

Antoine Geerinckx

# 80 Tips for Young People



The things I wish I'd known  
when I was somewhere  
between 16 and 30

TITLE  
BOOKS



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### **Before reading this book: a disclaimer**

All these tips are based on my personal experiences. They're totally subjective, personal, and sometimes weird. I'm not responsible for what you do with them, and there's no scientific proof that the way I see things in my slightly twisted mind will really help you.

As a climate activist and social entrepreneur, I'm often approached by t(w)eenagers looking for meaning and purpose in their lives. They are often torn between their dreams and what society expects of them. They are like scouts in a dark forest with only their granddad's compass to guide them. I was like that once, too. Now, looking back, I've made a list of the things I wish I'd known when I was that age.



**If youth knew,  
if age could**

(Henri Estienne)





# DON'T CHASE

## 01

The first thing you should do is give your “happiness” books to charity—or throw them into a bonfire in the company of good friends. Happiness is overrated, and sadness has its place in a happy world. Your sad moments will show you how to appreciate and cherish the happy ones. Embrace sadness, and you will be happy.

# HAPPINESS



# 02

## **RELY ON YOUR ELDERS**

We all realize this too late. If you're young and passionate about something and have the guts to make it happen, the sky is truly the limit! Why? Because many older, more experienced people—managers and investors—will recognize a spark they may or may not have had in you and will want to be part of your project or help you in some way. But a word to the wise: don't give your project or idea away! Define your idea, structure your vision, mission, strategy, decide what to do, then go for it... (while leveraging the experience of your elders).

# NOTHING GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN

03

Unfortunately, we tend to complain (a lot) when things don't go as planned. Honestly, get used to things going wrong, and the fact that very few people will really care. Sorry, I know this sounds harsh, but welcome to the real world. Life is not a Disney movie where you know the good guy will prevail. Once you accept the fact that plans often fail, you'll become more resilient and ready to accept change. And it gets even better. If you accept this fact, you'll be prepared to pivot and bounce back faster than your peers. In short, you'll be able to adapt quickly and survive in this tough world.

**"I LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER."**  
Colonel John "Hannibal" Smith, The A-Team

# SO PLAN ON IT\*

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\* I got this quote from Meg Zany, an L.A. based street artist I admire for her meaningful messages.

# 04

## DON'T BE A FOLLOWER

“I follow this person and that person...”  
Really? You’re not a sheep! Some reality stars have more than 280 million followers. So much precious headspace tied up with meaningless and empty (sponsored) “content.” Ask yourself why you follow this or that person or brand and try to understand the real answer. If you’re not really learning anything from them, unfollow them now. Every minute, every hour you waste numbing your brain by following others and their ideas and their lives is an insult to you as a massively creative human being. Imagine all the minutes, all the hours, all the days you could be investing in creating your own path, your own ideas, your own inventions—and earning your own followers.

# TRY THINGS YOU

## 05

There are so many things (sports, hobbies, and more) I didn't like—until I tried them. So, try something you don't think you'll like (and I don't mean dropping acid). Try it once, twice, and if you still don't like it, change up the people you try it with. Sometimes it's just because you're not with the right people. If you still don't like it (after making a real effort), you can give up. At least you tried and know why you don't like it. Knowing what you truly don't like is a major asset! The sooner you know, the sooner you can focus on what you do like and master it.

# DON'T LIKE

# 06

## WHAT WORKS FOR OTHERS...

...won't necessarily work for you. A lot of people will tell you they love doing this or that and they'll try to convince you that it's the shit. Instead, create your own path. Don't go to law school just because all your friends are going. Form your own opinion and vision of yourself for the future. As one of my friends (Cédric Dumont, keynote speaker and wingsuit magician) often says, "become the architect of your life." Remember, once you fake your way into something you don't really like, it will take years to redirect yourself towards the thing you were made to do.

# FIND YOUR

07

Your “safe heaven” is a place where you feel at home, where you can be yourself. It can be a physical place (like your home or out in nature) or a social setting (like being with family and friends). It’s the place you can always go back to when times are tough to feel safe and revived. Make sure you have one. Find one or build one because there will be tough times to get through.

My safe heaven is anywhere by the ocean where I can hear waves, surrounded by good company.

“SAFE  
HEAVEN”\*

*\* I changed ‘haven’ to ‘heaven’ because surely it must be heaven.*

# 08

## RESPECT YOUR BODY AND BRAIN!

Cliché alert: “You only have one body.” “You are what you eat.” “Healthy body, healthy mind.” You get the idea. Unfortunately for junk food addicts and reality TV junkies, these statements are true. At your age, you probably feel invincible. I felt that way, too, until a few friends died or nearly died in car accidents, avalanches, or from alcohol poisoning. They’re still paying the price today. They’re 40 now and probably have another 40 years to go in a body they messed up.

Then there’s your brain, which has a positive or negative impact (you choose) on your body. But your body also has a positive or negative impact (you choose) on your brain. **That’s why you need to take care of both.** If you rot your brain too much (by binge-watching reality TV, reading celebrity gossip blogs, doomscrolling, or being jealous), you won’t improve your mental wellness. Instead, you’ll feel increasingly empty.



# DON'T EXPECT

09

If you don't expect too much from others, you won't be disappointed. Or at the very least, you'll set the right expectations. Otherwise, it can blow back up in your face. Some people expect too much from others and are often let down. So, set low (if not realistic) expectations and you will hopefully be pleasantly surprised! 😊

TOO  
MUCH  
FROM  
OTHERS

# 10

## GET A MENTOR (OR TWO)

Find someone you admire who can teach you something. Start by looking around you. Once you've found them, say that you admire what they do, and ask, "Could you please free up some time to answer a few questions I have about my career?" Do your research and find out as much as possible about them. They will give you their time, but they will cut it short if you ask too many stupid questions\*. Here are a few good ones to start with: What would you change about your career? What would you have done differently? What are 3 key tips or things you have learned? This is how I feel about my current situation, what do you think? This will create a connection, and they will probably be happy to give you some advice, career support, and connections... all for free ;-). Just remember to say thank you and to pass the kindness on.

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*\* Some people say there are no stupid questions, only stupid answers. But I can assure you there are stupid questions for people who give you their time.*

# BEWARE OF

11

They take up a lot of space, always complaining and imposing themselves. They can be really nice—sometimes too nice—and those bright spots will keep you coming back. They will try to control you and organize your life. Then suddenly, they can become very mean for no reason or because you don't fit into their plan anymore. These mood swings are not good for you. Like anyone with some emotional intelligence, you'll think back to try to understand what you did wrong to deserve such treatment. But you did nothing wrong. If this sounds familiar, you're too close to an energy sucker. Back away.

# ENERGY SUCKERS

# 12

## NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU'VE COME FROM!

**TAKE THAT (BEST BOY BAND EVER,  
LOOK THEM UP)**

I promised myself I wouldn't use classic, overused quotes from the Dalai Lama, Mark Twain, Cicero, or Gandhi. I kind of like using a 90s boy band lyric as my cheesy quote of the day. Seriously, it's important to acknowledge where you come from, and if at some point in your life you can give back to your community, please do it. Unfortunately, sometimes you might feel ashamed of where you come from, like it's not in line with your ambitions... Or ashamed of your parents because you don't think your new crew will think they're cool enough. Imagine if you had the guts to say to your friends, "My parents are so cool, they love me for who I am!" Accepting where you come from makes you real and unique. Rejecting your roots, on the other hand, will hurt all the people you knew, and you might lose one of your "safe heavens." People connect with real people, not fake ones inventing fake origin stories. Fake people attract other (uninteresting) fake people. By not fussing about where you come from (by being chill about it), you can connect with other real people on your way to wherever you're heading. This is so much more fun.

# THE BEST IS

13

I've believed this for as long as I can remember. It's always easier said than done, but if you can live with this phrase as a refrain through the ups and downs in your life, you'll be invincible. If you're reading these tips, you're probably no younger than 16 and no older than 30. Things are looking pretty good right now, aren't they? 😊

Every period in your life has its own beauty, you often just need to find it. But don't look back too often or have regrets, unless you're learning something from them. Don't wait for the best that's yet to come, either—the future will be here faster than you think. Savor every moment.

If you're older than 30, well, I hope intellectual activity will balance out the eventual loss of physical strength, stamina, and aptitude. If you feel so inclined, share your tips on how to compensate for the decline after 45 using #80tipsforyouth or #IwishIdknown (ask the younger people in your life about this hashtag stuff 😊).

# YET TO COME

# 14

## IMPATIENCE IS LIKE A FIRE IN THE WIND

It burns too fast. A lot of energy is lost without using the fuel to the fullest. Sometimes it's good to be excited to move forward, but not impatient. If you say, "I want this, and then that, and afterward I want this other thing ASAP," and then suddenly you have it all, you'll still feel the same emptiness. That's because you moved too fast and forgot to **enjoy the ride!**

# THERE'S NO

15

When Sean Combs (known at the time as Puff Daddy) wrote the song *I'll Be Missing You* in 1997, my advertising teacher, Tony Bodinetz — the dude who created the “Probably the best lager in the world” tagline for Carlsberg — started his lecture with a phrase I’ll never forget: “There’s no one best way to do advertising.” It just felt so liberating! This phrase gives us the freedom to do things our own way. I believe it’s the same in life. “There’s no one best way to live your life.” Don’t follow a stereotypical path for your life, family, or success (whatever that means). There is truly no one best way to live your life or do your job! Feel how free you are when you master this thought. Check out contingency theory! There is no one best way. Just stick to your values and purpose.

# ONE BEST WAY

# 16

## YOUR FRIENDS' LOVERS ARE OFF LIMITS

I'm far from perfect, but this is a golden rule I've never broken. It has allowed me to keep my friends and build lasting, trusting relationships. Knowing you're your friends' rock gives them a great sense of comfort and gives you such a great feeling, too. If the person your friend is with is interested in you, look them in the eye and tell them: "I would never hurt my best friend for a kiss or a hookup!" There are nearly 8 billion people on this planet, all beautiful in their own way. So why take a risk on the one who would get you in trouble and ruin a great friendship? It'd be like a nuclear disaster. Steer clear. Don't insult your values, your friendships, or your intellect. Don't be a loser and keep your hands off.



# 17



## Take cold showers

Check out the free Wim Hof training videos on YouTube (he's also known as "The Iceman"). Build up your cold shower ritual in the morning to boost your energy and resilience (and provide a host of other health benefits). Start your shower at the usual temperature but slowly reduce the heat until you end with a cold shower. After a while, you'll be able to take a cold shower from the start. You'll become a Viking—with brains. At the same time, you'll consume less energy to heat the water and lower your CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, reduce your climate footprint, and save on your utility bill. It's good for you and the planet!

# 18

## **EXCUSES ARE FOR LOSERS**

I used to look for excuses when I lost something, when I didn't perform well, when I didn't meet expectations... Nobody cares about why you made a mistake or a gaffe. The sooner you realize that nobody really cares, the sooner you'll stop looking for excuses (it's such a waste of time and energy anyway!) and start taking responsibility. As soon as you start saying "I'm the only one responsible for this," you'll start getting better and be able to keep mistakes from happening.

# HONOR THE PEOPLE

19

Pretend you're at their funeral! But no need for tears, since they're still with us. People usually only honor their loved ones when they're dead, which is sad, because they'll never know how much you appreciated them. It's crazy to me. Honoring them when they're alive will make them (and you!) feel so good. Think of the people you love, the people who have helped you, who inspire you—and show your gratitude. Do it soon and do it well. These moments define who you are and who you want to be.

YOU  
LOVE

# 20

## TAKE TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

At some point in our lives, someone we love will pass away. Sometimes we're lucky enough to see it coming. In those cases, it's crucial to do what you can to say everything you wanted to say before that person dies. Mend past conflicts and misunderstandings. It will build an interdimensional bridge (metaphorically, not scientifically, speaking) between you and those who are close to your heart. You will both be at peace, without regret. Live in peace—rest in peace.

# PUT SOME ART 21

## IN YOUR LIFE

[Underground] art\* is crazy—crazy people, crazy prices (but not always). It's so much fun, mind-opening, and (sometimes) wallet-shrinking. Cliché alert: beautiful things are one of life's greatest joys. So, buy or make art you like looking at. The art I have, at least most of it, puts a smile on my face every time I see it. Artists and their peculiar worlds are interesting. Sometimes when they describe their art, you might think they're either full of shit or the best salespeople ever. But if one thing is certain, artists are living their dreams and are very serious about their craft. Try to crawl into their minds. Use what you find as a counterbalance to our fact-driven or fake-news-driven world. Not everything about art is easy to understand, but why not give it a try? Take a walk on the wild side.

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\* The underground art scene is full of potential. Don't just look at the great classics. The next great artist might be that person standing next to you.

# 22



## Smoking kills and it sucks big time

When you use cigarettes, you smell bad and literally watch money go up in smoke. Smoking kills—slowly but surely. In the meantime, it takes its toll. First, you'll start to look gray, your fingers will turn yellow, you'll cough like you have pneumonia, and your teeth will turn yellow. You'll irritate everyone around you, having to go outside to light your cancer sticks. In short, you'll be a nuisance. You'll litter the world with cigarette butts and pollute 500 liters of clean water for every one you leave behind. To spare society the cost and the burden, it'd be better to find a bridge and jump off it —it's quicker\*.

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\* Please don't do this either, obviously. Just quit smoking and do something good with all the money you save.

# 23



## Embrace the OCEAN

Life as we know it started in the ocean. So, find your way back to it. It's therapeutic, gives us energy and heals our rat-race-obsessed souls. The ocean never leaves anyone untouched. Don't believe me? Just watch people when they're getting in or out of the water. They always have a smile on their faces. Respect and cherish our oceans!



# 24



## Let's go OUTSIDE

On average, the quality of indoor air is 3–5 times worse than outdoor air. In our often over-insulated houses and offices, the air doesn't get replaced frequently enough. There are high concentrations of pollutants like volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter (PM), and carbon monoxide (CO) chilling in your living room and even your bedroom. We spend 60% of our time at work (in the office) and probably 80–90% of our time inside (including sleeping). No wonder so many people suffer from cancer, diabetes, and more.

Spend as much time as possible outside. Don't just go out when it's sunny. Feel the elements—the rain, cold, wind, and heat—on your skin. You'll always feel amazing after a great day outside, and you'll sleep better, too. Sweet dreams!

Source: [Airscan.org](http://Airscan.org)



# FIND PLEASURE AND

## 25

As I explained earlier, actively chasing happiness will make you miserable. Pleasure and happiness are the result of contrasts. If you always have adrenaline rushing through your veins, it'll consume you. Then, when you suddenly don't feel that rush anymore, you'll be like compost, ready to feed to the worms. So, organize a fair share of highs and a fair share of lows—and then enjoy them. Look inside yourself, feel the contrasts, and enjoy.

*Here are a few examples:*

- *Going to a festival is great (high); you feel the music and bass pumping through your body. But after a few hours or a few days, you'll be exhausted from all the overstimulation. Then, your bed or quiet garden (low) might be the contrast you're looking for to help you recover.*
- *When you're out camping, you often just take basic food with you (low). Sleeping in a tent affects your sleep quality (low). After a few days of getting back in touch with nature, you'll really appreciate a well-prepared meal (high) and the nice bed (high) waiting for you.*

# HAPPINESS IN CONTRASTS

# 26



## Appreciate the small things

If you appreciate the little things, you'll always find beauty and wonder around you. We tend to tell ourselves we'll finally be happy once we achieve this goal or buy that expensive thing. It's good to dream big, but pleasure and happiness can be found every day in even the smallest things. Just look around you. Really take it in, and a whole new world opens up, one with so much going on where there's plenty to discover. Not convinced?

Talk to someone with cancer or someone who has lost their partner or spouse. They usually miss the small things they used to do on a daily basis (together). Just imagine if you couldn't chew anymore, or walk, or hear, or see. Or if you couldn't leave your room ever again... just imagine how it must feel for a few seconds. Yes, your parents may and probably have already told you this... but this is one thing they are soooo fucking right about.

# HOW DO YOU WANT

## 27

It's probably too early to think about this right now—I mean, your life's just getting started—but it's never too early to lay the right foundation. Think about it. **If you died tomorrow, how would you like people to talk about you at your funeral?** Do you want to be remembered as an untrustworthy prick? A villain from a cheap B movie? If you answered yes, put this book in a blender with a banana, some spinach, and some blueberries and drink up.

If not—and I thought so—good! Try to write down 3–5 things you want to be remembered for (there's some space at the end of this book). Maybe you want to be remembered as honest, funny, a free spirit, relaxed, well-educated, or respectful. Then try to act that way, in your own way, every day.

# TO BE REMEMBERED?



# 28

## **LIFE SUCKS SOMETIMES**

The sooner you accept this, the stronger you will get and the easier it will be for you to bounce back when you hit a snag. No need for too much introspection or finger-pointing. Just move on when you get struck by bad luck.

# DO A GOOD THING

29

Doing good every day doesn't mean you have to be like Mother Theresa. Help an old lady cross the street (just don't post it to IG or TikTok), give your seat to someone who needs it, give the money you were going to use to buy a Snickers to a poor person or street artist, clean up a beach, collect litter by a river... you get the idea. Every time you do good, your spirit will grow. You'll become a superhero of GOOD!!! Just imagine how much good you can do with one good deed a day! That's 365 good deeds per year!

# EVERY DAY

# 30

## DO A SILLY THING EVERY DAY (OR WEEK 😊\*)

As I explained earlier, happiness can be found in contrasts. Doing something good every day doesn't mean you can't do something silly, too. By doing something fun or dumb, you create shared memories forever, as long as you see the fun in it. 😊

Fart in the elevator (tip: do it silently for maximum impact). Shake your friend's soda before they open it. Write "I made you stronger" on a big rock and put it in your friend's backpack. Put a fake tattoo on your forehead and tell your parents it's permanent... Share your silly antics using #80tipsforyouth #dosomethingsilly #IwishIdknown

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\* For some, once a week might be enough 😊

# WHY ARE YOU

31

Kids ask “why?” a lot. And they grow up so fast! Why do we stop asking why? Is it because we’ve stopped growing? Ask yourself WHY regularly. If your reason for doing something doesn’t make sense or align with your values, expectations, or how you would like to be remembered, then take a timeout!

DOING  
THIS?

# 32

## EXERCISE IS YOUR FRIEND

Move your body regularly. It increases your dopamine and serotonin levels and boosts your mood. When you feel down, go outside, go for a run, and you might just feel better.

But be careful with extremes. Too much exercise can damage your body and long-term wellbeing, as you can get addicted to dopamine, serotonin, and other chemicals. Some athletes suffer from depression after they go “too far.” Don’t worry, the issue is usually the other way around. 😊 We do too little and sit too much. Remember, chairs and screens are the real killers today.

Exercise responsibly and enjoy it! Oh, and try to minimize doing sports that have a negative impact on the environment, climate, and biodiversity. Like stupid jobs, there are also stupid sports...



# DON'T TRY TO BE SOMEONE ELSE!

## 33

That person will be a fake. Heroes, stars, and influencers have a unique blend of experience, talent, hard work, chemistry, brain magic, culture, tension, trauma, love, and disappointment. Be inspired by your heroes, but don't try to copy them. You can't turn a banana milkshake into a strawberry almond shake, right? Look at those celebrity lookalikes you can hire for a night. They've wasted their whole lives trying to be someone they will never be! Such a waste of talent. Be your own person and create your own blend.

# IT'S NOT YOU.

# 34

## HAVE A FEW GOOD FRIENDS

Friendships need water like flowers do. You can't water the whole planet if you only have one bucket. Your water is your time, and you don't have an infinite amount, hence why you need to make time for a few really good friends.

Friends lift each other up, not pull each other down. Friends are not energy suckers. Give them your time. Celebrate their success. Be there for them when times are good and when times are tough—through thick and thin.

Some people get jealous when their friends succeed. They don't get it, and maybe you shouldn't be their friend. Every time a close friend succeeds, you rise with them, and they rise with you. There's always cross-pollination. Make a few rules for what true friendship looks like and talk about it over a few beers—it makes the discussion easier.

# MAKE

A

35

An environment where you can discuss anything (your plans, jokes, disasters, stupidity...) in complete confidence. Things you would only feel comfortable telling your "real" friends, who would never betray your trust.

(GOOD)

**FRIEND**  
**ZONE**

# 36

## **CREATE A ROMANTIC PARTNER ZONE**

(Preferably just one 😊)

A place where you can discuss certain things you can't talk about anywhere else: love, affection, tenderness, your dreams, your life (together), your fears, your insecurities...

# FEED YOUR

## 37

Or you will be food for others. Be curious about the world around you. It's a tough world out there, and your brain will help you recognize the signals when something is right or wrong. Feed your brain with the great thoughts of philosophers, scientists, economists, artists, explorers, and adventurers, because they thought about so much before you. This doesn't mean they're always right, but their wisdom will help you develop the right thinking reflexes (faster). Give yourself the edge you need to survive out there.

# BRAIN

# 38

## EVERYBODY HAS THEIR OWN DEMONS

Everybody struggles *with something*, so don't believe your way is the only way. Being aware that we are all (Black, white, poor, rich...) coping with our own demons will allow you to accept others as they are. Everyone comes with their own baggage, and you need to make sure you're ready to accept that. This will in turn help you accept your own demons and put them into perspective. Talk to people and listen. For example, just because a kid has rich parents doesn't mean they've had an easy life. Maybe they don't get any love or recognition from their super (financially) successful and busy millionaire parents, or maybe the pressure their parents put on them to do as well as they did was too high, when all they wanted to do was live simply and share the beauty of nature.

# DREAM

39

But don't get lost in the clouds.

I hate cliché “dream big” and “aim for the stars” quotes, but in a way, they're right. It's better to aim high than to aim low, otherwise you might end up with regrets. If you go big and fail, then at least you tried. My point is: when you dream big, don't be reckless. Nobody remembers the names of the people who failed! To realize your big dream, you need to be well-prepared. So, when you go BIG, make sure your skills and willpower match your dreams. Know who you are and what you can do. Then give it a good try. But remember that a mouse cannot become a lion...

# BIG

# 40

## **FOCUS ON THE BIGGER PICTURE**

Don't focus on the one thing that went wrong. When you take a step back and look around, you'll see that the other 80% (or more) is better than fine. Don't let the one or two dark spots in your day catapult you into a black hole. It's not easy to do, but at least start by being aware of it.



# SHARE YOUR

## 41

Solitude is a good thing—it can be healing—but it's so much more fun when good times and passions are shared. You'll walk away with stronger memories of them. The people who were with you during those good times will remind you of them! So, share the good times, and be there to witness others' good times, too.

# PASSION(S)

# 42



## Stay close to nature and you will never lose yourself

This is one of my personal favorites and is sure to make some of my colleagues laugh because I used to put it in my out of office message 😊.

Nature is a continuous cycle. No matter what, it evolves. Sometimes, it appears to be self-destructive, but after all destruction, new life emerges. So fascinating. It's a structured and disciplined evolutionary system. Night and day, the seasons, rain, clouds, sun, sometimes all at the same time. Storms followed suddenly by absolute calm. My silent source of energy and strength has been the ocean. It's as if my genetics and the fluids in my body constantly long for the ocean. The more we move away from nature, the more torn, sick, and mentally ill we become. Many of life's answers can be found in the beauty and cruelty of nature. Stay close to nature, and you will never lose yourself.

# 43



## Eat less

Look around you, obesity is becoming more and more common. Some aspects of our current lifestyles are (slowly) killing us. We eat too much and waste so much—approximately 50% of the food we produce is wasted. Luckily, more and more initiatives are addressing this issue. Eat less, but eat better. Go vegetarian (or even vegan), organic, seasonal, and local. These are the fantastic four. Sometimes people tell me: “Yes, but not everyone can afford good food.” According to them, good food is more expensive, but I’m under the impression it’s mainly junk food producers who make a lot of money. If their food is so cheap, how do they make so much?

I’m still waiting for a study to prove this, but I’m pretty sure that if you calculated the price according to nutritional value, you’d be better off with high-quality food. That being said, our food price benchmark should be set according to nutritional value, and not price per gram or kilogram. Otherwise, crooks will want to put in cheap additives, like (salted) water and other garbage, to make their food bulkier or give you more shit value for money 😊.

Skip a meal once in a while to remind yourself what it’s like to be hungry. So many people are.

# 44



## Stay away from gossip, lifestyle magazines, and influencers

They regularly share uninspired stories paid for by brands that want to exploit this moment you've taken for yourself. When you lower your defenses, they jump into your brain, finding something you don't have and saying it's the new "must-have." This creates a dissonance in how you perceive your current self by making you imagine an ideal self that owns this must-have stuff. It's a trick. You don't need it, they're just very good at making you believe you do, especially when you're feeling down, as it may fill a temporary emptiness. They will even pay your favorite athletes to wear/drink/use it, so it must be good, right? Not true. Landfills, our oceans, and trash incinerators are full of last year's "must-haves."

**DON'T**

# GROW UP

45

Of course, we all grow up—our bodies and society make sure of that—but don't lose your youthful soul or values. Fight for your beliefs, fight against injustice, don't accept the common or the ordinary, or you will lose yourself and one day you'll look in the mirror, asking yourself "Is this really what I've become?" If you grow up to be too far removed from what you really love, you'll be trapped. This is one of the reasons why you should take time to reflect on and make a "one-page plan" every year.

**IT'S A**

# TRAP

# 46

## **MAKE A "ONE-PAGE PLAN" (EVERY YEAR)**

Write down what you want to achieve this year, both personally and professionally. Having a plan will allow you to maintain a balance, keep your focus, and ensure you realize how much progress you've made. This, in turn, keeps you motivated and happy. Put your one-page plan somewhere you can see it every day, like your office desk or your bathroom mirror.

# TRUST

47

We all have some kind of inner voice that says, “come on, do it,” or “don’t do it, you idiot.” Learn to listen to that voice (assuming you have the right values, of course, this doesn’t work if you’ve always aspired to be a gangster). It’s your instincts saying, “no, bad idea.” Your instincts are built on all your experiences, brain food, education, rules, and observations. They could save your life, or at least keep you out of trouble.

# YOUR INSTINCTS

# 48

## LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

Mistakes are OK (as long as you're not an astronaut or a base jumper). They make you tougher and better. If you never make mistakes, you'll never learn how flexible your skills, boundaries, surroundings, and capabilities really are. If you start repeating the same mistakes, seek out advice, or check with your mentor. Try new things with the intention of learning from them.



# 49



## Travel (responsibly)

Traveling is one of the only things that makes you richer without owning stuff (friendship is another). Traveling is also one of the best tools (after education) for fighting racism. Fuel your soul with places, scents, colors, smiles, encounters, and stories, but limit your impact on the environment. Check your carbon footprint with [Greentripper.org](http://Greentripper.org), give back to nature, and respect the cultures you encounter. There is a growing movement to travel locally and fly less often. I agree with this, but it's crucial to discover (at least some of) the world and support local people and cultures. During my business travels in Africa, I quickly realized tourism was one of the only ways to bring money to the guy on the street (by buying fruit, local food, and services). The big money from natural resources and industry (like mining), energy, and agricultural exploitation rarely makes its way back to the average street vendor or local family.

# 50



## Take your time

There are books with titles like *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*. Really? When? And with what money? Don't go for fast travel, or you'll miss everything. It's like fast food, it looks good in the picture, but afterward, it will leave you with a bad taste and an empty feeling. Make a top 3 or top 5 list. Enjoy the planning as much as the journey. Take your time.



# PEOPLE

WHO ARE

NICE

51

TO

YOU

WHEN

YOU

ARE

My point here is that when you're young, you're uncertain, slow, clumsy, ugly (thanks, acne!) and not super smart. For businesspeople with busy schedules and a lot of responsibilities, you're barely worth any time at all. I remember that the people who were nice to me in my dumb years have proven over time to be good people. This isn't science and isn't applicable to everyone, but if someone is a jerk to kids (or animals), they (often) stay jerks their whole lives.

A KID ARE USUALLY

GOOD

PEOPLE

# 52



## Fight for your rights

Governments have a responsibility to protect their people from risk and danger. Decisions that are made (or not made) today have an impact on the quality of the air we breathe, the health and fertility of the soil we use to grow our food, the quality of the water we drink, risks linked to climate disruption, climate emergencies such as increasing extreme weather events, rising sea levels, droughts, floods and storms, and the list goes on. If something will impact your life and that of your younger siblings or children, then it's your right and even your obligation to stand up and say you disagree. Why can't we swim in or drink from our rivers anymore? Why don't we deserve the same safe climate our parents had? Why do we have to be satisfied with 40% of the biodiversity our parents enjoyed? Why do we have to eat GMOs and foods containing antibiotics or covered in pesticides? Fuck that!

# SHARE YOUR

53

(But don't be a whiner).

Share them in safe spaces and as much as is appropriate for your audience. Sharing feelings used to be seen as a weakness. But today, in a world of technological changes, operating systems, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things, feelings make us human and show that we are honest and trustworthy. People want to connect with the values you share when you share how you feel.

# FEELINGS

# 54

## HAVE SEX

It's good for you!

I recently read that young people today aren't really into sex anymore. Really? What a shame! Is it due to social media? Spending more of our free time looking at each other through a screen rather than in real life, less time touching each other or performing other romantic rituals? A lot of chemistry happens when two people connect, and I believe it's much more than what can currently be scientifically proven. When performed safely and with consent (please), sex (and love) have a lot of benefits! For your heart, your soul, your body, your sleep, and more.

# EROTIC CONTENT 55

...as long as you know it's not real.

There will be many phases in your life where your libido will go into overdrive. If you don't have a partner to relieve the tension, then erotic content might help stimulate and speed up the act of relieving your sexual drive, also called masturbation 😊.

It's free (never whip credit cards out for this) and healthy. There's no complex relationship, no hassle, no problems, no STIs ... Some need to masturbate more than others (I remember some even became experts at boarding school). But if you watch/read a lot of erotic content, it might give you a distorted view of sex, relationships, equality, respect, and love. Please remember that what you see is not reality if you want to have a normal, enjoyable relationship with your (future) romantic partner. Enjoy and consume responsibly.

IS NOT  
BAD...

# 56



## Get your own energy

The future is electric, decentralized, autonomous, and connected, especially for residents. Try to start making your own (solar) energy ASAP and/or get a shared heating system, if possible. The future is the combination of solar power and heat pumps, solar and electric heating, solar and hydrogen. Batteries will help temporarily store excess energy for later use. Ditch fossil fuels. “Natural” gas is still a fossil fuel!

Energy-efficiency wise, cities tend to offer high-rise buildings and housing that are usually much more energy efficient. But until these big cities bring nature back and solve the pollution problem, some or even many people will stay away, especially since remote work skyrocketed due to the pandemic.

We'll progressively move away from centralized, big production units transporting energy over long distances (and losing some energy along the way). Soon (I hope), we'll all be producers and users of local, decentralized green energy or co-owners of renewable energy production units—a new kind of freedom of co-ownership. Every time you turn on the lights or drive an EV or ride an e-bike, you'll know the power was produced responsibly. Take your power back!



# A DEAD HERO

57

Don't kill yourself trying to be a hero. Heroes are great! They fight all kinds of evil: tyrants, monsters, racists, fascists, criminals, deforestation, poachers, polluters... But heroes reach that status because they don't get killed in the first episode! By hanging around longer than one episode, you too can have a much bigger impact. So, don't get killed, so to speak!

# IS A WASTED HERO



# 58

## **BREAK THE RULES**

Especially if they make no sense and if they destroy the planet and your future. Again, don't get killed.

# COURAGE HAS

## 59

A few years ago, I bought a piece of street art by Meg Zany featuring Jane Goodall's face and the line: "Courage has no gender." I wanted to remind my daughter on a daily basis that gender does not matter. There are and have been many great and courageous woman shaping today's society, and there will be many more. It's not a man's world, it's a world for brave people!

# NO GENDER

# 60

## DRINK IN MODERATION

A good glass of wine, beer, gin, whisky, etc. can do wonders and create special bonds because it makes everyone open up a little (or a lot) more than usual. Some of the greatest moments, evenings, and memories may have started with a (few) glass(es). But everyone has lost family, friends, or loved ones due to these same glasses. And sometimes, before you know it, you might end up dealing with consequences you didn't expect (like accidents or STIs). So, stay in control and enjoy responsibly. Drink a maximum of 14 units a week\*. The only good thing about a hangover is that you can appreciate a normal day, feeling normal and doing normal things without a headache (see *Find pleasure and happiness in contrasts*).

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\* Source: NHS (British National Health Service).

# SA

61

(From the French word *savourer*)

Everything you put in your mouth has much more flavor when eaten slowly and when you consciously take the time to enjoy all the flavors, aromas, and senses it stimulates. I've always been amazed at how fast people can eat, as if they're rushing to catch an imaginary just-after-lunch train. Savor every bite and you'll eat less and appreciate simple meals and moments even more.

# VOR

# 62



Better is...  
just better

There's a French expression that cheap is expensive (*Le bon marché coûte cher*). Thanks to various studies we've conducted at CO2logic-South Pole, we've shown that the cheaper option is usually not cheaper over the total lifecycle of a product. That's why I believe that better is better. Buy better food (higher nutritional value by weight) and better clothing, because you'll need less of them. Work with better people and better companies. You'd be surprised at how fast we could change things, improve our lives and planet, and reduce our climate impact if all 8 billion of us made the same effort to be better.



# 63



## Don't buy from BAD companies

So many companies have proven time and again that they will prioritize profits over human health, climate change, or the limits of our planet (also called planetary boundaries). If you don't agree with these companies, then don't buy from them. Things could change so quickly if companies realized that human health, planetary boundaries, and fair pay were interconnected with what financial people call "profit."

# 64



## Smaller = smarter

As you grow up, you might think you need a mansion like Kim Kardashian or some other celebrity, with a garage for 10 big SUVs and enough rooms for the Chinese Army, to attract the attention of others. Guess what? What really attracts people is being free as a bird, without any material worries. Invest in something that allows you to have your own home without carrying a huge amount of debt on your shoulders. A small house and a small car mean less energy, fewer costs, lower negative impacts, fewer worries, and more freedom.





# DON'T BE A SLAVE TO THE

## 65

Don't sell your soul for a student loan or huge mortgage and, by extension, become a slave to the wage. I mistakenly fell into this for a while for our house, and I nearly got stuck in the "good job to pay off your loan" trap. I didn't really think about how much money I needed to build a house or how much I needed to set aside for everyday expenses. A loan that's too big will restrict your financial freedom and probably tie you to a job you don't really want for the term of the loan (often 20 years). When you want to launch your own venture, you'll hear, "Don't switch jobs, you make good money and you might not be able to pay back your loan if you change." This will restrict your quality of life and create all sorts of tension. Excess debt is possibly one of the biggest crushers of dreams and souls and killers of talent!

# WAGE\*

\* Nod to English alternative rock band Placebo.

# 66

## **INVEST WISELY, AND IN YOURSELF, TOO**

We often ignore our parents, but one of the best pieces of advice I received from my dad (a clever doctor) was to invest in yourself first: in your health, education, growth, talent, job, home—but without becoming a slave to the wage.

So, invest wisely in things you have control over. Good investments create financial and emotional freedom. “Smaller = smarter” (tip 64) + “Don’t be a slave to the wage” (tip 65) + “Invest wisely” are the essential foundations of (financial) freedom.

# UNITED

BY

67

Music caresses your ears and transports you to other places, moments, and cultures. It unleashes feelings, crazy dancing, and athletic performances. It unites us! So, celebrate music! Make a feel-good playlist and a feeling blue playlist (we all feel that way sometimes) and listen to others' playlists, too. Always have music and a book with you, unless you're out in nature. Nature is a book and music at the same time. Listen to the silence of nature. In silence, there is a lot of music.

# MUSIC



# 68

## WATER IS LIFE

60–70% of your body is made up of H<sub>2</sub>O. Make sure you hydrate with good water, or you'll slowly poison yourself. Apparently, the lower (in mg/L) the “dry residue”, or total dissolved solids, the better it is for your health. Stay away from soft drinks.

# BAL

## 69

This number makes me think of three things. The first one is too obvious, so I left it out 😊. The second is equality between men and women. It's crucial we treat all people equally. Just imagine starting life in a less democratic region or in a religion where women don't have the right to go to school, speak up, choose their husbands, or earn the same living even with the same qualifications. The third is BALANCE. Find the right balance in your life ASAP! Between work, free time, family, and friends, you are your own life-balancer! Losing your balance can be deadly for your soul, your motivation, and your passion. Always keep an eye on your balance and change or reset it when it doesn't feel good anymore.

# ANCE

# 70

## **Don't choose a UNIVERSITY or HIGH SCHOOL just because it's good**

It's not just about what you're going to study or where. It's about so much more. Yes, feed your brain with the best teachers and lectures you can find. But you're not robot #3468532, so what about the quality of life on and around campus? What about local internship or entrepreneurship opportunities? Is there room for your favorite sport or hobby? What about pollution and safety? Good food, health, and good company? Tour the campus before you go. If you're not the best student, hang out with those who are inspired. Join in extracurricular activities, meet people, open your eyes, and be curious. If you're not a leader, there might be a Bill Gates or Elon Musk in your year who's looking for exactly your complementary skills.

A

# PENSION,

71

Already? But retirement is sooo far away. I still believe this myself. But you don't want to be the Grasshopper in the famous *Grasshopper and the Ant* fable by Jean de La Fontaine (look it up 😊). You don't need to become a survivalist, but put some savings aside. After all, winter is coming. Know how much you would like or how much you would need to stay healthy and happy in old age. I have always remembered this fable and thought that Ant was a little tough on Grasshopper. If I were an ant, I would have welcomed the grasshopper and taught him some ant tricks. I would have helped him, and together, he'd have made my lonely ant life more fun!

# REALLY?

# 72 HIT THE BARS!

Apparently, towns and cities with more or better bars make people happier and more social. They're places full of potential for social cohesion! Meet your friends for a drink once in a while and engage in deeper conversations. It's amazing what you can learn from others when they're relaxed and a little buzzed. Call it barstorming. I've met great people in bars (usually before midnight 😊). Just avoid the tattoo shops on your way home after you've had one too many.



# SUPPORT GOOD

## 73

Always—even the ideas of people you don't really like. Their good ideas might put them back on the right path. When you hear an idea, give it a chance, be objective, and if it's good, congratulate the person who had it, challenge it a little where it could be improved, and share it (while giving credit) for free. Don't expect anything in return. Do it because you like the idea, and that's the kind of person you are.

# IDEAS

# 74

## BE GRATEFUL

Recognize what makes others (and you) feel good and be grateful for every good moment.

One day, I went snowboarding in the Alps with 3 beautiful women: my wife, Sevi, my good friend, Bec, whom I'd met as a student, and her friend Naomi, who is a model and one of Australia's best lesser-known female rappers 😊. I usually ride with "dudes," so I was a little worried.

Then I realized it was one of the best days I'd ever had. It wasn't planned, and I spent quality time with three fun and intelligent women, sharing a few schnapps between slopes in an old family-owned Tyrolean ski restaurant. When I realized how much fun it was for all of us to be together, I told them how I felt, saying it was probably one of the best slope days I'd ever had.

By recognizing and celebrating the good moments, they become even better. You engrave them into each other's memories.

Note: Don't force this.

Another note: You don't have to go skiing with 3 women or men to be thankful! As I explained earlier, be thankful for the small things in life, too.

# PLAY

75

They see right through you, but they can't express it yet! They will quickly hold an invisible mirror up in front of you, revealing whether you're patient, OK with mess, adaptable when it comes to noise, and more. Be attentive to how you feel when playing with kids. You might quickly learn things about yourself.

WITH

# KIDS

# 76



## Fuck living on Mars\*

I recently read that Elon Musk's objective for the colonization of Mars is to ensure the survival of humankind even after the potential destruction of our planet (when hit by a meteorite or some other apocalyptic disaster). I understand and respect that, but we have more immediate challenges on our hands. We're currently undergoing the sixth mass extinction, on our watch! The Mars billions could be better spent.

Our planet is beautiful. Look around, travel, spend some time in nature. It's nearly perfect, and the imperfections make it even more perfect. We'll probably send people to Mars one day, and people will be able to live there, but have you already seen the pictures taken on Mars? I would happily give you my ticket for a second life on Earth. If we want to be able to stay here, we'd better take care of this beautiful blue and green planet. And as we can read everywhere now: "There is no Planet B." Or maybe there is, but it will probably be full of stones and dust, and it'll suck big time!

\* Thanks to Dimitri Barbe at make sense agency for this great quote.

YOU ARE

ONLY

AS

GOOD

77

One of my close friends with limited athletic talent (you know who you are 😊) always brings up this saying when he beats me at ping-pong, surfing, or golf (thanks to more experience and wisdom). And it's so true! Don't lie back and talk about how good you were. Nobody cares. Live in the moment NOW, win or lose. What you did last defines how good you still are. The rest is forgotten (unless you were an Olympic champion and your prowess has been documented on YouTube).

AS

YOUR

LAST

GAME

# 78

## READ what you like

Reading sparks so much creativity and so many ideas, especially if you read nonfiction and autobiographies! The more you read, the more you activate this creativity. I've never had brilliant ideas while watching Netflix, Streamz, Hulu, Disney+, Amazon Prime, or any other streaming service. I usually watch Netflix to numb my thoughts so I can fall asleep. Of course, there are also many good documentaries on Netflix and other channels that bring you insights and expand or challenge your current way of thinking. Try to strike a balance between books and visual entertainment.

# DON'T ARGUE WITH 79

Sometimes, it can be fun to argue with people about things that trigger different feelings, points of view, and ideas. The rationale behind every argument might expand your perception and enrich your thoughts. People are very different, our views of things differ depending on when, where, and how we were born and raised. Experiences and encounters further shape our points of view. So, don't waste your time fighting. Avoid the negative energy that results from quarreling. Both you and the other person will be unconsciously irrational towards each other. Once you accept that people are very different and that you have to respect their opinions, and that you can't undo their 16 to 25 years of (un)education in the course of a 20-minute argument, you will grow and become better!

# IRRATIONAL PEOPLE

# 80

## **SEND LETTERS**

Emails, snaps, and text messages are fast. Just like fast food, they're quick, factual, have little charm, and, through the use of ridiculous emojis, promote the standardization of imagination. For magic and impact, try sending a letter or drawing to your family (parents, grandparents etc.) or a postcard for the less courageous writers. Of course, make sure what you're writing is worth the paper and postage you need to send it. Make it fun and enjoy it. Note: For the Britneys, just like with Instagram or Snapchat, don't send naked pictures of yourself. #nodickpics



# UNDER **PROMISE** AND

81

You were expecting 80 tips, and I've given you 85 😊. Don't you always feel great, like you got good value for your money, when you get more than you expected? The answer is usually yes, so try to apply this in your daily life, too, and the people around you will love it. This is, of course, not applicable to bad grades or bad news. 😊

# OVER **DELIVER**



# 82

## LOOK INSIDE MORE

Following the isolation caused by Covid, the war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, and the loss of biodiversity, our world today looks gloomier than ever. There's a huge spiritual trend now where people are trying to dive deep into their souls to address stress, relationship issues, anxiety, (mental) health problems, and more. A few techniques for doing things include yoga, breath work, and microdosing (taking small amounts of psilocybin). If you go the latter route, make sure that you're guided by professionals, as this is currently only legal in the Netherlands.

# THE MUST- SEE

83

American Pie, Road Trip, The Breakfast Club, Old School, Good Will Hunting, The Hangover, The Graduate, Top Gun 1 & 2, Friends, Flatliners, Dead Poets Society, The Theory of Everything, The Social Network, Cliffhanger, Freedom Writers, Warrior, The Internship, Sleepers, The Great Debaters, Wedding Crashers...

One of these is not like the others. Find the odd one out and post it on social media with a picture of this page using the hashtags #80tipsforyouth #oddoneout #IwishIdknown. Don't forget to name the movie! We'll send a present of 250 dollars or euros to one lucky winner, selected at random in an online lottery.

## STUDENT MOVIES/SERIES

# 84



## Sign the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty

The whaaaat? Non-proli...?

If there's one thing you should really sign for a better future, this is it!

I'll admit, there were clearly no brilliant marketers involved in the branding of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, as nobody really knows what 'non-proliferation' means (except maybe a few bookworms).

Maybe the Fossil Fuel Phase Out Treaty would've been better!

In any case, you can now support a treaty to phase out fossil fuels in line with the scientific consensus to keep global warming below 1.5 °C.

[www.fossilfuel treaty.org](http://www.fossilfuel treaty.org)



# SHARING IS

85

Feel free to share your life experiences and the tips “you wish you’d known” earlier using the same #80tipsforyouth #lwishldknown hashtags. If the response is strong, we could eventually share them in an upcoming book or on Instagram, TikTok, or whatever the next hot social platform is. If they’re really crappy, we could even write a “wall of shame” chapter. 😊

# CARING



# THANK YOU

To my mom and dad for doing a good job parenting a lost cause 😊

To my kids and wife for staying by my side and patiently reflecting myself back to me. This is for you! I hope you don't burn it or scroll right to the end. 😊

To my friends for being there and for their encouragement (and discouragement). You will recognize yourselves in many of these tips! Don't sue me. 😊

To my partners and clients for your support and for taking climate action. We're all in this together.  
#strongertogether #climateaction











# 80 Tips for Young People

**The things I wish I'd known  
when I was somewhere  
between 16 and 30**

Social entrepreneur and climate activist Antoine Geerinckx, cofounder and soul behind the CO2logic success story, was once (and sometimes still is) a dreamy, rebellious, and passionate teenager, a little lost on the road to adulthood, whatever that means.

Based on all the pitfalls he's encountered, all the mistakes he's made, and all the experiences he's had, he's drafted a set of 80 tips—the advice he would have liked to have received when he was somewhere between 16 and 30.

He shares his advice like an older brother you can talk to about anything (and sometimes, even, about nothing).

TITLE  
BOOKS

in partnership with

