

7 Lessons Elon Musk Has Taught Me

How to Think Like Elon?

Just finished the Elon Musk biography by Walter Isaacson and feeling super inspired. These are some practical things that I've learned or gleaned from it.

1. You don't want to be Elon Musk

The first practical and pragmatic thought that I have is that no you do not want to be Elon Musk. Better to be yourself.

I am grateful for all of the epic sacrifices that Elon has made, but, at the expense of his health and sanity and personal well-being, I don't really think it's worth it.

The simple thought I have is that instead of trying to become someone else, **a better strategy is to just take the parts that you like, the parts you desire to emulate.**

It does not pay to try to become someone else.

Regarding the book the reason why I find it to be such great material to read is get a sense of all the personal anguish and tragedy of Elon. For example, his first kid getting sudden death infant syndrome, and Elon having to pull the plug while his child was still in his arms, heart beating and all. Also his insanely horrific upbringing with his father, which makes in my mind, all other comparisons seem pedestrian.

2. An insanely audacious vision and goal

An idea that I borrowed from Elon is that perhaps, the only limits we should put forth are the limits of physics. That is, all of these other considerations are unnecessary and superficial. To get beyond silly regulations and "rules", because

the reason why so many things are so expensive is people just trying to game the system.

First principles thinking. That means just ask yourself; is this thing possible or not possible simply from a physics perspective?

3. Cost cutting

Why do people want to be Elon Musk? I think they think they want to spend a billion dollars, rather than being insanely scrappy.

I think the tragedy of modern day life is that we think that in order to be legitimate, we must spend exorbitant amount of money on certain things. However, perhaps the path to the greatest entrepreneurship is actually from the opposite; **being able to be insanely scrappy, to bricolage, to experiment, and reduce costs seems to be a better path.**

I have a simple suggestion: **first always strive to reduce costs by 90%, then simply work your way backwards.**

4. A passion for deletion

Delete delete delete, “if you don’t have to add back at least 10% of things, you’re not deleting enough.” Elon

I think great design, innovation and entrepreneurship comes from deletion rather than addition.

For example, **deletion goes hand-in-hand with cost reduction and simplification.**

Perhaps it is a good idea to delete to a fault; to even delete the necessary, in order to push the limits.

5. Design passion

I think what makes Elon Musk great is that he is almost like the ultimate merge between Steve Jobs and Jony Ive; he has a passion not only for business, but also design. It seems that he might be as fastidious, if not more fastidious for design in regards to Jony Ive and Steve Jobs.

I think Elon Musk has two pieces of wisdom. First, **design sells**. Or in other words ugly design or boring design doesn't sell.

I was particularly inspired by just how passionate he was in regards to designing the Tesla model S and cyber truck. He truly truly truly wanted to blow everyone's mind, and he personally would be present at these critical design meetings. I think the ultimate take away is that you must believe in the design so so much, 100% of your soul in it. Otherwise it will just become a lame design that nobody cares for.

To compromise on design is to compromise your soul.

6. To become an insanely great entrepreneur, you must be bad

I don't think it's a matter of being bad or unethical or "evil", for the sake of it... rather, to think and consider how perhaps to create insanely insanely epic things, what needs to push traditional morality to the side.

I was particularly inspired and shocked and also impressed by how ruthlessly he would fire people, even if he was in the wrong. I think the general gist is that 90% of his firing decisions were critical and wise, perhaps 10% of them were inaccurate.

Maybe then that is the path; **just follow your gut and wisdom, and know that honestly, eventually 10% of the time you're going to be wrong.**

Truth be told, it ain't even about being right or wrong. I think it's more of a matter of following your heart, and having the courage to be the "bad guy". Irregardless of what others think or say or feel or desire or request.

If in fact, I think about it critically, my Achilles heel is that I want everyone to like me. And this is my critical flaw; I don't know how to be a "bad guy". Certainly this has made me more empathetic, but is empathy holding us back?

7. Success or failure isn't the goal

I think the ultimate takeaway point that I have from Elon Musk, and being able to retroactively study his life, also through the wise lens of Walter Isaacson is that ultimately, it ain't about success or failure. Instead, **it is committing 100% of your soul to something you truly believe in and care for.**

How to save money?

Simple ways: just make a coffee at home, ERIC KIM Omakase coffee. Also just cook at home! Just buy cheap meat, beef and lamb, and go ham!

Maybe instead of getting a gym membership, just work out at the park! Simple ideas include getting a very very heavy sandbag, 400 pounds, and throwing it around! Just ordered a 400 pound sandbag on the Rogue website, let's see what this bad boy can do.

Passion for entrepreneurship?

For me, entrepreneurship is all about discovering novel solutions to common problems. Even for myself, I am always seeking a more optimal or satisfactory solution for myself.

Health?

If it is maximum productivity that we seek, then, what is the best path? I believe it has to do with health. That means, optimizing your health is to optimize your productivity.

For example, sugar is bad. Also to a large extent, energy drinks are bad, Red Bull is bad, anything that ain't just 100% black coffee is bad. Even caffeine is bad; I think coffee and caffeine is probably the least bad drug out there, but I really do think that it is a timing issue; coffee in the morning is good, but it seems that after that coffee is bad.

For example, when I was in Philly I had a coffee mid day, and as a consequence, I slept insanely poorly that night which totally fucked up my next day. I think I had a coffee at around 2 PM or 3 PM. My new thought is that any coffee past the midday is bad.

The upside of napping

The more you sleep, the more you nap, the more productive you shall become. I think it is a very wise idea to first prioritize your sleep. Like my friend Jeffrey Lam says, perhaps sleep is the number one most critical factor.

Why sleep? Even 30 minutes of productive work after sleeping a great 8 to 12 hours is more effective than 12 hours of subpar work done with little sleep.

Even the gods sleep

Let us never forget — in the Iliad, even the ancient gods go to sleep!

ERIC

UPCOMING EK EXPERIENCES

1. Nov 4: Discover your creative mission in LIFE IN LA
2. Dec 2: Introduction to Stoicism Workshop

2024:

1. CONQUER CONFIDENCE ONLINE WORKSHOP: Jan 27, 2024
2. April 20th, 2024: SF ZEN PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP (info TBA)

What am I into right now?

1. The hardest car is a white Prius?
2. Excited for my 400 pound ROGUE FITNESS sandbag to come in the mail!
3. Enjoying EK OMAKASE COFFEE— the photographer. Best coffee on the planet.

More thoughts on EK BLOG

Also some BOGO thoughts below:

Muscle Paradise?

Muscle is not zero sum. Everyone can get swole together.

1. What is the point of muscle?

First and foremost, let us consider the purpose of muscle. What is the point of muscle?

My thought is from a very pragmatic perspective, muscle is strength. Muscle is power.

Power for what? Anything and everything.

For example, if we consider tenacity, endurance, where does this derive from? Not the mind or the silly nonsense of “willpower”, but rather, muscle and muscle power.

2. Why this anti muscle trend?

It seems that nowadays, muscle and being muscular has fallen a little bit out of vogue. Why? I think the new modern day male aesthetic is towards being feeble, weak, androgynous, non-threatening and nonconfrontational etc.

For example, if you are a muscular, and have muscles, other people feel belittled by you. For example, if someone is salty about your physique, it is simply a sign that they wish they were as fit as you.

3. Muscle cars?

Am I the most jacked person that I know who just drives a Prius?

A funny realization:

We are allowed to flex our muscle cars, yet, we are not permitted to flex or muscles in public.

Also, virtue. Scholarship and education; we are allowed to flex how virtuous we are, or how good we are, or how enlightened we are or how wise we are, or how “educated” we are, yet, we are not permitted to flex our muscles and our body?

Why this bias?

I have some theories.

First and foremost, maybe it is a capitalism thing. We are permitted to flex our muscles in terms of our economic prowess, and to quote Benjamin Franklin, capitalism is a virtue.

Also, I think I have a good definition for what it means to be a “white person”— to quote Kanye West:

White people make money don't spend it — I'd rather buy 80 gold chains and go ignorant.

Therefore, in America, according to the cult and new religion of capitalism, any sort of activity towards building capital, whereas not “wasting it” is seen as a virtue.

Never stop thinking

1. START
2. BOOKS
3. PRODUCTS
4. NEWS
5. WHY?
6. FEEDBACK

The secret to the happiest life? The life with the most risk!

EK

