

# WARRIOR BRAIN



How To Get The Bulletproof Mindset  
Of A Fearless Warrior

# Warrior Brain – How to Get the Bulletproof Mindset of a Fearless Warrior

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What I'm getting at, is that your life isn't really hard. You might think it's hard and sometimes it might feel hard.

But there are people out there with *much worse* lives than you. There are people out there who live with crippling illness and not two cents to rub together. And many of them do this with a dignity, a grace and a bravery that puts the rest of us to shame.

You see, the Warrior Brain actually has nothing to do with combat. In fact, the hooligans that start bar fights and that think they're 'hard' for starting fights are about as far from true warriors as it gets. Ask anyone who has seen real combat if they would want to risk their health and waste their energy on *looking* for trouble.

The Warrior Brain is different. This is about knowing what you want and going for it. It's about being *hard* and it's about not letting little things get you down. It's about pushing ahead with what you know is right and it's about carrying responsibility and hardship on your shoulders with dignity and pride. It's about not letting your emotions get the better of you and it's about not taking the *easy answer* or the easy route to solve your problems.

### What is the Warrior Brain?



The Warrior Brain is different. This is about knowing what you want and going for it. It's about being *hard* and it's about not letting little things get you down. It's about pushing ahead with what you know is right and it's about carrying responsibility and

hardship on your shoulders with dignity and pride. It's about not letting your emotions get the better of you and it's about not taking the *easy answer* or the easy route to solve your problems.

So where does this title and this approach come from? What is the theory behind the warrior's mindset?

Of course, it comes from our romantic image of the warrior and from stories of warriors from history. It comes from tales of our bravest men and women who fought actual battles while remaining cool headed, sacrificing themselves for others and doing incredible things.

Now, we all know that in reality, not every warrior fits this mould. For every heroic individual who put themselves in the line of fire, there would have been hundreds more soldiers that complained, that were in it for the wrong reasons, or that wouldn't put themselves out for others. Romanticizing warfare is in fact a terrible idea – it is a truly horrific state of affairs and very few people feel like 'warriors' when they are faced with enemy fire.

But it's that image of the ideal 'warrior' that we're looking at here. And at our notions of history's greatest warriors like the samurai or the Spartans.

The point is that some people manage to stay cool and calm in even the worst situations. Some people constantly forge ahead and *do not* allow small inconveniences or a lack of creature comforts stand in their way.

And those people put *us* to shame. Those people make our complaints seem very minor indeed.

Now imagine if you could take that same mindset and apply it to modern life. Instead of getting tired or bogged down, instead of being distracted and tempted, you would instead drive forward with an unstoppable, bulletproof mentality. Your enemies would quake knowing that there was nothing they could do to stop you and your career obstacles, relationship goals and financial plans would all crumble beneath your will.

If you apply an iron will and warrior mentality to a modern lifestyle, you get extreme efficiency, determination and pride. Self-discipline, determination and self-sufficiency are traits that make us strong and that help us get what we want. They

are traits that make us good parents, good friends and good partners. They are traits that help us to live with ourselves and to earn respect and admiration from others.

Imagine if you had the mental strength to sit in a freezing cold shower for hours on end. Imagine if you weren't phased in life threatening situations. Take those traits and then put them up against the absolutely *measly* challenges that most of us face today. They would fall like dominos.

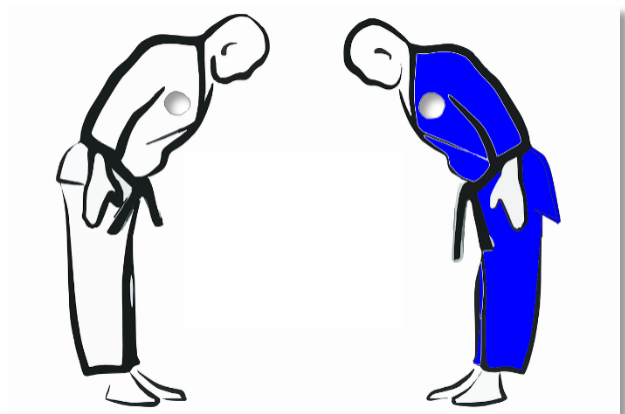
Having a warrior's mindset and going through modern life is like bulging with muscles and having to lift 5kg. *Developing* that warrior's mindset is like a workout for your mind, your philosophy and your soul.

It will make you *unstoppable*.

## Chapter 2: The Aim – What it Takes to be a Warrior

So, what are the tenants of the Warrior Brain? What words can we use to describe the modern warrior? Here are just a few:

- Courageous
- Self-Disciplined
- Principled
- Strong willed
- Kind
- Growth oriented
- Self-sufficiency
- Protective
- Self-Sacrificing
- Calm
- Responsible
- Motivational, Inspiring, Charismatic
- Noble
- Powerful
- Modest (though not necessarily humble)



These are just some of the traits that a true warrior should strive for. These are some of the things we will be looking to cultivate and better understand throughout this book.

Another great description of a warrior comes from an unlikely source: the Disney film *Mulan*. These quotes are from the song 'I'll Make a Man Out of You' but in fact they can apply equally to a woman.

Oh, and in case you don't want to learn lessons on chivalry from a Disney film, consider the fact that Jackie Chan sang the Chinese version of the song. He's one of life's true warriors, so perhaps that gives it just a little more weight...

*Tranquil as a forest*

*But on fire within.*

*Once you find your center*

*You are sure to win.*

*We must be swift as a coursing river*

*With all the force of a great typhoon*

*With all the strength of a raging fire*

*Mysterious as the dark side of the moon*

Still and calm on the outside then, but with great power and strength on the inside. Not driven by impulse or whim, but by greater purpose. Never bending to the will of others and never giving up when the going gets tough. That is the warrior spirit.

## Times You Were Not a Warrior

You probably don't live on the battlefield and you probably *hopefully* will never need to see combat (although this book will ensure that you are ready in case you ever do).





But there are plenty of ways that the Warrior Brain will apply in your day-to-day life as well and plenty of opportunities to demonstrate what it takes to be a warrior.

Perhaps the easiest way to consider this is to look at all those times that you *weren't* a warrior in your life. These are the times when your fear, your anger or your lack of motivation and willpower got the better of you.

Consider this:

- You wake up in the morning and realize your favorite shirt is torn, you spend the rest of the day angry with everyone, sulking and not focussing on your work. This very small inconvenience has ruined your ability to stay productive and it has made other people feel bad.
- It's raining out so you call off your plans to visit your friend down the road, who you know was looking forward to the get together.
- You're trying to lose weight but you're low on energy and so you eat a large piece of cake.
- A friend faints at a party and instead of staying calm and following a correct protocol to make sure they're okay, you instead get in a flap, scream at everyone and make matters worse.
- Your boss needs you to complete an assignment before you go home. You resent the idea of staying later and you're feeling tired so you rush it and put in less than your best work.
- You have been telling friends for years that you're going to write a book and that it is your dream to become a published author. You get home and the first thing you do is crash on the couch and watch trashy TV.

- You break a glass in the kitchen and when your partner asks who did it, you blame your friend who was round the other day.
- You get into a physical altercation with someone in the street and run away – leaving your friends or family to deal with the danger on their own.
- You are getting onto a train and instead of letting the elderly lady on in front of you, you push ahead.
- Your friends are peer pressuring you into smoking weed and accusing you of not being fun. Smoking weed is something you have no interest in in this hypothetical situation but you let yourself get talked into it for fear of appearing lame.
- You are happily married when an attractive woman/man makes their move on you. You give in to your momentary impulse and you sleep with them, effectively wrecking your relationship with not only your partner but your children as well.
- You are unhappy in your relationship or job but you stay in it because you don't have the heart to tell the person or you are too afraid of what the future might bring.

Some of these examples are more extreme than others. Of course, there is a big difference between eating ice cream when you really shouldn't and being swayed by hate speech! And occasionally losing your cool is normal. But while these points might all seem very different, they essentially come from the same thing: weakness.

Weakness is often the source of our problems and even of evil. Weakness means giving in to things we know aren't right, or making excuses and putting off our goals.

Now let's look at how someone *strong* might approach the same issues:

- You wake up in the morning and realize your favorite shirt is torn. You shrug and wear something else, recognizing this is a very small issue in the grand scheme of things!

- It's raining out and you don't feel like going out. But you know it's the right thing to do, so you man up and you go.
- You're trying to lose weight but you're low on energy. You dig deep, find that fire within and head to the gym.
- A friend faints at a party and you remain calm, cool and collected. You assign jobs to people and check they're okay.
- Your boss needs you to complete an assignment before you go home. You resent the idea of staying later and you're feeling tired but you complete the work to the best of your ability nevertheless. You speak to your boss about not putting you in that position again.
- You have been telling friends for years that you're going to write a book and that it is your dream to become a published author. You get home and resolve to write two pages a night.
- You break a glass in the kitchen and when your partner asks who did it, you own up and face the consequences.
- You get into a physical altercation with someone in the street. You make sure your family and friends are safe while trying to calm the situation as best you can.
- You are getting onto a train and you *always* stop to let the old lady on first. And the old man. And anyone who was there first.
- Your friends are peer pressuring you into smoking weed and accusing you of not being fun. If you want to, you do it. If you do not, you do not.
- You are happily married when an attractive woman/man makes their move on you. You have control of your feelings so you turn them down.
- You are unhappy in your relationship or job so you discuss that unhappiness with the other party and look for ways to improve the situation. That might mean finding a new job or ending the relationship but it is better than dragging it out.

The warrior is mentally and physically strong and this allows them to stick to their code of ethics and to work toward their vision for a better future – instead of doing what makes them feel good in the short term.

Ultimately, this leads to much greater happiness, much greater peace and much greater pride. And not just for you, but for all those around you.

## Chapter 3: The Fire Within

That line, the 'fire within' is one that speaks great volumes about the Warrior Brain. And it calls to mind lyrics from another song: 'Hearts On Fire' by the (excellent) band Survivor.

A great line from that song goes:

*In the warrior's code, there's no surrender*

*Though his body says stop, his spirit cries: "Never!"*

So, what is this telling us about the warrior mentality? Simple: warriors don't give up and they don't give in.

(I also enjoy Vegeta's line: *you may have invaded my mind and body but there's one thing a Saiyan always keeps... his pride!*)

So how do you gain this kind of iron will and determination? How do you develop the unstoppable ability to *never give up*?



It starts by knowing what you want to achieve and by having a set of your own principles.

To use *yet another* quote, Alice Cooper and Xzibit sang:

*If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything*

And this is completely true. If you have no specific goal and no set of values that is entirely your own, then how can you be expected to stick rigidly to those values?

If you haven't defined who you are, what you're about and what is important to you, then of course it will be easy to get tempted by good food, trashy TV or other 'easy options'. Of course, it will be easy for you to be swayed by the influence and the politics of others.

Moreover, having a goal is what will give you the motivation and the energy to get up and work toward the things you are truly excited about.

Think about someone like Arnold Schwarzenegger or Dwayne Johnson. These are people who have accomplished incredible things and part of the reason for that is undoubtedly their seemingly endless energy. Their ability to get up every single day and know what they want to do.

Can you *imagine* seeing the Rock look tired and dejected? Have you ever seen Arnold Schwarzenegger look indifferent or bored?

These people have tireless energy but it comes from a vision and a goal. And so it is with *all* the most accomplished people throughout history.

Arnie said this of his burning desire and how it led him to accomplish his goals:

*With my desire and drive, I definitely wasn't normal. Normal people can be happy with a regular life. I was different. I felt there was more to life than plodding through a normal existence... I have always been impressed by stories of greatness and power. I wanted to do something special, to be*

*recognized as the best. I saw bodybuilding as the vehicle that would take me to the top, and I put all my energy into it.*

The point is: knowing what you want from life will fuel you with energy, whether that is wanting what's best for your family, wanting to achieve creative accomplishments, wanting to reach a certain point in your career... etc.

Think about a new parent. Parents have seemingly endless energy and will sacrifice their sleep, their finances and their happiness to look after their children. They can accomplish anything because they have found something greater than themselves.

A parent's love will give them that warrior's mindset but you can't rely on just that. In order to accomplish the most and to build the best world for your family and friends, you also need something that is *intrinsically* motivating to you. In other words, you need a purpose and a goal that doesn't rely on anyone else – so that even when no one needs you, you still have the strength to pull yourself out of bed and to refuse distractions and unhelpful desires.

Once you have your goal, you will find a passion. And once you have a passion you will find that you have endless energy and drive and that you even speak with more conviction and greater charisma.

Did you know that we gesticulate more when we speak about something that we're passionate about? That's because we are now speaking with our entire bodies – our body language is congruent with what we are saying.

And did you know that when people see us speak in that way, they actually rate us as more charismatic? More inspiring? And better leaders?

When we really believe in what we are saying, we will be more efficient at getting *others* to believe it. This is how movements are started and this makes us far more attractive and magnetic.

And with your goal and your objective, you will better be able to make decisions and to avoid unnecessary distractions. You will be more decisive and you will be more impressive. Why? Because you can consider every decision through the following lens: 'does this help me to achieve my goals'? If the answer is no, then you do something else.

What career path should you take? The one that helps you to achieve your overarching goals. What party should you vote for? The one that helps you to fulfil your vision.

### Goals and the Warriors



The point of the goal is to have something that is greater than yourself – something worth fighting for.

This single-mindedness is something that was central to the psychology of all of history's greatest warriors, though it took

a very different form. Historically, you had your samurai and your knights. A samurai's training went to great measures to ensure their loyalty to a 'shogun' (a master samurai). They would be willing to die for their shogun, just as a king's knight would be willing to die for king and for country.

Today though, this is dangerous thinking. We are all too aware that our politicians are flawed and we've seen how blindly following a leader or a set of beliefs can lead to terrible atrocities.

So, what we need to do instead is to create our *own* set of values and principles. Rules to live by and a goal or a vision to strive for. This can change but we must never let others force us to act against our code.

Unfortunately, there is no objectively 'correct' way to approach life. We don't know why reality exists, what is waiting for us on the other side (if anything) or what the



meaning of life is. Therefore, it is up to each of us to make our own way by assessing our own values, principles and rules to live by.

## Finding Your Goal

So, let us start with finding a goal, something greater than yourself to strive toward. A purpose that you will be an instrument in accomplishing.



So this might mean that you set about changing the world for the better.

Maybe you want to put an end to world

hunger, maybe you want to help slow down global warming, or perhaps you are interested in becoming a rock star or a musician. Maybe you just want to get rich.

No goal is 'wrong', it is simply having a goal and something to be passionate about that will give you the fuel and the fire to keep going no matter what.

Goals *start* with visions. So visualize the way you want life to be 5 or 10 years for now. Picture where you are, what your surroundings are, who you are with, what you've accomplished. This should be a vision that makes you excited and energized – your perfect life. For inspiration, consider the times in your life you were happiest, consider what you wanted to be as a child and picture some of your role models and what you can perhaps learn from them.

*This* is what you will picture in order to drive yourself toward change and toward greatness. This is what will get you out of bed in the morning. And then on top of that, you are going to structure yourself goals – smaller, more measurable steps that will help you to reach that point.

## Creating Your Own Code of Ethics

On top of this, you will build your own code of ethics. Your idea of what you consider to be 'living well' and 'doing the right thing'.



Again, this doesn't have to be your conventional set of rules. It might be that you don't agree with some aspects of the law. Some well-known philosophers are known for views that stray from conventional ideas about ethics and morality.

Take Ayn Rand for example, who believed that morality comes from what makes them

happiest. She said:

*Man has no automatic code of survival.... His senses do not tell him automatically what is good for him or evil, what will benefit his life or endanger it, what goals he should pursue and what means will achieve them, what values his life depends on, what course of action it requires. Man must choose his actions, values and goals by the standard of that which is proper to man - in order to achieve, maintain, fulfill and enjoy that ultimate value, that end in itself, which is his own life.*

She believed that individual morality should be based on what makes that individual happiest. That means working on things that you love, improving yourself and protecting the ones you care about... who in turn make you happier.

Rand would suggest that we should look after our families and our loved ones, pursue our passions and our self-betterment and that way contribute to society.

Whatever *you* believe your code to be, you write it down and then commit to stick to that code. That way, you won't be persuaded by other people, you will be able to fight for your values and people will know where they stand with you.

That said, you also shouldn't be afraid to evolve and adapt your ideas over time. That is why it is so important to keep reading and keep learning. Keep up to date with politics and what is going on in the world, read philosophy and reassess your values.

There is no value in sticking to one set of goals or principles indefinitely and refusing to readdress them, as ultimately this becomes a 'lie' as much as any other

You should not vote a certain way because you have always voted a certain way. And you should not be afraid to reassess the way that you feel about certain aspects of your code.

The point is that you will not break your code of conduct while it exists. You have standards to uphold and the simple act of upholding them will make you a stronger, braver and more impressive individual.

And note that in the ideal scenario, there should be some interplay between what you believe, your personal code of ethics, your goals and your political views. Hopefully, you have a vision for where you think the world should go, what you think life should be like. Your goals are there to help you achieve that, while your code of ethics should also ensure that you don't miss the trees for the forest.

All this results in you becoming a person who knows what they believe and who knows themselves. And when you know that, you will be a greater and more powerful individual.

## Chapter 4: Overcoming Fear

When we think of the archetypal warrior, we will almost certainly be sure to think of someone that is brave, courageous and seemingly fearless. This is the kind of person that will walk into the line of fire. That will speak out against injustice, that will take on enemies that are much greater than them.



In our personal lives, there are no real dragons to slay. Rather, they take on many other forms, whether they be illness, whether they be debt, or whether they be the struggle of going to the gym every day...

### How to Use 'Fear Setting'



If you're a fan of reading self-help literature then chances are that at some point you will have written down your goals. This is something that almost every guru seems to advise and that many claim can help you to

accomplish your dreams by better defining and visualising them.

But in Tim Ferriss' *4 Hour Workweek* this advice is turned on its head somewhat. While Tim doesn't necessarily have a problem with goal setting per-say, he also recommends doing essentially the opposite by 'fear setting'. And he claims it can do a great deal more than goal setting when it comes to realising your aims and getting more from life...

### **What is Fear Setting?**

The general idea behind fear setting is that you're defining the fears that are holding you back so that you can face them. In most cases Tim postulates that after doing this you'll find that your fears are actually relatively unfounded and thus



will move forward and past them. Normally our fears are of 'irreversible' negative outcomes, but actually these are rarer than you might think...

So what you do is to write down the absolute worst possible outcomes for doing whatever it is you want to do, and then write down all the ways you'd cope with the situation or possibly reverse it.

### **An Example: Changing Career**



Let's take changing career as an example. This is something that a lot of people want to do, but feel held back by fear of the potential repercussions. By defining those fears though, you can minimise their potency.

So if you were going to write down the worst possible outcomes for changing careers, it might well look something like this:

- I might leave my job only to fail to find another job
- I might be unable to pay the mortgage and thus be forced to move home
- This could upset my partner so much they leave me
- I might get the job I think I want and find out I hate it more than my last job
- I might apply to other jobs only to get rejected by everyone and end up damaging my ego

These are all real concerns, but now if you think about all the ways you can manage risk and reduce the impacts of those negative outcomes you'll find your fears aren't all that founded...

- I can look for jobs without leaving my current job to avoid the risk of unemployment. No one has to know.
- This will also be a lot less reckless in the eyes of my partner.
- Alternatively I could speak to my boss about my problems and see if there are other positions within my organization.
- If I do end up out of work, I could always speak to my old boss about getting my job back/work in a supermarket while I look for other work/work for Dad/live off of savings for a couple of months/move back home with the parents!
- If my partner leaves me for trying to become happier then I need to reassess that relationship
- If I don't like the job, I find next then I will feel more confident about job hunting again in future.





So, what precisely does it involve?

### **The Power of Pessimism**

If we tell someone that we don't think things are going to work out as we hoped, then they'll often tell us that we need to be 'more optimistic'.



There's even a song that tells us to 'accentuate the positive' and 'eliminate the negative'. The general consensus is clear: being positive is a good thing and being anything *other* than positive is unacceptable.

But is this really the best way for us to approach our problems? Or is it perhaps actually quite *damaging* to constantly be blinded by optimism? Does it leave us vulnerable to disappointment and potentially easily caught off guard? Is expected life to be constantly 'sunshine and rainbows' the precise opposite of a Warrior Brain?

Wouldn't a warrior accept and embrace the fact that life is going to be hard? And then toughen themselves up to deal with it?

That's the view held by stoics at least and when you delve into the philosophy a little, you might find that they actually make a very good case for pessimism.

### **The Central Ideas of Stoicism**

The general gist of stoicism is not to try and 'shut out' negativity

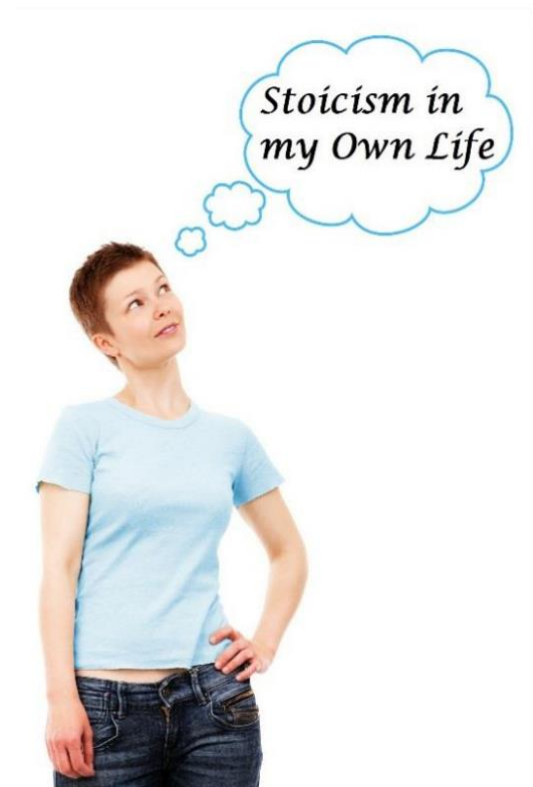




and pretend that bad things don't happen but rather to *embrace* it and even to use it as a tool. *Hope*, according to the stoics, is the enemy, precisely because it means we're unprepared for things going wrong and we're likely to be disappointed.

Instead, stoicism advocates the notion of gritty realism – of recognizing the negative aspects of life and accepting that a lot of what happens is out of our control and is probably not going to be very pleasant!

### Using Stoicism in Your Own Life



This might not sound like a particularly helpful stance to take on things, but then that's because most of us are highly trained into only accepting positive viewpoints. This is the general conceit of countless self-help books and even Hollywood films. Dream big and you can get what you want! In fact, it's pretty much the driving force behind capitalism.

But the Stoics take the opposite approach. They prepare for the storm. They learn to enjoy life even when things aren't going their way and they recognize hardship as

challenge and an opportunity for growth.

When you go through life feeling *entitled* to everything going your way, how can you be expected to be happy? And how can you be expected to face challenges that are genuinely difficult?

So how does rejecting this incessant positivity help? How do you practically apply stoicism in your own life?

### *Negative Visualization*

One suggestion from stoicism is something called 'negative visualization' – the idea that you visualize your fears rather than your goals. Instead of picturing things going perfectly to plan, instead, picture things at their very worst. Imagine how your plans can fail and picture what life would be like if all of your worst fears came true.



What this does is to first help you to prepare for those worst case scenarios. Once you know what your fears actually look like, you can then think about how you would cope in that scenario. Often, you'll find that this worst-case scenario is not as bad as you at first thought it would be. And in other cases, you'll find that you can actually find ways to cope with that situation.

This removes fears that could otherwise hold you back *and* means that you aren't blindly ignoring what could potentially go wrong.

If this sounds familiar then that's because it's precisely the same concept that helped Tim Ferriss to come up with his Fear Setting technique.

### *Be Content With the Scantiest and Cheapest Fare*



In one of his letters to Lucilius, Seneca said:

*Set aside a certain number of days, during which you shall be content with the scantiest and cheapest fare, with coarse and rough dress, saying to yourself the while: is this the condition that I feared?*

The general idea here, is that you should not only visualize your worst case scenario, but also try *living* it. That might mean spending a week living off of minimum salary, it might even mean sleeping rough.

In either case, this teaches you not only that you can handle your worst fears – and therefore have less reason to be afraid – but also that you actually don't *need* material possessions in order to be happy.

This is actually something that is very important to cultivate. It takes great discipline to part with your possessions and belongings but the result is freedom from fear and also from many physical restrictions. If you are weighed down by possessions and belongings, then you will not be able to move home freely. You will spend a lot of time cleaning and attending to things that *do not* help you further your goals. And ultimately, you will have much more to fear.

The more you own, the more you have to lose. This creates a sense of fear.

So, try to declutter and live a more focused and minimalist life. At the very least, learn to detach yourself from physical possessions and remember that they are indeed 'just things'. They are a means to an end and if you must sacrifice them, so be it.

Selling your widescreen TV or turning down a holiday in order to pay off debt or pay for your child's tuition – those are warrior-like choices.

### *Wear Ugly Clothes...*

Another classic stoic move is to wear 'ugly' clothes in order to teach yourself not to be ashamed. People might stare at you, but this will simply teach you that it doesn't matter at all what others think – only what *you think*.

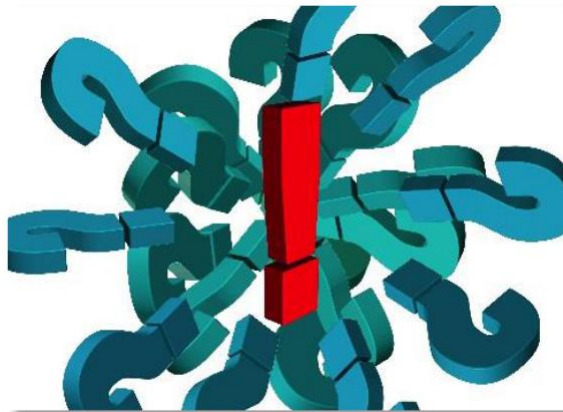
This is an important aspect of the warrior



mindset: caring what other people think makes you vulnerable to peer pressure and to vanity. Sometimes, to do what must be done, you must be willing to sacrifice your reputation.

Just as in our example about admitting that you broke the vase...

### *Expect the Worst*



Stoics argue that we curse when we're angry and that this anger is our own failing – our own stupidity.

Think about the last time you swore with anger. Chances are that it was not because it rained or because you found you were in debt. More likely, it was

because you dropped something on your toe, or because you broke your favorite possession.

The point is that the anger comes from the *surprise*, not the disappointment. You don't swear when it rains because you know that rain is a possibility.

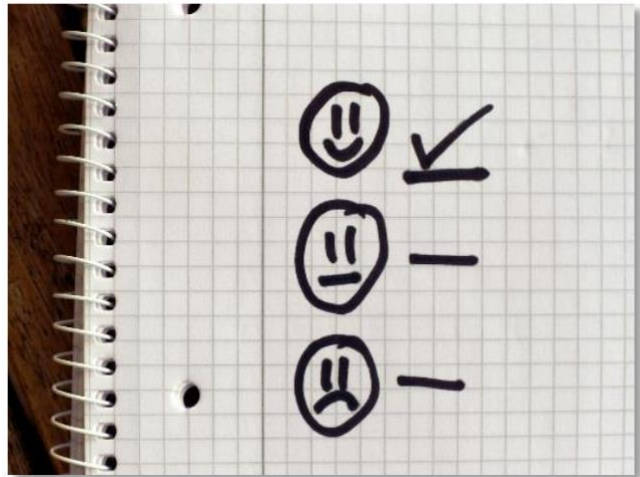
Therefore, if you are angry, this then suggests that you didn't expect whatever happened to you and this is arguably *your own fault*. If you accept that bad things happen and if you accept that sometimes things won't go to plan, then you will have no need to be angry – because you will have accounted for it and prepared mentally for it.

Now, when your partner cheats on you, or when a service provider doesn't deliver a good service, you will think of it as being simply a part of life – just like the rain.

### *Control Your Reaction*

Stoicism means submitting to the fact that you have scant-to-no control over reality. But at the same time, it also means taking solace in the knowledge that these outside factors can't hurt you – only your reaction can.

You can't control what happens to you but you can control what *you* make of that event and your own interpretation of it. Being mentally prepared for things that could go wrong is one good example of this in action. Likewise though, you might also simply decide not to let things affect you – to take a step back from



them and to deal with the consequences rather than thrashing against things that you cannot change. This is something we'll be addressing more closely in upcoming chapters: mindfulness and the ability to decide how *you* want to react to the things going on around you.

But simply by remembering that tough things happen and it's your job to deal with them, you should find you can

I actually think that Rocky Balboa is one of the great modern stoics – and one of his more recent famous quotes summarises the ideas of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius perfectly:

*The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place... and I don't care how tough you are, it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently, if you let it. You, me or nobody, is gonna hit as hard as life. But ain't about how hard you hit... It's about how hard you can get hit, and keep moving forward... how much you can take, and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done.*

Here's a quote from fiction a book I wrote several years ago. This line was spoken by a reckless character in the story and was never meant to carry much weight. But I found that as I thought about it, it was actually surprisingly true:

*Those that fear death, fear life.*

It is true that if you live life in fear of death, then you will be permanently cautious. You will not take risks and you will not live life to its fullest as a result.

So, what is the solution? Do we put death 'out of our mind'. No: it would be better to come to terms with it and in stoic fashion, simply accept it as a reality. And this mirrors the way that the Samurai would approach their lives too. Here is a quote from Edo samurai Daidoji Yuzan, which can be found in the book *Code of the Samurai*:

*One who is a samurai must before all things keep constantly in mind...the fact that he has to die. If he is always mindful of this, he will be able to live in accordance with the paths of loyalty and filial duty, will avoid myriads of evils and adversities, keep himself free of disease and calamity and moreover enjoy a long life. He will also be a fine personality with many admirable qualities. For existence is impermanent as the dew of evening, and the hoarfrost of morning, and particularly uncertain is the life of the warrior...*

Remember your goals and your vision. Work toward them. Stick to your code. Try to make a difference and focus on what you leave behind. That might mean protecting your family even when it means putting yourself at risk, or it might mean taking chances in order to chase after a bigger goal.

## Chapter 5: Growth Mindset

In the last chapter, we looked at the importance of overcoming fear – even overcoming a fear of death.

And similarly, it is equally important to be willing to be uncomfortable and to experience small amounts of hardship. How can you lose weight if you are afraid of dieting? How



can you expect to progress in your career if you shy away from hard work?

But this is the reality for many of us. We are simply unwilling to do things we don't want to do, or to put up with hard times. We have become exceedingly weak and it is ultimately making us unhappy.

### Why We Have Become Weak



Consider your dog and compare them to a wolf (if you don't own a dog, consider one you know). Look at the differences.



Your dog might be loving, loyal and fun but it is entirely dependent on you. It wouldn't survive a day in the wild and it's certainly not a *warrior* like the wolf is.

Why not? Because it has been domesticated.

And that my friend, is your problem as well.

We have not only become domesticated but we have also become lazy, spoiled and overly indulged. In modern society, everything is disposable, everything comes easily and we never have to wait.

Hungry? Order a takeaway. It will be with you in five minutes and it will be packed with salt and sugar so you feel a rush of reward hormones.

Horny? Watch some porn.

Bored? Turn on the TV and laugh at someone falling over.

Need information? Just ask Siri.

Want to get into better shape? Naah, that seems like a lot of effort.

Being so constantly indulged in whatever we want means that we find it harder than ever to put in effort when it is needed. *Why would* we put in effort when we can have so much, so easily?

And likewise, when we are used to getting whatever we want, we feel absolutely distraught when the shower doesn't heat up properly.

And here's the thing: in the wild, you would have *only* had cold water to wash in. Eating would have required hunting or foraging in the rain while avoiding predators. You could be so much stronger and so much tougher – mentally *and* physically. But as we are, we're fat, lazy and low on motivation.

## How to Get Tough

So with that in mind, how do you go about getting tough?



The first thing you need to do, is to try living with less. We discussed this already in our post on Stoicism, but travelling is a fantastic way to accomplish the Warrior Brain. That means travelling and staying in hostels, not booking hotels the night before, only taking a few clothes.



I have been on a few journeys like this myself. I went on a trip around Europe and took only a backpack to get by. I remember lying at a train station in Poland in the snow, unable to read the signposts (despite my Polish heritage) and not knowing when the next train would come. Or even where I was! This was before data roaming or 3G, so that was out of the question too.

Then I found a little cafe and managed to order some tea – with milk rather than with a lemon as the Polish generally drink it.

You know what? I felt actually bliss drinking from that polystyrene cup. I appreciated the tea *so much* because it had been so long and because I was so cold.

Today, I often ask for my tea in polystyrene cups when it's an option because it sends me back to that moment.

And this is what you realize when you force yourself to do without: you learn that the little things can bring you a lot of joy. That there is reward and happiness to be found in every moment. You don't *need* everything to go perfectly.

And in fact, when things go wrong, it creates stories and helps you to grow stronger.

## Growth Mindset



And that's a key point actually: to keep a growth mindset at all times. Each challenge that comes your way is a chance to get stronger, smarter and better. By dealing with these hardships, your life has greater purpose (life is meaningless when it is easy) and you

become better equipped to take on similar challenges in future.

So, the next time you find yourself in debt, instead of letting it defeat you, instead see it as a challenge. How can you earn the money you need to get out of it? How can you become *better*?

Don't wallow in stress or anxiety – that helps no one. See it as a chance to grow and to prevent this happening again and take the necessary steps. Don't worry about how it looks to others, don't blame yourself for letting yourself get into that situation before.

Just take action. And learn from it. You were not good enough before but now you are going to be better.

In fact, growth and challenge are things that the brain is actually *wired for*. We *thrive* when we are challenged mentally and physically and this results in the production of hormones like dopamine, brain derived neurotrophic factor and more that keep us focussed and that help protect our brains into old age.

Not only should you welcome the challenges that come, you should seek them out. During 'times of peace', you should prepare for battle by learning (reading books, adopting new skills) and by training your body.

## Chapter 6: Tools for Growth and Resilience



We've talked a lot about how the Warrior Brain involves greater resilience, greater patience, calmness and strength. But the real question is how you get to that point. How can you *gain* that Warrior Brain?

Hopefully by now you understand what the Warrior Brain *is* and what it means in a broader context but how can you overcome your weaknesses and your urge to eat cake, to relax and to take the easy options?

Here are a few powerful tools that will help you to grow and become stronger.

### Meditation

Meditation is an absolute must for a modern warrior. This is one of the single most powerful tools for transforming your mindset and for giving you the resilience,



hardiness and sense of calm you need to *choose* how you react to your emotions and feelings.

Meditation is simply the practice of concentrating your mind, of emptying your brain of thoughts and of learning to avoid distracting ideas and impulses. This takes great mental discipline and in that sense, it is a perfect tool for *training* that discipline. Really, concentration *is* discipline!

What's more, is that meditation teaches you to distract from your anxieties, your urges and your desires. Mindful meditation teaches you to let your thoughts drift by without affecting you, while transcendental clears your mind entirely.

This is a great way to calm your physiology when stressed or aroused and to take back *control* over your thoughts and actions. Those who meditate are calmer and less easily riled and this frees them to act in the most considered and effective manner.

Finally, meditation is a great way to recharge your batteries and gain more energy, which in turn allows you to execute your plans.

Seinfeld credits meditation with providing him with endless energy. He says that he would likely still be doing the show and wouldn't have burned out, had he already regularly practiced TM (transcendental meditation):

*I'll get up at 6 a.m. My kids get up about 6:45 a.m. And so I do the TM before anybody gets. And how does it feel? It doesn't feel like anything. I don't understand it. But here's the difference. At 1 p.m. that day, my head does not hit the decks like it used to. That's the difference. If I didn't do TM that morning and I'm working, then by 1 p.m. I'm shot, and I think most people are. And now, at 1 o'clock, I'm feeling good. I just sail through the day, and then I have my second TM at 3 p.m. or 4 p.m.*

## Correct Breathing

Another tool you can use to regain your composure and enter the Warrior Brain at will is correct breathing. This means belly breathing, breathing from your diaphragm first and taking deep breaths. This calms your nervous system and puts you into the rest and digest state, it's the perfect way to overcome anxiety.



## Cold Showers



Cold showers increase your metabolism, they help you produce more testosterone and they cause a flood of adrenaline. They can actually strengthen your immune system too. In other words, they're actually good for you and a great way to start your day.

But at the same time, they hurt and they suck. This is a terrible shock to the system and it's the last thing you want to do.

Which is *precisely* why it is ideal for your warrior training. Taking cold showers requires incredible mental discipline and if you can force yourself to do this every day, then you can achieve just about anything.

And as a fun fact, Hugh Jackman said that he used cold showers as a way to get into the mind of Wolverine for the X-Men movies. Now there's a warrior that you could afford to be more like!

## Strength Training and Martial Arts

What do all the warriors through history have in common?

They are not just mentally tough – although that has been the focus of this book – they are also physically tough. This is very important because physical toughness gives you the strength, the resolve and the power to



be confident and to make a stand when you *do* need to fight for your values.

It is important where possible not to fight but actually, being formidable physically will help you to avoid the *need* to fight.

Not only that, but it will give you the ability to protect the ones you love.

And both martial arts and weight lifting will help you to grow while also instilling *great* self-discipline. To increase your chances of succeeding on your journey, take up a martial art and endeavor to hit the gym 3 or 4 times a week.

As Socrates said:

*No man has the right to be an amateur in the matter of physical training. It is a shame for a man to grow old without seeing the beauty and strength of which his body is capable.*

## Chapter 7: Applying Classic Warrior Principles to Business and Life



I always thought it was something of fashion statement for business men and women to carry copies of *The Art of War* by Sun Tsu. I understood their claim that it was relevant to business strategy and that many of the ideas are still relevant, but it all seemed a

bit fanciful to me. More like vanity and posing! How could a thousand year-old treatise genuinely be relevant to today's world of computers and mobile phones?

That was until I began to practice the Warrior Brain and quickly realised that it actually *is* highly relevant. Sure, it won't teach you to use MSWord, but in terms of marketing, leadership and the management of resources it is still very useful. These ideas and suggestions are timeless and can be applied in almost limitless situations. Look at it this way, if the advice is good enough to help you win wars with swords and arrows, then surely it can help you to get Bill from accounting to stop complaining.

With that in mind I present some of the best quotes and lessons from the book that you can take with you into the office and us to inspire more loyalty and productivity. And just for good measure I've thrown in some Machiavelli; who wrote *The Prince* as an instruction manual for an Italian prince that would help him to become an effective ruler someday.

These are both texts aimed at historical warriors and kings and yet they are covered by business professionals, relationship gurus and more. This is the *perfect* example of why the Warrior Brain is still relevant today and you will see that the sentiments therein echo much of what we have already discussed.

## Lessons from the Art of War

*There is No Instance of a Nation Benefiting From Prolonged Warfare*

In other words, if you are at odds with a competitor or a colleague then a prolonged struggle will only serve to damage *both* of you. This is called a 'pyrrhic victory' – a phrase that comes from another famous historical battle. By the end even if you win, you will have damaged your



reputation and wasted your resources so that you're left with nothing but a Pyrrhic Victory. Instead then, see if you can't turn an opponent into an ally and find a way that you both can benefit instead.

Remember, the warrior chooses their battles wisely. The Warrior Brain is not about being aggressive and reactionary. It is about being poised, forgiving and powerful enough to *not need* to lift a finger.



This then explains another of Sun Tsu's quotes: *the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting*. This is *highly* relevant to modern warriors – truer now than ever before.

### *Opportunities Multiply As They Are Seized*

If you wanted an example of how The Art of War can directly apply to business then this is it. How much more perfectly could you want this to describe the process of making investments? You have to spend to accumulate!

Remember how Arnie chose bodybuilding as a path and a springboard to greater success? You can similarly choose wisely in order to yield incredible results from simple starting points.

*Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.*

This is an obvious one that rams home the importance of both researching the market, and looking at your own feedback in order to ensure you are best prepared to take on the competition. In case you thought Sun Tsu only glosses over obvious points though he goes on to expand: *When you are ignorant of the enemy, but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant of both your enemy and yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril.*

Outside of the office, we have already discussed how knowing yourself will allow you to form your own rules and your own goals and objectives.

*The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom.*

This is the kind of employee you want - keep an eye on those who bring too much ego to the workplace. This is the kind of employee you need to be. And this perfectly echoes Seneca's views on living with less earlier on.

Remember, in this case you are not serving your country or sovereign but the higher purpose and values that *you chose for yourself*.

*Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.*

Planning is *everything*. Before you bring your product or service to market your success or failure is a foregone conclusion - so make sure you've tested the waters and researched thoroughly.

And again this speaks to the calm and calculated nature of the warrior – the warrior does not rush in headlong, despite their control over their fear.

## Lessons From The Prince

*Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times.*



This is particularly important to note if you run a large organization and are in danger of resting on your laurels. Be thinking one step ahead at all times if you want to avoid the same fate as Kodak.

This echoes the sentiments we discussed earlier too, about being willing to *change* your principles and adapt where necessary. But this should come from within, not from without.

*Men ought to be well treated or crushed, because they can avenge themselves of lighter injuries, of more serious ones they cannot.*

'Crushing' your opponents and employees may not be encouraged in ethical business (interestingly Sun Tsu is actually much more pacifist than Machiavelli) but the point is still valid - don't make enemies then give them time to lick their wounds.

As far as possible, the warrior should avoid combat and confrontation. They should seek to please everyone and find the most mutually beneficial outcome.

However, if you *do* decide to engage in competition or combat, then you must act with finality.

*The wise man does at once what the fool does finally.*

I.e. Time is money and indecision is a recipe for failure.

*Entrepreneurs are simply those who understand that there is little difference between obstacle and opportunity and are able to turn both to their advantage.*

This is far more literal than you might think. Opening a tin of beans easily: challenge or opportunity? This is similar to the ideas we discussed earlier about seeing challenge as a chance for growth. And how crazy is it to think that Machiavelli might have had such relevant and useful advice for *modern* entrepreneurs.

Yet more proof that the Warrior Brain is timeless and just as important today as ever before. Anything can be approached as a warrior.

I highly recommend reading these books as part of your evolution and your journey to becoming the best version of yourself. They belong on every warrior's reading list.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion: Taking a Harder Road



We're reaching the end of our journey together now but yours is only beginning. It's time to start putting yourself out there, testing yourself, growing, taking on challenges and deciding what's important to you. It's time to stop fretting the small stuff, to cease the creature comforts and to embrace a more challenging and demanding life – because that's where the value comes from and that's what will make you great.

But a word of caution before you go: this is going to be tough.

You are going to find that sometimes, doing the right thing and ignoring your emotional response means saying things people don't like.

Sticking to your principles will mean upsetting the apple cart.

Forgetting how you look will lead you to sometimes be shunned.

Forgetting physical possessions will leave you sometimes feeling destitute.

But if you know yourself truly, if you know your goals, you know what you want and you know the principles you want to live by... then you will know the right things to do and you should have the strength to do them.

And that means living with the consequences.

And that is the last lesson I want to impart upon you: be willing to face the music. Be willing to put yourself out there, take risks and then face the flack that comes your way. This all follows on from the lessons on stoicism, minimalism and fear that we have already considered. But it is highly important.

As soon as you learn that sometimes you'll get things wrong – and you accept and learn to deal with the outcome – you'll find that you become a more decisive and more efficient individual.

People who are afraid to make the wrong choice and who don't want to upset anyone will never be able to make decisions. They'll always be on the fence and they will lack conviction.

That's not you. You are a warrior and that means you need to follow your own path and face the consequences as a mature adult.

You will ask for forgiveness and not permission. And if you don't get it? As long as you have done what's right *by you*, then you forge ahead anyway.

You are the warrior.