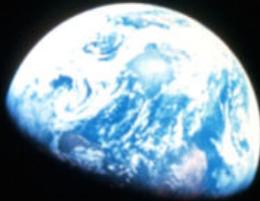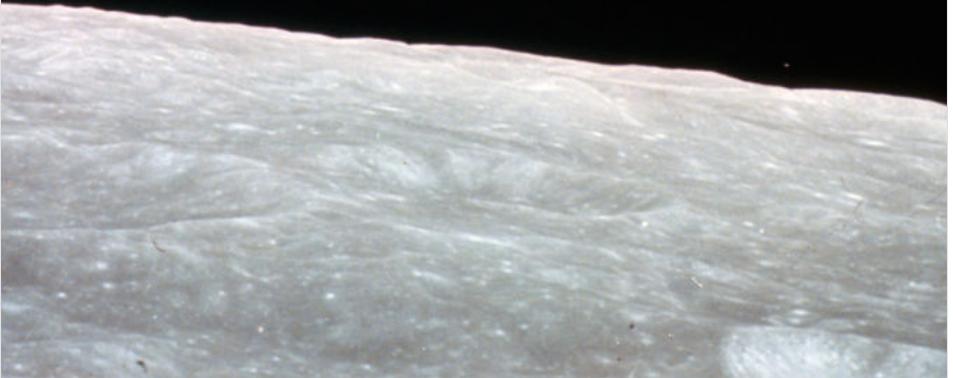# Great.Link/

Booklet 01:
An Inspiration Conspiracy

Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter.
Francis Chan

Contents

Mini Habits

What are Mini Habits: In short: one of the most life-changing books I've ever read. 200 pages about something that can be explained in 3 minutes, but well worth the read.
In very short:

If we want to start a new habit like "20 minutes meditation a day" or "30 minutes workout each day", chances are high that we will fail eventually, for several reasons:
- there'll be a day where we forget, are too tired / drunk / busy, can't get the motivation etc., and the streak is broken. Chances are we skip the second day, and it's over.
- when you sit on the couch, the brain imagines a 30 minute workout as a huuuge mountain of effort. Only when you are on the floor doing a push up, can your brain realistically appraise how it feels, and usually it feels real gooood.

So what can we do to succeed with creating new healthy habits?

www.great.link

Only commit to a ridiculously small daily activity. Too small to fail. But force yourself to do it every day. It has to be so small that you can do it even on your worst day.

Examples: 1 push up. 1 minute of meditation (which can happen while you sit on the toilet, no joke). Reading 2 pages. Writing 50 words. 1 yoga pose. The possibilities are endless ;-)

The trick is:

When your too-small-to-fail activity is done, you can stop and feel great about yourself and about keeping the daily streak. But you also don't limit yourself to stop there! On the floor in the middle of the first push up and it feels awesome? Do another 5! Reading 2 pages and really want to finish the chapter? Go for it! Meditating 1 minute and feeling sooooo relaxed? Just keep sitting, smile, and enjoy yourself!

==> You will either feel good about meeting the daily requirement, or you feel fantastic because you over-exceeded your goals! Constant extra-reward is built into the system and will create a

spiral of self-encouragement. No more failure and self-judgement because of missing a goal!

Important:
Don't raise your target! Stay with the ridiculously small action. But do it every day.

Recommendation: Pick no more than 1-3 daily habits. Once they become routine, you can pick new ones.

Tony Robbins:
"It's not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives. It's what we do consistently."

20 min video of my workshop on Mini Habits:
great.link/youtube/minihabits

Mini Habits book:
great.link/amazon/minihabits

Mini Habits for Weight Loss book:
great.link/amazon/weightloss

3-Minute Meditation

After working for hours, I get tired and unfocused. I know I should take a break, but usually I don't. Recently I started experimenting with short 3 minute long meditation bursts, a "momentary deactivation of the brain" which re-energizes me and resets my focus. I work 25 minutes, meditate 3 minutes, and the time saved through increased productivity pays off big.

I found a meditation technique that works wonders for these short bursts, and created an audio recording of 6 minutes, with bells every 1 minute and 3 bells after 3 minutes, so I can stop after 3 minutes or continue if I'm enjoying myself.

It's called "Just Note Gone". How does it work? In my own words:

I pay attention to the **ending** of sensations / thoughts / sounds / tensions / etc., and mentally acknowledge the ending with "Gone".

Whenever I notice the release of tension, I mentally comment the noticing with "Gone."

www.great.link

Whenever I notice a sound that stopped / is subsiding, I mentally comment "Gone."

Same with thoughts: When I've been drifted away in thoughts, and I notice that I am drifted away, **in that moment the thought ends and awareness kicks in.** From this space of awareness / presence, I acknowledge the ending of the stream of throughs and the return to presence with "**Gone.**"

The powerful thing about this technique, for me, is that I don't get frustrated that I'd been drifted off in thoughts. With other meditations, I drift off in thoughts, realize that I'd been in thoughts, and feel frustrated. With the "Gone" technique, I celebrate the return of presence, and the opportunity to practice noticing "Gone".

I usually focus my awareness on the feeling of my body, or I practice noticing sounds / etc. acknowledging whenever they subside with "Gone".

www.great.link

Wonderful, short explanation by Chade-Meng Tan, out of Timothy Ferriss' book "Tools of Titans":
great.link/just-note-gone

More detailed explanation by Shinzen Young, creator of the technique:
great.link/shinzen-gone

Audio file for 3 minute meditation:
great.link/3-minute-meditation

Productivity / App blockers

www.freedom.to
www.focusme.com
News feed eradicator (Chrome/Firefox/Safari plugin)

(If you have any questions about those, please ask me, I'll be happy ;-)

Alternative Education

The current education system is quite outdated. Created in times that were asking for factory workers, children and adolescents around the world are still being educated to follow orders, instead of proactively think for themselves and take initiative. To tackle the worlds current and future problems, we need leaders to be able to think out of the box and come up with unconventional solutions.

For more information about how the education system is not serving it's purpose anymore, please watch Sir Ken Robinson's fantastic TED talk:

great.link/video/robinson-schools

In conventional education, there are some exceptions of people who do great things. Here is a video about a teacher that invented a game to teach third graders how to solve the world's problems and create peace:

great.link/video/world-peace-game

Unfortunately, those great examples are still exceptions. But there is light in the end of the tunnel: in the past decade, the alternative education movement has been getting stronger and stronger, and all kinds of unconventional (education) projects are popping up all around the world:

Artist Incubators, Coworking spaces, DIY education such as free online courses, entrepreneurship incubators, hackerspaces and makerlabs, social innovation camps, collaborative living projects, and many more. A fantastic collection can be found here:

great.link/superhero-schools

I myself did a 'masters program' at Knowmads Business School Amsterdam. It was one of the best decisions of my life. Knowmads is a one year educational program about social entrepreneurship, changemaking, personal development, business, leadership, and much more. There are no teachers and the students

decide on what projects they want to work on. Whether starting a co-working space, a consultancy or opening a café, the students learn to take initiative for their own life, and their own learning. Some students even started or are starting new Knowmads schools in Hanoi, Berlin and Sevilla

www.knowmads.nl   (Amsterdam)
www.knowmads.vn   (Hanoi, Vietnam)

Documentary we made about Knowmads Hanoi:
great.link/knowmads-documentary

Things are changing rapidly: with access to internet, you can now learn anything you want, be it Programming (f.ex. on the websites udemy.com, or lynda.com, or a course about artificial intelligence or social innovation at MIT (good overview of online educational courses: edx.org).

Some people are doing their own 'Personal MBA' or a so-called 'Open Master's Program' (www.openmasters.org), and organize

their education themselves, instead of spending a fortune on a conventional university.

To be able to navigate effectively through this new world with all its possibilities, opportunities and challenges, it's good if you have learned to take things in your own hand, and take control and responsibility of your world.

Space

Have you ever thought about it - or felt it: What you have under your feet right now is not concrete, sturdy ground. No, you are standing, sitting, lying on a round ball, which is not sitting on some substantial ground itself, but only floating through dark nothingness. You are walking on the top surface of a giant ball, which is flying through vast space. Right now, at all times.

If you look at the cover picture, shot from the moon, you might be just upside down in the dark area of the image. If you jump up high enough, maybe the earth moves with you when you hit the ground again - just a fraction of an atom. Imagine.

What separates you from the big black immense infinity is nothing but a paper-thin layer of atmosphere.
And yet, we walk through life all day, most people all their life long, without ever thinking, wondering about it. It's so obvious that we don't recognize

the forest because all the trees are blinding our vision.

To give you some more inspiration, here are some amazing, beautiful, mind-expanding videos.

The Planetary Collective is a group which promotes a paradigm shift in how we see and identify ourselves: from individual, member of a certain group or country, to being a human being on planet earth. They made a wonderful short movie about what they call the 'Overview Effect':
great.link/video/overview

They also made a full length documentary called 'Planetary', here is a trailer:
great.link/video/planetary

According to Neil deGrasse Tyson, the most astounding fact of our existence on this planet, in this universe, is….:
great.link/youtube/stardust

What happens, if you take 200 million pictures of the sun, and put it into a time lapse? Something breathtakingly beautiful.

great.link/youtube/sun

Have a look on the night sky through the eyes of the Hubble telescope, in the largest picture ever taken. Be aware, that all the grains in the photo are not noise, but each dot is a star, a planet, or a whole other galaxy far, far away.
great.link/youtube/andromeda

How vast is it really, out there? See for yourself:
- A picture tour through the distances in the universe:
great.link/scary-universe

- A beautiful animation, zooming out from earth:
great.link/youtube/zoomed-universe

- A beautiful classic from 1977, on the Power of 10:
great.link/youtube/powers-of-ten

A vision of the future:
great.link/video/wanderers

How do we get there? Possibly faster than light, since the Nasa is researching about warp drives, and a University Professor named David Pares from Omaha claims to have built one in his garage:

www.paresspacewarpresearch.org

Social Inventors

One of the most beautiful things of the Internet is that it can bring people together to do something good for their fellow human beings or to collaborate and share their knowledge. The Open Source movement is about voluntarily working together and creating software of which the source code can be accessed and changed by anyone. The Mozilla Firefox browser is a prominent example of this, or the Linux operating system.

And since there are millions of programmers out there, some of them use it to build amazing things. Mick Ebeling, who founded the 'Not Impossible Foundation', was sad to see that the San Francisco graffiti artist TEMPT got a nerve disease that made him go completely paralyzed, unable to do anything than blink with the eyes.
It took hours for him to communicate, only by someone going through the alphabet and TEMPT blinking the eyes letter by letter, to build a sentence. Machines which f.ex. Stephen Hawking

used to communicate are very expensive, and only few people can afford it.

Encouraged to help TEMPT, Ebeling invited hackers from all around the world into his home, where they created the 'Eyewriter', a pair of sunglasses that track eye movement and enabled TEMPT to do art again, and to actually communicate with people. The best: the eyewriter is open source, relatively cheap and can be built by anyone with some skills in electrical engineering.
Watch this inspiring TED talk here:

great.link/video/ebeling

Another example: a young computer geek used a simple Nintendo Wii Remote, which costs around $20, to build a head tracking device and transform an ordinary computer or TV screen into a 3D display, long before 3D TVs hit the market. With the same hardware he also built a low-cost interactive whiteboard setup, which can be done with any ordinary screen or projector. Both open source, of course. The software for the whiteboard

has been downloaded millions of times shortly after release, and apparently has been used by schoolteachers in developing countries, to be able to use an interactive whiteboard without having to spend thousands of dollars on one.

great.link/video/wii-remote

One device that has facilitated great global change was the Arduino microprocessor board. It is basically a tiny, and cheap computer which is easy to program and very versatile. People are building all kinds of things with it: a prosthetic device which enabled a disabled kid to play with a Playstation, another group built hundreds of DIY Geiger counters to measure the radiation in Japan after Fukushima, other people are building drones. Kids are programming robots that play soccer, the first 3D printers were built with an arduino board, and others made a glove that has a motion sensor and reads sign language, to instantly translate it into written language and shows it on a little display. The possibilities are endless, and in many cases, groups of people around the world are working together, improving

each other's work and collaborating to build something great.
Watch the TED talk here:

great.link/video/arduino

In 2013, a young dutch man invented a device to clean up the oceans from the trash in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. (The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a sort of floating 'island' of plastic trash in the middle of the ocean, about the size of the state Texas. For more info: great.link/wiki/garbage). He works together with a team of volunteers from around the world, and will hopefully succeed in a task which seems almost impossible to tackle.
www.theoceancleanup.com

Never before in the history of mankind was it possible to share knowledge and ideas with such an amount of people, and experts in their field. I believe that humans have an inbuilt wish to contribute, help, and facilitate positive change. These two factors are a good combination to find solutions for our most urging problems.

About

Hi, my name is Chris. I love ideas. Information. Good conversations. Inspiration. Technology. Books. Social change. And the global shift, that is slowly emerging.

After working in a bank, a degree in psychology, a ride through the crazy Knowmads Business School Amsterdam, work in a high level consultancy, meditating for three months in Thailand and running alternative education programs in Hanoi for two years (knowmads.vn), my partner Mercedes and I finally arrived Portugal, crafting our lives, listening to and creating what wants to emerge next.

Say Hi at: www.christiansextl.com