

Book Notes - **Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long Term Fulfillment** by George Leonard

If you don't have a chance or the time to read the book, here are my notes. If you have questions or would like to discuss the book or the topic of mastery - feel free to email me at bart@bartsellshouses.com.

To open the book George says that,

“We fail to realize that mastery is not about perfection. It's about a process, a journey. The master is the one who stays on the path day after day, year after year. The master is the one who is willing to try, and fail, and try again, for as long as he or she lives.”

Which reminds me of the Bruce Lee quote, “I fear not the man who has practiced ten thousand kicks one time, but I do fear the man who has practiced one kick ten thousand times.”

I've got a really interesting Bruce Lee book for you over at the blog. The book is called Letters of the Dragon - and is a compilation of his personal correspondence with friends and family members.

If you're a fan of the Dragon make sure to grab a free copy of the book over on the blog.

Now back to George and his fantastic book on Mastery.

If we have any desire to reach our personal greatness, we **MUST** master the concept of Mastery. And George Leonard, a life-long learner, teacher, author, and Aikido master is our ideal teacher.

This book is packed with simple, yet profound truths aimed at helping us re-orient ourselves from ineffective Dabbler, Obsessive and Hacker approaches to life - to one of Mastery.

And you know how I feel about Mastery. The simplest explanation for personal greatness is Self-Mastery, which is a magical combination of self-awareness, self-discipline, and self-love.

Life's too short for anything other than our best, and we don't want to find ourselves with our proverbial pants down - lying on our deathbed and in walks the person we could've been - the person we should've been.

Oh, hell no!

Not me and certainly not you. We've got each other's back in our pursuit of personal greatness and self-mastery.

As the author says,

“We all aspire to mastery, but the path is always long and sometimes rocky, and it promises no quick pay off. So we look for other paths, each of which attracts a different person.”

And those three other paths? The Dabbler. The Obsessive. And the Hacker.

- The Dabbler: Gets really into something for awhile and loves the quick results but the moment things fade, he/she's off to the next new thing—rationalizing that it just wasn't a good fit. Hence, no mastery.
- The Obsessive: A bottom-line type of person who wants to get the golf swing right on the first lesson and, when results start to slow, pushes even harder to make it work, ignoring the fact that plateaus are part of the path of mastery—pushing and pushing mercilessly to create a continuing upward curve. Then? A sharp, sharp decline. Hence, no mastery for the Obsessive.

- The Hacker: After sort of getting the hang of something, the hacker is content to stay at a plateau—never really improving his skills beyond the first basic level. Hacking, hacking, hacking. And of course, no mastery.

You can find these three alternatives to mastery in the real estate agent world all day long. I've had at least one of each type on my team at any given time and on a few occasions I've had all three types on the team at the same time.

Can you think of some examples of how you may have shown up as a Dabbler, Obsessive or Hacker?

In your real estate career? In your hobbies? In your relationships?

I know I have. I know I still do. I've done all three just in here with you over time with Real Estate Good Life.

DILIGENCE

As George asks and answers: "How do you best move toward mastery? To put it simply, you practice diligently, but you practice primarily for the sake of the practice itself."

This statement reminds me of my pal Seth Godin. Seth is the author of my favorite marketing books and has helped me over the years recalibrate my thinking away from instant gratification and back to the work.

Do the work for the love of the work, let go of the angst created by the obsession with the outcome. We sell ourselves short all the time when we justify throwing in the towel and quitting because we are fearful of failing. From Seth Godin and Dan Kennedy is where I get the Good Life Principle: Patient Persistence. Those words individually are at odds with each other aren't they? Combined they create magic.

Work patiently. Work persistently. Do the work. One foot in front of the other. If you fall off the horse, dust yourself off and get back in the saddle.

Don't wave the white flag and surrender. Raise the black flag!

Sometimes you have to spit on your hands, raise the black flag, and slit some throats!

Hahahahaha!

That statement right there upset one of my email subscribers once. He was triggered from a podcast episode I published, where in it, I defended President Trump.

He of course missed the point, he missed the meaning of the podcast which was clearly stated. I would've published the same message defending President Obama.

I'm not a republican or a democrat. I'm an American. An American that worships at the altar of his own Mission. My mission is to help real estate agents reach financial independence.

Because this guy was already triggered by my defense of Donald Trump he read my email about slitting throats, copied just that sentence from the email and published it on the Bart Vickrey Real Estate Facebook page with a one star review along with a asshole based commentary of the type of guy I am.

Anyway, got off track - as per usual.

Seth Godin taught me to be patient and be persistent. He also said to me, "Everything changes when you optimize for happy customers."

Which is exactly what you'll be benefiting from with me, the podcast, the blog, and the emails.

I get excited often and want to try and force you into my coaching program. The least expensive - most valuable - real estate agent coaching program in the world. Realestategoodlife.com

But I don't have to force anything. All I have to do is stick to the message, practice patient persistence over time, and deliver you the most value possible.

We get impatient though, don't we. (bratty voice) "I want results and we want them now!"

The path to mastery, however, isn't about the high we feel after a motivational seminar or one great Instagram quote. It's about showing up. Practicing. And mastering something we care about as we diligently, patiently, and persistently do the work.

How are you doing on that front? Do you get really into something for a week (or two or three) and then kinda fade? That's not gonna get us very far.

I see it all the time with Good Life members. They launch the newsletter, publish for a month or two, maybe three, and then start to fade off... falling silently down the easy path to mediocrity.

There's one thing we'll never be able to avoid when pursuing greatness and building a successful agent business... and that one thing is the work. The hard work. It cannot be shirked, side-stepped, or avoided. Do the work.

In the first part of this two part book notes we began discussing George Leanoard's wonderful book Mastery.

George was telling us about how most of us spend our entire lives desiring Mastery but never achieving it because we wallow around in wankerville as a Dabbler, Obsessive, or a Hacker.

We discussed the first prerequisite to Mastery with the word Diligence which is described as the patient and persistent pursuit of the work. Not for result's sake - but for the love of the work, for the purpose of the work.

Now let's continue with part two of the book notes and start with the topic of Endless Climaxes.

"Say what, Bart? This isn't that kinda show you sicko!"

No, not that type of climax. Get your mind out of the gutter.

George describes endless climaxes as one of the many monkey wrenches that causes mopishness.

The path to mastery involves plateaus—often long ones—where nothing appears to be improving and, in fact, can be pretty boring in a lot of ways.

We don't want to be sold the truth, the truth of hard work and sticking to the path. We want instant gratification and endless climaxes.

Leonard says: "In all of this, the specific content isn't nearly as destructive to mastery as is the rhythm. One epiphany follows another. One fantasy is crowded out by the next. Climax is piled upon climax. There's no plateau." As Leonard points out, we're bombarded with images of "endless climaxes"—after a second and a half of work, it's Miller time!

He advises: “If you’re planning to embark on a master’s journey, you might find yourself bucking current trends in American life. Our hyped-up consumerist society is engaged, in fact, in an all out war on mastery.”

Let’s take a closer look at how we can deal with that challenge, starting with:

LOVING THE PLATEAU

Goerge says, “Goals and contingencies are important. But they exist in the future and the past, beyond the pale of the sensory realm. Practice, the path of mastery, exists only in the present. You can see it, hear it, smell it, and feel it.

To love the plateau is to love the eternal now, to enjoy the inevitable spurts of progress and the fruits of accomplishment, then serenely to accept the new plateau that waits just beyond them.

To love the plateau is to love what is most essential and enduring in your life.”

Trust the process.

Have you ever experienced a time where you just fell in love with the PROCESS of learning? The process of discovery, of getting better, of being curious and excited enough to follow the steps necessary to get you even a few feet closer to personal greatness.

Again, goals, Missions, and forward-looking improvement are an important part of the process, but to achieve mastery, we MUST learn to love the plateaus—those times when we may or may not be seeing external rewards but when we can revel in the subtler joy of doing our best moment to moment to moment.

Let's love the process. And in the long-run, to paraphrase Viktor Frankl, success will follow us precisely because we had forgotten to think about it.

This section of the book, on loving the plateau reminds me of another great book with a similar concept - and that is, *The Dip* by Seth Godin. I'll have to share my notes with you on that book soon as well.

Next in *Mastery*, Leonard delves into **Practice**.

“A practice (as a noun) can be anything you practice on a regular basis as an integral part of your life—not in order to gain something else, but for its own sake...

For a master, the rewards gained along the way are fine, but they are not the main reason for the journey. Ultimately, the master and the master's path are one. And if the traveler is fortunate—that is, if the path is complex and profound enough—the destination is two miles farther away for every mile he or she travels.”

Wow. That is a slap to the head isn't it? Let's be real for a moment. Do you really practice anything? Let alone HAVE a practice? If we intend to be a master of our lives—in our personal development, our personal and business relationships, our work, our hobbies—we need to practice the skills inherent to mastering that subject AND make that practice a practice.

Practice as a noun. It's a powerful concept. Can you make your self-mastery and personal development a practice? Create rituals around your meditation or journaling or reading or exercising so that it's not a “when I can find time” kinda thing but a fundamental part of you? A practice you honor on your path to mastery.

You've heard the term law practice or dental practice - what about for us? Do we have a real estate practice, or we building an actual business, are we developing and mastering our skill sets in order to have a continuously improving real estate practice?

Or are we just dabbling, messing around, acting like we're working, going through the motions but never taking any real actions - being constantly reactive and rarely proactive.

"Are we talking about practice?"

Well yes, Mr. Iverson we are indeed talking about practice. Because as they say, how you do anything is how you do everything.

How do you do... anything?

A phenomenal book about practice is the sublime work of Malcolm Gladwell titled Outliers. --- better dig those notes out and share them with you on the blog.

The next section discussed in the book is:

SURRENDER "The courage of a master is measured by his or her willingness to surrender."

That sentence from the book reminds me of one of my favorite thoughts from Seneca's Letters from a Stoic. Seneca says: "You can only acquire it successfully if you cease to feel any sense of shame." And: "You cannot successfully acquire it and preserve your modesty at the same time."

How do we expect to learn something new if we aren't willing to look like wobbly legged doe learning to walk for the first time?

Aside from the Jaws movie triggered fears of the water, and drowning, the reason I never learned to swim until just eight or nine years ago - was to protect my fragile ego from looking like splashing around spaz face while attempting to learn to swim.

How do you look cool while simultaneously learning something fundamentally awesome?

Two words: You cannot.

So we need to get over ourselves, surrender and have fun falling on our faces and looking like the fool on our wizard like way to meaningful mastery..

As usual, we need to brush ego aside - get to the doing - and go for it! Don't be afraid to surrender to your Mission.

Mommy's alright - daddy's alright
They just seem a little bit weird
Surrender - surrender - and let's find our way to Mastery

Okay next, **INTENTIONALITY**.

George says, "It joins old words with new words -character, willpower, attitude, imagining, the mental game but what I'm calling intentionality, however you look at it, is an essential to take along on the master's journey."

Intentionality. Intent. It's one of Leonard's "keys" to mastery. Do you have a clear vision of your ideal Mission? And do you appreciate the habit of purposeful intention combined with the power of visualization?

Leonard believes strongly in both and shares this awesome quote from Arnold Schwarzenegger:

“All I know is that the first step is to create the vision, because when you see the vision there—the beautiful vision—that creates the ‘want power.’ For example, my wanting to be Mr. Universe came about because I saw myself so clearly, being up there on stage and winning.”

“Get to the chopper!” hahahahaha! Not the best Arnold impersonation but you get the idea.

Next is **HOMEOSTASIS**.

You know that thermostat you have in the house? It keeps the temperature within a set range? Bringing you back to the “homeostatic” point you selected?

Well, Leonard makes the point that, over a lifetime of certain habits, we’ve created our own little homeostasis in our lives. And when we change, even for the better, we’re going to feel a natural tug back to how things were.

As they say, the bulk of the fuel used in a trip to space is in the lift-off phase when the rocket needs to escape the gravitational pull. Same thing here.

So, here are some tips from Leonard on how to deal with the inevitable tug:

1. “Be aware of the way homeostasis works... don’t panic or give up at the first sign of trouble.”
2. “Be willing to negotiate with your resistance to change... The fine art of playing the edge in this case involves a willingness to take one step back for every two forward, sometimes vice versa.”
3. “Develop a support system.”

4. "Follow a regular practice." and 5. "Dedicate yourself to lifelong learning."

Leonard's description of Homeostasis reminds of the book: What got you here won't get you there by Marshall Goldsmith. It's a book about overcoming our unconscious annoying habits that keep us from true success and practical instructions on how to gather feedback about our blind spots which plays into one of our superpowers doesn't it?

If the key to an awesome life is Self-Mastery - and we know that self mastery is a magical combination of self-awareness, self-discipline, and self-love - we accept that each of the three ingredients can be considered superpowers.

And the first super power on that list is self-awareness. Without self-awareness we can NEVER realize the tethered tug of homeostasis - which prevents us from straying too far from our normal, from our average from our mediocre existence.

Or as Good Life member Tom Miller once brilliantly explained to me... from our pattern. Tom said, don't judge people by their potential, judge them by their pattern.

Which harkens back to what George Leonard reminded us - how you do anything is how you do everything.

If you want more but lack the self-awareness that you keep repeating the same start, stop, and quit pattern... you'll never get anywhere and you'll reaffirm what Einstein told us, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

Here at the Good Life we are on a Mission to self-mastery. As real estate agents working in the greatest small business opportunity in the world,

often we overlook and or take our opportunity for granted - never fully grasping the forest through the trees.

PITFALLS ON THE PATH

“It’s easy to get on the path of mastery. The real challenge lies in staying on it.” How true is THAT?!? How many times have you started a new program and then burned out and/or switched courses?

A lot? Yah. Me, too.

Leonard points out some pitfalls. My personal favorite? “Obsessive goal orientation. As pointed out numerous times in this book, the desire of most people today for quick, sure, and highly visible results is perhaps the deadliest enemy of mastery.”

We discussed this one before but I’m putting it here as a friendly reminder.

Are you focusing too much on your goals and not enough on your consistent action!??

I remember what Russell Simmons once told me, “I know some people say ‘Keep your eyes on the prize,’ but I disagree. When your eyes are stuck on the prize, you’re going to keep stumbling and crashing into things. If you really want to get ahead, you’ve got to keep your eyes focused on the path.”

Another pitfall? Laziness. Leonard defines it for us as: “Disinclined to action or exertion; averse to labor, indolent; idle; slothful.”

We know when we're being lazy. As Leonard says, practicing mastery is the absolute best solution to the problem.

My experience? Just do what you say you're going to do. Again and again and again. So often when I get stuck (which often) I just stop - breathe - take a minute to slow down - and then JUST do something. Even if it's the tiniest of actions that are in alignment with or associated with my Mission... I do something - and it works.

MASTERING THE COMMONPLACE

“Could all of us reclaim lost hours of our lives by making everything—the commonplace along with the extraordinary—a part of our practice?” I love this practice. Why not make every moment an opportunity to express our mastery? Whether you're driving to the office or discussing a routine home inspection with a buyer or taking care of a task that should've been handled by the other agent: why not take advantage of the opportunity to practice bringing your best to the moment?

GETTING ENERGY FOR MASTERY

“A human being is the kind of machine that wears out from lack of use. There are limits, of course, and we do need healthful rest and relaxation, but for the most part we gain energy by using energy... It might well be that all of us possess enormous stores of potential energy, more than we could ever hope to use.”

That's beautiful. How about you? Are you playing full out? How can you step it up a notch or two?

Leonard offers a variety of tips to get energy for mastery. Some of my favorites:

- Set priorities and make decisions. He says: “Indecision leads to inaction, which leads to low energy, depression, despair.” What have you been putting off making a decision on? Make a decision. Get clear on what you’re going to do. And do it.
- Take action! As an aikido master, he says: “It’s instructive to watch the immediate surge of clarity and energy during training that comes from the simplest act of writing one’s name on a notice.” Love that. What notice do YOU need to write your name on?!?
- Get on the path of mastery and stay on it!! This is perhaps the surest way to fuel your energy. As Leonard advises: “Much of the world’s depression and discontent... can ultimately be traced to our unused energy, our untapped potential.” How can you tap more of your potential today?!?

As we set off on our path of mastery and practice developing our (noun) practice, let us remember the wisdom of Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt therapy: “I don’t want to be saved, I want to be spent.” So... How will you choose to spend your precious energy, my friend?!?

If you’ve enjoyed these book notes - you’ll love ALL the notes coming your way in the next weeks and months. Dozens upon dozens of them!

Have a great day my friend!