

Directives

A Brief Guide on What to Do from The Best in The World

By Sam Thomas Davies

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Foreword: “Just Tell Me What to Do”

A few years ago, I was listening to author and entrepreneur Derek Sivers on Tim Ferriss’ podcast, “The Tim Ferriss Show.”

During the interview, Derek shared his experiences with recommending books to friends—and a common reaction he noticed.

“When I’d tell my friends about a great book I’d just read, they didn’t want to read it,” writes Derek in an article on his blog. “They didn’t want 300 pages of anecdotes, explanations, and supporting arguments. They’d say, ‘Just tell me what to do.’”

Derek realized that many people aren’t interested in the *why*: the reasons behind the need to eat healthily, exercise regularly, save more, and so on. After all, rarely, if ever, is a book’s thesis for *why* we need to make a change memorable enough to inspire action.

What we desire, rather, is the *what*: the knowledge to know what to do and when and how to do it, step-by-step. We want to know what and what not to eat; the training regime to lift with proper form or run without injury; the mindset for building wealth. We want specific instructions from the people who blazed the trail we’re looking to follow.

We want *directives*.

How This Book Came About

A few years ago, I began summarizing books I read and posting them online on my blog. Nothing overly-impressive; just my notes and highlights from many of the best non-fiction books of all-time.

Summarizing each book helped me recall what I learned. Plus, feedback from readers was positive, so I continued doing it.

After a while, though, I noticed that I soon forgot what a book was about, even though I often reviewed my notes. Maybe I would remember a takeaway or two, but *rarely would I recall what the author wanted me to do*. So, I began rewriting my notes and highlights. I removed anything that didn't further the Memorable Directives from the book, rewrote what remained in my voice, and made them as concise as possible.

One day, while reviewing my summaries, I noticed an interesting pattern: **the books I remembered best were the ones that I summarized as *directives*.**

For example, when summarizing *The Obstacle Is the Way* by Ryan Holiday (Directive #65), one of my highlights was, "Focus on the moment, not the monsters that may or may not be up ahead." While insightful, it lacked context. So, I rewrote it as a directive, "In moments of crises, focus on the moment, not the monsters that may or may not be up ahead." Now, whenever I reviewed my notes, I knew what to do without the need to review what the quote was in reference to.

Around that time, I listened to Derek's interview and I thought to myself, *What if I collected my favorite directives, organized them by category, and put them into a book, a commonplace book of sorts?*

After months of writing and rewriting, that book is now in your hands.

How to Read This Book

The goal, with *Directives*, is to distill what I feel are ninety-five of the best directives from the best non-fiction books of all-time, categorized for your convenience. A few things to keep in mind before moving forward:

1. **Most directives are direct quotes from the book.** Those that aren't, are passages I rewrote to improve the reading experience. For example, if the author wrote, "individuals," I rewrote it as "you."
2. **You'll notice all directives focus on what to do, rather than what NOT to do.** This is on purpose. Directives are far easier to remember when you're clear on where you need to go. To quote Tony Robbins, "We move toward what we focus on."
3. **Aside from occasional context at the beginning, each directive begins with a verb.** A verb, as you know, is a "doing" word. Pay attention to the action the directive recommends, if it's relevant, of course.
4. **I've omitted links to buy the books to improve the reading experience.** Instead, I've added commentaries to certain books I feel are worth particular attention and linked back to the full summary on my site, if you choose to read more.

As you read each directive, notice any thought or feeling that may arise. Often, it's a signpost to explore that idea further or a reminder to take action on something you're putting off. Welcome it; it's trying to tell you something.

Whether you read *Directives* in its entirety or jump to chapters of interest, it's my hope you return to this book again and again, to drink from the knowledge of the many great men and women that grace these pages, and, to quote Ryan Holiday, turn their words into works.

Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, "It is my ambition to say in ten sentences what others say in a whole book." Mine is to do it in fewer. I hope I've done that.

—Sam Thomas Davies

Chapter 1: Biographies & Memoirs

Directives

An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth

by Chris Hadfield

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

If you've got the time, use it to get ready. What else could you possibly have to do that's more important? Yes, maybe you'll learn how to do a few things you'll never wind up actually needing to do, but that's a much better problem to have than needing to do something and having no clue where to start.

Benjamin Franklin

by Walter Isaacson

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Obtain knowledge by the ear rather than by the tongue.

Bossypants

by Tina Fey

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Do your thing and don't care if they like it.”

Einstein

by Walter Isaacson

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Knock down the things that depress or anger you.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

by Maya Angelou

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Pursue the things you love doing, and then do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you.”

Shoe Dog

by Phil Knight

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Rather than tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.

Steve Jobs

by Walter Isaacson

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“If you want to live your life in a creative way, as an artist, you have to not look back too much. You have to be willing to take whatever you’ve done and whoever you were and throw them away. The more the outside world tries to reinforce an image of you, the harder it is to continue to be an artist, which is why a lot of times, artists have to say, ‘Bye. I have to go. I’m going crazy and I’m getting out of here.’ And they go and hibernate somewhere. Maybe later they re-emerge a little differently.”

Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!

by Richard Feynman

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Learn what the rest of the world is like. The variety is worthwhile.”

Chapter 2: Business Directives

Built to Last

by Jim Collins

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

When building a revolutionary company, understand who you are rather than where you are going—for where you are going will almost certainly change.

Built to Sell

by John Warrillow

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Don’t be afraid to say no to projects. Prove that you’re serious about specialization by turning down work that falls outside your area of expertise. The more people you say no to, the more referrals you’ll get to people who need your product or service.”

Note from Sam:

Built to Sell is my favorite business book. Systemizing our marketing department transformed how our marketing department and

organization (Sleeknote) operates. Plus, it helped scale our content marketing (more on that [here](#)).

Getting Things Done

by David Allen

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

Use your mind to think about things, rather than think of them. Add value as you think about projects and people rather than remind yourself they exist.

Getting to Yes

by Roger Fisher

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“People listen better if they feel that you have understood them. They tend to think that those who understand them are intelligent and sympathetic people whose own opinions may be worth listening to. So if you want the other side to appreciate your interests, begin by demonstrating that you appreciate theirs.”

How to Win Friends and Influence People

by Dale Carnegie

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Don't be afraid of enemies who attack you. Be afraid of the friends who flatter you.”

Losing My Virginity

by Richard Branson

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To be successful, put yourself out there and hit the ground running.

The 4-Hour Workweek

by Tim Ferriss

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

For all of the most important things, the timing always sucks. If something is important to you and you want to do it, do it and correct course along the way.

The Lean Startup

by Eric Ries

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

When building a minimum viable product, remove any feature, process, or effort that does not contribute directly to the learning you seek.

The One Thing

by Gary Keller

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To distinguish the vital few activities that matter from the trivial many, ask yourself, “What’s the ONE Thing I can do such that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”

What Got You Here Won't Get You There

by Marshall Goldsmith

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Treat every piece of advice as a gift or a compliment and simply say,
‘Thank you.’”

Chapter 3: Personal Finance Directives

How to Own the World

By Andrew Craig

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Live on less than you earn and invest the rest.”

Note from Sam:

I put off investing for YEARS. I didn't know what indexing was, how it worked, or why I needed to get started. But then I read *How to Own The World ...* and it changed everything for me. In fact, I began investing for the first time before I even finished the book. One of my favorites.

I Will Teach You to Be Rich

by Ramit Sethi

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Spend extravagantly on the things you love, and cut costs mercilessly on the things you don't.”

Money Master the Game

by Tony Robbins

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Remember: we all get what we tolerate. So stop tolerating excuses within yourself, limiting beliefs of the past, or half-assed or fearful states. Use your body as a tool to snap yourself into a place of sheer will, determination, and commitment. Face your challenges head-on with the core belief that problems are just speed bumps on the road to your dreams. And from that place, when you take massive action—with an effective and proven strategy—you will rewrite your history.”

Rich Dad Poor Dad

by Robert T. Kiyosaki

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

An asset puts money in your pocket. A liability takes money out of your pocket. To become wealthy, acquire assets.

Secrets of the Millionaire Mind

by T. Harv Eker

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To move to a higher level of life, let go of your old ways of thinking and adopt new ones.

The Intelligent Investor

by Benjamin Graham

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Before buying a company's stock, analyze the company thoroughly. To protect yourself against serious losses; aspire to "adequate," not extraordinary, performance.

The Millionaire Fastlane

by M.J. DeMarco

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

"Instead of digging for gold, sell shovels. Instead of taking a class, offer a class. Instead of borrowing money, lend it. Instead of taking a job, hire

for jobs. Instead of taking a mortgage, hold a mortgage. Break free from consumption, switch sides, and reorient to the world as producer.”

The Millionaire Next Door

by Thomas J. Stanley

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Whatever your income, always live below your means.”

The Richest Man in Babylon

by George S. Clason

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Accept opportunity to entice good luck.

Think and Grow Rich

by Napoleon Hill

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“The starting point of all achievement is DESIRE. Keep this constantly in mind. Weak desire brings weak results, just as a small fire makes a small amount of heat.”

Chapter 4: Health & Fitness Directives

Bigger Leaner Stronger

by Michael Matthews

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

Lift hard, lift heavy, get sufficient rest, and feed your body correctly.

Food Rules

by Michael Pollan

[Print](#)

Memorable Directive:

If you're hungry, use the apple test. If you're not hungry enough to eat an apple, you're not hungry.

In Defense of Food

by Michael Pollan

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”

Starting Strength

by Mark Rippetoe

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Hardcover](#)

Memorable Directive:

To get strong, you need to perform a few very important exercises, movements that train the whole body as a system, not as a collection of separate body parts.

Strength Training Anatomy

by Frédéric Delavier

[Print](#)

Memorable Directive:

To prevent the formation of fibrous scar tissue in the hamstrings, reeducate the muscles as soon as possible. A week after a tear, perform gentle stretches for the back of the thighs. The goal is to stretch the injured muscles and especially to soften the scar so that it doesn't tear when you resume training.

The 4-Hour Body

by Tim Ferriss

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Rule #1: Avoid “white” carbohydrates (or anything that can be white). Rule #2: Eat the same few meals over and over again. Rule #3: Don’t drink calories. Rule #4: Don’t eat fruit. Rule #5: Take one day off per week and go nuts.”

The New Encyclopedia of Modern Bodybuilding

By Arnold Schwarzenegger

[Print](#)

Memorable Directive:

“If you don’t find the time, if you don’t do the work, you don’t get the results.”

The First 20 Minutes

by Gretchen Reynolds

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#)

Memorable Directive:

Walk or otherwise work out lightly for 150 minutes a week in order to improve your health. You can split these 150 minutes into almost any chunks and still benefit.

Wheat Belly

by William Davis

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Eat raw nuts. Raw almonds, walnuts, pecans, pistachios, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, and cashews are wonderful. Eat as much as you want. They're filling and full of fiber, monounsaturated oils, and protein. They reduce blood pressure, reduce LDL cholesterol (including small LDL particles), and consuming them several times a week can add two years to your life.

Why We Get Fat

by Gary Taubes

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To get leaner, lower your insulin levels so you get fat out of your fat tissue and burn it.

Chapter 5: Leadership Directives

Extreme Ownership

by Jocko Willink

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Prioritize your problems and take care of them one at a time, the highest priority first. Don’t try to do everything at once or you won’t be successful.”

Good to Great

by James C. Collins

[Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

If you’re building a great company, limit its growth based on your ability to attract enough of the right people.

Leaders Eat Last

by Simon Sinek

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To be a great leader, inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more.

Lean In

by Sheryl Sandberg

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Make others better as a result of your presence and make sure that impact lasts in your absence.

Start with Why

by Simon Sinek

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

People don't buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it. So, instead of asking, "WHAT should I do to compete?" ask yourself, "WHY did I start doing WHAT I'm doing in the first place, and WHAT can I do to bring my cause to life considering all the technologies and market opportunities available today?"

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

by John C. Maxwell

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“To lead yourself, use your head; to lead others, use your heart.”

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

by Stephen R. Covey

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”

The Art of War

by Sun Tzu

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.”

The Effective Executive

by Peter Drucker

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Convert an opportunity into a result rather than try to solve a problem.

The Innovator's Dilemma

by Clayton M. Christensen

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To succeed consistently as a manager, you need to be skilled not just in choosing, training, and motivating the right people for the right job, but in choosing, building, and preparing the right organization for the job as well.

Wooden on Leadership

by John Wooden

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Hardcover](#)

Memorable Directive:

Commit to what's right rather than who's right.

Chapter 6: Marketing Directives

80/20 Sales and Marketing

by Perry Marshall

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

The 80/20 Principle says 80 percent of your results come from 20 percent of your efforts, and 20 percent of your results come from the other 80 percent. So, to maximize your results, invest your time, energy and resources in the 20 percent for each area of your business.

Contagious

by Jonah Berger

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

Design products and initiatives that advertise themselves and create behavioral residue that sticks around even after people have bought the product or espoused the idea.

Influence

by Robert B. Cialdini

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

People like to have reasons for what they do. So, when asking someone to do you a favor, give a reason. You will be more successful.

The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing

by Al Ries

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

It's better to be first than it is better. So, if you can't be first in a category, set up a new category you can be first in.

Note from Sam:

The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing is my favorite marketing book and I recommend it to every intern that works under me. Granted, the examples are outdated, but the principles are not. And that's why it's a classic.

Ogilvy on Advertising

by David Ogilvy

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

When meeting with prospective clients, tell them what your weak points are, before he notices them. This will make you more credible when you boast about your strong points.

Permission Marketing

by Seth Godin

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Invest money in customer retention, because it’s a small fraction of the cost of customer acquisition.”

Positioning

by Al Ries

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Don’t create something new and different to position your company. Instead, manipulate what’s already in the buyer’s mind, to retie the connections that already exist.

Purple Cow

by Seth Godin

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Instead of trying to use your technology and expertise to make a better product for your users’ standard behavior, experiment with inviting the users to change their behavior to make the product work dramatically better.”

To Sell Is Human

by Daniel H. Pink

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To sell well in today’s world, is to *serve*, first; to improve another’s life and, in turn, improve the world. So, anytime you’re tempted to upsell someone, stop what you're doing and *upserve* instead.

Tribes

by Seth Godin

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“The secret of leadership is simple: Do what you believe in. Paint a picture of the future. Go there. People will follow.”

Chapter 7: Philosophy Directives

Discourses and Selected Writings

by Epictetus

[Print](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Sickness is a problem for the body, not the mind—unless the mind decides that it is a problem. Lameness, too, is the body’s problem, not the mind’s. Say this to yourself whatever the circumstance and you will find without fail that the problem pertains to something else, not to you.”

Enchiridion

by Epictetus

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Demand not that events should happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well.”

Letter from a Stoic

by Seneca

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Enjoy present pleasures in such a way as not to injure future ones.”

Meditations

by Marcus Aurelius

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“You have power over your mind—not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”

The Obstacle Is the Way

by Ryan Holiday

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

In moments of crises, focus on the moment, not the monsters that may or may not be up ahead.

Chapter 8: Psychology Directives

Drive

by Daniel H. Pink

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To motivate creative individuals working on right-brain, heuristic tasks, avoid offering “if-then” rewards. Instead, use “now that” rewards, ones that provide praise, feedback, and useful information.”

Flow

by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To overcome the anxieties and depressions of contemporary, become independent of the social environment to the degree that you no longer respond exclusively in terms of its rewards and punishments. To achieve such autonomy, give rewards to yourself. Develop the ability to find enjoyment and purpose regardless of external circumstances.

Grit

by Angela Duckworth

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To teach yourself hope, update your beliefs about intelligence and talent, practice optimistic self-talk, and ask for a helping hand.

Man's Search for Meaning

by Viktor E. Frankl

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Don't aim at success. The more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself. Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it. Listen to what your conscience commands you to do and go on to carry it out to the best of your knowledge. Then you will live to see that in the long-run, success will follow you precisely because you had forgotten to think about it.

Outliers

by Malcolm Gladwell

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To be successful, develop the persistence and doggedness and the willingness to work hard for twenty-two minutes to make sense of something that most people would give up on after thirty seconds.

Predictably Irrational

by Dan Ariely

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To improve an irrational behavior, ask yourself, “How did it begin? Second, ask yourself, “What amount of pleasure will I be getting out of it. Is the pleasure as much as I thought I would get?”

Switch

by Chip and Dan Heath

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Any successful change requires a translation of ambiguous goals into concrete behaviors. In short, to make a switch, you need to script the critical moves.”

The Happiness Advantage

by Shawn Achor

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

"Lower the activation energy for habits you want to adopt, and raise it for habits you want to avoid. The more we can lower or even eliminate the activation energy for our desired actions, the more we enhance our ability to jump-start positive change."

The Power of Habit

by Charles Duhigg

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To extinguish a bad habit, insert a new routine but keep the old cue and deliver the old reward.

Stumbling on Happiness

by Daniel Gilbert

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

When we imagine future circumstances, we fill in details that won't really come to pass and leave out details that will. When we imagine future feelings, we ignore what we are feeling now and fail to recognize how we will think about the things that happen later. So, avoid treating what you imagine as though it were an accurate representation of the facts.

The Talent Code

by Daniel Coyle

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

When learning a skill, don't look for the big, quick improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time.

Thinking, Fast and Slow

by Daniel Kahneman

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Remember that nothing in life is as important as you think it is, while you are thinking about it.

The Tipping Point

by Malcolm Gladwell

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To bring a fundamental change in people's belief and behavior, create a community around them, where those new beliefs can be practiced and expressed and nurtured.

The Willpower Instinct

by Kelly McGonigal

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To avoid willpower failure, practice self-awareness, be kind to yourself, and focus on what matters most.

You Are Not So Smart

by David McRaney

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“From the greatest scientist to the most humble artisan, every brain within every body is infested with preconceived notions and patterns of thought that lead it astray without the brain knowing it.”

Chapter 9: Self-Help Directives

Awaken the Giant Within

by Anthony Robbins

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To make a change in you life or work, raise your standards and believe you can meet them.

Note from Sam:

Wow. What can I say about *Awaken the Giant Within*? I read it in my early twenties and it changed my life. Granted, Tony's NOT for everyone. But if he's for you, and you apply what you read, his content will impact your life—guaranteed.

Feeling Good

by David D. Burns

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

Every time you feel depressed about something, try to identify a corresponding negative thought you had just prior to and during the depression. Why? Because these thoughts have actually created your bad mood, by learning to restructure them, you can change your mood.

How to Stop Worrying and Start Living

by Dale Carnegie

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“No matter what happens, always be yourself.”

Maximum Achievement

by Brian Tracy

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

All change is from the inner to the outer. All change begins in the self-concept. So, become the person you want to be on the inside, first, to see the appearance of this person on the outside.

The Magic of Thinking Big

by David J. Schwartz

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Look at things not as they are, but as they can be. Visualization adds value to everything. A big thinker always visualizes what can be done in the future. He isn't stuck with the present”

Psycho-Cybernetics

by Maxwell Maltz

[Print](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Act like the sort of person you conceive yourself to be.”

The Power of Positive Thinking

by Norman Vincent Peale

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To be happy, keep your heart free from hate, your mind from worry. Live simply, expect little, give much, Scatter sunshine, forget self, think of others. Try this for a week and you will be surprised.

The Road Less Traveled

by M. Scott Peck

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

To proceed very far through the desert, you must be willing to meet existential suffering and work it through. In order to do this, your attitude toward pain has to change. To do this, you must accept the fact that everything that happens to you has been designed for your spiritual growth.

*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*

by Mark Manson

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

When you don't know what to do, don't just sit there. Do something. The answers will follow.

The Success Principles

by Jack Canfield

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

To be successful, take 100% responsibility for everything that you experience in your life.

Chapter 10: Writing Directives

Bird by Bird

by Anne Lamott

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#)

Memorable Directive:

Own everything that happened to you. Tell your stories. If people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better.

On Writing Well

by William Zinsser

[Print](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Decide what you want to do. Then decide to do it. Then do it.”

On Writing

by Stephen King

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Write with the door closed, rewrite with the door open.”

Note from Sam:

An awe-inspiring insight into the experiences, habits, and convictions that have helped Stephen become one of the most prolific writers of all-time. Even if you're not interested in writing, it's worth reading to learn how he bounced back after his involvement in a car accident.

The Elements of Style

by William Strunk Jr.

[Print](#) | [Hardcover](#)

Memorable Directive:

“To achieve style, begin by affecting none.”

The War of Art

by Steven Pressfield

[Print](#) | [Audiobook](#) | [Book Summary](#)

Memorable Directive:

“Are you paralyzed with fear? That's a good sign. Fear is good. Like self-doubt, fear is an indicator. Fear tells us what we have to do.”

Remember one rule of thumb: the more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we have to do it.”

Final Directive: Turn These Words Into Works

My goal, with *Directives*, was to invite you to turn the above *words into works*. To follow ONE instruction, to buy a book you were putting off, to make a change, to do *something* to improve an aspect of your life or work.

I hope I've done that.

If you've enjoyed this book, I would love to hear from you. To get in touch, send me an email at sam@samuelthomasdavies.com. I read and reply to every email.

Cheers,

—Sam

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam V. Davies". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Like What You Read? Then This Is for You...

If you enjoyed *Directives*, you might like my commonplace book.

It's my private searchable database of 100+ book summaries, notes from premium training programs, and of course, more directives.

To learn more, [read about it here](#).