

**SELF-EDUCATION;  
THE KEY TO  
LIVING LIFE ON  
YOUR TERMS**



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**A short guide to improve your life  
through self education**

# **Self-Education**

**The key to living life on your  
terms**

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## **Preface**

The kind of education we receive in school is great in its way. It teaches us about the technical parts of our job, but it does not necessarily prepare us for life. Besides what you do as a career, there is so much more to learn in life. You need soft skills, creating relationships, self-control, motivation and inspiration, discipline among other elements. For this, since no one will call you into a class and coach you about it, and make you take a test for it, you do need self-education.

I do appreciate all the education I received in the school system, but I am even more grateful for the skills and insights I have developed through self-education. I have seen self-education transforming lives, the lives of people who didn't even have formal education. I blog about self-education and even started a podcast for it, but I thought I could combine my thoughts on the same and bring you this e-book, just so you could learn about self-education, why you should self educate and how you can do it.

Sarah.

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## Chapter 1

### Formal Education and Self education

*“Formal education will make you a living; self-education will make you a fortune”- Jim Rohn.*

You and I know it for a fact that the most successful people in the world didn't become so successful from formal education alone. True, formal education has produced a lot of brilliant minds, but it took more than that to create success. Many successful people will say they learned their skills from practice, mentors, books, and a lot of other sources. They took the initiative to educate themselves in certain areas so that they could excel in them. Sure, some of these people didn't even have some formal education, and yet, through one way or another, they acquired and perfected some skills that make them exceptional.

In my opinion, formal education does contribute to the creation of the person we become. I, for starters, would not give up the formal education that I have acquired so far for anything. I am proud of my formal schooling and have made a living from some of the things I learned in my formal education. Further, besides what is learned in class, going to university, meeting different people and generally the whole experience is a lesson by itself.

All the same, there is much more to education than what you were taught in school. Formal education is not sufficient to carry you throughout life, especially if you don't intend to live an average life. (*Book Recommendation: Be obsessed or Be Average-Grant Cardone*). We substitute our formal education with other sources of knowledge and experience to fit more into the working environment.

Our education system has for the longest time been churning out graduates who know all about calculus and nothing about life. Let's face it, there are things we wish we were taught in school and have had to learn them the hard way. We leave school with an ideal image about what life is about and most of us experience shock when we face real life. There are some skills we could use concerning money management, how to carry ourselves, emotional management, some confidence, among other skills that were not in our school textbooks.

As a result, most of us spend most of our twenties confused and disappointed to a point of disillusionment. I think the twenties are some of the most difficult years of a person's life due to the uncertainties they face. At this age, most of us have no idea what we want with life. We find that we don't even like practicing the courses we took in college, and we wish we got more exposure to real-life early enough. I know very many of us who

don't use the knowledge we acquired in school at all. If asked, we don't even know why we picked some of the courses we did in school, but here we are.

### **Self-education to the rescue**

The good thing is, we can still improve our lives through self-education. We can live full lives, change careers, and explore options, all through educating ourselves and realizing what we want. We can use our twenties to build healthy foundations on which we can construct our lives and become functional adults that are above average. I know this for a fact because most of the things I do, what I do for a living, how I handle relationships, how I carry myself, I have had to teach myself. How can we educate ourselves and hack life? How can we equip ourselves with the right skills to face life and not get damaged in the process?

By taking the initiative to add onto your knowledge base, and learn more of a skill, you can learn some useful skills such as self-awareness, self-love, business skills, creativity and making a living from our innate talents. You can achieve this using self-education. Instead of spending all your time watching series, playing video games or partying, you can take control and learn new things that will be impactful in your life. Sure, entertainment is important for everyone, but remember, you are being entertained by other people's work. How about your work.

## Chapter 2

### Why self-educate?

*"Self-education is, I firmly believe, the only kind of education there is" –Isaac Asimov*

So, what are you working towards? Are you aiming for a promotion at work, running a business, using your talent to entertain, or simply improving the quality of your life? To get that promotion at work, surely, you need to show some skill that the next person doesn't. To run a business, you need to learn some skills such as confidence in negotiating, sealing deals, [resilience](#), among others. To entertain using your [talents](#), whether it's playing the guitar, acting or animating cartoons, you need to improve these skills so well, so that your work will be picked over that of the next person.

How does a streetwise person learn how to be streetwise? They usually have gone through some experiences that make them streetwise. Same happens to someone who is a great negotiator, great debater, analyst, among others. While it's true that there are some traits that we are born with that make us great in some things, self-education makes us improve some of our inborn traits so that we use them in a way that they positively impact our lives.

## **So, why should you take interest in educating yourself?**

### **To understand your strengths and weaknesses**

Through reading, self-searching and even [feedback](#) from others or professionals, you will learn where your strengths lie. This is part of [self-awareness](#) that is discussed in detail later. Knowing where your strengths lie means that you can work on skills that will enhance your strengths and compensate for your weaknesses. For example, if you learn that you are good at speaking in public, you will work on skills to enhance your communication skills and help you build relationships with other people. You will also learn your weaknesses and see if you can work on them, improve on areas where you are falling short, and even turn your weaknesses into strengths.

For example, while I was reading [Grit by Angela Duckworth](#) I realized that I wasn't persistent. I was not as gritty as I desired to be and for a long time, I relied on my talent to provide for me without persisting on areas that needed an extra push to breakthrough. This challenged me and I started challenging myself to push harder on issues I would have otherwise easily let go. Lack of persistence is a weakness that I discovered, and I am challenging myself to persist more, a little harder than I usually do, until it becomes something I do often.

On understanding your strengths and weaknesses, I recommend reading *Now, Discover Your Strengths* -Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton.

## **To understand your personality**

Understanding my personality is one of the best things that have ever happened to me. (Take [the personality test](#) and understand what your personality means and how it influences your actions) For a long time, I felt that I didn't fit in. Have you ever found yourself in situations or places that you got yourself into willingly, but once you are there you can't stop asking yourself what you are doing there and have this feeling that you'd rather be elsewhere or at home? That was me, at least 80% of the time. It's only human that sometimes I questioned what was wrong with me every time I felt this way.

In my self-education journey, I came across a book that explained introversion in detail, with well-conducted research backed up by additional studies. I realized I am an introvert and that I didn't have to fit in when it came to social situations. I didn't have to be excited by the idea of being with other people or going out and having a blast or even entertaining. This gave me so much peace that these days I spend time alone unapologetically and I love it so much. It is this time I use to recuperate, create, do some thinking and plan.

The more you take on personal development self-education courses or books or blogs, the more you will learn to be comfortable in your skin. This gives you a head start in creating the life you want since you start living on your terms, not on other people's terms. Understanding your personality will help you so much in career, relationship, and life in general. Learning you are an extrovert, for example, will help you explore careers that require people of outgoing nature, and you are likely to shine in these areas.

I have an extroverted friend who worked in finance which she dreaded. Every day she had to push herself to get out of bed and get to work. After some soul searching, she realized she thrived in an environment where people are surrounding her, and being locked up in that back room of her company's finance office was stifling her. She learned as much as she could about something that interested her, tours and travel. These days, she works in a company that allows her to talk to people, tour and her spirit is thriving now more than ever.

### **To learn self-motivation**

Motivation is a tricky subject. Most times we wait for motivation to come to us so that we can do what we are supposed to do. It hardly ever shows up and as a result, we become procrastinators. [Self-motivation](#) is an even trickier subject. How do you motivate yourself without external motivators? How do you stay motivated when there

is no money on sight or any other form of reward right in front of you? It is through self-motivation that we get things done and achieve our goals. I used to wait to feel the motivation to write or create something, but sometimes I could fail to be motivated for a whole two weeks. Just as Mel Robbins says, you will never feel like doing what you want to do, you have to motivate yourself to do it.

From Daniel Goleman, I learned that optimism and believing in my abilities gives me a burst of energy and therefore motivation. This means, the more I think positive thoughts, the more I assure myself that my abilities are sufficient, the more motivated I become. Simply put, if you feel good about yourself, you will be motivated. Mel Robbins taught me that if I get a positive impulse, acting on it within 5 seconds will lead me into action. I have motivated myself by allowing myself to act when I get the urge to do something constructive before the comfort-seeking me prefers to ignore the feeling and relax in bed.

What I am trying to say is, self-education teaches you about the different ways that you can motivate yourself. It also teaches you that what motivates one person may be very different from what motivates the next person. Sometimes, to motivate myself to get into action, I can put in a 30 minutes workout and have my blood pumping. While this works quite effectively for me, it is possible that it can tire another person to a point that

they don't want to work anymore and prefer to do something else. The moment you learn to derive motivation from your inner self, you will be proud of the results that will come from it. You learn not to work because you are inspired, but to work like a pro, because you have to get things done.

### **To live the career of your dreams**

I love that these days you can be anything you want to be. Unlike in the past where career lines were limited to formal professions, right now I know people who make decent living in their underwear. I mean, people are becoming millionaires by being YouTube stars and influencers. Talented people are being discovered thanks to uploading their videos online and showcasing their art.

Through self-education, first, you learn of the different opportunities out there. Secondly, you learn how to think outside the box and consider a career that best suits the person you are and which not only will pay the bills, but help you live a life that you love. I look back in appreciation for the first job I had that introduced me to the internet and the massive opportunities it offers. This was the start of my affair with the internet and now, I am happy to say I chose a career that I do love. The internet opens one to a whole new world to people. Think about it, the world's richest man as I write this is Jeff Bezos whose Amazon business model is solely an e-commerce model, something which

couldn't have been possible 10 years ago. Who knows what's next for the next 10 years. Keep educating yourself and learn on what's coming and how you can be a part of it.

## **You develop self-awareness**

I cannot preach enough about self-awareness, because I have seen it transform lives. I have seen some of the timidest people come out of their shells, some people with difficult backgrounds emerge winners from their experiences, and even pompous people learn how to handle themselves, simply because they understand themselves a tad better than they previously did. Understanding yourself is the first step to prosperity, whether in your personal life, career or business.

What is self-awareness? Self-awareness is a conscious understanding of yourself; your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. It is the core of emotional intelligence which is the ability to understand and have control over your emotions. According to Stephen Covey, in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, self-awareness empowers us to examine our thoughts. It makes us tap into the right parts of the brain whereby we expand our perspective and visualize different situations. This means through self-awareness, you become aware of opportunities that you never thought existed.

Self-awareness is the basis of the core of being human. Daniel Goleman in *Emotional Intelligence* defines self-awareness as knowing your emotions and recognizing a feeling

as it happens. The moment you don't recognize your feelings, you are left at their mercy and allow them to control you. When you have greater certainty about your lie, you become a better pilot of your life and you have control over your decisions.

I hate to bore you with definitions, but it is important that you understand what self-awareness is about, and what it can do for you. I have made an entire course on self-awareness and self-development to help you understand yourself, your feelings, and why you behave the way you do. When you are self-aware, you are not controlled by your emotions. Even when experiencing emotions such as anger, sadness, or a terrible mood, you are aware of it and you handle it without being reactive. That way, you can change these feelings and not allow them to take over your life. To be self-aware, you have to understand your background, your support system, your identity, and inner self in such a way you understand how they influence your life.

Self-awareness helps you answer questions such as; do I act the way I do because of my childhood, or how I was brought up? When you are self-aware, you can learn self-motivation and discipline since you don't have to wait for external sources of motivation to push you but derive it from deep inside. You can make conscious choices. For example, self-awareness sounds something like this, "Today, I feel low, I am in a foul

mood. However, I am not going to allow this to control my day. I will wake up, take a shower, have a good breakfast, and get to work and be productive”.

Self-awareness is also realizing what you like and what you don't, what you are good at and what you're not good at. As a result, you plan your life in a way that you create a healthy balance to do what needs to be done. For example, I like writing, I don't like editing. However, to produce good content, I have to do both, whether I like it or not. There are two ways to do this. I can dedicate specific time blocks to do some editing, mostly when I feel most energetic, or I can get someone to do it for me. Self-awareness, as aforementioned, makes you realize your opportunities and choices. For example, there is no way I can take the job of an editor. I would be terrible in it. Another example is that I would be terrible at a job where I have to interact with people all day, and knowing this, I pick jobs where I mostly work in solitude.

You can learn more about self-awareness through self-education by reading more about it, listening to podcasts and audiobooks about it and taking self-awareness courses and exercises. Take personality tests, since learning your personality is the basis of self-awareness. At the end of this book, I will offer a list of some of the books you can read to improve self-awareness.

## Chapter 3

### How do you self-educate?

*"Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it"- Albert Einstein*

Now that you know about the different ways that self-education can improve your life, how do you self-educate? (I cannot sum up all the benefits of self-education in a book. They are massive, I will probably write more on the same in my blog posts). How can you learn more, gain knowledge and experience, become better at critical skills and improve our lives?

Here are different ways you can learn more

#### **Open yourself up to different experiences**

I always say that I think we should spend our 20s learning, more so our early and mid-twenties. At this age, you have minimal responsibilities and it is here that you should take risks. Take on a new job, if an opportunity opens up outside your town of residence, take it. Go to new places. I believe you shouldn't be clutching onto a job in your 20s just because you need to pay your bills. I know, sometimes it's difficult to get a job in the first place, and most of us have had to hold onto jobs we don't like because we needed the money. In that case, do what you have to do.

However, if you ever find that you have a choice, don't hesitate to explore your options. If you don't take a risk at this age, when will you do it? When you have a couple of kids looking up to you? It is at this time that you can take risks and fail, go back to your parents' house if you have their support, or friends or live with siblings to keep your expenses low. Going through different jobs teaches you a lot. It is at this age that you are discovering what you love and what is not for you.

I think by the time I was 28 I had worked in office administration, worked for an engineering contracting company, learned SEO and worked as an internet marketer, quit several times and had a few internet marketing clients, failed, got back to employment and landed a job in a college where I taught. By the time I was wrapping up my 20s, I had gone through different lines and I was finally gaining clarity about what I wanted to do with my life. Further, I had taken so many risks that risks no longer scared me. I knew I could hit rock bottom and rise all over again.

I urge that you make yourself open to opportunities and different experiences and use this time to learn. Don't hold onto one job that you probably hate because you need to feel some form of stability. Like I mentioned earlier, I do understand this is necessary sometimes, we have to eat. Please also note that I am not urging you to be careless, but don't be too cautious either. As you grow older, you will realize that the freedom you

have when you're young will not last for long. Once you have dependents, your ability to take risks will significantly reduce. This is because today you can fail and camp at a friend's house until you have your act together, but you cannot do the same after you have started a family.

A few years back my younger brother was in a dilemma on whether to hold onto a well-paying job but he was doing routine work, or whether to go one with less pay where he would put his creativity into action. I advised him to go where he will learn and forget about the money. He was only 21, had been interning in different positions since he was in university and his skill was getting better the more he found challenging opportunities. I told him he was free to sleep on my couch if things didn't work out for him. He left the job, hopped through a few jobs and internships, sharpened his skill and eventually landed a nice job where his skill would be most useful, a stable job at 23. As much as I love that he has a great career, I still urge him not to get too comfortable. This is not the time to get comfortable. On the other hand, remember some people gain clarity on what they want to do way earlier than others, and that is great. It took me almost my whole twenties to figure out what I wanted with my life, but I had a wonderful time in all the experiences I went through.

## **Read good books**

To further your self-education, I urge you to read, a lot. I usually picture reading as a way of learning from wonderful people that I will never meet, but they were kind enough to put their knowledge on paper for me to consume. Reading has taught me so much. It has taught me self-awareness, understanding how the world works, knowing you are not alone in some of your thoughts, among other things. I recommend books here and there in my blog on different topics.

Think about it, wouldn't it be great to learn about how to develop good habits from Stephen Covey and Charles Duhigg? Wouldn't it be wonderful to learn from the great Dale Carnegie about how to create effective relationships and to be fearless? Or learn from Daniel Goleman about emotional intelligence and self-awareness as well as learning about leadership from John Maxwell? Since you most likely will never get to meet these people, why not read what they have put down on paper. Not everything in a book is relevant to your life but in every book, you grab a lesson or two and live with it. Some books have had long impacts in my life and I keep them around to peruse through them when I need some motivation, assurance or even to remember why I do what I do.

By reading good books, I mean that not all books that are out there are great. Also, what you put into your mind is what you spew in your words and actions. If you read garbage, you will spew out the garbage. (I will recommend some books at the end of this e-book for different purposes they can serve in your life).

Here is the other thing, I understand that not everyone likes reading. I do have brilliant friends that I shove books to all the time and yet I still find the books gathering dust somewhere in a dusty corner of their houses. If you are not a reader, consider listening to audiobooks and podcasts. As much as I love reading, sometimes I hardly have the time to read, and I found myself turning to audiobooks. I like them as I can listen as I do my chores, working out, I sometimes play them when I am trying to sleep or when my eyes bother me from too much computer time (which is often). Whichever way that works for you, make the best out of it.

### **Take courses in areas you are interested in**

Are you interested in an area? Why not take a course in it? The internet is full of free and paid courses in different areas. Besides the internet, you can enroll for short courses offered by institutions and organizations in different areas. You don't have to enroll in a whole master's program to learn on how to launch and manage a successful business or website. You can find short courses on the same online and some of these things are

even on YouTube. We live in a modern world where information is no longer held up for those who are willing to pay for it, a lot of information is now available anywhere.

Some of the courses with good content may cost a couple of thousands but they are a better investment than buying your friends drinks over the weekend. I know photographers who have learned good photography and videography through online courses. My brother learned his animation skill through tutorials online. A lot of what I do is self-taught. If you feel you need to learn about a certain area, simply look out for courses and study them. Implement what is learned in the courses and there you go, you have one more skill that you did not have yesterday.

### **Watch videos, documentaries, talks**

Sometimes back I bumped into YouTube talk by Jim Rohn which was recorded in the 70s. The quality of the video was wanting but the lessons were so great, I couldn't stop video stalking him until I had watched almost every one of his videos. You will be surprised how much useful information is on YouTube if you search the right places. After I read a book, I always go to YouTube and search for summaries of the book. Sometimes I hear something in the summary that had not occurred to me as I read.

I have also been introduced to different authors by watching their Ted Talks or any other talks available online. I learned about Susan Cain, a researcher on introversion,

who wrote the book *Quiet* which I love, through a Ted Talk. I learned of other authors such as Dan Pink, Simon Sinek, among others, through watching their talks.

## **Continue learning**

Here is the catch about self-education. You don't wake up one day and decide that now you are educated enough. You have to continue educating yourself probably till the day you die. That's why I like the phrase that one is a lifelong student because I identify with that. I learn every day, and the more I learn, the more I am desperate to learn more.

As you continue to educate yourself, you will start to gain clarity about the things that are interesting to you, that matter to you and you will have more clarity on the career and life that you want if you don't know that just yet. For others, you could find yourself taking a whole different path and changing gears to something you find more appealing that you believe will lead you to live a full life. I challenge you to seek different ways to learn, whether is through seeking different experiences, reading, watching, trying out new things, learn something all the time. You will thank the person you are today in a few years when you realize how much constant learning can improve your life.

## Chapter 4

### Bonus resources

*"I read a book one day and my whole life was changed."* – Orhan Pamuk

- Develop good habits- *The power of habit*- Charles Duhigg, *7 habits of highly effective people*- Stephen Covey
- Self-motivation, self-control, and self-awareness- *Emotional intelligence*, Daniel Goleman
- Understanding what is important to you (what defines success) to you – *Today matters* - John Maxwell
- Learning how to be persistent (especially if you give up as easily as I once did) – *Grit* – Angela Duckworth
- How to start and grow successful businesses – *Start with why* –Simon Sinek, *E myth revisited*- Michael E Gerber
- Leadership (how to lead) -*21 irrefutable laws of leadership* – John Maxwell, *Start with Why*–Simon Sinek
- How to know your talents/ your strength- *Now, Discover Your Strengths* -Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton.

- Running successful organizations (or be a successful manager)- *Winning*- Jack Welch
- Creating an online business – *Crushing It* by Gary Vaynerchuck
- Creating unique business models, working less for more pay and creating a fulfilling career- *The 4 Hour Workweek* –Tim Ferris
- Creating a unique business model: *The blue ocean strategy*- Renee Mauborgne and W. Chain Kim
- Managing worries and fears- *How to stop worrying and start living* – Dale Carnegie
- What makes exceptional people that way- *Outliers* -Malcolm Gladwell
- What makes up winners- *Think and grow rich* – Napoleon Hill