The Betterment Project
Volume One

ASYSTEM
About Bjorn Iooss

The landscape photographs woven throughout this book are by Bjorn Iooss. Celebrated for his deep understanding of color and light, Iooss has built a body of work that spans fashion, beauty, portraiture and entertainment for clients like Tom Ford and Estée Lauder and publications like Vogue and Vanity Fair. He was born in New York and has a BFA in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design. (See page 31 for more.)

About ASYSTEM

ASYSTEM makes it easier for men to look, feel and perform at their best—so they can give their best. From its headquarters in Venice Beach, ASYSTEM creates science-backed betterment products engineered to optimize the male body, inside and out. The mission: You. Only better.

@ASYSTEM
It’s the main reason men don’t take care of themselves. In the face of all the important stuff—family, work, social obligations—carving out time to support your mind and body usually takes a back seat.

It’s time to think differently.

We believe that prioritizing your wellbeing doesn’t just make your life better, it also helps the people around you—friends, family, colleagues and the countless others you meet every day. This is what we mean when we talk about “betterment.” It’s about feeling your best, so you can give that version of yourself to all those who deserve it.

The goal of The Betterment Project is to spark conversations about how to feel better and be better. To kick things off, we spoke to some of the most interesting and extraordinary men we know. They include professional athletes and the founders of restaurant, wellness and fitness empires. One of fashion’s most legendary photographers and the scion of America’s foremost family of wine. Today’s most relevant creatives and entrepreneurs who’ve tapped into the zeitgeist. What do they have in common? They’ve all overcome challenges to rise to the top of their fields while striving to benefit the people that surround them every day.

We asked each guy five simple questions about making life better, both for themselves and for the people they love. Here’s what worked for them. You can decide if it works for you too.

“ When you look, feel and perform at your best, everyone around you wins.”

I don’t have the time.

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“Everything you need is already inside.”

—Bill Bowerman

Where does your drive come from?
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What daily habits keep you going?
—
What would you say to your 20-year-old self?

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
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The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Where does your drive come from?
I’m a competitive person. When I do something, I want to be the best at it. It goes back to when I surfed competitively on the world tour. That focus, drive and concentration have stayed with me through every career move.

What daily habits keep you going?
Coffee. Looking at the ocean. And being sure to get outside for a walk, no matter the weather.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Don’t second-guess any decisions—it’s all going to turn out right.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I’ve only found two things that allow me to completely disconnect: surfing and sailing. It just so happens that they’re both on the water. When I do either, I let everything go. I don’t worry about what’s going on back on land. I don’t think about looking at my phone or what time it is. I’m just present at that moment.

Mikey DeTemple
Director & Photographer | @mikeydetemple

“Don’t second-guess any decisions—it’s all going to turn out right.”

Why Him
He’s spent the last 15 years balancing filmmaking, photography and professional surfing—in between six heart surgeries for a congenital condition. His commercial clients include Apple, Finlandia Vodka, Gap and Olympus, and he also regularly collaborates with non-profits, including the Surfrider Foundation.

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Where does your drive come from?
I’m driven by the mission of changing my family tree. I want to establish a legacy and slowly change the statistics of financial success for the black community. That’s a huge driver—and so is my ego, no matter how hard I try to quiet it most days.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You’re going to want to think about your emotional growth earlier rather than later. It’s easy to focus on pragmatic things like business success, but there’s going to be a day in the not-so-distant future when you’ll want more meaningful connections.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Adding therapy to my routine. It has led me to form deeper, stronger relationships with people I truly value—and I think it has helped me bring value to my clients’ and colleagues’ lives as well. It’s refreshing to be more in touch with feelings, instead of being detached and just trying to get shit done.

Why Him
He quit his job at Goldman Sachs to become a fashion and lifestyle photographer. Nine years later, he’s the main man behind the lens at Kith and has worked with the likes of GQ, Details, Armani and Barneys.

Where would you say your 20-year-old self?

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?

What daily habits keep you going?
I like to keep it simple. I used to have ridiculous daily routines that ended up causing more stress and upkeep than value. So I pared it down to the necessities that work for me: wake up early, don’t use my phone for the first hour of the day and drink lots of water.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Get some sleep—you’ll thank me later.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?

Realizing that we have less control than we think. Reminding myself of that daily has led to a significantly more fulfilling and satisfying life for me—and by association, those around me.

Justin Bridges
Photographer | @bybridges

Nate Brown
Creative Director | @natebrown

The Betterment Project

Photographer | @bybridges
Creative Director | @natebrown

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The Betterment Project

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Where does your drive come from?
I grew up in Pittsburgh. My father was a city police officer and my mom was a banker. Although they were busy, they always made time for us, whether it was my mom coming to my football games before her shift, or my dad rushing to catch my sisters’ recitals while still in his uniform. I saw my parents’ drive—to be the greatest they could be in less fortunate circumstances—and I get my drive from them.

What daily habits keep you going?
I wake up, meditate and then head straight to the kitchen—I absolutely love coffee. It reminds me of when I was a police officer. It kept me awake during my night shifts. Brewing that one cup of coffee reminds me every morning that I am a man of service with a higher purpose. Whether it’s in music or policing a community, my goal is to help in any positive way I can.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
When I was slapping the bass for Wiz Khalifa, I was hungry for more. I felt like I needed to leave to unlock my true potential as a musician. I lost my income and, eventually, was evicted from my apartment and my car was repossessed. That was one of the lowest times in my life.

But I recognized that this low moment was a launching pad—an opportunity to rebuild myself. I embraced the feelings of isolation. I tapped into my idea for Bass Hop. I recorded an album. I landed back on my feet with Lady Gaga and eventually onto stages I never thought I would see.
Brendan Fallis
DJ & Entrepreneur | @brendanfallis

Why Him
Thanks to his impeccable taste, he’s become one of the world’s most in-demand open-format DJs—as well as a style icon and a partner in the talent management firm Preveyors.

Where does your drive come from?
It definitely comes from my dad’s side, and it’s less about impressing others and more about outdoing myself. I was selling lemonade and doing chores for income at a young age, and then I was very enterprising in elementary school, creating goods and selling them to my classmates.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Just relax. It’s all going to work out. And get excited, too: life has some great things in store for you.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Meditation and breathing. It’s allowed me to find a calmer sense of being, which ripples through those around me.

Matthew Goldman
Creative Director | @bigbignews

Why Him
He founded one of the most sought-after experiential creative agencies in LA, MFG Creative Company, while simultaneously creating School Night, the city’s most respected new music showcase.

Where does your drive come from?
Counterintuitively, atheism. I believe we only have one life and that everything we reap is a result of the work we put in. I want to see and do as much as I can during the blink I get. And while hard work doesn’t guarantee happiness and success, I think they’re hard to find without it.

What daily habits keep you going?
Groundwork Coffee Concentrate with Rice Dream. Maintaining a detailed to-do list. Enjoying a joint at the end of the day with my wife, our pup and music.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You make it to at least 38, so take care of yourself while you’re having all that fun. Also, invest in Apple.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
It’s hard to know what has profoundly affected others, but owning my bad dietary habits and changing them has made my family’s life substantially better.
What daily habits keep you going?
I do something active every day. Surf, swim, cycle, train—I have a lot of energy and need to get it out! My wife and I both love to cook, so trying to eat a balanced diet is important not only physically, but mentally too. A big dinner keeps me up half the night, so smaller meals throughout the day help me digest and relax before bed.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Travelling less—I’ve slowed it way down and have made more time to spend with my wife, family and friends. For years, I spent close to 200 days a year on the road, and being at home felt like a vacation. I used to say yes to every job, every shoot, every opportunity, every trip. I would sometimes get to the airport and forget where we were going. Now, I put a lot more consideration into the pros and cons of each trip. I place a lot more value on the impact they have not only for my career, but personally, too.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
There is no better feeling than waking up before the sun, driving to the beach in the dark and paddling out when you can barely see.”
Justin Hayward-Young

Songwriter & Musician | @sheikhyhaard

Why Him
The frontman for the British rock band The Vaccines has had a pretty good decade: four studio albums (including a platinum-selling debut), three Brit Award nominations and tours with the Rolling Stones, Arcade Fire and Red Hot Chili Peppers.

What daily habits keep you going?
I have quite bad OCD. If I don’t fulfill a promise I made to myself about doing something, then it eats away at me—so I write everything down the day before. I run every day, too. It helps me process my work. In the evenings, I go out with friends, so I’m actually living in the world I’m writing about.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I’ve learned recently not to put too much pressure on myself or those around me when I’m writing or collaborating. Sometimes just going with it makes the creative process much more rewarding—and much more fun.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I took a weeklong road trip through Mississippi a couple years ago after a breakup, and I didn’t take my phone. It caused me so much anxiety, but I had one of the best weeks of my life.

Bjorn Iooss
Photographer | @bjorniooss

Why Him
Equally at home on set, in studio or surfing his childhood breaks in Montauk, he has crafted the visual world of many of our favorite brands. His images have also appeared in the pages of Vogue, Vanity Fair and Harper’s Bazaar—as well as in this book.

What daily habits keep you going?
On the days I don’t have to travel or shoot, I usually have morning coffee with my wife, then go for a swim before heading to my office.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Enjoy the ride.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Getting a good night’s sleep always makes for a better day.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
In the late ‘90s and early 2000s, our family used to vacation in Mexico along the Pacific Coast, at a place that had no electricity. We would spend our days doing nothing but eating, surfing and reading—and yet the days would fly by.
What daily habits keep you going?
I focus my eyes on the horizon. In an office or city, you can easily go an entire day without lifting your nose to look beyond what’s in front of you. It gives me a sense of claustrophobia, so I make sure to set my gaze on the furthest structure I can find or, even better, on the horizon. Some people like a cleansing breath—I like a cleansing stare.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I discovered sport at 34. I had zero interest in exercising before that. Now, I run, I cycle, I practice yoga, I swim. It has had a tremendously positive impact on my wife, kids and co-workers.

Why Him
As an art director for Dazed & Confused and Vogue Hommes Japan, he was early to recognize the power of interactive media. He put this thinking to work for Gucci, Comme des Garçons and Alexander McQueen before moving to Vancouver to lead creative at Lululemon.

Where does your drive come from?
I grew up in a religious home and something about what I was taught to believe never felt right. That sparked a curiosity to explore the world, where I discovered many other ways of living.

What daily habits keep you going?
Meditation, movement and making things.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
The practice of gratitude. Gratitude is an emotional frequency that is received by everyone around you.

Why Him
As a photographer, he’s shot campaigns for Nike, Coca-Cola, Adidas and Lamborghini. On his podcast, Nion Radio, he chats with influential creatives—think chef Rocco DiSpirito, director Jon Chu and Usher—about how they built their lives and careers.

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This is hard because I am such a creature of habit. Perhaps this weekend, I’ll hop on a flight to a random destination and see what comes of it. You can read about it in the next edition of this book.
Where does your drive come from?
I think growing up working class during the ’70s in England helped. The UK was still very much in a post-war economy and recovery mindset then. We came out of the war totally bankrupt; the empire was gone, racial tensions were high and there was a lot of poverty. All in all, it was a dark period. So, looking around me as a youngster, I was very aware I wanted out—or something better than what I had. That was a powerful driving force.

What daily habits keep you going?

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You think you have it all figured out, when, in fact, you know nothing. Oh, and stop taking drugs at 21 rather than 31.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Adopting a much stricter exercise routine. I sleep better and smile a lot more.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
In my mid-twenties, I discovered an island in Sicily, bought a house and didn’t leave for a long time. It’s still my favorite period. I’d sometimes drive from London to Sicily just to see the landscape change every hundred miles or so. Sicily has a real unmistakable magic to it.

Why Him
He’s one of fashion’s most renowned—and influential—photographers. Over a 30-year career, he has published five books and worked with Gucci, Saint Laurent, Calvin Klein, Chloe, Prada and Hugo Boss, along with every publication that matters.

Glen Luchford
Photographer & Filmmaker | @glen_luchford

“As a youngster, I was very aware I wanted out—or something better than what I had.”
Where does your drive come from?
It’s multifaceted. One component is that my family never set expectations for me to do or be anything—their quest was to give me the tools to be a good human, to use my natural talents and to leave a positive mark on those around me. Another component: I was in an accident at 27 that left me unable to walk unaided and I lived in heavy pain for a few years. Drive is the only reason I can walk today, both metaphorically and physically.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
After just one lesson, I went on a four-day off-road motorbike trip—with a group of guys who all knew what they were doing and whom I’d mostly never met before. My ego was on the floor. I got lost after an hour and nearly hit a coyote. But I realized this would not kill me and I had survived much worse. Sometimes you need a little discomfort to find comfort.

Ben Stubbington
Menswear Designer & Artist | @sidandddo

Javas Lehn
Creative Director | @javaslehn

Why Him
The former creative director at Theory, he now leads men’s design at Lululemon—so he’s behind most of the clothes in your gym bag. He’s dedicated to art and yoga, which help him to manage pain from a botched procedure he underwent at 27 for a running-related knee problem.

Where does your drive come from?
Most of my family members are in art, architecture or textile design. I was always inspired by how they approached life in a creative way. I avoided the family tradition for many years, but then ended up at school for communication design.

What daily habits keep you going?

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Stay curious and compassionate.

Why Him
As the founder of the New York-based design firm Javas Lehn Studio, he’s lent his refined sensibility to companies like Miansai, Saturdays NYC and Phaidon.

Where does your drive come from?
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What daily habits keep you going?

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Stay curious and compassionate.
Where does your drive come from?
Half of it is wanting to be the best version of myself and doing everything in my power to fulfill the extremely high expectations I set. The other half is the fear of not fulfilling my hopes and dreams—that fear of losing is what ensures my drive never runs out.

What daily habits keep you going?
I see my relationships with friends and family as my foundation in life—the thing that keeps me level-headed and sane. Touching base as much as possible gives me relief in my hectic schedule.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
The simple change to my routine is that I simply don’t have one anymore. With my success building over the last couple of years, my schedule has become more sporadic. I’m either in front of a camera, in meetings or sleeping—and most of my friends lead a similar lifestyle. I guess the profound impact it’s had on us all is that we see time differently now. It’s almost as if we charge up when we’re apart, working on our own shit, and when we’re together, our energies collide and start bouncing off each other. Those rare moments to reunite have just become more precious now.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I’m still laying the strongest foundations I can for my career, so I feel like I always need to be present. I don’t think I’m going to have time to go off the grid for a while—and I’m ok with that. I want to stay switched on and see where things take me.
Business
What daily habits keep you going? I train at 5:30am five or six days a week. It allows me to be with my thoughts and burn off any mental tension from the day before. Fitness also offers the opportunity to win every day, no matter what else is going on in my life.

My grandmother was a practicing Buddhist who instilled open-mindedness in me and my sister from a very young age. I have a simple morning practice where I ask the universe to guide me, to humble me and to include empathy in all of my actions.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you? Getting home before my kids go to sleep has made an incredible impact on my family life. The restaurant business doesn’t lend itself to being home in the evening, but having a great team in place allows me to make it back two or three nights a week.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one. Somewhat cliché, but one of my greatest memories is when I asked my wife to marry me. We were in Taormina, on the Sicilian coast. I’d made a late reservation at a beautiful restaurant with a veranda that looked over the sea, hoping that we’d be alone. But halfway through our meal, a family with young kids sat down right next to us. Hurdle. When we were done eating, we walked along the cliffs and heard this strange rumbling noise behind us. Mount Etna, off in the distance, had begun erupting. It was surreal—heavily shooting into the air. I immediately dropped down on my knee and said, “Donna, I was looking for a sign and, holy sh*t, did I get one.” She laughed hysterically—and said yes.

Why Him
He started working in restaurants at 13, graduated from the French Culinary Institute at 26 and opened his first restaurant at 28. After growing The Meatball Shop into a New York City institution with a half-dozen offshoots, he turned around and did it again with Seamore’s.

“Fitness offers the opportunity to win every day.”

Michael Chernow
Restaurateur | @michaelchernow

43 | Business
Where does your drive come from?
I started competitive sports at age five, which helped instill a sense of discipline, determination and teamwork.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Be patient.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Not working on weekends as much as possible.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Spending time with my family on a small beach that can only be reached by boat—without cell phones.

Chidi Achara
Chief Creative Officer

Why Him
As a creative director and brand strategist, he worked with Cole Haan, Hugo Boss, Dunhill, Diesel and Levi’s. Now, he heads up the creative team at Simon Property Group, the world’s largest operator of luxury and fashion shopping centers.

Where does your drive come from?
It comes from a desire to better myself and to drive progress for the various communities I represent.

What daily habits keep you going?
I would love to say I’ve figured out a way to get all the sleep I need, but sadly that’s still something I’m tinkering with. For now, coffee in the morning is absolutely essential to kickstart my brain. And listening to music during the work day helps me feel more productive.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Calling, texting or DMing as soon as I think of someone—even if I don’t have a lot to say. It’s sometimes hard to find time to respond to everyone, but a simple text when I’m thinking of someone helps me stay at least semi-connected.

Gregory Alexander
Co-Founder, A Club Called Rhonda | @omgregory

Why Him
In 2008, he created a hedonistic dance party that bridged the gap between straight and gay nightlife. In the decade since, he’s turned A Club Called Rhonda into a local institution and exported the concept to cities from Paris to Tokyo.

Where does your drive come from?
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There was no schedule and no plan, but I had to make it work. It was the best education of my life.

Why Him
With his brother Jamie, he started Herschel, the accessories brand named for the Saskatchewan village where their great-grandparents settled in 1906. As Herschel’s managing director, he propelled the company to global prominence—and, through its investment arm, he’s building the foundation of a fashion empire.

Where does your drive come from?
Both my parents were hard workers. My father was a professional engineer who owned a small oil company, and my mother owned a daycare. They instilled drive at a young age.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Understanding that there are many routes to get where you want to go—so be open to change. By opening up to others’ perspectives, you can end up further ahead than you thought.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I landed in Australia two weeks after my 18th birthday by myself with $600 in my bank account. It felt like a million miles away from home. There was no schedule and no plan, but I had to make it work. It was the best education of my life.
Where does your drive come from?
I grew up on a farm in rural England with parents who supported every thought and desire my siblings and I had. The first expression of that was somewhat shameful—my brother and I secretly purchased and sold stolen phones before moving on to more legal occupations.

What daily habits keep you going?
Running, meditation and an unrelenting commitment to eight hours of sleep.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You’re an idiot, and that’s okay. Oh, and your girlfriend is about to cheat on you. Don’t worry, that’s also okay. Everything happens for a reason.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Before we started District Vision, Max took me on a road trip from San Francisco to LA, to overcome heartbreak. As a result of that trip, he lost his job and we started our company. I don’t think I’ve ever appreciated time, space and friendship as much as at that point. I hope he feels the same.

Why Him
A serious long-distance runner and seasoned fashion executive, he combined both sensibilities to create District Vision, a technical eyewear and apparel company, with friend Max Vallot.

Why Him
A Saint Laurent alum and meditation buff, he co-founded District Vision with friend Tom Daly. The technical eyewear and apparel brand celebrates the intersection of running and mindfulness—with a healthy dose of style.

Tom Daly
Co-Founder, District Vision | @tomtomdaly

Max Vallot
Co-Founder, District Vision | @vallot
Where does your drive come from?
I have a strong belief in what I’m able to accomplish through determination, discipline, diligence and focus. When I was a junior in high school, I had such a desire to play football, but was told by every coach I came across that I was so bad I should quit. I decided to pour my heart and soul into training—and eventually became a captain on the team by working harder than everyone else. I was able to beat the odds and went on to play in college. That laid the foundation for my success as an entrepreneur.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Enjoy the ride every single day. Remind yourself of everything you have to be thankful for in order to keep your energy positive and your momentum moving forward. Always trust your gut—your instincts are your best asset.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Every summer I take a week or two at the end of August to totally disconnect. During those weeks, there are so many great memories that come from doing things I normally wouldn’t do—like going on a fishing expedition for four hours with my son, hanging at the beach with my family or laying by the pool with my daughter, just hanging out and talking.

"Keep your energy positive and your momentum moving forward."

Shae Hong
Founder, Sensio Inc. | @shaehong

Why Him
His infectious positive energy and entrepreneurial drive have helped him turn Sensio into one of North America’s most successful small-appliance businesses—as well as establishing him as a sought-after angel investor.
Jake Kassan
Co-Founder, MVMT | @jakekassan

Why Him
He dropped out of college at 19 to launch a watch brand with his friend Kramer LaPlante. MVMT’s combo of affordability and design, along with the pair’s shrewd understanding of the menswear market, proved lethal: five years later, Movado bought the company for over $100 million.

Where does your drive come from?
A lot of my drive comes from wanting to be in a financial situation where I enjoy life and am not bound to work. In the process, I’ve found that I really like impacting others and building companies. There’s nothing better than building something from scratch and seeing people around the world use your product.

What daily habits keep you going?

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I’ve been going to morning workout classes. I’m not a morning person, so getting up early enough for the gym is tough. But there’s a commitment when you book a class the night before and are charged whether you show up or not. I know the hard part is getting there, and that 50 minutes later, I’m going to feel more energized—regardless of how much sleep I missed out on. Win the morning, win the day.

David Kaplan
Bar Owner | @dkproprietors

Why Him
One of the owners of Manhattan cocktail institution Death & Co, he cemented his status as a bar industry insider by launching lounges around the world with his consulting company, Proprietors LLC.

Where does your drive come from?
My dad started several businesses, a few that failed and one that did well. It showed me that risk is worthwhile and failure isn’t taboo. In a very Psych 101 way, I was always trying to get my father’s encouragement.

What daily habits keep you going?
I wish I could say meditation, reading and journaling, but none of that is true. Instead, I check my nightly reports, Slack and scan my emails while lying in bed when I first wake up. Once I ease that anxiety, I put my phone down and think through my day for another 10 minutes before the madness begins.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
I’m not sure if it would be relationship advice or business advice—I could have used both. I think I would say that trusting yourself is the best thing you can do, even if that leads to missteps.
What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Leaving work baggage at the door when I come home—something I could not do when I was younger. I’m sure my wife and oldest son (who was old enough to remember when I was running FRAME) were frustrated that they always got the distracted, half-ass version of me. Time with the fam needs to be respected. It’s when I recharge, and it’s often when spontaneous ideas arise.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
A few years ago, my wife and I took our three (super-young) kids on a road trip around France for three weeks. We booked hotels but nothing else, hired a minivan and set off. It was magical. We discovered incredible restaurants and sights, but the best memories were simply a result of being curious alongside the ones I love the most.

Why Him
When an injury cut short his pro snowboarding career, he turned to entrepreneurship. First came Davi, a luxury skincare brand, and then FRAME, a fashion brand that he scaled to international success as its CEO. His newest project is ASYSTEM, co-founded with Josh LeVine.

Where does your drive come from?
I think it was probably something I was born with. However, a few things have notably impacted it, including being bullied badly at boarding school (I boarded from the age of 7). That strengthened my resolve to do whatever it takes to succeed in life.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You have two ears and one mouth. Listen and speak in that ratio.

Josh LeVine
Co-Founder, ASYSTEM | @djl27

Why Him
As co-founder of the pioneering London-New York creative agency Wednesday, he helped to create brands (MR PORTER) and accelerate others (Balenciaga, Mincler, Estée Lauder, Calvin Klein…). After a chapter as CMO of fashion retailer Allíla, he launched ASYSTEM with Josh LeVine.

Where does your drive come from?
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What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You have two ears and one mouth. Listen and speak in that ratio.

Oli Walsh
Co-Founder, ASYSTEM | @olivwalsh

The Betterment Project
The Betterment Project

Where does your drive come from?
It’s derived from dissatisfaction with the way something is manifesting in the world. I started Riot Games with my business partner, Brandon Beck, because I was a gamer who felt ignored by game publishers. Similarly, I got involved in political philanthropy after seeing the absurdity of America’s governmental system, where the interests of the average American have a near-zero impact on public policy.

What daily habits keep you going?
I prioritize sleep and recovery time. People say, “It’s a marathon, not a sprint.” I prefer to say, “It’s an infinite series of consecutive sprints.” When you’re driving hard on something, it is much more analogous to sprinting—but even a world class sprinter cannot sprint indefinitely, so being deliberate about recovery is important.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I have started to share my opinion more publicly about the issues of the day. This change was inspired by my wife—she challenged me to focus on being honest rather than worrying about bringing up potentially difficult topics.

Marc Merrill
Co-Founder, Riot Games | @marcmerrillofficial

Why Him
He’s the Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of Riot Games, the company behind League of Legends (a.k.a. the world’s most-played online game). He also serves on the board of several nonprofits, including organizations focused on addressing political polarization and dropout rates.

Where does your drive come from?
It comes from my belief that I have a responsibility and role to play in bettering the world. It’s always been something I’ve felt in my gut, and has become increasingly pronounced over time.

What daily habits keep you going?
I listen to positive, instructive podcasts in the morning. I use words like “phenomenal,” “outstanding” and “amazing” when asked how I’m doing. And I drink green tea with honey or agave.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
It’s really not about you. Understanding and living that will expedite your arrival into fulfillment.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Leading 4thMVMT was unplanned and unexpected. It’s the fulfillment of all I am and have experienced, but I could never have envisioned it.

Karim Webb
Entrepreneurial Activist | @karimwebb

Why Him
He co-owns PCF Management, the first company to bring full-service restaurants back to South LA nearly 20 years after the 1992 riots. Known for offering jobs, training and fresh starts to workers in the local community, he also founded 4thMVMT, which helps people gain the tools to operate their own businesses.

Where does your drive come from?
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The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
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“I think I’ve always had that internal motor. I was a kid who was never really satisfied, as sad as that sounds.”

Scott Morrison
Founder, 3x1 | @imadethisblue

Why Him
He’s one of the world’s foremost denim experts, having founded Paper Denim & Cloth, Earnest Sewn and now 3x1. In his second full-time job as the founder of Leo’s Lighthouse Foundation, he’s making a difference in the lives of children who, like his son Leo, are affected by Bainbridge-Ropers Syndrome.

Where does your drive come from?
I think I’ve always had that internal motor. I was a kid who was never really satisfied, as sad as that sounds. I really started to see what I could do when I began playing golf around 11. I became really competitive, wanting to not just get better, but become great. Setting goals, challenging yourself, making sacrifices, finding a way to work around problems—those were all things I learned through golf and they’ve helped me in life every step of the way.

What daily habits keep you going?
These days, most of my habits involve my kids. I have an early wake up—5 or 5:30am—which gives me a couple hours of quality time with them before my day starts. I get Leo out of his crib and make breakfast for the family. I’m commuting into New York City each day, so I knock out emails on the train in the morning. It’s a game changer. I walk into the office 95% of the time with a clear head, and very few nagging issues to deal with in the first hour or two.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Better sleep. It’s amazing (and not surprising) that getting some quality rest makes a huge difference at home and at the office. Changing things up by committing to the early morning—and subsequent early evening—has led to more sleep and a better, more engaged me.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Going off the grid used to mean literally just getting away for the weekend somewhere without Wi-Fi. Now I’m trying to make that more of an everyday commitment. I limit my time on the phone or computer when at home. It’s challenging on the best of days, but shutting things down when I walk through the door to be present—truly present—is a huge priority.
Zak Normandin

**Founder, Iris Nova | @zaknormandin**

**Why Him**
Under the Iris Nova banner, he launched Dirty Lemon, a much buzzed-about line of wellness drinks sold via text message. His next stop in reinventing the beverage industry? Conceptual retail locations that use the same SMS-ordering platform.

Where does your drive come from?
My grandfather was an architect and I remember being drawn to the artistic intention behind his craft at a young age—the idea that you could draw something and make it come to life in a tangible way was very exciting to me.

What daily habits keep you going?
An ideal morning starts with two or three cups of coffee while reading the newspaper. I try to give myself an hour of alone time before I start working. It allows for an atmosphere of creativity before I open my email and instantly jump into the mindset of problem solving.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I try to bike for transportation as much as possible. Biking to meetings helps keep me on time and gives me a mood boost in the process. It’s the most enjoyable way to get around New York City.

Ben Pundole

**Hotelier | @benpundole**

**Why Him**
As an entrepreneur, hotel manager and editor, he has touched every facet of the boutique hotel industry. His current gigs: brand experience for EDITION hotels and running the award-winning travel site AHotelLife.com.

Where does your drive come from?
My brother and sister went to nice private schools in London and good universities. I went to the local comprehensive and started working at age 18. I think I’ve always felt I’ve had something to prove.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
I’d probably tell that boisterous 20-year-old to have patience, to think about his choices—and to save money! The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Burning Man! A yearly reminder of how far the human spirit can stretch, and an opportunity to be the very best version of yourself.
Where does your drive come from?
When I was 22, I had a glass of wine with my grandfather that changed my life. We were at a friend’s winery in Burgundy, and after walking the vineyards, talking and tasting, I began to truly understand the connection between the rain, the earth and the sun—and how incredible it could be when they’re brought together properly in wine.

What daily habits keep you going?
I eat and drink organic, biodynamic and regeneratively farmed goods as much as humanly possible. It has nothing to do with being posh—I’m a farmer and know that some of the garbage the chemical industry pawns off is actually really fucked up.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I always used to say yes to everything. My schedule was way too packed and I ended up doing a half-ass job on things. My father always told me to slow down, and I think I am starting to understand what he meant.

“ My father always told me to slow down, and I think I am starting to understand what he meant.”
Health & Wellness
Where does your drive come from?
I’ve always been very competitive with myself, seeking peak performance physically, mentally and spiritually. If you’re the best version of yourself, you’ll exude positive energy and inspire those around you.

What daily habits keep you going?
I try to meet two or three new people every day. My deep connections with like-minded people have led to soul-gratifying opportunities. Surrounding yourself with positive people who want to see you thrive is a way of investing in yourself. I also seek discomfort every day—ice baths, extreme heat, anaerobic workouts. Train your mind to embrace discomfort and you’ll build a tolerance to stress.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Don’t plan so much.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Sharing my network with others. I make a conscious effort to connect like-minded people—the universe reciprocates, and we all benefit.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I go off the grid every day! My creativity is fueled by flow-state activities: being alone in the woods, mountain biking, downhill trail running, rock climbing and sitting in cold streams.

Why Him
A five-time Ironman and veteran entrepreneur, he co-founded Urban Life Athletics, a fitness facility, and Original Grain, a healthy fast-casual restaurant. As an investor, he champions disruptors in the fitness and wellness industries.

Eric Hinman
Entrepreneur & Angel Investor | @erichinman

“Surrounding yourself with positive people who want to see you thrive is a way of investing in yourself.”
Where does your drive come from?
I think it’s important to identify what you value and what you want to stand for—you can tap into that infinitely. My driving force is simple: to make global change in mental health and keep landing acting work. I know there is always work I can do towards those goals. If my drive was simply “become a movie star” or “make X amount of money,” I would get bored, uninspired and burned out.

What daily habits keep you going?

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
You are already enough.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Last year I was worn out after doing 150 mental health presentations in 12 months. I decided on a whim to take five weeks off, booked a one-way flight to India and landed without a plan. Exploring that country and learning from the locals was life-changing.

Shom Chowdhury
Health & Wellness Director | @shomchowdhury

Why Him
In addition to his role as the Global Health & Wellness Director for Soho House, he advises many top wellness brands, including Rumble Boxing, Eight Sleep and Watson Gym Equipment.

Where does your drive come from?
My mom and dad are both engineers who immigrated to the US from India in the ’60s. They worked tirelessly—multiple jobs, multiple businesses. My dad especially loved the hustle: he worked as a defense contractor, sold cast-iron products and Indian rugs, and in his spare time, he did oil painting and wrote poetry. Keeping pace with even 50% of his activities kept me and my bro pretty damn busy.

What daily habits keep you going?
The gym. Protein shakes. Spending time with my wife Madison.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
When I stopped staying out late and pointlessly socializing, and started focusing more on things I liked to do, I noticed that I made better choices, both professionally and personally. I focused more on experiences than bullshit. And people around me seemed to smile more.
What daily habits keep you going?
At the end of the day, I reflect on how I can do better. I try to be honest. If you refuse to believe you make mistakes, then how can you fix them?

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
He was in a bad place. I would probably say, “Tough times don’t last. Tough people do.”

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
My first fight was not planned. I’d started boxing at 12, but my mother was afraid of head injuries, so I stopped. Four years later, I walked into a restaurant and saw my former boxing coach. He asked if I had an interest in the Indiana Golden Gloves tournament, less than a month away. I said no at first—I hadn’t put on a glove in four years. But then I convinced my mother, and endured three weeks of brutal training. I was terrified, but ready. I ended up winning the tournament and it changed my life forever.

Why Him
He came to Hollywood as an Olympic hopeful to train at Freddie Roach’s legendary Wild Card Boxing Club. After a series of injuries, he turned his energy to coaching. Now, he’s known for getting professional fighters in peak condition for competition.

Julian Chua
Boxing Coach | @julian_chua

What daily habits keep you going?
My weekly Evryman group is an important stabilizer in my life. It’s like a weekly gutter cleaning.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
My wife and I moved our family from San Diego’s safe and secure suburbia to a 31-foot RV on the bank of a river in the mountains. We got rid of 80% of our stuff, and the remainder is locked away in storage. We learned a sharp and powerful lesson that stuff sucks and connection is sublime. We’ll not be back in a city any time soon.

Why Him
A former wilderness expedition leader and high school teacher, he’s on a mission to help men connect to their emotions and to others. His company, Evryman, runs weekly group sessions, retreats and expeditions, all designed to help unlock men’s emotional wellness.

Dan Doty
Co-Founder, Evryman | @danieldoty
Where does your drive come from?
It all started out of a desire to prove people wrong. To show the world that I, too, could be happy and successful. Luckily, I have learned over the years that this approach leaves others in control. Be happy for yourself and you will have unlimited drive.

What daily habits keep you going?
Presence. My wife and I work from home with our 9-month-old son. Being present has been easier with him. He challenges me to just sit with him and play with a toy, or my hand, or a napkin. His presence helps me practice my own.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Where I live in Oregon, our phones lose service often. It’s a really nice way to reconnect with nature, with yourself and with those you have around you.

Why Him
He’s a motivational speaker and advocate for the transgender community—as well as the first transgender man to grace the cover of Men’s Health. Through his YouTube channel, apparel company and non-profit, Point of Pride, he’s made a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of trans people worldwide.

Aydian Dowling
Transgender Activist & Entrepreneur | @alionsfear

“Be happy for yourself and you will have unlimited drive.”
Baron Davis
Entrepreneur, Investor & NBA All-Star | @iambarondavis

Where does your drive come from?
My drive comes from survival. Growing up in South Central LA, you only knew how to survive. It takes instinct, calculated decision making and always pulling the good out of the bad.

What daily habits keep you going?
Waking up early. Spending time with my kids. Spending two hours before bed to check my blueprint and goal sheet.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Arriving 15 minutes earlier for meetings.

Why Him
He showcased swagger and speed over the course of his NBA career—and savvy in his second act as a businessman (he was an early investor in Vitaminwater). He has founded several companies under the Baron Davis Enterprises banner in the film, music production and publication industries.

Alex Fine
Fitness Entrepreneur & Bull Rider | @alexfine44

Why Him
He has personally trained dozens of A-listers and professional athletes, including Jennifer Aniston, Mark Consuelos, Reggie Bush and Odell Beckham Jr. He specializes in exercise and nutrition programs that get screen-worthy results—fast. His side-gig? Competitive bull riding.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
I would tell him not to change a thing because every decision I’ve made led me to where I am now.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I smile at strangers. Everyone is so guarded and in their own world, so it’s nice to feel welcomed by someone on the street.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I woke up with a hangover the morning of the 2018 Super Bowl and said to a buddy, “Let’s roll the dice and travel somewhere.” We got last-minute flights to Minnesota for the game, then flew to Bogota afterwards. We ended up eating dinner with the President of Colombia and Ronda Rousey.
Where does your drive come from?
My parents’ approach. For them it was not about pushing me. They told me that if I got myself out of bed, it would never be too early or too far to drive me where I wanted—but they would never kick me out of bed. I have coached many Olympic champions and one thing they have in common is that you never need to push them. Their inner drive is deep and self-motivated.

What daily habits keep you going?
For the last two years, I have been taking hydrolyzed collagen every day. I work with some of the top nutritionists and sport scientists in the world and, having seen the mind-blowing studies on the effect of collagen, I had to give it a try. I am glad I did because my joints feel great and my skin looks better.

And, before I go to bed, I always ask myself one question: Have I done everything in my control today to have no regrets tomorrow?

Dominick Gauthier
Co-Founder, B2ten Foundation | @gauthierdominick

Why Him
A former Olympic mogul skier, he’s now one of the most influential figures in Canada’s Olympic organization. His B2ten Foundation helps prepare the country’s best athletes for their big moment, both mentally and physically.

Where does your drive come from?
As the child of two immigrants—a Cuban father and an Italian mother—I developed a deep appreciation for the American dream from a young age. They taught my brother, sister and me to work hard to get what we want and never settle for anything. And, luckily, that I could accomplish anything I put my mind to.

What daily habits keep you going?
Meditation. Cuddle time with my kids. And Barry’s of course.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Replace fear with focus.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
When I was 19, I did a program called Semester at Sea and traveled to 14 countries in 100 days. It was the most enriching experience of my life, giving me a global perspective that I would never have developed without seeing the world at that age.

Joey Gonzalez
CEO, Barry’s Bootcamp | @joeygonzalez

Why Him
He started as a Barry’s Bootcamp instructor in 2004 and worked his way up to the top job at the international fitness brand by 2015. Even with his packed work schedule and family life (he and his husband have two kids), he still makes time to teach classes.
Where does your drive come from?
I am passionate about helping people. The biggest heartbreak with leaving a medical career was thinking that I wouldn’t be able to make an impact on people’s lives. But with what I’m doing now, I see real potential to influence people to choose healthier lifestyles, physically and mentally. I realized I could grab people’s attention and increase awareness, emotional intelligence and body intelligence. Helping people make better choices before they need to go to the hospital drives me.

What daily habits keep you going?
I take a moment before bed to recap—everything from what tasks I got done to how I reacted in particular situations. The only way to grow is to self-audit. When I wake up, I look over the notes I made the night prior and visualize how my day is going to look.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
It’s funny because, in my early 20s, I felt lost and researched answers from various people to this very question. Now, more than 10 years later, I would tell my younger self to keep exploring the world, but never try to be what you think people want you to be. Always seek validation from yourself.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
I’ve always been into puzzles. I’m very analytical. A side effect of this, though, is that I overthink things to the point where I hold back and miss opportunities. Once I started saying yes to just about everything, my life changed. It’s very interesting that most of the things we want to experience in life are very obviously outside of our routine. But when opportunity comes our way to have that experience, we let the fear of the unknown take over. Everything we want for ourselves is just beyond our comfort zone.

Why Him
Before turning to yoga full-time, he studied biochemistry and medical pharmacology, and worked to procure heart and kidney transplants. He brings this medical background onto the mat—the anatomical precision of his classes has earned him a sizable (and devoted) following.

“Everything we want for ourselves is just beyond our comfort zone.”

Hiro Landazuri
Yoga Teacher | @actionhiro
Where does your drive come from?
I'm competitive and I used to thrive in competition. Now, I'm working to thrive in cooperation. My drive comes from wanting to be the best father, son, friend, student and teacher I can be, in order to make this planet better for everyone, myself included.

What daily habits keep you going?
Breathing deep, focusing especially on long exhalations. Sitting and standing tall, keeping my spine awake—I try not to slouch, but to sit tall and relax. Practicing yoga on and off the mat. Staying hydrated.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?
Anything is possible. Have faith.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
A jet ski ride in the Pacific Ocean turned into an epic swim with dolphins when I decided to jump off! The more I practice listening, the better I can decide when to go off the path and when to stay on.
Where does your drive come from?
I knew at the age of five I wanted to be a hockey player. I have no idea where this came from—my parents were not involved and knew very little about hockey. I have always felt that was a blessing, as I had nobody pushing me but me.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?
Stepping away from a high-pressure executive role has allowed me to focus on my wife Cristina and our two-year-old son Roman. I am so lucky to be able to have this time with them.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
I love ski touring in the winter. The serenity of the mountains and the snow is my happy place—spending hours climbing and being in my head is therapeutic for me.

Trevor Linden
Entrepreneur & NHL Legend | @trevor_linden

Why Him
He was one of the youngest captains in NHL history, smashing numerous records with the Vancouver Canucks. This, along with his charity and community work, has made him one of the most loved humans in the city. Now a serial entrepreneur, he has a rapidly growing empire of fitness franchises.

Where does your drive come from?
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Marvin Washington
Cannabis Entrepreneur & Super Bowl Winner | @mwash52

Why Him
Following an NFL career that spanned 11 years with the Jets, Broncos and 49ers, he became an advocate for the medical use of marijuana. Now an executive at CBD leader Isodiol International, he also serves on the board of Athletes for Care, a non-profit dedicated to athlete health and safety.

Where does your drive come from?
My drive came from my father, who had a seventh-grade education, but put his family comfortably in the middle class—five kids with four degrees and two post-graduate degrees. He never had an alarm clock. He said he didn’t need one to wake him to his responsibilities.

What daily habits keep you going?
I wake up at 3:30 or 4am. It gives me time to focus on the day’s tasks. And I take care of the little things—or the big ones will not be taken care of.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.
Post-divorce, I lost a lot of things, but found my true self. It was not fun, but it put me on the path that I am on today.
Where does your drive come from?

My parents escaped the Vietnam War. They arrived in Montreal and had to learn a new language and go back to school because Canada didn’t recognize their degrees. They worked day and night to create a better future for me and my sister. Seeing my dad do that without ever complaining once helped me develop an insane work ethic.

What daily habits keep you going?

I always work out in the morning because it helps set the tone for the rest of my day. I read for two hours a day, every day—I’ll be a student for life. I hate eating vegetables, but I understand the importance of getting the right nutrients, so I try to have a green juice daily to make up for it.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self?

You’re not working hard enough.

What simple change to your routine has had a profound effect on those around you?

Routine gratefulness translates to a fulfilling life. When you’re happy and you put out positive energy, everyone around you feels it.

The best memories often result from going off the grid or off schedule. Describe one.

I spend the majority of my time working with athletes and executives, so when I was asked to be on a major movie set in 2017, it was out of my comfort zone—and a strain on my schedule. Even so, I said yes. It was awesome seeing how a production of that scale operated.

**Vinh Pham**

Co-Founder, Myodetox | @vinniernhab

Why Him

Mixing physiotherapy, chiropractic and massage therapy with movement, he created Myodetox: a system of manual therapy that emphasizes a whole-body approach. It works—he now owns a chain of clinics throughout the US and Canada.

“Routine gratefulness translates to a fulfilling life.”
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