds inside it a vision of a future self. But that vision won't emerge by itself. Your soul has to be trained until it is strong enough to have an impact on the world. My job is to guide and encourage my patients as they move through this soul training. Rather than being the shrink to the stars it would be more accurate to call me the “shrink to the soul.”

You're about to read an extraordinary book written by an extraordinary person: Brian Johnson.

I say that without hesitation because I have worked with Brian every week for years. At each meeting, I poured into him the totality of everything I had learned over 45 years on any topic. I had done this with many others but no one even approached his ability to absorb information at dizzying speed and then make it his own.

But that's only half the story. Training the soul is mostly a process focused on the individual. Brian is also a genius at connecting people and nurturing a collective soul force.

In short, I know greatness when I see it and Brian's greatness just keeps on growing.

Brian has a profound impact on everyone who crosses his path. In today's digital media world he's considered an “influencer.” But when I hear that term I think of someone with a lot of Twitter followers or someone who is plugged into the design and fashion worlds. The driving force for that kind of person is the fear of not being “cool,” which is ultimately the fear of being left out.

Brian had no interest in working on this superficial level—it barely scratches the surface of what a human being is capable of. He would accept nothing less than the unlocking of the hidden potential in each human being. And just the way this potential goes unexpressed in each of us, the entire human race has its own hidden potential. Brian's goal was to uncover this collective potential. Without it our survival as a planet is severely compromised.

But to guide our whole species to its highest potential is a daunting task. It requires no less than the ability to inspire every single human being. This may sound grandiose, even impossible, when you read it in the pages of this book. But when you're in Brian's physical presence you can feel a boundless, almost supernatural enthusiasm that makes anything seem possible.

Brian is a dreamer and he dreams big. What sets him apart is that he is disciplined and practical in pursuit of those dreams. Most self-help books are products waiting to be sold. They have little ambition beyond catching the attention of potential readers. We read them to give ourselves a non-specific sense of hope. Brian doesn't criticize others but he would never publish a book with such modest goals. Especially now. Because right now we face a challenge so all-encompassing that it puts our very existence at risk.

The challenge comes from an enemy that wants to destroy us. This enemy is invisible but its effects stare us right in the face. Take a hard look at the institutions that form the foundation of modern society. Government, education, the church, science, finance, media, medicine, the judiciary, etc. In every area there is a lack of discipline, leadership and transparency.

This is a picture of a world that is falling apart. A world of chaos, fear and darkness. And only if we put that world back together again will we be strong enough to defend ourselves. Sounds bleak and overwhelming. Enter Brian Johnson.

He didn't know it, the world didn't know it, but he had been preparing for this moment all his life. The moment when the two sides of his soul, his two major talents, would work in harmony to defeat the enemy that had turned our world into a living hell. A force that could overcome evil.

Here are the two sides of Brian Johnson.

1. His drive to OPTIMIZE the potential of the individual. The state of functioning you'll need to reach if you want to do anything big and frightening. He presents this as a modern form of the hero. In a war the hero runs toward the battle. The more conflict around him (or her) the more inspired the hero becomes.

2. His drive to UNIFY the human race. As a unified whole the human race is capable of anything. The problem is that evil works to prevent unification. It focuses on the differences between us, not the common ground.

Brian has proven to me (and to his thousands of followers) that you can stay focused on the unique path toward your personal potential and at the same time live within a structure that applies to all human beings. He calls the values and habits that have this universal relevance "Virtues." The cardinal virtues Brian leans on have been present throughout all cultures across all time, including: Love, Courage, Wisdom and Self-Mastery.

This is only the foreword, not the book. I couldn't begin to cover all that you'll find as you read further. But understand the opportunity that you (and I) have been given. We are present at the inception of a new way to work with human beings that is exactly what is needed right now. Its timeliness comes from the extraordinary amount of conflict, confusion and fear spreading without resistance over our world.

What Brian has developed is much more than a bunch of coping mechanisms for the over-stressed modern person; although that would be an improvement for most of us. He's developed a training program for the soul. Commit to this training and you will gain the ability to transmute your biggest problems, your darkest days, into unstoppable courage, endless enthusiasm and an unshakable faith in the future.

This book will change your life. And, if enough of us commit, it will change the world.

PHIL STUTZ, MD

Los Angeles, California

October 15, 2020

OBJECTIVE 0: **FLIP the SWITCH**

as of 11 / 11 / 20

Nice to Meet You, Let's Get to Work

Welcome, Nice to Meet You

Hi there. This is Brian. Nice to meet you. I appreciate you taking the time to open this book.

I wish we could actually meet so I could learn more about you. What I do know is that you're busy and I strive to deliver more wisdom in less time, so let's jump straight in.

I'll start by introducing myself and telling you a bit about what led me to write this book then we'll move on to an overview of what we'll cover together then we'll ask ourselves the most important question of the book before taking a quick trip to Heaven and Hell and flipping the switch to connect to the best version of ourselves.

If you'd like to skip ahead a few pages to the Overview, please do so. If you'd like to learn a little bit more about me, here we go.

I'm the Philosopher + CEO of Optimize Enterprises, Public Benefit Corporation. I've spent half of the last 20+ years as a Philosopher and the other half as a Founder/CEO.

As a Founder/CEO, I've raised over \$10 million to finance the creation of three businesses. I sold the first two and I'm working on the third. As a Philosopher, I've created a protocol that has been scientifically proven to change lives. I'm excited to distill that wisdom into this Training Manual.

With my first business, I won the business plan competition at UCLA's Anderson School of Management. I was twenty-four at the time. By twenty-six, I had raised \$5 million and hired the CEO of adidas to replace me as the CEO right before the market crashed in 2000. We sold that business to one of our competitors called The Active Network. Our company was called eteamz. We built the technology platform that powers three million teams around the world—including Little League Baseball® who used the technology.

After selling that business, I became a Philosopher (aka "a lover of wisdom"). I traveled a bit (studying Socrates in Greece, Rumi in Konya, Turkey, Jesus in Jerusalem, and Marcus Aurelius near the Danube of Hungary) and read a lot and started teaching as well.

After a few years, I needed to make some money again and didn't want to follow the traditional self-help, motivational speaker-coach route, so I started my second business. It was a social platform that pre-dated Facebook. It was all about connecting people who wanted to change the

world. John Mackey, the CEO of Whole Foods became a friend and mentor and investor and Whole Foods nearly bought our business. I sold that to a publicly-traded company called Gaiam and went back to being a full-time Philosopher.

I contemplated a range of Ph.D. programs (just like I did after selling my first business) but couldn't find one that integrated everything I wanted to study—from ancient wisdom and modern science to practical things like business and nutrition and fitness and productivity and stuff like that. So, I decided to give myself my own Ph.D. in Optimal Living.

As part of that, I decided the Master's portion of my work would feature me creating a profitable business getting paid to read and write and share wisdom which led me to create something called "PhilosophersNotes." Think: Super-short (6-page) CliffsNotes-like Notes on some of the best self-development books out there.

I moved to Bali for a year where I started creating 100 PhilosophersNotes on all the ancient wisdom classics (like Seneca's *Letters from a Stoic*, Epictetus' *The Enchiridion* and Aurelius's *Meditations* to *The Dhammapada*, *The Bhagavad Gita*, *Tao te Ching* and Confucius' *Analects*) and then I went on to include all of the classics of the genre (like *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The Magic of Thinking Big* and *Think and Grow Rich*) plus my favorite subject: Positive Psychology (*The How of Happiness*, *Happier*, etc.).

I kinda got on a roll. I've now created over 600 PhilosophersNotes. We have dozens of Notes on everything from Stoicism (my preferred flavor of Ancient Wisdom) to Positive Psychology (my preferred take on Modern Science). I also distilled the best Big Ideas from those books into 50, hour-long Optimal Living 101 Master Classes on everything from finding your Purpose and cultivating Confidence to setting Goals, becoming Productive and Conquering Depression. I also created over 1,000 daily micro-lessons we call Optimize +1s.

We've had something like 50,000 people sign up as members of Optimize (from every country on the planet) since we launched. Optimizers include generals and bishops and some of the most elite U.S. Navy SEALs in the world (in fact, some of the guys who *train* the most elite SEALs in the world are Optimizers), best-selling authors, Fortune 100 senior executives, Olympic medal-/NCAA Championship-winning coaches (and their teams), pastors and rabbis and other leaders and peak performers who come to us to Optimize and actualize their heroic potential.

I've also distilled all the PhilosophersNotes and 101 Master Classes and Optimize +1s into what we call our "Mastery Series"—which is the cornerstone of our 300-day Optimize Coach program in which we help people master themselves, serve heroically, and empower others to do the same.

We've trained over 2,000 Optimize Coaches from over 75 countries in the two years since we launched that program. Half of the Optimizers who go through the program are Coaches who want to take their practice to the next level (or aspiring Coaches who want to start their coaching practice) while the other half are people who "simply" want to use the program to master themselves, serve heroically and empower others to do the same.

Note: We're committed to creating an *army* of one million virtuous heroes within the decade.

What else? Oh, yah. Before all that I graduated from UCLA with high honors (Phi Beta Kappa, yada yada...). I was a first-generation college student.

btw: Not-so-fun family fact: My dad was a hard-working alcoholic and his dad was an alcoholic who killed himself. I like to say I lost the genetic AND environmental lotteries on that one. I also *know* that my own struggles with (and ability to conquer!) depression and anxiety are what give me the confidence to say “I know what it feels like to want to end my own life (gah) AND I know what it feels like to feel a sense of sustainable, joyful, calm confidence AND I know what I did to go from *there* to *here* AND I know that you can do that, too.” And, most importantly, I can now say: “Here’s how!” (I just got misty typing that as I imagine you or a loved one who may be struggling to find Hope right now being inspired and encouraged by my story.)

After graduating from UCLA, I started my career as an accountant-consultant at the old Arthur Andersen. I *literally* threw up on the side of the 405 freeway in Los Angeles driving home from work the first week on the job. (Always a good sign you’re not *quite* on the right track eh? Hah. I can laugh now.) Law school was my escape route. So, I studied for the LSAT, got into a Top 10 school to get the stamp from society saying I’m a smart guy and... I threw up the day I moved in to my apartment. Eek. *That* wasn’t quite it *either*. (Laughing.) I dropped out of law school (UC Berkeley Boalt Hall class of 2000!) which, although heart-breaking and depression-inducing at the time, was one of the absolute best decisions of my life.

Note: We’ll talk a LOT about becoming what we call “antifragile” and using our greatest “failures” as the fuel for our heroic fires.

While we’re on the subject, it’s probably worth mentioning that while living in Bali, I was featured in a documentary on Joseph Campbell and the modern hero’s journey. The movie is called *Finding Joe* and also features Deepak Chopra, Sir Ken Robinson, Laird Hamilton, Tony Hawk and other luminaries.

In *Finding Joe*, I actually tell the story about how, although I NEVER could have predicted it, after dropping out of law school, I wound up creating my first business (eteamz) and *hiring* the firm I would have dreamt of *working for* *before* I would have graduated.

Note: In many ways, as we’ll discuss, this Training Manual is an operationalization of that movie and a guide on HOW to live our best, most heroic lives in the twenty-first century as we strive to joyfully give the world all we’ve got.

btw1: The director of that film, Pat Solomon, heroically put the entire film up on YouTube when COVID-19 came to town. Just Google “YouTube + Finding Joe + Full movie” and you can watch the movie in its entirety, for free. I highly recommend you do as it’s a great (!) companion to this Training Manual.

btw2: Fun fact: Pat was inspired to create the film after reading my PhilosophersNotes on Joseph Campbell’s books and I was the first person he filmed for the documentary.

Moving on... These days I’m combining my passion and experience as a social entrepreneur with my passion and experience as a teacher and professional Philosopher as I lead Optimize.

Our Mission at Optimize Enterprises, Public Benefit Corporation is very simple: We are committed to changing the world, one person at a time, together, starting with you and me, TODAY.

My Mission with this Training Manual is *exactly* the same.

I'm excited to distill the essence of my life's work over the last 20+ years into an inspiring, super-practical field guide to becoming the best, most virtuous versions of ourselves so we can live with eudaimonic joy and serve the world heroically.

This Training Manual is for people who are fed up with the viciousness in our society and want to play their roles in life as powerfully as they can to make a difference in the world.

It's for smart, ambitious, high-performing individuals who KNOW they are capable of so much more than they might be currently expressing. It's for CEOs/entrepreneurs looking to bring out excellence in themselves and their employees. It's for HR executives looking to bring out excellence in their workforce. It's for teachers and counselors and spiritual leaders and athletic coaches looking to bring out excellence in their students / patients / communities / teams / players. It's for Moms and Dads who want to be the best they can be and raise the next generation of heroes. It's for grounded, earnest people who want more ancient wisdom and modern science with less woo-woo "Secrets." It's for people into self-help who want to see more virtues-based wisdom and less "get-it-quick" schemes.

Ultimately, it's for people who want to master themselves, serve heroically and empower others to do the same so we can change the world together, one person at a time, starting with you and me, TODAY.

Let's get started.

The Overview

In a few pages, I'm going to ask you what might be a life-changing question. I'm also going to walk us through what might be a series of life-changing exercises. (We're going to take those quick trips to Heaven and to Hell.)

But, first, I'd like to walk us through the contents of this book and briefly touch on the major themes and give you a sense of where we're headed.

We should start at the top with the name of our business...

Did you know that the word *Optimize* comes from the Latin word *optimus* which literally means "the best"? Yep. In our case, of course, we're talking about YOU being the absolute best version of yourself.

But...

Important note: We're not trying to get you to be the best version of you so you can snap a selfie of your six-pack on your yacht in front of your mansion on the cliff overhanging the crashing waves so you can post that on Instagram and impress all your pseudo-friends. (Hah.)

We're trying to help you become the best version of yourself so you can serve your family, friends, community and world as profoundly as you can.

The ancient Greeks had a word for that type of person committed to and successfully living with virtue and consistently expressing the best version of themselves. They called that type of person a “eudaimon.” *Eudaimon* literally means “good soul.” We’ll connect that ancient wisdom to modern science in our first Objective called “Operationalize Virtue” in which we’ll focus on “Eudaimon-ology: The Study of a Good Soul and How to Operationalize Virtue Via Ancient Wisdom + Modern Science + Practical Tools.”

But...

We don’t stop there.

Although it was *implicit* in ancient Greek philosophy that you could only be a *eudaimon* if you lived with virtue and served your community, we make it *explicit* and take it a couple steps further by saying that we need you to be a HERO.

You happen to know what *that* word means? It’s another ancient Greek word. Etymologically, the word *hero* doesn’t mean “killer of bad guys” or “tough guy” or anything like that it.

It means “PROTECTOR.”

A hero has strength for two. A hero is willing to do the HARD work to HAVE that strength for two. And, you know what the secret weapon of the ancient hero was?

LOVE.

It’s LOVE that fuels our commitment to DO that hard work to HAVE the strength for two. It’s LOVE that gives us the Courage to act in the presence of fear and do what needs to get done whether we feel like it or not.

I’m going to say this AGAIN and AGAIN and AGAIN throughout this Training Manual.

Our world needs heroes Today more than ever before.

We need YOU to be a hero.

We need YOU to do the hard work to cultivate virtue so you have the strength for two and can truly be the change you want to see in the world so we can (echo) change the world, one person at a time, together, starting with you and me, TODAY.

That’s Objective II of this Training Manual called “Forge Antifragile Confidence” in which we focus on “Hero-ology: The Study of a Good Hero.” We’re going to spend some time defining some terms and helping you cultivate your Antifragile Confidence + Heroic Courage + Response-Ability. You can think of this three-part section as a sort of basic training for Heroes.

btw: At our offline events, our Optimizers get a lanyard. On that black lanyard, in bold white letters, it says: OPTIMIZE = OPTIMUS = BEST = EUDAIMON = HERO.

THAT’s the ultimate game we’re playing.

You at your best? You’re a HERO. Period.

From there, it's time to move from the very important (yet slightly abstract) philosophical framing of our ultimate quest to the very concrete reality of YOUR life.

Which leads us to Objective III on what we call "Get to Know The Big 3 (x2)." We'll start this discussion with an origin story of the Big 3 in which we invite Stephen Covey, Tony Robbins and Sigmund Freud to the party.

Stephen Covey has his "Roles and Goals." Tony Robbins has his "Categories of Improvement." Both of which are great, but... It's easy to get overwhelmed by the near-infinite "roles" we play and the near infinite "categories" of our lives we want to Optimize. (Right?)

Then we have Freud who told us that a good life is all about Work and Love. This is one of the few things on which Freud and I agree. But... I like to say that if you have a hard time getting out of bed in the morning because of poor lifestyle choices, GOOD LUCK showing up powerfully in your Work OR your Love.

Which is why we have our Big 3: Energy + Work + Love.

First we need to Optimize our ENERGY *then* we bring all that Energy to our Work and to our Love.

We're going to help you shine a very *bright* flashlight on who YOU are at YOUR Optimus-best Energy + Work + Love wise.

If you feel so inspired, take a moment right now and think about that. Who are you at your ENERGY best? What about your WORK best? And your LOVE best?

We call those Optimus-best versions of you "Identities" and we're going to help you get clarity on your Identities across our Big 3 of Energy + Work + Love. (For curious souls, my Big 3 Identities are: Athlete, Philosopher + CEO, and Soul Mate.)

After we help you get more clarity on who you are at your best Energy + Work + Love wise, we're going to help you get more clarity on the Virtues that Optimus-best version of you embodies. Then we're going to help you get more clarity on the BEHAVIORS you're going to engage in TODAY to be in integrity with those best versions of yourselves.

THAT is The Big 3 (x2): Energy + Work + Love (x Identity + Virtues + Behaviors).

Getting clarity on and then living in integrity with those ideals is LIFE-CHANGING.

Seriously, it's crazy how powerful this stuff can be. Which makes me realize I forgot to mention the fact that we worked with one of the world's leading well-being research labs to scientifically TEST whether or not our Optimize protocol actually works.

Short story.

Before we launched our inaugural Optimize Coach class (with 1,000 Optimizers from 50+ countries) early last year, we reached out to one of my friends and favorite positive psychologists, Sonja Lyubomirsky (author of *The How of Happiness* and *The Myths of Happiness*), to ask for help in SCIENTIFICALLY validating the effectiveness of our Optimize protocol. (Or *not*, if it ISN'T effective!)

We worked with Sonja and one of her top Ph.D. students (thanks, Seth!!) to TEST whether or not

our protocol works. We did a before and after measure (basically checking in on where people were before Day 1 of our program and then where they were on Day 300) on a broad range of areas we hoped to help people Optimize.

For example, could we boost confidence in the face of challenges while deepening connections with loved ones and increasing productivity at work?

Could we also help people create better habits—eating better, exercising more, sleeping deeper, managing their tech usage better, along with all the other stuff we know we **should** be doing but often fail to do?!

And, if we *could* do that, would that lead to measurable gains in our Big 3 of Energy + Work + Love and overall well-being?!

We rolled up our sleeves and got to work creating the scientific surveys we'd need. We got all the "Before" data we needed. Fast-forward to Day 300. All the data is in! We, of course, eagerly anticipated the results.

Now... Based on the HUNDREDS (and HUNDREDS!) of testimonials we received during and after the program, we knew, qualitatively, that the program was working. The question was: What would the **quantitative** data show?

And... In the words of our research lead, the effects were "massively positive." For the geeks among us, he tells us: "The effect sizes were huge!! They were all around Pearson correlations of .6 (Cohen's *ds* of 1.7), which is unheard of!!" (The Team and I might have done a very happy dance when we heard the news.)

For example, at the beginning of our program, 29% of our Optimizers felt connected to the best version of themselves. At the end, 93% (!) felt connected to the Optimus-best version of themselves. (← WOW.)

At the beginning of the program, 37% exercised for 25+ minutes a day. At the end, that number was 64%. Meditation? Same thing. 43% meditated every day on Day 1 (which is actually a really high number! lol). 89% (!!) meditated every day on Day 300.

How about Confidence? Well, on Day 1, 37% felt calm and confident and present most of the day. On Day 300 that number was 88%.

Perhaps most inspiring (as this is one of THE central themes of the program and a key ingredient to living happily AND heroically!), on Day 1, only 23% of the Optimizers in the program leaned in to challenges (vs. avoiding them). On Day 300, 79% of our Optimizers were leaning in to their challenges!! (#OMMS!)

58% felt they could handle any challenge life presents on Day 1. That became 90% on Day 300. 83% felt more excited than anxious at the end, while only 41% could say that in the beginning.

Those same stats repeated themselves in Work, with an overwhelming majority of our Coaches feeling a deeper sense of purpose, engagement, focus, and productivity at Work. (While learning to manage digital distractions and, as a result, Optimizing not only their productivity but their sense of what we call "Energized Tranquility.")

And, the same stats showed up in their Connections with friends / family / colleagues / community and humanity in general.

Then we have the healthy habits. Eating. Moving. Sleeping. Etc.

ALL Optimized.

Eating-wise: 53% said they followed their nutritional philosophy on Day 1 whereas 84% said that on Day 300. Which is why we also saw a shift from 46% who felt it was easy to maintain their ideal weight to 76% saying that at the end. (btw: I was perhaps most astonished by the number of people who told us they're back to a weight they NEVER thought they'd see again!)

Sleep-wise: We spend a lot of time helping people a) get the fact that sleep is SUPER important then we spend an equal amount of time helping them b) get great sleep!

Science says that the #1 tip to getting a good night of sleep is to turn off your electronics at least an hour before bed. (We call that a Digital Sunset.) Which is why I was thrilled to see the percentage of people who spent time without screens before bed move from 32% on Day 1 to 87% (!!!) on Day 300. (← WOW!)

Which, of course, all translated into feeling more Energized both in the beginning of the day AND at the end of the day. Get this: 46% said they started the day Energized on Day 1. On Day 300 that was 85%!!!

All of which brings us back to the most important measure. Did we help people feel more connected to the best version of themselves? Yes. That, again, went from 29% to (a staggering) 93%. ← !!!

Why is that important? Well, because that's pretty much what ALL the great wisdom traditions have told us is THE most important thing we can do and what our program and this Training Manual is, ultimately, ALL about.

So, I can humbly and confidently say that we KNOW our Optimize protocol can help you truly change your life.

Which brings us back to our discussion.

When do you think it would be wise to actually live this stuff? To move from Theory to Practice to Mastery? Of course, the only possible answer to that question is TODAY!!! Which is why Objective IV is called "Carpe Diem: TODAY's the Day!"

In this Objective, we're going to slow down and take our time helping you become a Master of creating Masterpiece Days. We're going to start with a high-level view of WHY seizing the day is so important and then we're going to systematically help you architect your ideal day.

Somewhat paradoxically, but radically life-changing, we're going to START with your PM Bookend. We've gotta know that TODAY *actually* started YESTERDAY. If you're blowing your brain up with blue light late into the night HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY hope to get a good night of sleep and wake up feeling awesome and Energized?!?

We're going to tell you that you need to make a decision: Do you want to be entertained by fake heroes or do YOU want to be the Hero of your own life? (Seriously, which is it?)

We'll help you architect your optimal night which will then lead to having MUCH better AMs. We'll help you Optimize those AM Bookends as well. Then we'll help you make sure you're dialing in your Energy + Work + Love all day every day.

That's Carpe Diem.

Note: If you're doing ANY of the stuff we're going to talk about, by this stage I can *promise* you that your life will have already changed. Good news? The fun has just begun.

Now it's time for Objective V called "Master Yourself" in which we're going to help you (and you'll hear me repeat this over and over again until it's tattooed on your brain!): "Use your Willpower wisely to install Habits that run on autopilot via Algorithms."

This might just be my favorite subject. We're going to teach you the art and science of behavior change and help you INSTALL the #1 most life-changing habit *and* DELETE the #1 most life-destroying kryptonite habit *while* mastering the PROCESS of behavior design such that you can repeat your successful habit installation and deleting process *while* empowering others to change their lives as well. (It's going to be epic.)

From there it's time to go deep into the Fundamentals of Optimizing. Want to FUNDAMENTALLY and PERMANENTLY change your life? Master your fundamentals.

We have seven of them: Eating + Moving + Sleeping + Breathing + Focusing + Celebrating + Prospering.

It's easy to get fired up for a weekend at a motivational seminar or yoga retreat and walk on fire or bend yourself into an enlightened pretzel for a moment. It's a different thing to actually FUNDAMENTALLY and PERMANENTLY change your life.

How do you do that? Again, it's all about mastering the fundamentals. We're going to help you do that in Objective VI: "Dominate the Fundamentals." (It's going to be awesome.)

All of which leads us to Objective VII: "Practice Your Philosophy." This is our final Objective. It could also (perhaps more appropriately) be called Objective ∞.

Want to Optimize your life to become the Optimus-best, most Eudaimonically Heroic version of yourself? Fantastic. (Me, too.)

Guess what? It's time to PRACTICE OUR PHILOSOPHY.

When? Right now.

Moment to moment to moment we're being called to express the best version of ourselves. If there's a gap between who we're capable of being in any given moment and who we're actually being in that moment, you know what happens?

We feel it.

It's in that gap between who we're *capable* of being in any given moment and who we're *actually* being in that moment that regret and anxiety and disillusionment creep in.

Close the gap and there's simply NO ROOM for that negative stuff.

Which is why the ancient philosophers like Aristotle told us that the WAY we actually become *eudaimons* (good souls!) and experience the deep sense of eudaimonic joy that he said was the ultimate aim of life is to live with what he called *areté*. (Roughly pronounced as “are-uh-tay.”)

We translate THAT beautiful word into English as “virtue” or “excellence” but it also has a MUCH deeper meaning.

When we live with *areté*, we're expressing that best version of ourselves moment to moment to moment. We're giving the world all we've got—showing up with virtue in our Energy + Work + Love and joyfully, heroically serving our families, friends, communities and world.

How does THAT feel? Well, you tell me! How do YOU feel when you're showing up and being your best?! (Amazing, eh?) (THAT's *eudaimonia*.)

Helping us live with *areté* to experience that deep sense of eudaimonic joy is, of course, what this Training Manual is all about. In fact, if we had to summarize my ENTIRE philosophy (and this Training Manual) in one word, it would be *areté*.

All of which brings us back to that laniard you'll get if you ever join us for an event...

One more time: OPTIMIZE = OPTIMUS = BEST = EUDAIMON = HERO.

P.S. I almost called this book “Optimize | A **TRAINING MANUAL** for the Modern Hero” as a nod to Epictetus and his *Enchiridion*. Epictetus is my favorite teacher.

(Abraham Maslow and Joseph Campbell are my other top three favorite teachers of all time for curious souls. I'll be channeling a bit of Epictetus's intensity and logical precision along with Maslow's soulful science and Campbell's call to your heroic destiny.)

An old-school Stoic philosopher, Epictetus was a former slave who taught the guys who tutored the great Roman Emperor (/Stoic Philosopher) Marcus Aurelius. In fact, Epictetus is the guy Aurelius refers to the most in his *Meditations*. Viktor Frankl and the founders of the modern cognitive behavioral therapy movement also recognize his work as inspiration for theirs.

Although he never wrote any of his own books, one of Epictetus's students took really good lecture notes (thanks, Arrian!) and captured his wisdom in a little manual called the *Enchiridion*. The Greek word *enchiridion* is translated as “handbook.” But it's important to note that the word literally means “within” (*en*) + “hand” (*kheir*).

Epictetus's wisdom (and the wisdom of all great ancient philosophers) was less like a guidebook you held in your hand and more like a *sword* or a *tool* you held in your hand—wisdom that was ready at hand and could be used to meet life's challenges as we dare greatly and win the (heroic!) battle between the lower and highest version of ourselves.

As the great modern Stoic-therapist Donald Robertson tells us in *The Philosophy of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, the Stoic philosophers told us that we needed to be WARRIORS of the mind, not mere *librarians* cataloging interesting ideas. They had an entire collection of weapons/tools in what was known as their “armamentarium.” That’s how I’d like us to think about this Training Manual.

Ancient Wisdom + Modern Science + Practical Tools to help us master ourselves, serve heroically, and empower others to do the same so we can change the world, one person at a time, together, starting with you and me, TODAY.

That’s the Overview. Welcome to *You Are a Hērō | Here’s Your Training Manual*.

The Dojo Decision

Alrighty. Now that we’ve sketched out the basic elements of our work together in this Training Manual, it’s time for us to make a decision. We call it “The Dojo Decision.”

Note: This might be THE most important part of the whole Training Manual.

Imagine walking into a dojo. You’re going to study a martial art. This is your very first day studying this art. You might already have a dozen black belts in *other* martial arts or this might be your very first time *ever* in a dojo. Either way is great. And, either way, you start in *this* school with a white belt.

So... Here’s the question.

As you look around the dojo and feel the energy of the place, are you there Going for Mastery or are you there Going Through the Motions?

That may not sound like a big distinction, but it is.

If you’re proud of yourself for simply getting off the couch and showing up and plan to kinda sorta go through the motions of the class then, Cap’n Obvious here, you’re going to show up with a VERY (!!!) different energy than the version of you that’s GOING FOR MASTERY.

If you (goosebumps as I type this) KNOW that you want to be a Black belt in x years, you’re ALL IN. You’re *not* just kinda sorta going through the motions. You’re using EVERY SINGLE MOMENT of that class to get a little better. You’re paying attention, standing up tall and giving your best. Moment to moment to moment.

So... As we begin our journey together, I ask you.

Are you planning to just go through the motions and read yet another self-help book?

Or...

Are you sitting up nice and tall, with a fierce look in your eye as you commit to going all in to give the world all you’ve got?

Of course, either answer is *technically* fine. And, you and I may not be on quite the same page and you may not feel inspired to really commit to going all in with me on this journey—which, of course, is MORE than just fine.

But...

Let's not kid ourselves. This isn't a dress rehearsal. It's time to wake up and give the world all we've got. It's time to quit just going through the motions of our lives—mindlessly scrolling through social feeds and doing what everyone else is doing. It's time to stand up, put the smartphones down and high five our inner souls as we commit to giving the world all we've got. TODAY.

Quick Trips to Heaven and Hell

Carrying on... Each of our chapters will integrate both Theory and Practice. The Practice will include “Reflection” components and “Action” components.

For the Reflection exercises in this Introductory chapter, we're going to take three quick trips. First, we're going to Heaven. Then we're going to Hell. Then we're going to our Eulogy. For the Action exercise, we're going to activate the ultimate Optimizing algorithm called “Flip the Switch.”

First, it's time to go to Heaven. Buckle up. We're going to do some time traveling.

See that time machine over there? Yep. That one. Let's hop in. Please secure that seatbelt. Ready? LET'S GO.

BOOM. It's five years from now. Unfasten that seat belt of yours. Let's step outside the time machine.

OH WOW!! Who do we see? It's YOU!!

Only... It's the most RADIANTLY ALIVE version of you that you can possibly imagine. GASP.
Would you look at YOU?!?

You're radiantly alive. Clearly in the best Energetic shape of your life. You're calm. Confident. Energized. Tranquil. You're HAPPY. No... More than that. You're JOYFUL. You're alive and flourishing and clearly living in integrity with your deepest values. Amazing.

Now...

You and your Optimus-Best You get to spend ONE MINUTE together.

What does THAT version of you have to tell you?

Seriously. If you feel so inspired... Pause. Reflect. Imagine the most Optimized version of you five years from now. You're living in integrity with your deepest values and flourishing Energy + Work + Love wise. What does THAT version of you want THIS version of you to know?

Write that down. (And: Cap'n Obvious here again: Live it. Today.)

(Btw: That's a reflection exercise inspired by two of my friends who happen to be two of my favorite authors and two of the world's leading positive psychologists. In her book *The How of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky tells us that "best-selves exercises" like that one are some of the most robust ways to boost our hope and well-being. Tal Ben-Shahar offers a time-traveling exercise of his own in his great book *Happier*—telling us that we ALL ALREADY HAVE ALL THE WISDOM WE NEED. We just need to tap into it and then live in integrity with it.)

Moving on...

It's time to head back to Today. BOOM. We're here. Now it's time to fast forward. This time it's not going to be quite as pleasant. We're going to the very end of our lives. Take a deep breath. Hold on tight. BOOM. We're there.

This time we get out of our magical time traveling machine and we see you on your death bed. Only, gulp, something's different this time. It's clear that you DIDN'T listen to the advice you got from that Heavenly Optimized version of you. Eek.

You can feel the pain of regret that *this* version of you is experiencing. It's heart-breaking. Then... Right as you're about to take your last breath... The door to your room opens... And... In walks that Optimus-best version of you. Aged, but just as vitally alive and joyful and loving as ever. That version of you looks at the other version of you with compassion and sadness. Then... BOOM. You're gone.

Some would say that THAT is one definition of Hell—to meet the version of you you COULD have become right when it was too late to do anything about it. Sigh.

Good news. It's NOT too late to do something about it.

It doesn't matter how long we might have allowed ourselves to get hypnotized by the sickness of our society. TODAY IS THE DAY for us to step up and decide to fulfill our heroic destiny.

So... Let's step back into that time machine. Come back to Today. Take a nice, deep breath. In through your nose. Down into your belly. Back out through your nose—exhaling slightly longer than your inhale to flip the switch on the ol' parasympathetic nervous system.

It's time for one more trip. This one's sobering but beautiful. We're going all the way to the end of your life again, only this time, you showed up more and more consistently as that virtuous, heroic version of yourself. Not perfectly, of course, as there ARE NO PERFECT HUMANS BEINGS. But, you did it. You lived a great life you're proud of.

Step out of the time machine. We're at someone's end of life celebration. And, it's truly a celebration. This person clearly lived an epic life. That person is YOU. People are laughing and crying and sharing memories of how you inspired them and changed their life. It's time to pull up a chair and listen to the eulogies.

Who says what? Seriously. WHO SAYS WHAT? And what do you HOPE they have to say about you? What virtues do you hope they think of when they talk about you?

The ultimate purpose of this Training Manual? Helping you be THAT version of yourself. More and more consistently. STARTING TODAY.

It's Time to Flip the Switch

Now it's time for one more exercise. This one's an action exercise for you to practice. We call it The Ultimate Optimizing Algorithm. If we could boil the X00 pages of this Training Manual into a 30-second practice, THIS is it.

It's very simple and straight-forward. The challenge, of course, is remembering to do it in the moments that matter. And then doing it so consistently that it runs on autopilot and becomes just a part of who you are.

There are three steps.

If the Optimus-best version of you (aka your inner soul or daimon or whatever you want to call it) tells you something, LISTEN.

1. Then, FLIP THE SWITCH and say, "Hi, Optimus!"
2. Then, GO DO WHAT THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF IS ENCOURAGING YOU TO DO as you bring all the Soul Force you've got to the only moment that ever matters: RIGHT NOW.

(That's seriously the whole book. Remember the "Science Says, 'Optimize Works!'" part of our discussion earlier? 29% of our Optimizers felt connected to their Best selves at Day 1. 93% (!!) felt connected on Day 300. I'm hoping we can see similar results from Page 1 to Page X00 and this practice is one of the key tools we'll use to get there!)

Getting REALLY good at high fiving that inner daimon is, as we'll discuss in Objective I, essentially, what life is all about.

So... If you EVER hear your inner daimon whisper (or scream!) something in your ear, remember to LISTEN. That's Step 1.

Then, "Flip the Switch." Stand (or sit) up nice and tall. Imagine pulling a thread through your head. Lengthen and widen your spine. Chest up. Chin down. Take a nice, deep breath in through your nose, down into your belly as you strike what Amy Cuddy would call (in her great book *Presence*) a "power pose." BOOM. Got it? Awesome. That's what we call "Flipping the Switch" and how we invite/welcome the best version of ourselves to the party.

After flipping that switch, we like to say, "Hi, Optimus!!" (Insert whatever you'd like to call that best version of you.) That's Step 2.

Step 3 is simple. DO WHATEVER YOUR INNER DAIMON is encouraging you to do. RIGHT NOW.

That's how we live with areté and close the gap between who we're capable of being moment to moment to moment. Not in some abstract, *someday* kinda way. But in the only moment that ever matters: RIGHT. THIS. SECOND.

With that, it's time to invite Aristotle and Martin Seligman to the party as proxies for Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science. We're going to ask them about the meaning of life...