

# Success everywhere is a lagging indicator of becoming great somewhere

In aviation, there's something called the "1 in 60 Rule."

For every 1° you're off course, you'll end up 1 mile off course after travelling 60 miles.

Fly from NY and you'd miss Tokyo completely, ending up 112 miles away in the Sea of Japan somewhere.

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Here's something I can't stop thinking about:

**Most of what we're doing these days doesn't need to be done, we've just been doing it for so long that it's become a thing that we do.**

I've built audiences and email lists before.

But this time feels different. I've been struggling. The world's gone mad and distractions are everywhere.

There's so much to do. So much we're told we *have* to do. And yet, so much of it feels aimless. Like I'm on an autopilot set 1° off course.

I'm actually on an airplane right now. Coming back to Mexico after a mastermind with 140 others. Got some clarity. Wanted to share it with you. Hope that's ok.

I'll share how I'm applying this at the end, but what I do with the key idea and what you do will likely differ.

If you ever feel like I've been feeling . . .

That you're working hard.

Doing stuff.

And you've been working hard and doing stuff for a while, but, at the end of the day, in that time when time slows down after dinner but before bed, you think about your day. Try to remember what you did. And can't think of anything . . .

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You're not alone.

Just like that '1 in 60 Rule' I mentioned earlier, if your focus is a few degrees off then, over time, that small deviation will land you miles from where you want be.

It's time to correct your course. And I hope that what I'm about to say will help.

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## **Success everywhere is a lagging indicator of becoming great somewhere**

Timothée Chalamet just won an award for best actor. Here's part of his [acceptance speech](#),

“I know the classiest thing would be to downplay the effort that went into this role. But the truth is, this is five and a half years of my life. I poured everything I had into it.”

Chalamet continued:

“The truth is, I’m really in pursuit of greatness. I know people don’t usually talk like that. But I want to be one of the greats.”

Amen.

The goal should be greatness. Screw all this acceptance of mediocrity talk. Greatness is something worth shooting for. It is *the* thing worth shooting for.

Whether you get there or not isn't important. The quest is. The more you do the work you're uniquely built to do, and the less of all the other shit you get distracted by, the more you realize that it's about the work.

The more results that you get, the more you realize that rewards are empty compared to what you get from work well chosen.

I've been in some circles where people chase external praise only to get it and realize it's not what they wanted. But that's like abs. People need to get it for themselves to see.

You have a thing. A thing that comes natural to you. A thing that you just seem to *get*. Where you wonder why, even if it's hard, you have boundless energy for it.

I have a theory:

Everybody can go from OK to good in just about everything with enough hard work. Like, with a tremendous amount of effort I could be a decent YouTuber.

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But I don't care about YouTube. I've literally never watched a YouTube video start to finish.

It's irrelevant how good of an opportunity that it is. I'm never going to be world class.

On the other hand, we all have one (maybe two) things that we're born with the natural chemistry to become truly great at. Woodworking. Improv comedy. Motivating others into action. Whatever.

1. You must find yours.
2. You must point every ounce of energy and effort into becoming the best in the fucking world at it.

My thing is writing. I don't know why it's writing. Writing is hard.

Most nights I go to bed and hate what I wrote and feel like a failure. But then I'm excited to write the next day.

There's nothing else that causes me the same exquisite combination of anger, frustration, and elation that writing does. It's never burned me out. No matter how hard I've struggled with it, it's never burned me out. Days where I write are better days than days where I don't write. That's how I know that it's my thing.

I recognize that what I'm saying might feel like it contradicts advice given in my book [The Obvious Choice](#) to find your 'g' 'e' good enough.

For career success, good enough, done repeatedly, is how you get great. That's true.

Here, I'm referring to greatness in a different capacity.

A career is how you make money. Important. True greatness, however, transcends how you make your money.

Your thing is what you pursue for the sake of pursuing it. For reasons impossible to put into words.

In my case, writing makes money, yet makes little financial sense.

It is not responsible for the majority of my income. It unquestionably has detracted from my earning potential (at least in the short-term).

If I'm honest, I'm happy about that. Maybe one day that will change and it'll make me more money than [OTA](#), [OTM](#), and [QuickCoach](#). If it does, I need to make sure that I don't depend on it to support my family.

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That's because it is the work that matters. It is what you become as a result of pursuing greatness in your work that matters. Once the work you do becomes your job, how the work becomes viewed changes. Maybe your job and your work are the same thing. For me, they're not. My job is what makes my family money to feed my family today. My work is where I'm pursuing greatness.

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Here's my struggle:

Deep work in one area (writing) pulls away from the other (platform growth). Writing short-form for social media is something I can do, but doing it at the same time as working on deeper writing projects like books has proved difficult.

Maybe others can do both at the same time: Social media and deep work pursuing greatness. It's possible I'm simply not as good as them. If so, it is what it is. And I've gotta learn to do the best with what I've got.

Regardless, I need the platform to sell the writing.

But if I focus on the platform, it'll take energy away from the deep work. And I'll never write incredible books. Which is all that I care about.

A few examples jumbling the brains of ambitious people (like me) today:

- We're told that we have to build an [Instagram](#) following, but [X](#) is great for networking.
- [LinkedIn](#) has a lot of opportunity these days though . . . and Threads is a dark horse . . . but TikTok's algorithm . . . you might go viral . . . you're just one video away, right?
- Oh, and [YouTube](#). That's the new TV. There's podcasts, too. A podcast audience buys stuff.
- Think I forgot about [Facebook](#). Uhhh, FB is there too. And discord. No idea what that is.

But also, none of these audiences are owned, right? That's what they say. That you're building an audience on somebody else's platform so you've got to build your email list, too.

I counted. I was a personal trainer once so I can't count. For you though, I counted:

That's ten platforms.

And none of them matter if your work sucks. Social media success is a lagging, not leading, indicator of success in the real world. It's an effective tool for amplifying greatness, but it doesn't create it.

Which brings me back to that line. That marvelous line:

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**Success everywhere is a lagging indicator of becoming great somewhere.**

[\(Click to tweet\)](#)

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I felt lost before last week. Went into a funk. [Success left me depressed.](#)

[The Obvious Choice](#) has just gotten released. The next book in the series, *The Obvious Challenge*, a book about intentional life design, is in editing. And I know that I should be building platform, creating content, and networking, but felt resistance.

So I asked myself a simple question:

What am I optimizing for?

Which led to three deeper questions:

1. Where's my path headed?
2. What do I have a chance at becoming truly great at?
3. What am I willing to do (realistically\*)?

*\*Whatever this is, there must be evidence from my past efforts that I can stick with it for long enough to be impactful.*

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[The people I admire](#) focus on their craft not for weeks, months, or even years. But for decades.

They don't jump on trends.

**[Pat Rigsby](#) has been sending a daily email for 18 years.** He doesn't have a big social media audience. Because he's stayed true to himself, his work resonates and converts. Back when I had affiliates for my programs, Pat was consistently a top referrer, despite having a much smaller list. He's not famous on the internet, but he is [famous to the family](#).

**Warren Buffet has ignored tech and crypto investments.** During that time, people continued to drink Coca-Cola and buy insurance. He's become very rich.

To be clear, you don't have to admire everything about a person to admire something. Drink the soup, spit the bones. In these cases, I admire that both Pat and Warren were clear what they did, and didn't do, and stuck with it, irrelevant of whatever insanity happened to be gripping the world that day.

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Once you find your thing, obsess over it. Accept the tradeoff that nothing you could work on matters as much as it does.

Then, design your day with a long-term lens. Pursue greatness in that area. View all else as supporting elements. Use them where you can, but do not measure your success on them.

I guess what I'm saying is that greatness can only be achieved with persistent, consistent, obsessive, and almost unhinged focus; a focus hard to maintain while the rest of the world is distracted.

Distraction, therefore, is both the problem and the opportunity.

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## Everything big starts small

The first-ever molecule to form in our Universe was helium hydride. Everything grew from there.

That's esoteric. A few better examples:

**We only see the influencer once they become an influencer.** We didn't see the years of nights and weekends they invested grinding through the silence.

**We only buy from Nike once it became Nike.** We didn't see Phil Knight selling running shoes out of the trunk of his Plymouth Valiant at weekend track meets.

Smaller, yet dedicated audiences are faster to build, more profitable, and where everybody begins—even if your goal is to become large.

(This is the crux of [The Obvious Choice](#). And where just everybody goes wrong these days but most need to screw-up before realizing the error in their ways. Myself included, sadly. Which is why I wrote the book.)

All that every algorithm aims to figure out are two things:

1. Who is this content for?
2. What does that person want?

The wider you go, the harder a time that the algorithm will have feeding your content to a new audience.

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## A Return to Focus

I know a guy who is a massive success. You'd know his name if I told you. I also know somebody who worked for him.

We hung out recently. I finally got a chance to ask the question I'd been wanting to ask,

“That thing he did that was successful was 8 years ago. He used to constantly produce interesting work and new thoughts. Now he just recycles the same couple of ideas over and over again.

Why hasn't this big-shot guy done anything else?” I asked.

“*Complacency.*” My friend responded.

I did that thing where I paused so he'd continue.

“He had plans for more and has started and stopped multiple times. There's always opportunities pulling him away. He's made so much money, too. I guess it's just been so long that, finally, one day, he just gave up. To be honest, I don't think he even remembers how to do what he used to do.”

Maybe that's right for him. I don't judge.

But holy heck I don't want that to be me.

The pleasure of well-chosen work is in doing the work, sharing the work, and being proud of the work. Not in it simply being done. And definitely not in any of the prestige or rewards that accompany it.

Again, my thing is writing. Yours might be different. That's cool. Whatever it is, I hope you find it.

Once you do find it, pursue greatness. That means accepting the tradeoff that literally nothing else matters as much.

The few times I published articles this past year, I felt like I was high the entire day. OK, I don't remember what feeling high feels like. I smoked a lot of weed in College. Watched a lot of Chappelle Show. Been a while though.

I feel like a shell of myself if I don't write. Do you ever feel that way? A shell of yourself? Have you considered why. Worked backwards. Identified patterns?

If ever a book that I wrote becomes a runaway success, I want to keep writing. So much so, that I expect I'll largely ignore any markers of success when they do appear.

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The work is what matters. Pursuing greatness is what matters. What you become as a result of that pursuit . . . is what matters.

Any outcomes; any rewards—they're all lagging indicators of greatness. And, when they come, if they do come, get your butt back to the work as soon as possible.

This means a few things:

- Saying no to opportunities that take you away from your pursuit of greatness.
- Simplifying every aspect of your professional life.
- Recognizing necessary tradeoffs and accepting them gladly.
- Building an amplification machine by using timely "in-the-moment" strategies on social media to get attention for your timeless, deeper work.

I do think that social media matters.

But I also believe four things:

1. It's a long-term game.
2. You must make it work for you.
3. You must make a plan you can both sustain and enjoy.
4. It cannot diminish your quest to become a world-class performer.

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## **Which Brings Me to My Plan**

You're not reading this for my plan. You're reading this to help get clarity on your steps.

I'm sharing my plan in the hopes it helps you make yours. Because, finally, I feel like I have a plan that I can stick to.

I don't have all the details figured out.

What I do know is what my focus is.

From here, I'll move fast, execute, and fix where it's broke.

### The Goal:

Write articles. Leverage social media to promote my long-form writing. Optimize for email list first, YouTube second, and everything else a distant third.

Focus on the timeless, and use the timely at any given time to amplify it.

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Top-level view:

**On the website:**

1. One article (like this one) weekly. Each with the goal of permanently altering your landscape. I'm calling them "lightning strikes".
2. Weekly newsletter ([5-reps Friday](#)).

**Podcast:**

1. Split my podcast into Obvious Choice and a new one dedicated to online fitness business.
2. On my podcast, I'll present each week's article and host interviews.

Articles to hold me accountable to ongoing production, force me to read them aloud, and help to promote the writing. Interviews to expose me to interesting people and ideas to expand my worldview.

The online fitness business show will share [Online Trainer Mentorship](#) hot seats and both feature and be hosted by our incredible coaches.

I.e. Focus the platforms. Amplify my writing. Remove me from the online fitness business coaching stuff and build up my team because they do a better job there than me anyway.

**YouTube:**

1. Split YouTube into [my personal channel](#) and a new one dedicated to online fitness business.\*
2. On my channel, I'll only have "made-for-YouTube" material—presentation of these articles and uniquely filmed content\*\*

*\*YouTube is fantastic for discovery for small, niche-focused channels. Splitting the shows will help algorithmic discovery.*

*\*\*When presenting articles for the podcast, I'll level up production. My video team will then contextually edit for YouTube. In addition, videographer(s) will visit me once every 3-4 months for two days and ask me questions on camera. They'll take the footage and create videos for the channel.*

**Instagram:**

1. Weekly, a post promoting the new article and one for the newsletter.
2. Other posts will be recycled / reposted old material and the occasional new tweet.
3. Stories to promote article and newsletter in addition to day-in-the-life stuff.

**FB/Li/X:**

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1. Repost article and newsletter promo from IG.

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While this seems like a lot, it doesn't feel overwhelming.

So long as the single central piece of content (a long-form article) gets done, most everything else points towards it.

- People who like to read, can read.
- People who like to listen or watch, can listen or watch.
- All platforms get fed from the same source.

Key is, it's all the same content. My focus is on becoming a world-class writer. Everything supports that vision.

I'll end with a two-part challenging question:

1. *What are you optimizing for?*
2. *What do you need to remove in order to 10X your obsession with it?*

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## Simplified Content Plan

