



5² LIFEHACKS

BY ARNO DIEPEVEEN



It's almost impossible to read an article, open a book, visit a website, or hear an expert speak (who isn't an expert these days?) without being buried in well-intended and unsolicited advice. Advice that's almost always intended for someone else. Make sense? Nope, I think not. The best kind of advice is almost always given to ourselves. Because you're the only one who knows what you really need. Of course, you've got to have an open mind and it takes some courage to do something with your own advice. That's why we'd rather give advice to other people; it's much better for our egos. But how can you advise others when you're not even capable of managing yourself? Would you take skiing lessons from someone who can't ski? Seriously. Just stop. Cut it out. Try listening for a change. You might actually hear something, make a connection, and earn more.... attention, respect, and money.

In order to back that up, I'd like to share a series of five articles featuring the 5² Life Hacks that I use as guidelines for myself. Isn't it comforting to know you don't have to take them personally? I've learned all 25 by trial and error, some by damage and disgrace. And I still do. Enjoy.

- Arno

**"I CANNOT TEACH ANYBODY ANYTHING,
I CAN ONLY MAKE THEM THINK"** - Socrates

A white line-art illustration of a hand with the index finger pointing upwards, positioned on the left side of the image.

5 LIFEHACKS AS A **SALESPERSON**

ENTREPRENEUR

SOCIAL BEING

MARKET



BE OBSESSED OR BE AVERAGE

There's nothing as sad as a burned-out sales soul. Someone with a job and a mortgage for his or her townhouse who's quietly hoping that everything will remain just as it is. Anything wrong with that? For a whole lot of people, there's absolutely nothing wrong with it. Salespeople who do everything, and I mean everything, in order to achieve their personal goals and sales targets – they're the ones that break records. They go the extra mile. And who are always complaining about people with obsessions? Exactly, the ones without one. It takes a while to get used to them because they're in the majority. The good news is that there's plenty of opportunity to set yourself apart from all the rest. The only condition is that you really gotta want it.

WHAT GOT YOU HERE WON'T GET YOU THERE

There's a saying that you get what you always got when you do what you've always done. Doesn't make sense, of course. It's caused problems for many. Learning faster than others – and using this knowledge – is your unfair advantage. If you can't figure out how to learn faster and better than the other guy, more and more clients are going to say 'no' to your so-called irresistible proposition. According to current research, you need to call someone eight times to get them on the phone nowadays, while this was only three times ten years ago. Do you know why that is? Because you don't adapt your fucking message, mate. And you're the only one to blame. Learn, Unlearn. Relearn. Times are changing. You should follow. Get the picture?

CREATE VALUE. ALWAYS.

Once you figured it out, you can see it clearly: the difference between delivering and creating value. Everyone claims to do the first one (yawn); the second is something clients didn't think of on their own, because they need your genius to get there. And that's your holy grail of uniqueness. It gives you immunity. When I ask the average salesperson what they've contributed to their clients, he or she comes up with something on the spot. But value has only meaning when defined by the receiver. 64% of companies say they understand their clients well but just 24% of clients agree with that statement. Delivering value is a commodity. The big question is: what value do you create for – or cocreate with – your clients? According to your clients.



BE DIFFERENT

Why be different? Well, 'cause everything everyone else is doing doesn't get you to where you want to be. Or you should have made the conscious, passive choice to become the dead burned-out salesperson I mentioned before. Top salespeople with extraordinary achievements do this with something unique, something personal, something smart, something different. A former Bayer salesman once explained to me how he achieved over ten times his target. He hired free sales agents whom he paid from Bayer's generous uncapped commission scheme. He pocketed the entire annual retention commission for himself. Smart thinking. He's been living like a king somewhere in the Southern Hemisphere ever since.

THE SECRET OF MULTIPLYING YOUR BEST CLIENTS

My very first mentor in the world of sales (I owe him forever) literally took me along in the success of scalable sales: getting loads of referrals. If every one of your clients is prepared to introduce you to potential new clients, you'll never have to spend time prospecting again. In order to help, he gave me a copy of Dale Carnegie's book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, and the rest is history. What's this book got to do with it? Simple. Being introduced to people doesn't happen by accident. You gotta treat the process the way a gold medal athlete would treat a championship. Still most salespeople I know give up at the first sign of defeat. That's just not gonna cut it, amigo.



A large, light blue line drawing of a hand with the index and middle fingers extended, resembling a 'V' or '5' gesture, positioned on the left side of the page.

5 LIFEHACKS AS AN **ENTREPRENEUR**

SALESPERSON

SOCIAL BEING

MAN

SPONTANEOUS REVENUE



10X GROWTH MINDSET

To achieve goals that are ten times bigger than you envisioned, you gotta think and act outside all of the boxes. If you can't think like that, you're done. Going from 1 million turnover to 10 million is the equivalent of doubling three times and a bit. Same thing for 10 million to 100 million. Not bad, right? An annual increase of the targets by 10 or 20% usually causes a tsunami in most organizations. People are scared of losing their bonuses, right? Poor bastards. But you're not gonna change peoples' minds with that approach and you're certainly not gonna put a man on the moon either. Just build a company with balls, where everyone has bold ideas, where everybody is shooting for the stars and bringing home the bacon. Go big or go home.



INCREASE HAPPINESS

Nowadays, you practically trip over the self-appointed gurus looking to help you scale up your business with another man's method. That's so cheap, mate. Believe me, you can grow without those guys. The decision to grow is elementary to progress and you are the only one who can make the decision. How about this: starting today, be a supplier of happiness, of which Zappos is a great example. How do you do it? Ask your clients. Certainly not by harassing people with a digital questionnaire. Decide that you will not be satisfied until all of your clients are your evangelists, shouting from the rooftops about how you've improved their quality of life. What do you think it would take? A lot of effort, lots of gains, and loads of self-fulfillment.



DIFFERENTIATE OR DIE

Ask an average entrepreneur what he excels at, and you'll often receive the most generic answers you can imagine. All champions have at one point made the choice of what to do with their life. You don't become a world champion at sports; but you become a world champion at the 110 metres hurdles. Why is it so difficult to indicate how your company distinguishes itself from the rest of the world? Why is it so hard to be specific and unique? Of course, it's fine that you can't explain it all in one breath, but what would it be like for you if you could? Would it affect your identity, your market share, your profits? Could this transform your company into an actual, well-known brand? In the end it's harder to stay average than to be the best at something.

IT'S BIG FUN

There are quite some entrepreneurs who've found themselves in a situation that doesn't give them the pleasure they were looking for. If you're not having any fun, you gotta make it fun. Or, in the words of Jim Rohn: "If you don't like how things are, change it. You're not a tree". Why did you become an entrepreneur anyway? Because you wanted to do things your way, right? It's either gotta be fun, or you gotta quit. Great. Now do it. Today. Being an entrepreneur is the best thing that could have happened to you. Or would you like someone else to determine what you should do? If you're an entrepreneur and you don't like to do something yourself, you've got three options: quit, delegate, or outsource it. Is that so hard?

THREE ESSENTIALS

You're working against the odds when you don't integrate three adjectives into your business model: repeatable, scalable, profitable. In other words: take care of clients who continue to buy, give it an exponential component that makes your turnover go through the roof, and prevent costs from rising at the same pace as turnover. Need an example for clarification? Take Salesforce. Each month, clients pay at least €75 per user for a service they can't easily get rid of. That last part is essential. Do not only deliver an awesome experience for your clients but also create a lock-in whereby it's too expensive to leave. And the difference between 10K or 10M users hardly makes a difference to Salesforce. Got it? Good. Go do it.



5 LIFEHACKS AS A **SOCIAL BEING**

SALESPERSON

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SPIRITUAL BEING



SERVING. NOT SELLING.

There are people who only take. Suckers. Quite often they're even nice people. They're like sales people who've only got eyes on the close. They're so fucking lonely and only think of themselves. They make no connections whatsoever. That's the reason they keep having to find new victims time and again. You're socially sustainable when you focus on the well-being, growth, and importance of the other. If you only do that with clients but not in any of your other social relationships, then you're just a one trick pony. You've taught yourself to do it. Think about Heineken's Serving the Planet but, instead of beer, make it service. Service someone else's needs because, eventually, it'll serve you. Stop reading this for a minute. Just let it sink in.

ALWAYS BE CONNECTING

What always baffles me, particularly about sales people, is that they never seem to have good insight into the network of their network. If you know 100 people well, and they know 100 people well, you have a network of 10,000 at your disposal of friends who want the best for each other. As is the case with big data, the network is dumb until you start making the connections, the algorithm. What extraordinary thing do you offer, that everybody would like to grant to three of their friends? You don't have a clue, do you? Otherwise, you would have gained 300 new clients x your average order size = how much money you've failed to make because you don't see it? That much? Ouch.

IT'S THE LIFE IN YOUR YEARS

Voilà. It's not the years in your life that count; it's the life in your years. Life must be lived. To the fullest. Intense. I was once staring death in the face, but I was lucky that my immune system was stronger than cancer. I've made it through traumas and depression – as a result, maybe it's a little easier for me to make “live life to the fullest” my mantra. Quit wasting time. Quit bitching and making excuses, and other useless crap. Stop worrying about what others think. Life deserves to be celebrated. Go out and party. Dance. Roar with laughter. Until your stomach hurts. Be with your loved ones and do what you love. That's all there is. “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it.”



YOUR INNER CIRCLE

Jim Rohn: "We are the average of the five people we spend the most time with". We're very much shaped by the people around us. They reflect the way we think, act, and make decisions. They even effect our levels of confidence. Time to shake things up a little? Say goodbye to the people who unilaterally and chronically draw energy from you. They are poisoning your subconscious mind. Spend time creating a crew of positive peers from who you can expect honest feedback when you need it. You won't learn much if you only surround yourself with "yes-men". Get rid of all the whiners. Remember the law of reciprocity: you attract what you radiate. Be vibrant, stay positive and affect everyone around you with your inimitable presence. Cheers.

PLEASING PERSONALITY

That's one of Napoleon Hill's Laws of Success from his eponymous masterpiece from 1926. A pleasing personality has a whopping 25 characteristics. Can you learn them, and integrate them into your personality? I have no idea, but it does determine whether your communication is accepted by others; there's no influence without a pleasing personality. If I were you, I'd try to figure out a way to have one. How pleasant are you to be around? How skilled are you at conveying your vision as an entrepreneur, salesperson, partner, friend, or whatever role you are in? Look, I'm still bewildered by a salesperson who never gets beyond doing the occasional sales training course and never reads a book on the subject of influencing people. Isn't that incredible?



5 LIFEHACKS AS A **MAN**

ENTREPRENEUR
SOCIAL BEING

SPIRITUAL BEING



BE FEARLESS

In my keynote The 5 Habits of Highly Effective Salespeople I speak about the five most striking characteristics of the top 1% salespeople. One of these is: They Are Fearless. In the reviews of my audience, I got quite a lot of acclamation. Because, apparently, fear seldom comes to the table despite the fact that it's so common. Fear is an integral part of our existence. So is love. And being hindered, or more aptly put: allowing yourself to be hindered by fear is a waste of your life, your opportunities, your chances, your development, your connection with others, and your right to freedom. Still, it is entirely your responsibility to face your fears, give fear the finger, and go for what you really love. Feel the fear and do it anyway.

BE POWERFUL

You have the final say over your own well-being. Mens sane in corpore sano: a healthy mind in a healthy body. How strong, fit, and vital do you want to be? Tell me. What are you willing to do for it? No time? Lame excuse. Alcohol is part of the fun? Bullshit. The first bio-hack is nutrition: natural, unprocessed food and grass-fed steak. Intermittent fasting rocks. The second hack is strength. Muscular strength. Lift some heavy shit and practice high intensity interval training. You cycle with your buddies on Sunday morning? Great social event, but cycling makes you skinny-fat and is really bad for your balls. Boost your testosterone naturally by sunbathing your testicles. Get real, mate. Be a man. Sun, Steak and Steel. (Thank you, P.D. Mangan).

EXECUTION IS A STRATEGY

Great quote by Herb Kelleher, the former founder of Southwest Airlines: "We have a strategic plan and it's called doing things". There we are: doing things. It's an almost forgotten discipline in which you actually put results up on a scoreboard. Intentions are beautiful, plans are patient, and dreams are just like fears: they almost never come true. What you're really up to is what Napoleon Hill calls your definite chief aim. You'll need some grit to get there. Execution is a strategy. Stop having meetings, playing politics, and micro-managing every situation. Just go do something. Learn by doing, adapt the plans, and improvise how to fail and move forward fast. You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.



LOW TESTOSTERONE DISEASE

One of the world's most insidious epidemics is the devilish lack of testosterone among men. You know the drill: bitch tits, belly fat, sitting down on the job, having a beer and shit like that. Typical causes of lack of testosterone. Testosterone is an essential androgen, necessary for healthy heart and blood vessels, a sharp concentration, good memory, muscle mass, optimal mental health, benefits your libido, as well as being an effective anti-inflammatory agent, and much, much more. Are you a man over the age of 30? Have your blood tested regularly, even if you have a high metabolism. Don't kid yourself: make sure that you've got a blood value of at least 20 nmol/l, irrespective of your age. Period.

IT'S ALL ABOUT MINDSET

Testosterone supports your focus and drive. It'll also give you an advantage in achieving results. A chronic lack of testosterone will set you back. Without will power and a strong mind, you won't make it to the top, no matter what you do. But the good news is, you can train your mind just like your muscles. "Watch your thoughts, they become words; watch your words, they become actions; watch your actions, they become habits; watch your habits, they become character; watch your character for it becomes your destiny." Take a day and write down all your unfiltered thoughts. A whole new world of endless opportunities will open up if you leave your mindfucks behind. That's not a promise, it's a guarantee.



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5 LIFEHACKS FOR A

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5 LIFEHACKS AS A **SPIRITUAL BEING**





WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE

Another one of these horribly tired subjects: why do you get out of bed in the morning, in other words: what's your purpose? I'm allergic to this hype because I've met so many people who suddenly (or finally) discovered their purpose and then didn't do anything with it. Except talk about it. A lot. They didn't really have execution as a strategy, if you know what I mean. Don't be distracted by a search for purpose. Why do you do the things you do? Say it out loud. To finance the previously mentioned townhouse and your bi-annual vacation? Or are you ready to ponder about the deeper meaning of what you are really worth? Wake up, buddy. Do what you love, be so good that they cannot ignore you and people will abundantly pay you for your services. There's your purpose.

FUCK YOUR DNA

This doesn't sound very spiritual, does it? Still I know plenty of people who have, in the spirit of their upbringing, stayed very close to their childhood surroundings. Their futures have been carefully planned so that the rest of their lives may proceed without too many surprises. You may not have realized this but, you can escape this fate, mate. It will mean you need to rigorously leave behind several of your parents' beliefs which you hold so tightly. It's incredibly liberating, I promise you that. But what's so spiritual about all of this, you may be asking yourself? Well, personally I find it incredibly empowering to determine your own destiny, free from any chains. Just give it a try. Let go of the past and you will be reborn.

WHO WILL CRY WHEN YOU DIE?

An old Sanskrit saying goes: "When you were born, you cried while the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a way that when you die, the world cries while you rejoice." That's a noble aim, don't you think? It could very well be an extension of your purpose, but this one's a little more focused on other people. Let's quickly return to the salesperson that fails to make a connection: we've forgotten the poor soul right away. The more you add to someone's life, the more they'll remember you. The additional effect is that it will hugely propel your business and wealth. For many of us, here's a gem of a paradox: get out of your own way in order to book the best results. Not easy for all of us. So, how do you want to be remembered?



LIFE IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

Stoicism is a philosophy from the third century BC and is based on the teachings of the Greek philosopher Zeno of Citium. Well known followers of stoicism from that time include Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius. Stoicism operates on the principle that life is unpredictable; but we can absolutely determine the way we respond to situations. Logic comes before emotion. Emotions are like alcohol: they destroy more than you want them to. If you can remain cool, calm, and collected when having a setback, you'll be more alert and better equipped to make the right choices. This goes for when you're having successes too, by the way. Ask a world class athlete. Intense emotions end in a red card. Game over.



THE POWER OF NOW

A recurring trait among world class athletes is that they are very good at focusing on the task at hand. Be in the moment. If they focus on winning the game, they're putting themselves into the future. If they don't quickly recover from a mistake, they're stuck in the past. Without a focus on the main task at hand. Do you see the parallels with a salesperson? Being in the now allows you to gather your wits for what is happening at that very moment. Fear and worry are products of the past and the future. That's your mind warning you about things that aren't happening now and probably never. And you'll be the last to let that happen, right? Not to mention that you'll be doing it to yourself.



ANYWAY...
MAKE IT COUNT.

