Challenge

mission:

30 DAYS TO TURN YOUR LIFE INTO THE ULTIMATE VIDEO GAME

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Game Quitters Challenge

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www.gamequitters.com
Introduction

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This is just a sample of
The Game Quitters Challenge

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Introduction

You’ve decided to quit playing video games to get your life back and in Respawn you managed to do just that. But now what? Sure, you’ve removed games from your life and that was an important first step, but this was never about games in the first place—it was about a commitment you’ve made to start living your life to the fullest.

But how are you going to do that? You might not have social skills, or willpower, or any clue how to really get started. But I want to let you in on a little secret: Life is a game and YOU are the character, so over the next 30 days (and 30 missions), I hope to empower you to take these initial steps back into the game of life, because it’s a lot of fun when you start to play. 😊

After you quit playing video games many changes will occur in your life, and these changes happen in both in how you feel (your physiology) and in the world around you (your environment.)

In Respawn I introduced you to a few of these concepts and helped you start taking action to quit games themselves and begin establishing how life will exist now.

You accomplished this by first creating a greater barrier of entry to gaming, and in doing so we destroyed Loss Aversion—the tendency to strongly prefer avoiding losses to acquiring gains. Then we chose new activities to fill your time with and added structure through the use of a daily agenda.

To help with physiological changes you may experience we made sure to focus on being properly hydrated and exercising on a daily basis. And finally by integrating two specific mindsets, focusing one day at a time and on growing you set yourself up for success each and every day.

(If you haven’t read Respawn or completed each task, do so now.)

So now that you’re life is game-free, the question becomes... now what?

I mean, sure, you can replace gaming with new activities and use these to kill time, but for what?

When you quit gaming I don’t just want you to survive, I want you to thrive.

I don’t want you to resist playing games, but actually recover from them.

The truth is, it’s never been about games. Games were just a symptom of an underlying problem. They were just a way for you to fulfill your needs.

Now, as I’ve said before, it hasn’t always been this way and there was likely a time in your life where gaming was a positive—or, simply not a negative. But at some point that changed and since this moment you’ve slowly been coming to the decision you’ve made now, to quit.
Day 0

Recovery begins by acknowledging that you’re closing a chapter—one where you played games—and starting a new one—one where you don’t.

So it’s not that games are good or bad, or that they are fun or not, it’s simply that you have made a decision to close a chapter in your life and to start a new one.

And this is powerful. Our decisions are powerful.

One of the decisions you’ve made recently is to get honest with yourself. That whisper in your head that you should consider moving on from games has been there for some time, but it’s only now that you’ve truly begun to listen. And you haven’t only listened but also taken action. There’s a big difference.

Most people know what they need to do but it’s only the few who do that live truly remarkable lives. So from this point forward let’s continue to be honest with ourselves.

One of the ways we can do this is by recognizing that we did in fact have a lot of fun playing games. There’s no need to pretend otherwise. We had a blast, we met a ton of cool people and gaming meant something to us.

Yes, it has become problematic and it’s time to move on… but it will always be a chapter in our lives we will remember. Nothing about quitting games takes any of that away. And there’s surely nothing to regret. For many of us, gaming is something we grew up with and put a significant amount of focus and energy into. Sometimes even for a decade or longer!

We played hard, we studied and learned a lot along the way. We were dedicated to our craft. And that’s really incredible, you should feel proud of what you’ve been able to accomplish in gaming.

In life there will always be what ifs and buts. It is what it is.

I just want you to know by moving on from games that doesn’t take away what they meant to you. Just like when I quit hockey, something I poured my heart and soul into for over 15 years, that didn’t take away from all the memories, good and bad. At first it was hard to even watch hockey on TV, because the sport meant so much to me, but over the years it’s become easier and I look back on hockey as a great chapter in my life.

Gaming is no different. Because when you quit something that meant a lot to you, especially gaming, it’s easy to experience regret. Why are you punishing yourself for something you love? Why are you not enjoying games and having fun when you’re truly passionate about them?

But that doesn’t help us at all.
The truth is, unlike with hockey, when I quit gaming it wasn’t hard for me. Now, don’t get me wrong, that isn’t to say it was easy. And I certainly experienced many obstacles and difficulties, including a relapse 11 months after I quit where I played 16 hours a day for five months straight.

But that relapse taught me so much of what I’m sharing with you now, so I’m grateful for it. It allowed me to learn more about why I played and I’ve leveraged this to move on for good—I haven’t touched a game since. I don’t need to. It’s not that I couldn’t, it’s just that I closed that chapter.

The reason it wasn’t as difficult for me was because I fully acknowledged that I was closing a chapter in my life and moving on to a new one. And I really meant this. I wasn’t just saying it.

We all have our own reasons for why we are moving on from games, and regardless of what your reason is you are allowed to make that decision for yourself. Don’t ever let anyone else tell you that you shouldn’t quit playing video games because your reason isn’t valid enough. That’s not their place.

You are allowed to quit gaming for any reason whatsoever. And being that you are the only person who will ever live your life, you always get to the final decision on how you do exactly that nobody can ever take that power away from you.

So we are closing a chapter in our life, one with gaming, and moving on to a new chapter. And the best part is that you get to choose what this new chapter is going to be. You get to define that for yourself.

It can be anything.

You get to create it.

Right now it’s a blank canvas. You get to paint it.

Over the years I’ve found that part of the reason problematic gaming occurs is that it’s a way for you to check out from your life. It’s a way to escape. And sometimes this can happen because you’re living a life you aren’t very excited about. And gaming is exciting so you pour your time and energy into it—especially when you have free time.

It’s this notion of free time that is at the very core of problematic gaming. It’s not that you shouldn’t game in your free time—it’s free time after all. But when you are using gaming as an escape, it tends to occur after you’ve fulfilled your obligations for the day. I don’t mean responsibilities because for many of us who have issues from gaming we tend to neglect our responsibilities.

Or maybe that was just me. ;)

Obligations we still fulfill, at least to some degree. So what happens is we have an obligation to fulfill of going to school or work in the morning, and it’s mostly against
our will. We are being forced to go, it’s something we have to do. But we likely never chose it.

We didn’t choose to have to go to school all day, and with the societal pressures of college and university many of us can find ourselves studying a subject we are only half-heartedly engaged in. For those of us out of school, it’s common for us to be working a job we aren’t passionate about to pay the bills.

So what happens is we go and fulfill these obligations, and since they are happening to some degree against our will, when we come home we feel that much more justified to do whatever the fuck we want. And that tends to be gaming.

And there’s nothing technically wrong with this. The logic is sound. I’ve fulfilled my obligations for the day, now get out of my way and let me do what I want. But just because you can live your life this way, doesn’t mean you have to.

And there’s an interesting angle to it that unfortunately most people miss. And it’s this angle that I hope to inspire in you.

It’s the notion that you get to create the life you want. You get to take ownership for it. Up until now, you’ve been living the life someone else has designed for you.

You need to go to school and get good grades, so you can go to college and get a degree, so you can get a job working 9–5 to afford a house and a car. So you can then start a family and eventually after you retire at 60 you can go travel and see the world, or do anything else you’re passionate about.

Huh?

Maybe it’s just me but that typical life plan looks miserable. Some people love it and power to them, but that isn’t the way I’ve ever envisioned my life. And maybe you haven’t either. Either way, you’re about to embark on a new chapter. Until now you’ve been living your life unconsciously, going through the motions and playing games whenever you’ve been able to.

So now that you’re moving on from games, you have the perfect opportunity to take a step back and see your life from a new perspective.

What do you want it to look like? What is your vision?

Think of your vision as your north star, it’s meant to give you direction and guide your decisions. If you’re not sure what your vision is, don’t worry. It’s meant to evolve over time, so just take anything you’re feeling inspired by right now and start moving towards it. Keep an open mind to possibilities, and be conscious of any interesting opportunities that come your way.

When I first quit gaming, my vision was that I wanted to have a real social life. At the time I didn’t have very many friends, and the ones I did have were gamers—of whom I would now have little in common with.
Not only that, but I didn’t even know how to make friends. I wasn’t an anti-social kid, but after experiencing intense bullying throughout middle and high school I just kind of said fuck it. I still felt lonely though.

So when I quit gaming I wanted to learn how to make new friends. This is the vision I started with, and over time it evolved to me wanting to work for myself—I wanted to be my own boss and have the freedom to travel and work from anywhere I had wifi.

(Fun fact: I’m currently writing this in Bali, Indonesia, cause #yolo.)

But not only did I want to learn how to make friends and to work for myself, online from anywhere in the world, I also wanted to retire from winter (now I spend the winter in the beautiful California sun), to become a DJ, and to have an incredible relationship with a woman I’m passionate about (still working on this one!)

The point is, allow your vision to evolve over time. It will ebb and flow as your life expands and you learn more about yourself.

But your vision doesn’t only consist of things or experiences you want, although those are important too. The real secret about why you need a vision is that it gives you a sense of purpose. And if you’ve ever struggled with motivation (I have), you’ll want to know that motivation comes from a sense of purpose.

I’ll be honest, I used to struggle with feeling motivated, and still do sometimes. People would tell me to find my purpose and all that hippy hoopla, but it would only frustrate me because I could understand it logically, yes... finding your purpose sounds great!, but how?

And feeling frustrated would cause me to feel paralyzed and, you guessed it... less motivated. But I had a breakthrough that changed the way I saw purpose and motivation forever, and it came in the form of a short story:

Imagine you are in the desert and you have a forty pound bag to carry across to the other side.

... How motivated would you be?

Not very much, right?

Now imagine that forty pound bag is your son and he’s sick.

... How motivated would you be?

It’s a silly question, right? You wouldn’t even question whether you were getting your son across the desert or not. You would get it done. It’s just a primal reaction. You sure wouldn’t have to worry about whether or not you had motivation.

So what’s the difference? With your son, you have purpose. You have a reason to do what you need to do. And because of that your motivation is just, there. It’s not something you need to think about.
If you want to become more motivated you need to find a purpose, a reason to do what you want to do.

And what’s great is that in *A Man’s Search For Meaning*, Viktor Frankl shares that the last human freedom we have is our ability to give meaning to our circumstances. The last human freedom we have is our ability to define what our purpose is. We get to choose why we are doing what we’re doing.

**So often when we think about purpose we make these two mistakes:**

1. **We think purpose is a singular concept.** “Find your purpose” makes us think it can only be one thing. But what if you have more than one thing you enjoy? What if it changes? When in fact purpose evolves. It can be one thing or it can be many things. It’s not a singular concept.

2. **We think purpose magically comes to us.** When we actually need to define it for ourselves. We get to decide what our purpose is. It’s a choice. If we spend our time waiting around to find our purpose it will not come.

I learned this lesson in Christmas 2012. At the time my entire world had just crumbled in front of me: My business failed, I was broke, most of my friends weren’t really the friends I wanted (or needed), my trip to Costa Rica turned out to be a disaster and to top it off, my girlfriend left me.

This all happened within weeks of each other. I felt like shit. Even though I had made so much progress over the years, it appeared as if I was back to square one. I was depressed and had a difficult time getting out of bed every day.

*Why did it even matter?*

It’s hard to write about this time in my life and articulate just how badly I felt on a daily basis, but suicide was always on my mind. I just couldn’t take it any more.

One day I was standing in my living room and I asked myself an honest question: did I really want to commit suicide? Or was I just bluffing and in doing so, causing significant anxiety and stress on my spirit?

*What did I really want?*

I wanted to get better. I just wanted to feel better. So in this moment, as a thought experiment I asked myself: If I could get better, would I? If it was actually possible, would I do it? And of course the answer was yes. I did want to get better, I just wasn’t sure how. I looked across the hall at the mirror in my bathroom and visualized a mantra I could write on it that would serve as a reminder of this.

*If I could, I would.*
And let me tell you, this was a powerful experience. It was powerful because it reminded me of what I wanted—I wanted to get better—and that if that was what I wanted, it was ultimately my own choice to do so.

And so as Viktor Frankl shared, this became the meaning of my life. Although the situation I was in was rough, I still had the ability to define my circumstances and what they meant to me for myself. It wasn’t something that I could depend on magically happening—it was something I had to take responsibility for.

And since I didn’t know how to get better, I did the next best thing: I learned about it. Initially in my vision to get better I focused on how I could relieve the anxiety I felt on a daily basis, so I learned meditation, did a gratitude journal and made sure I was eating clean healthy food and exercising.

Prior to this if you told me to meditate or do a gratitude journal I would have thought you were some weird hippy dude. But when it was within the context of how can I relieve my anxiety I simply researched what science said. And when it comes to science, meditating and focusing on gratitude are two fantastic ways to relieve anxiety.

I didn’t try to reinvent the wheel and I let go of my ego. This wasn’t about me having to prove how smart I was. This was about me relieving my anxiety so I could live my life and be happy I opened my mind to follow the research of others. And guess what: it worked!

**I was beginning to feel better so my vision expanded to three main goals:**

1. I wanted to be the happiest and most fulfilled I’d ever been.
2. I wanted to be in the best shape I’ve ever been.
3. I wanted to have my career in the best place it’s ever been.

And it was from these three goals that I began to pursue the *new* vision I had for myself. These were results I wanted, and they gave me a sense of direction.

To become the happiest I’d ever been I followed research on happiness. I continued my meditation and gratitude practices, and focused on following my passions. At the time I loved to DJ so I made sure I had time scheduled in my day to DJ.

Healthy relationships and deep connections are also proven to increase your happiness and fulfillment, so I cut out any negative energy in my life and focused on learning how to make new friends and deepen connections with people.

For my career I began to explore new opportunities and paid attention to when I felt most in my *zone*. One of these experiments had me apply (and ultimately be selected) to speak on stage at TEDxBoulder. I always thought I’d enjoy public speaking and knew I wanted to do a TEDx talk some day, so when I had the opportunity to apply I went for it. The story behind it is kind of crazy and you can read it here if you want.
And by experiencing that I learned I did enjoy public speaking and I’d love to do it more. So I’m currently in the process of working on creating that for myself. The launch of Game Quitters plays a role in that.

When I thought about what I’d want to share with kids at school, I knew the answer was about creating the life you want, which really comes down to living life with intention.

It’s exactly what I’m speaking to you about now. Consider what you want for your life, if it could be anything and now let’s learn how to create that for ourselves. What you want will be different than what I want, but it will always come back to happiness and fulfillment. And what makes you happy and what makes me happy will be relative too.

But no matter what it is, what’s important is that you find what that is for yourself (remember, it will expand and evolve over time) and make it happen. It’s up to you, nobody else. It’s not about hoping it happens—it’s about putting in focus and effort. Whether it happens or not is up to you. You can’t control everything but you can control your focus and effort, and really, what else is worth more attention than creating the exact life you want?

So if I want to speak at schools and I want to speak about intentional living, how does Game Quitters play a role?

Well over the last four years as you know I’ve been answering questions and emails about this problematic gaming issue, and I’ve been fortunate to receive such a warm response. Just the simple fact that you’re reading this alone shows you have a trust in me and what I can share with you that will help you move forward.

But what does this have to do with problematic gaming? Because it was never about gaming in the first place! Gaming is just the activity, it’s just the way you fulfill unmet needs. It’s what allows you to escape your life and check out. But the truth is, it’s not about checking out from life… it’s about checking in!

It’s about taking a step back and thinking about what you really want your life to look like. And then setting out to create it. And if you don’t know how, it’s about learning how. And just continuing to move in that direction.

It was never about the games and at least in my experience, and I imagine yours if you’re reading this… continuing to game would just allow me (and allow you) to avoid dealing with the situation—regardless of how bad the situation it is.

Each of our situations are different and how bad they are will be relative too. But it’s not about gaming, or how bad our situations are. It’s simply about removing gaming from the equation. So you can no longer escape whatever situation you’re in and giving yourself the opportunity to face it head on.

The truth is, I just reached a point in my life, as you may have as well, that I simply no longer wanted to continue to live my life this way. Regardless of how messy and ugly my situation was, there was only one path: forward.
Part of why I was able to make this decision for myself was because I had already tried a different path—one where I didn’t give a fuck, one where I dropped out of school (twice), one where I played video games all day and deceived my family by lying about jobs I had.

But when I got really honest with myself I knew I wasn’t happy. And I believe we always know the truth. It may only begin as a whisper but when you go to bed at night, you know whether you’re happy or not. You can deceive people around you, and even pretend to be happy to yourself... but you always know the truth.

I’d love to say that because we all know the truth that eventually we all get to a place where we realize we need to make a change. But the harsh reality is, most people don’t. Most people don’t get to that point, and they go on their entire lives pretending to be happy when they really aren’t.

**If you want proof, just look at The Top Five Regrets of the Dying:**

1. I wish I’d had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I hadn’t worked so hard.
3. I wish I’d had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

Most people live their entire lives under this illusion that they are “happy.” And that’s sad. It’s really sad. It’s why I’m passionate about what I do. Because there’s no reason for it. There’s absolutely no reason why you should live a life you aren’t happy living. Seriously, try to come up with a reason right now and it will just look silly. There’s no reason. Just consider the world we live in and the opportunity it presents. There’s never been a time in history where you had as much opportunity as you have now.

I remember this past Christmas I was on holidays with my family on an island called St. Croix. It’s a small island and even 20 years ago your career prospects would have been working on the island for a low wage and maybe, if you were so lucky you might be able to make enough money to get off the island and over to mainland for a better opportunity.

And what’s incredible is how many of us have parents or grandparents who literally did exactly that. Who packed up their entire lives and families and moved to a new country, most likely a Western country, to give their next generations the opportunity for a better life. Contrast that with today, where all you would need is $1000 to buy a laptop and have a wifi connection to literally have an unlimited potential for the amount of money you could make—while living on an island in paradise.
That’s truly remarkable. Life isn’t about how much money you can make, but money can buy you options and experiences. Now unfortunately, not every person on the planet has this opportunity, and I believe we should all contribute to making that a reality, but if you are reading this right now you have a computer and wifi connection, so your world is full of that possibility. It just depends on what path you choose and how you channel your energy (more on this later.)

So if this was the path I chose (because, yes, we have each chosen the path we’re currently on... regardless of how conscious or unconscious we’ve been), a path where I was checked out playing video games all day, at some point I would probably have to choose a different one—one where I check in.

The path I chose of checking out and playing video games didn’t leave me feeling happy or fulfilled, nor did I feel like I was really living to my full potential. I knew I had a lot of potential and I could do great things, I just wasn’t sure how to get there. But I figured, you know, at some point in my life I would have to at least try to live my full potential, at some point in my life I would have to go for it.

And if I recognized that at some point I would do it... I might as well start now. Because in the odd chance that I actually managed to figure it out, I should give myself the maximum amount of time to enjoy it.

And living my potential wasn’t only about doing great things, it was also about being happy and fulfilled. It was about waking up every day feeling alive and excited for the day. It was about surrounding myself with incredible people who inspired me and challenged me to be better. It was about contributing to the world and being a good family member. It was about having a career I was passionate about.

And I wasn’t doing this for anybody else but myself. I was doing it because I wanted to do it and not because anyone else expected me to. Because I think one of the reasons why we check out with video games as we do is because there’s so much pressure around us to be something we either struggle to be (living our full potential) or to be something we don’t want to be (pressures that can come from your family.)

And so it was this new path that became my purpose, and I wouldn’t give up until it was my reality. I didn’t expect it to be easy, I knew it would be difficult at times, but I wasn’t worried about that. I wasn’t saying: “I want to go down this path but only if it’s easy.” I was saying: “I’m going down this new path, and I won’t let anything stop me.”

Now, our vision consists of results that we want—whether those are actual material possessions like say making a million dollars a year, or experiences like having the capacity to work from anywhere in the world on my laptop, being happy or having a girlfriend.

And in order to achieve them there always tends to be a strategy or things you need to do. If you want to work on your laptop and travel the world you need to create a business that generates revenue online, and to do so you might need to buy a laptop, design a company website, and build a product. To have a girlfriend you’ll need to meet a girl, be attracted to her (and have her be attracted to you), and deepen your connection amongst others.
But there's another side to creating your vision, and it's a secret that so many miss but it's what leads to your inevitable success:

**Who do you need to become** in order to make the end result a reality.

If we take the girlfriend example above, first you'll need to meet her. That's the strategy side. But **who you need to become** is someone capable of approaching a girl you're attracted to, someone who is able to have an engaging conversation, and then someone who feels comfortable leading the relationship forward.

See the difference?

So what I've learned over the past few years is that our vision isn't only about the things, experiences or results we want, but also who we need to become in order to achieve them. Because the truth is, and something I'm sure you'll relate to, is that part of the reason why we are stuck playing video games is because we don't know how to move forward.

Our parents or people around us think it's as easy as just uninstalling our games, and yes that's accurate in a literal sense, but then what? Then what will we do with our time? What about our friends? What about the confidence and self-esteem we get from playing games? What about our identity as a gamer?

There is so much more to quitting games than just merely quitting games. And intuitively you know this, it's where your internal resistance to quit comes from, but what I've discovered is there is a solution to this.

Because over the last four years what I've learned is what we've all known all along: gamers are smart. Really smart. And although we channel this in games—because it's something we understand and feel confident in—we have the same capacity to channel our energy in any direction we choose, and in doing so we can use our intelligence to our advantage.

This is essentially what we do when we quit games—we recognize that continuing to game isn't the direction we want to go—so we refocus on **where do we want to go?** and by learning from our experience gaming we can apply what we know to the new vision we have for ourselves.

So what I've uncovered over the past four years is that you, as a gamer is smart, and because of this as I’ve been able to share more about your experience gaming and why you feel so drawn to it, or in other words, as I’ve been able to share more of an education around gaming and build parallels between gaming and the rest of life, thousands of you have been able to quit and get their life back on track.

It's pretty incredible. Whereas many parents and teachers have been shaming you for playing games, I've taken the simple step of helping you understand why you're playing and in doing so, you've embraced your intelligence and been able to discover how you can use it to your advantage in the “real world.”
One of these advantages is that you’ve gotten good at gaming. I mean, let’s be honest, the chance of you being a really good gamer if you’re reading this is pretty high. Even if it’s simply because as someone who’s recognized that you’re spending more time gaming than you’d like... that gives you a better chance of being good at each game—you’re putting a lot of time into it.

So what I want to share with you is that gaming is a skill—and because it’s something you’ve gotten good at, there’s a lot you can learn from in how you achieved that and in doing so, then apply the same methods to become good at any other skill. Here’s the best part: Most everything in life is a skill. In fact Life is even a skill. It’s something you can get better at if you learn how the game works.

I’ll go more into this later but first I want to share with you the seven ways I got better at games, and I imagine you’ve used some if not all of these to do the same:

1. Quantity of time—you played a lot.
2. Quality of time—you played with a focus on how you could improve.
3. Mentors—you sought out other people who were good to learn from.
4. Community—you found likeminded peers to play with.
5. Education—you joined forums, watched streams and tutorials.
6. Review—you went over your replays.
7. Perseverance—you didn’t give up, you kept learning to improve.

Do any of those seem familiar? I bet they do, because they are just the different ways you can engage in gaming to improve your skill, and in doing so you do better at the game you’re playing. So now it’s a simple formula, follow the same steps we used to get good at gaming to get good at anything else we choose.

But what are we supposed to get good at? That’s where your vision comes in. And remember, vision comes in two sides:

1. The actual strategy you need to achieve the results you want.
2. Who you need to become to be the person who can achieve the results you want.

Now to give you an example, let’s go back to getting a girlfriend as I shared above, specifically the part of who you need to become to get a girlfriend:

“Someone capable of approaching a girl you’re attracted to, someone who is able to have an engaging conversation, and then someone who feels comfortable leading the relationship forward.”

If you look at this from the new lens of **what skills you need to learn:**

**What is the skill you need to learn to be someone capable of approaching a girl you’re attracted to?**

Well, first, you need to be courageous. You need to be someone who has the courage to approach someone you’re attracted to.

Courage is a skill.
What is the skill you need to learn to be someone who is able to have an engaging conversation?

Conversation. Conversation is a skill.

What about someone who feels comfortable leading the relationship forward?

Leadership. Leadership is a skill.

And then you can apply the same framework for how you got good at gaming to how you can get good at each of these skills. In doing so, you will become the person capable of achieving the results you want, and then it’s just a matter of allowing time to get its course.

But what’s amazing about developing a skill like Courage, Conversation or Leadership is that yes they will all help you be able to get a girlfriend… but that’s only if you decide to channel them in that direction. They can also help you in every other area of your life, including to make new friends, have a passionate job or career, to feel more confident and even to have more fun!

And this is exactly what I’ve done over the past few years. Remember the story of when my whole world crumbled in front of me? I was devastated. It was on Christmas 2012, only a few short years ago. But it was during that time that I committed to learning the skills in my life that would allow me to be happy (fulfilled), to have a kickass group of friends and to live my life to the fullest.

And I wanted to learn each of them from in an honest and genuine way. I was authentic about my desire to learn, and I was going to bring that level of authenticity into my approach each day. It was an experiment… I didn’t know if it would actually work or not.

But my hypothesis was… working on these universal skills from a real authentic place would help propel me forward, and not only set myself up for success in the future but also help me live fully now. And sitting here now in Bali writing this, two weeks from my 27th birthday, I can tell you it has worked. And it feels amazing. And I’m so excited for you to step down this path too.

Being in Bali has been a challenge for me. I was flying into a country (and continent) I had never been to. I knew no one here, I would have to learn to interact with a new culture and fulfill my basic needs of survival—food, water, shelter—each day.

In so many ways the thought was overwhelming and I had every reason to feel that way. But what I knew was also true is that I had worked hard over the past few years to develop certain skills in my life that would make a difference on this crazy Bali adventure I’m on. And it’s happened exactly like that. And I can tell you with an honest heart it’s worth it and there’s no reason you are not capable of doing the same. And I want to be there with you.
So I designed the Game Quitters Challenge to help you take these initial steps. To help you get going. You've quit playing games and now you're ready to re-engage life, and over the next 30 days you'll do just that.

It will help you build character, develop more confidence and have fun doing it. And during this process as you become more confident, it will inspire more of what you want your vision to be.

We will start by develop the skills of Courage, Discipline, Social Intelligence, Contribution and Tenacity. Each skill has five separate missions for you to complete before going on to the next one. And before we begin with each of those I have five beginner missions, the Starter Kit.

Ready to play?
What to expect over the next 30 days:

Although my intent with the products I’ve released for Game Quitters has been to have you complete them in sequential order:

1. Read How to Quit Playing Video Games—commit to quit.
2. Complete Respawn—five steps to quit gaming and get your life back.
3. Complete Game Quitters Challenge—30 days to turn your life into the ultimate video game.

I know many of you may be at different points in your journey, so quickly I just want to share with you that whether you’re on day one, day seven, day thirty or any day in-between or there-after, this challenge is still for you.

Remember, the Game Quitters Challenge (GQC) is going to teach you more about problematic gaming and help you develop the universal skills necessary to live your life to the fullest.

As I will detail below, when you quit gaming there are changes you may experience, especially if you are at the beginning of your journey. These changes happen in your physiology and in your environment.

However if you are not at the beginning of your journey, the changes you experience may just be less intense. This will only make it easier for you to move forward. 🌞

What I wanted to share with you right now is a guide for what these changes will be so you are not surprised if you experience them. Use this document as a reference to respond properly.

Your Physiology

Your brain responds to gaming in specific ways. It’s one of the reasons why you have gamed as much as you have, and this has to do with a chemical in your brain called Dopamine.

“In the brain, dopamine functions as a neurotransmitter—a chemical released by nerve cells to send signals to other nerve cells. The brain includes several distinct dopamine systems, one of which plays a major role in reward-motivated behavior.”

Have you heard of dopamine before? Gaming provides rapid dopamine release. This explains why when you play games, the type of stimulation you receive is much different than what you experience in other activities (and can find other activities boring.)

That doesn’t mean other activities are actually boring or that you don’t enjoy them, it just means that the type of stimulation in games is different than the type of stimulation in other activities. I’m not going to make a villain out of game designers,
but games are designed, intentionally, with the best practices of gamification and reward-motivated psychology.

And this type of rapid dopamine release can actually be dangerous, and potentially even addictive:

"Researchers analyzed the levels of dopamine release in the brains of about 20 ex-drug users and non-users as they played a motor-bike riding computer game. They found that video game playing affected dopamine release at levels similar to those exhibited by using drugs like ecstasy. These results imply that excessive computer game playing may resemble substance abuse or addiction in that it may be a strategy that children use to cope with negative emotions like frustration, fear, and stress."

When you game you experience dopamine surges that provide an environment of hyper-stimulation and continued consumption of this can override our natural mechanisms causing structural changes in our brain.

That was a bit wordy but what you need to know is that the type of stimulation you get from gaming is excessive and with continued consumption over time your brain will experience structural changes.

The quick science as I detailed in this video by Gary Wilson is the following:

"Excess chronic consumption (dopamine surges) cause a binge mechanism (excess Delta-Fosb accumulates) which cause cravings for more which cause continued consumption which cause structural brain changes (detailed below)."

The more you game, the more you want to game, the more your brain wants to game, so the more you game, and then structural brain changes.

Here are the three structural changes that happen to our brain:

1. Numbed pleasure response: Every day pleasures no longer satisfy us.
2. Hyper-reactivity to gaming: Every thing else is boring, but gaming is super exciting.
3. Willpower erosion: Due to changes in our frontal cortex.

These changes help explain why moving on from gaming can be so difficult. And I bet right now reading this you relate to the following experience:

Life just doesn’t satisfy you like gaming does. Everything else is boring anyways, especially compared to how much fun you have gaming. And if you were going to quit, you just don’t really have the motivation to.

So what’s interesting about this is that for so long you’ve likely thought that either you just really enjoyed gaming (it was a passion) and thought other activities just weren’t really that much fun or at least, just not for you. Plus, you were just one of those who struggled with motivation anyways. But what I want you to know is that
this is likely not true. These experiences can be happening because of structural changes in your brain due to excessive gaming.

"With greater power comes greater responsibility."

So now that we know this we have the ability to leverage our knowledge to respond differently. Remember, our response is our responsibility. Research shows it will take up to 90 days for our brain chemistry to rewire back to normal dopamine sensitivity levels. And during this 90 days we may experience any of the following:

1. Compulsions, cravings and/or urges to game
2. Withdrawals, mood swings and/or irritability
3. Feelings of apathy, anxiety and/or depression
4. And really anything else. We each respond differently.

What I’ve found in my own journey through completing both moving on from games and the 90-day NoFap Challenge (multiple times), the symptoms tend to be strongest at the beginning and become less intense over time. They also can come and go spontaneously, so it’s important to know what your triggers are, when you are feeling triggered and how to respond.

Be aware of the following triggers:

1. Anything game related—this includes game releases, gaming forums, gaming streams, chatting with your friends on Steam or anything similar, gaming commercials, etc. Create a boundary around these.

2. Stress or anxiety—gaming has always been a way for us to escape from these emotions, so be careful anytime you are feeling heightened levels of stress or anxiety. Be mindful of your stress and anxiety levels.

3. Boredom—gaming has been your go-to activity whenever you’ve been bored, had free time or when you’ve wanted stimulation. Remember the new activities you’ve chosen and make sure to use your daily agenda.

When you are feeling triggered:

Feeling triggered is going to occur, it’s just part of the process. Sometimes it’s obvious (you’re feeling upset), and other times it’s more subtle. This is where being mindful and doing status checks is important.

Being mindful is just about being aware, especially when you’ve been exposed to any of the triggers I’ve shared above. Anytime you find yourself beginning to justify or rationalize any play, take a moment to step back and inquire what has happened so far in your day. Did you see your new favorite game is being released? Did something happen at school or work? Are you bored?

Taking a moment to check in with yourself is crucial, because what happens when you’re triggered is that you begin to act from more of an emotional state. And
making decisions from an emotional state leaves us vulnerable to make a less than empowering decision.

**How to respond when you’re triggered:**

When you are triggered, first you want to be mindful to do a status check with yourself. How are you feeling? What’s going on?

This status check will allow you to know what step you need to take next.

*If you’re feeling triggered due to being exposed to something game related,* you want to first take a nice deep breath and feel the release of tension in your body. Reconnect with yourself in this moment.

Next, you want to create distance between you and the possibility of gaming until you are less triggered. The easiest way is to simply get out of the house, go for a walk, bring a book to Starbucks, go hang out with a new friend you have.

*If you are feeling triggered due to feeling stressed or anxious,* you want to take a deep breath and feel the release of tension in your body. Reconnect with yourself once again.

Next, you want to first release the stress and anxiety from your body, and there are two ways to do this:

- **Quick way:** Do a gratitude journal. Just grab anything you can write on, a piece of paper, a sticky note or your phone, and write down 10 things you’re grateful for. You don’t need to overthink it, just write down the first 10 things that come to mind.

  Gratitude is scientifically proven to increase the amount of happiness, joy and optimism you experience, make you feel less stressed, boost your immune system and even help you feel less lonely. Who doesn’t want more of all of that right? And it only takes 20 seconds. Doing this practice will help you shift what you’re focusing on and that will alleviate the stress and anxiety you’re feeling in your body.

- **5–10 minutes:** Do a meditation. I like the Headspace app for this. They have a free 10 day challenge you can take and I just repeat it every 10 days. Plus I have the app on my phone so anytime I’m feeling triggered I can just do a random day of the challenge.

Now that you’ve reconnected with your body and released the tension you’ve been feeling, you want to identify why you are feeling stressed out or anxious and come to some resolution as to how you can deal with what’s going on.

Remember, to quit gaming is to take a step forward into dealing with your life situation instead of continuing to avoid it. The truth is, when we avoid things we may be able to drown out our situation with gaming, but it doesn’t actually fix why we were feeling the way we were in the first place. It’s only a matter of time before these feelings resurface.
If you are feeling triggered because you’re bored, take a nice deep breath and release the tension in your body. Reconnect with yourself. Now, what is the go-to activity you have chosen in Respawn anytime you’re feeling bored? Go do that now.

When you’re feeling bored you want to focus on doing an activity that is quick to start and will help you build momentum forward. And don’t underestimate the power of shifting the energy in your body. If you’re feeling bored, do 20 jumping jacks. It will build energy and help you take that next step. Remember later on to look back at why you ended up being bored, which is most likely because you simply had not defined what your agenda was.

So that’s what to expect in the next 30 days from your physiology. You’re likely to experience wide ranges of emotion, urges and cravings to play and doubt about why you’re quitting in the first place. This is all normal and it’s part of the process. Always remember to focus one day, one hour at a time. Your mission is to complete 90 days without games to allow your brain chemistry to rewire back to normal levels. From this place you will be in a better position to evaluate your life moving forward.

Your Environment

Over the next 30 days and beyond you will also experience changes to your environment. This is a natural process that occurs when you quit games because gaming has been an integral piece of your daily environment.

Your environment is a core piece of your identity and also consists of your social community. When you quit gaming you need to be prepared for the changes to your identity and social community because they are two of the significant ways you engage in each day.

Social Community

Most, if not all, of your friends play games too. Your friends consist of both the friends you have online and those you hang out with in-person, but gaming tends to dominate the conversation with both. When you quit it can be kind of scary because you wonder what will happen to your friends, will you lose them? If you lose them... won’t you be lonely?

And I’ve definitely been there too. When I first quit playing games all of my friends were gamers and I knew if I was to interact with them I would want to play, so I had to create distance between us. That doesn’t mean we had to stop being friends but I had to be aware of how I was interacting with them.

I told some of my friends I was taking a break and asked them not to invite me to play. Now, when you do this make sure you take it easy on them. I didn’t go into why I was quitting, because I wasn’t trying to create an argument or debate about gaming. Remember, you are quitting because you have made a decision that you want to quit. And you don’t need to justify that to anybody.

Some of my friends were supportive and encouraged me while others did not. I paid attention to the ones who were supportive and found new ways of staying in touch.
with them, using Skype and Facebook for example instead of Steam. The friends of mine who were less supportive I didn't hold it against them, I just knew I needed to create more of a boundary to manage their influence.

**To counteract the changes to your social community, do the following:**

1. **Stay friends with your gamer friends:** these are the ones who are supportive and don't continue to ask you to play. Find new ways of staying in touch as I shared above.

2. **Make new friends:** this can be an overwhelming thought at first but remember it's a process, and as we go through the Game Quitters Challenge you will have five missions to complete that will help you improve your social skills.

When I first quit gaming I had very few friends that weren't gamers, and I certainly wasn't very confident in myself or my social skills. And over the past six years I've spent much of my energy and focus on unlocking this skill in my life, and I can tell you that learning how to improve my social skills has been no different than learning the game of Starcraft. It's just a different game with different rules and skills to master. But anybody can do it.

**Your Identity**

One of the biggest changes to your life that happens when you quit gaming is to your sense of identity. Gaming has been an integral piece of this for much of your life, especially in the way that it helps you fulfill the six human needs.

(Note: These are a bit different than the needs I share that gaming fulfills for us [Temporary Escape, Social, Constant Measurable Growth & Challenge]. Both are simply frameworks to help you understand your relationship to gaming.)

**If you're unfamiliar with the six human needs, here they are:**

1. **Certainty**—assurance you can avoid pain and gain pleasure (comfort)
2. **Uncertainty/Variety**—the need for the unknown, change, new stimuli
3. **Significance**—feeling unique, important, special or needed (life has meaning)
4. **Love & Connection**—a strong feeling of closeness or union with someone or something
5. **Growth**—an expansion of capacity, capability or understanding
6. **Contribution**—a sense of service and focus on helping, giving to and supporting others

These are human needs we all have—they are encoded in our nervous system—and it's important to know that we will always find a way to fulfill them—whether that
happens in healthy, productive and conscious ways or unhealthy, unproductive and unconscious ways.

“All dysfunctional behaviors arise from the inability to consistently meet these needs.” — Tony Robbins

One of the reasons why we’ve falling into a pattern of problematic gaming is because of our inability to meet these needs in other ways.

The truth is, when you were gaming it was kind of happening on an unconscious level, it was just your habit. It was a cycle you were in, it was your routine. And because games are designed in extraordinary ways they were fulfilling many of your human needs all at once, so it took up until now for you to become more aware of what was happening.

But now that you’ve been able to step back and recognize what has been happening, you have the power to change it. And one of the most important ways is to be more intentional with how you fulfill your human needs.

The good news is that this new path you’re on—the path of checking in to create the type of life you want—is really about creating a life of meaning. A new meaning, one that is about your own happiness and fulfillment, instead of simply using games to try and fill that void within yourself.

“The force of life is the drive for fulfillment; we all have a need to experience a life of meaning.”—Tony Robbins

So over these next 30 days as you go through this challenge and experience changes in both your physiology and your environment, be mindful of your human needs and which ones you’re trying to fulfill in any given moment. Many times when we’re experiencing some tension or uneasiness, it’s a call from our body that we have an unmet need, and by using the practices I’ve shared above you can get the relief you need and keep pushing forward.
Disclaimer

It’s impossible for me to know how old you are so if you are under the age of 18 please keep the following in mind. Also, if you’re over 18, always use your best judgement and be safe.

If you are under the age of 18, please work with your parents through this challenge. You can let them know you have decided to quit playing video games and you’re taking a 30 day challenge that has different missions to improve your social skills and discipline. They will like that. ;) 

Ask them to support you to complete some of the missions—specifically the ones that may have you speaking with people and/or require them to agree for you to attend events, etc. Typically if you ask for them to help you with these they should have no problem with it, the missions are nothing too crazy, but I just want to make sure you remain safe at all times and your parents can help ensure that.

I have done my best to try and keep all the missions to be appropriate whether you are under or over 18, male or female, single or married, in school, working a job or neither.

I have designed the missions based on my understand of Western culture, which is what I’m familiar with. If you are doing this challenge from another culture, and any of the missions are sensitive, please create your own mission for the skill, and then email me with feedback so I can make improvements.

Please do your best, use discretion at all times and always be safe.
Rules of The Game

I hate rules so I don’t really have any but keep these in mind:

1. Complete one day at a time, and do your absolute best to complete each mission the same day, unless stated otherwise. There are only a few missions that will require extra days of planning but I have marked them.

2. Sometimes missions require you to complete tasks while you are out of the house, and for these missions I have marked “Important” the day before, so you can read it before heading out for the day.

3. Read each day’s mission in the morning if you can. You will be tempted to read ahead. Please only do so when it’s asked of you (as marked Important). Consider this a bonus mission in discipline.

4. A few missions need to be complete in the morning, a few when you’re out of the house and the majority when you're at home at night. Missions should only take 30–60 minutes. You found 8 hours to play video games every day so don’t tell me you don’t have time. ;)

5. Some missions are easy, others are more challenging, but each serve a specific purpose. Stay open minded and embrace new experiences.

6. Make sure to take time to recognize yourself for the action you take. I call this “celebrating the small wins” and it’s one the most important ways to build your self esteem. Every mission you complete is something to be proud of, so make sure you are proud! You deserve it.

Lastly, this challenge is meant to be a fun way to engage the game of life, take it seriously but not too seriously, laugh at yourself and don’t forget why you are doing what you’re doing—to learn to love life again.

Ready to play? Day 1 begins tomorrow.
Day 1

Mission: Self-Evaluation
Skill: Starter Kit
Difficulty: 1/5

BRIEFING

To complete the following, create a journal on our forum. You will use this journal over the next 30 days to complete different exercises and share your experience. It will also give the community a chance to interact with you.

*We’d love for you to join us, but if you’d prefer to remain private, feel free to answer the following in a journal or word processor of your choice.*

**Complete the following:**

- Write a letter to yourself about how you’re currently feeling and why it’s important to you to move on from games. Why do you want to make this change in your life?

**Then answer the following:**

- Write one or two sentences describing how you believe other people currently perceive you.
- Write one or two sentences describing how you’d like to be perceived by others.
- List three of your behaviors or characteristics you would like to change.

**Now complete the following:**

- Determine how many more days you have left to live.

To increase the intention we are living with we want to create a greater awareness of how the importance of our time (and how we spend it). Each day matters. Every day is a day we will never get back. Life is only short once.

**To complete this mission, follow these steps:**

1. Look up your age and and gender in a life expectancy table.
2. Convert the remaining years to a number of days by multiplying by 365.25 (the .25 accounts for leap days).
3. Now open this site. Click “Today” under Start Date and add the number you received in step two under “Days” on the right side.
4. Highlight the date of your result.
5. Now open this site. Click “Today” under Start Date and add the result from step three under End Date.
6. There you go! You should have a specific estimated number of days left. At the moment of writing I have an estimated 18,438 days left to live.
7. What about you? Share it in your journal on the forum.
Congrats! You’ve finished day one. I know the mission itself wasn’t very difficult but over the next four missions—the Starter Kit—we will build your foundation to grow forward.

Missions will vary in difficulty throughout the next 30 days. Some are designed to be easy and others will prove more challenging. As we progress through each skill—Courage, Discipline, Social Intelligence, Contribution and Tenacity, you, the character you are building in your life will develop and grow stronger.

**Bonus mission:** Watch “How Great Leaders Inspire Action” by Simon Sinek. Share in your journal what you found interesting and anything you connected with from the talk.
Day 2

Mission: Create Your Project
Skill: Starter Kit
Difficulty: 2/5

BRIEFING

In step two of Respawn we chose new activities to replace gaming with, in three specific categories:

1. Mentally Engaging Activity—these tend to be skill or achievement-based.
2. Resting Activity—something to do when you’re tired at home.

When you quit playing video games it’s easy to focus on just finding activities to kill time with. Removing games from your life has created a void, and at first it’s easy to see that void as a section of time. But that’s missing the point. Yes it’s important to have new activities to replace gaming, but life isn’t about just killing your time, it’s about investing it.

Each day we have 24 hours to spend as we wish. Time is one of only two resources you have each day. (The other is your energy.) When you’re gaming it’s easy to fall into the cycle of waking up, fulfilling your obligations for the day (school/work), and then using your free time as you wish (gaming) before you eventually fall asleep. Then you wake up and do it all over again.

And this is ok but it can get old over time. Which is one reason why you’ve come to the decision to move on from games. You may have fun playing games during your free time but you’re not necessarily fulfilled. And what you need is to see your free time from a new perspective. Up until now you may have seen it as free time to waste, where you get to do anything you want to do guilt-free, and again, this is all true, however just because you can do it that way doesn’t mean you need to.

And in fact, if you’ve approached a situation one way and not achieved the results you want, it makes sense to try a new approach. Your free time is actually an incredibly valuable part of your day that you can use and invest in to create the type of life you want.

For example, like me, if you wanted to have the ability to work for yourself from your laptop anywhere in the world, you could spend your free time learning about starting your own business and then leveraging your new knowledge to take action. You may only have an hour or two per day but by using The Slight Edge (compounding—you will learn more about this in Day 3), it will add up over time and eventually a few months or years later you’re now in a position to actually work for yourself anywhere in the world!
Your free time is the perfect time to invest in yourself. And the best part is, by spending your time on activities meaningful to you (as in, they have a conscious meaning in your life), you will feel happier and more fulfilled—regardless of the outcome or result. So when you quit gaming it’s really about setting new goals in your life. It’s about understanding you have new priorities and that you have a desire inside to honor them!

Sometimes I struggle to set goals. I think, who cares? What’s the point? But it’s not setting goals that’s been the problem it’s just the way I’ve gone about it. And today I will share with you the two changes I’ve made:

1. Create projects not goals.
2. The purpose of a project is to learn.

Having a project to work on helps give you structure and adds a sense of purpose for why you are doing it in the first place. Not only that, having a project allows you to challenge yourself, and challenge is one of the best ways to develop passion.

For example, when I quit playing games I wanted to learn how to DJ. It’s something I had always wanted to do but had simply never taken the step. There was no reason, I just hadn’t. So my roommates and I pooled money together (about $500 each) and bought gear. The learning curve was tough at first and I was frustrated but by using the seven ways I got good at gaming I improved over time. But I still wasn’t passionate about it and after the novelty of DJing wore off I started to lose sight of why I was even DJing in the first place.

That all changed when I launched Moments podcast. Every month I released a new mix that was at least an hour long on Soundcloud. I wanted every podcast to be memorable and would spend upwards of 40 hours a month putting each one together. And over time not only did I have a new mix to listen to every month (and friends who were loving it too), but a passion developed for DJing and while I was traveling through Europe I ended up having the opportunity to DJ in Prague. How cool is that?

Another example is the Game Quitters YouTube channel.

One of my goals for 2015 was to make marketing (extending the reach of my message) fun and a natural extension of my life. The thought of sitting down to write a blog post on the 15 Unconventional Ways To Quit Gaming made me want to put my head through a wall. It wasn’t inspiring. I wanted to find a way to provide more value to people like you, those looking for support with problematic gaming in a way that was engaging.

And plus, I travel so much already and that’s an example of me living the life I want to live, which is the message I’m promoting to you! I’m not here to convince you to do the work. I’m just here to show you it’s worth it. So I figured a YouTube channel where I can answer questions I get from you guys + use it as an opportunity to share my travels and lifestyle would be perfect. When I started I had no idea what to do, I didn’t have a camera and I had never edited a video before.
My commitment was just to put out one new video each week and improve quickly. Plus it would be a great way to improve my ability to speak in front of a camera. And filmmaking would be a skill I could develop, which who knows how that could come in handy in the future. And it’s been a lot of fun. Not only has the feedback been great (thanks for watching!) but because one of my missions with the channel is to show scenery you couldn’t experience in a game, each week I’m hiking off into the jungle or up a mountain or to a beach to record it.

But I’m not only spending my time recording and editing the video, but also thinking about how I can grow my channel. Right now I have 216 subscribers and I wonder how I can get to 500 in the next month. That gives me a question to think about and brainstorm ideas for.

Now it’s your turn:

**Answer the following: Three goals I want to accomplish right now are:**

1. 
2. 
3. 

If you’re struggling to identify goals in your life start out by focusing on these three areas: health, wealth and happiness. Another way you can think about it is to find one goal to make you money, one goal to keep you in shape and one goal that lets you be creative.

Remember, goals can always change as well. I know mine have and continue to all the time. The key isn’t to identify the one single goal you have right now but really just three goals you’re excited about. Start there, you can always change them later.

**Now take each goal and brainstorm ideas for a project:**

1. 
2. 
3. 

Next I want you to commit to one of these projects to work on over the next 30 days. One of the benefits of having a project is that it gives you more structure to play with. You are able to create rules and guidelines, tasks and milestones for its success. For Moments podcast, I needed to publish one new mix each month that was at least one hour long, and I preferred to only use new songs (instead of reusing ones from my previous mix.) I also needed to have artwork for it.

Here’s an example of a completed mix:
Each mix took a different amount of time but I found it varied anywhere between 20-40 hours of work. Yes, all of that for a silly hour long mix! But it wasn’t just about the published mix, it was also about improving my ability as a DJ, producer and promoter. The mix was just an excuse to do all of that.

Over time I learned more about what it took to actually finish the mix:

1. I would start by having a wide range of songs to pick from which I found from various sources online.
2. I’d play around with these songs until I had the ones I wanted to use.
3. Then it became a puzzle of fitting all the songs together into a mix.
4. Then I had to record it.
5. I had some post-production to do.
6. I had to create artwork.
7. I had to upload and promote the mix.

There were various tasks to complete for each step. And I uncovered new ones every time I completed the months mix. I knew it would take me between 20-40 hours for each one, so I had to work on it around 30-60 minutes per day (or between 3-7 hours a week) to finish it in time. I wasn’t always able to work on it every day so I would set aside time each week in my calendar. Without creating time in my schedule I could easily forget all about it—we all get busy sometimes.

Now that you have selected your project for the next 30 days, I want you to just quickly write down the different things you’ll need to do to complete it. What are the rules or guidelines? What about the milestones to hit? In order to achieve your milestones, what tasks will you need to finish?
Next, going back to step three in Respawn where we setup your foundation using a daily agenda/calendar, I want you to create a specific time in your schedule to work on this project. Section the time off and use it to focus.

**To complete today’s mission:**

1. Commit to one project you’ll work on for the next 30 days. Share your project in your journal on the forum.
2. Purchase a whiteboard for your room. Use this whiteboard as you please but I would suggest writing your project on it, any other goals you have and the number of days you have left to live that we found in Day 1. Begin each day by updating your number.

Great job today! Tomorrow we will learn about The Slight Edge—the power of compounding and how you can use this to your advantage.

**Bonus mission:** Write down 10 items in your bucket list/impossible list. To learn more about your impossible list, read this. Make sure you share it with us in your journal!
BRIEFING

By far one of the most powerful concepts I've learned is The Slight Edge. A book by Jeff Olson, it radically transformed my life by teaching me about how we can leverage daily activities to achieve powerful results in our lives. The book's description says it is not “a self-help gimmick or motivational tool,” and I couldn't agree more. The Slight Edge isn't some ethereal concept like The Law of Attraction, it's “grounded in reality, in the way things actually work.”

I'm sharing it today on Day 3 because it's the single most important concept for you to understand as you begin to move forward in this new journey. I can't stress that enough and I don't recommend such lightly. The best part is that as a gamer, you tend to be more of an analytical thinker, so you'll understand the framework and leverage it to your advantage.

Now, a quick caveat: The Slight Edge is not a magic pill or quick fix, but a philosophy meant to be a filter for every decision you make. It uses the concept of compound interest—a popular concept in the world of finance—and applies it to the choices we make in our every day life.

Compounding in the Finance world refers to:

“The ability of an asset to generate earnings, which are then reinvested in order to generate their own earnings. In other words, compounding refers to generating earnings from previous earnings.”

But compounding also happens every day in the choices we make:

“Sickness or health, sinking poverty or abundant wealth, deepening loneliness and alienation or a rich and growing circle of friends.”

Applying this to our own personal development is really about the power of habits—small habits—to create radical transformation over time.

**Here's a great example of how powerful using this concept can be:**

If you were to focus on a habit of improving just 1%(!!) each day, by end of the year you will see an almost 38x improvement:
That’s remarkable! At the time you may think improving 1% each day is insignificant—and in The Slight Edge, Jeff Olson calls these “Invisible Results.” But what you do does matter—your actions are either working for you or against you—and a 38x improvement is nothing short of significant!

Just imagine for a second being 38 times better at anything you want. But it’s not just 38 times better, it’s 38 times better compounding. The growth curve is exponential! Ok so I get really excited about this concept because it truly is powerful and I know if you apply it your life will never be the same. Again, I don’t say that type of thing lightly.

So now it’s a matter of what we choose to apply this concept to. And the best way is to think about what the habits are we can implement on a daily basis that will provide a powerful return over time. The habits we choose will produce the results we want—so we want to choose habits based on the results we want to achieve. Simple right?

Here’s an example for you: If right now you wish you could have more friends, you would want to focus on improving your social skills 1% each day. This is actually something I do: I focus on meeting one new person each day, which again seems insignificant—but over a year that’s 365 new people I will have met, and there’s not only bound to be a few of them that I naturally click with, but having 365 new conversations will also teach me a lot.

We will go over more about the habits you can implement to help both your social skills and the rest of your life throughout the challenge, but today we want to start with one habit to implement into your life immediately, and that’s a daily reading habit. The truth is, I used to hate reading, in fact until I was 20 years old I had read maybe three books my entire life—The Underground Railroad, Ender’s Game and Ender’s Shadow. All great books!
Fast forward to today, I turn 27 next week and the way I engage reading in my life has completely changed. In the last two years, 2013 and 2014 I read 46 books total. That’s a lot of books! So why do I read so much? Because reading is one of the easiest ways to become smarter. And who doesn’t want to be become smarter? I don’t read very many fiction books, although I’m not opposed to them, but I elect for books that teach me something with intention, depending on what I want or need to learn at the time.

The world is full of incredible knowledge and wisdom to learn, and it’s contained in books. We live in an incredible time where you can get access to pretty much any book with one click on Amazon.

Any problem you’re having there is likely to be a book or ten written about it. One trick I like to do is anytime I have something I want to learn or a problem I’m struggling with, just search Amazon for the top three rated books on the subject and read them. By the end of that you will have an in-depth understanding of the subject.

This is especially important if you are under 30 years old. One of the best things you can do before you are 30 is to read and learn as much as you can. Plus, being well read will help you have more engaging conversations (it will help you make more friends), and women are always attracted to someone who is well read. Trust me on that! ;)

I recommend reading for at least 30 minutes every day of a good book aimed at improving your life.

Based on average reading speeds, that’s equivalent to around ten to fifteen pages a day. Again, this might seem insignificant but ten pages read every day over the course of a year is roughly 3,650 pages, or 12-24 books of potentially life-changing material.


**To complete this mission:**

1. Purchase The Slight Edge and read up to the first chapter today, including the Introduction and Foreword. It’s 32 pages total.
2. Post in your journal what you’ve learned so far and in what way you are feeling inspired to apply The Slight Edge in your life.

**Notes:** At the time of writing The Slight Edge is available on Kindle for $7.82. Do not worry if you do not have a Kindle, Amazon has a browser/desktop app.

If you really, really, really don’t like to read, try audiobooks. You can download two free audiobooks here from Audible.

Tomorrow we will learn about a way to wake up feeling excited and fully alive every morning to set your day up for maximum success.
BRIEFING

In the Introduction I shared about my experience having my world crumble in front of me during Christmas of 2012. My business had failed, I was broke and my girlfriend left me. Waking up every day became a chore. I was depressed. Every day felt like a month as time moved ever so slowly. I couldn’t take it.

Over the course of four months I managed to get myself back on track, and it all started with one daily change I made: Creating A Morning Success Routine.

During this time I found some days I would wake up and instantly feel anxious, while others I would wake up and feel ok. But I noticed how my day started had a major impact on how my day ended. I committed to starting each day strong and regardless of what happened throughout my day, I would end of a good note as well.

But I didn’t just hope for it, I worked for it. With The Slight Edge philosophy in mind, I knew I had a simple choice: I could either choose the habits that would allow me to start my day strong, or I could choose habits that didn’t.

I’ve always done well with structure—not too much structure but a little bit. And I bet you have too. I’ve shared previously how gaming is just your habit, and because of that when you have free time you just go to it—it’s not a conscious choice you even make usually.

To counteract that, you need to be intentional with how you fill your free time, and this same process works for how you start your day—do you just go with the motions and hope to have a good day or do you have a few habits you know will make you feel great that you can use to build for the day?

We call this a Morning Success Routine.

“This is about setting your mindset and context for the day. It’s the linchpin that determines the quality of your day, which determines the quality of your life in every way.”—Eben Pagan

Successful people have specific habits.

Usually we all know this and would do them too... but finding time can be difficult, especially as the day begins and you have other things on your mind. But there’s an easy solution and it’s to have them in your Morning Routine.
In the morning your willpower is the highest. You haven’t yet spent it throughout the day making the various decisions you’ve had to make. So it makes the most sense to use this strong willpower to our advantage to complete the habits we know will lead us down the road to success.

**Now there are a few keys to your Morning Success Routine:**

1. Be intentional with what time you wake up. You’re mindset is to wake up because you want to, not because you have to.
2. You want to immediately begin the habits you’ve chosen to empower your day.

There are actually six areas my friend Hal Elrod shares in his book *The Morning Miracle* (Amzn) that you want your morning routine to have.

So far we know one habit you want to have is daily reading for 30 minutes. Today we will introduce another that is scientifically proven to reduce stress, boost creativity, improve focus and self-control, dramatically reduce anxiety, improve relationships and help you be more comfortable with yourself—which all prove to be a direct counter to experiences we can have as we quit gaming.

Over the next 30 days we will continue to build the remaining areas but today we will only focus on these two. So what’s the other area we’re going to focus on today?

Meditation.

The easiest way to start this habit is with the 10-day Headspace challenge. It’s free, only takes 10 minutes and you can access it in your browser or their app for Android and Apple smartphones. *(Tip: After you complete the 10-days, just repeat them. That’s what I do.)*

**So here’s how I want you to start your day:**

1. Wake up to your alarm—you’ve selected the time the night before.
2. Sit up in bed or on the floor and complete your 10 minutes of Headspace.
5. Grab breakfast and read for 30 minutes from a good book that is aimed at improving your life. *(This is a good time each day to read your new mission.)*
6. Begin the rest of your day.

This doesn’t have to take very long. Feel free to customize it but I would highly recommend starting your day with 10 minutes of Headspace before doing anything else.

You’re also welcome to add any other habits or things you want to get done first thing as well. For example, part of my morning routine right now here in Bali is to go to Tropical View Cafe after eating breakfast to write for an hour. I do this before I start answering emails or do any other work tasks.
This way I’m able to complete at least an hour of writing I need to do, which not only helps this project get complete but also makes me feel better because of it. If I start answering emails or doing other tasks first, I never get around to writing.

Remember, your mindset waking up is because you want to, not because you have to. Your day begins with your alarm clock so pay attention to what you are communicating to yourself: Do you want to get after the day or do you want to procrastinate?

By having a Morning Success Routine you’ll create the experience every day of waking up feeling excited to be alive. Completing these habits will build momentum to have a great day, and before you know it, you’ll have so many good days in a row you may forget what a bad day felt like!

To complete this mission:

1. Post in the journal what your Morning Success Routine is going to be.
2. Do it tomorrow morning!

Ok, wow! We’re making progress here. So far we’ve written a letter to ourself, created a project, learned about the power of The Slight Edge and now created a Morning Success Routine.

Tomorrow we will complete one more piece to our day to help us remember why we’re doing what we’re doing as we move into the more interactive missions to build our Courage, Discipline, Social Intelligence, Contribution and Tenacity.

Bonus mission: Listen to Tony Robbins on Morning Routines on the Tim Ferriss Podcast (great podcast btw). You can also download the first two chapters of The Morning Miracle by Hal Elrod for free here.

Note: If you’d like to review the magnitude of research that suggests Meditation is one of the most badass habits we can have, click here.
Day 5

Mission: Create A Morning Success Routine—Part 2
Skill: Starter Kit
Difficulty: 2/5

BRIEFING

How did it feel to wake up today? Did you feel better after completing your first day (or two) of meditation? Yesterday I mentioned how in The Morning Miracle, Hal Elrod shares the six key areas you need to focus on to start your day off right.

So far we have our morning reading and meditation practice, which as you continue to invest in these habits each day you will find substantial rewards. Today I wanted to share two more that are easy and add less than five minutes to your morning (at most!), but again the return is incredible.

One of them I spoke about in Respawn, and that’s having a gratitude journal. As a gamer I know you’re a highly intelligent person, which is what drew you to gaming in the first place—it was an easy way for you to apply the innate talent you feel inside in a way that was appreciated by others.

Because you’re a high intelligent, it’s easy for you to be skeptical at different ideas, especially when they are potentially a bit more spiritual or seem like something hippies would do. Now, I have nothing against hippies, in fact I probably am one—I mean, hippies for the most part love good healthy food and delicious coffee and I certainly love both! So if that makes me a hippy than so be it!

As a high intelligent it’s easy to feel resistance to new ideas, especially when they fall more on the “energetic” side of the world, like meditation. But what I want you to know is that I totally relate to you and I was definitely skeptical too. But what I decided to focus on was what science showed (which I also recommend for you!) and the more I read what scientific research showed, the more I realized that if I wanted to be happier and less stressed, meditation was a no-brainer.

Another concept that kept coming up in scientific research is the power of having a gratitude practice, which essentially means having an active appreciation. Research shows people who practice gratitude consistently report a multitude of benefits, including:

- A stronger immune system
- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More joy, optimism and happiness
- Acting with more generosity and compassion
- Feeling less lonely and isolated

Who wants some of that? I know I do.
One of the easiest ways to practice this on a daily basis is to keep a gratitude journal. To recap what that is, it's pretty simple: Write down 10 things you're grateful for. The number doesn’t matter but I like to go for ten. Don’t overcomplicate it, just write down the first ten things that come to mind.

It takes a total of about a minute. Right now I’m grateful for my Macbook to write this challenge on, each of you for reading it, water that keeps me hydrated, this fan that’s blowing on me and keeping me cool, my iPhone, delicious coffee... even if it makes me a hippy, music, being in Bali and experiencing a new culture, the Balinese people who are kind and welcoming (not always common!) and money, I appreciate money.

And now I take a deep breath and wow, I feel better. 😊

So you definitely want to add your gratitude journal to your morning routine. I would recommend adding it right after you do your meditation (which you should be doing at the very start of your day!)

Next, we are going to utilize one more scientifically-proven technique to our advantage: the power of visualization.

Growing up playing hockey I had the privilege of being taught peak performance by various sports psychologists. One concept that stood out above the rest was the power of visualization—seeing is believing.

“Creative visualization is the technique of using one’s imagination to visualize specific behaviors or events occurring in one’s life.”—Wikipedia

Part of the science behind this technique is that your brain thinks in pictures and often cannot distinguish whether you’re imagining something or actually experiencing it.

“It is a well-known fact that we stimulate the same brain regions when we visualize an action and when we actually perform that same action.”

(This is also one of the reasons why watching porn can be so detrimental—your brain can’t tell the difference between porn and the real thing.)

As we discussed in the Introduction, after we quit gaming it’s important that we come up with a new vision for our lives. We need to create a new life if we want to move on from our old one. This doesn’t need to be too complicated. Our vision can evolve over time, so initially we just want to find a few different things or experiences we’d like to have and focus on those. And then as we move forward away from games and start living our life—our vision will expand.

But our vision is only as powerful as the amount we focus on it—what we focus on expands. So it not only makes sense to start our morning routine with meditation—to bring us into a grounded state—and to also do a gratitude journal—to shift our focus to appreciation—but it also makes sense to visualize the life we are creating to help us remember why we are doing what we’re doing every day. And this visualization...
exercise only takes a few minutes. In fact you can have this and your gratitude journal done in a total of five!

The easiest way to do this is by creating a vision board—a visual representation of what you’re trying to create for your life. Now remember, life is about experiences not things, so always try and focus on the experience you’re trying to create. But who said we can’t have cool things too?!

So what you want to do is create a vision board (I have steps detailed below) and spend a few minutes each morning looking at it to visualize your future.

I recommend doing this after your gratitude journal. So wake up, meditate, do your gratitude journal and visualize your future for a few minutes. Then hop in the shower and start your day. Trust me, if you do this every morning you will feel badass.

Here’s mine: It took less than 30 minutes to put together.

- I want to travel to Tokyo, Istanbul, Amsterdam (to visit a friend) and Bali. I want to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, go to the Dates With Destiny event by Tony Robbins and Burning Man (again) this year.
- I want to own a Tesla Model S and be good at surfing. I want to afford living in AirBNB apartments anywhere I choose to go and use Uber to get around.
- My focus is on being calm, living from a place of love and making myself proud this year, building Game Quitters and I’d love to complete a Change Heroes campaign.
To create yours, follow these steps:

1. Look at your bucket list and/or think about things and experiences you’d like this year and in the future.
2. Open Google Images and save 10–15 images you like to your computer.
3. Find out what the size of your desktop is. On my Mac I opened “About My Mac” and clicked Display.
4. Open the photo editing software of your choice. I used Photoshop but you could use anything you have. If you are unsure what to use, I recommend Canva. After you login, click “Use custom dimensions” and input your display size. Once it loads click “Layouts” and scroll down until you find a layout that works with the number of images you have.
5. Finish putting it together.
6. Set it as your desktop wallpaper so you can see it all the time. You could also have it printed as a poster to put up your room. PosterBrain is my friend Eric’s company that can do this for you.

There you go! Easy.

To complete this mission:

1. Create your vision board and share it in your journal with the group.
2. Then share how your morning routine went today. Were you able to follow through on your commitments?
3. Now share ten things you’re grateful for to practice for tomorrow.

There we go! That brings us to the end of Day 5 and with it you have completed the Starter Kit missions.

**Important:** For tomorrow’s mission we will be heading out of the house (finally!) so make sure you schedule time in your day to go to a café of some sort—Starbucks works great. I recommend reading the mission in the morning in case you find the opportunity during the day (before heading home at night!)

**Bonus mission:** Grab yourself a 5 Minute Journal. This is a fantastic journal that is the simplest, most effective thing you can do every day to be happier. The journal itself is recommended but they also have an app for iOS.

**Notes:** If you’d like to read some research on gratitude, click [here](#).

If you’d like to read the epic story of how I used visualization to speak at TEDxBoulder, [click here](#).

If you’d like to read research behind the power of visualization, [click here](#).

Although these missions may have seemed a bit easy, trust me there will be a some more challenging ones ahead. These past five missions have been important to build a strong foundation, and it’s that foundation that is necessary to have a base to build on top of.
With the first five missions I wanted to keep them relatively easy to complete and have them be able to be done at home. As we move forward some of our missions will involve leaving the house (surprise!), but with a solid base you will be able to remain grounded and feeling empowered each day.

Now that you know your why (your letter), understand the importance of each day, have a new project to focus your attention on and have developed a killer morning routine with four keystone habits to start your day for success, you’re ready to take your life to the next level.

To accomplish this we will continue to build your character, by developing your Courage, Discipline, Social Intelligence, Contribution & Tenacity.

Quickly, I just want to acknowledge you for making it this far. You’re ready and I believe in you. Before we begin I also want you to take a second to acknowledge yourself. Going through this challenge is a real commitment you’ve made to yourself, and just as my vision board said, you’re making yourself proud. Take a minute to recognize that in yourself.
Courage

“It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.”
— E.E. Cummings

Throughout the course of our life, and whether we want to or not, we will run into an obstacle called fear. Fear comes in many forms and has a level of influence in the direction of our life... and the choices we make few of us consciously desire.

Our fears hold us back, and more so, they can be incredibly frustrating. At least I know they have been for me. They’re frustrating because as much as you want to get rid of them... that’s not always the best approach. I don’t believe life is about getting rid of every fear you have (you could spend your lifetime doing just that...), but instead it’s about learning how to dance with fear and shift the amount of influence it does have.

We will always feel fear in some way and it’s common for it to come out of nowhere. When you quit gaming you likely experienced fear. What would you do with your time? Won’t you just be bored? What about your friends? Are you really capable of having a life without games? Fear. And this fear makes you emotional and it encourages self-doubt. Fear encourages us to stay stagnant, to maintain the status quo. That way we aren’t exposed to the possibility of hurt (pain) or failure (emotional pain.)

So we need to learn how to dance with it, and over the last few years as I began to realize just how much of an influence fear was having on my life and holding me back from pursuing what I really wanted in the world, I went on a journey to explore how to shift from living from a place of fear, to living from a place of love.

One of my favorite ways to learn a new skill is to treat it like an experiment. I’m simply a subject open to learning what actually works to help me achieve a specific result. In this case, I knew fear was something I would never be able to remove from my life for good—that’s just not how fear works—so instead I focused on the antidote to fear: courage.

Courage is feeling fear and doing it anyway. So it’s not about whether or not you are afraid... but about having the strength to recognize the choice you have to move forward. Courage is also an essential ingredient in developing grit—which Angela Duckworth’s research shows is the key to success. Courage, along with discipline and tenacity will help you develop grit.

To learn courage you need to lean into your edges—your fears. I say lean in because when it comes to embodying courage, you want to focus on pushing your comfort zone one step at a time. That doesn’t mean you can’t go do something crazy to really push it... only that courage is developed through practice, and continuing to push into your comfort zone is that practice.
Developing courage is also about leaning into the potential for rejection. I believe our desire to avoid rejection, or painful previous experiences with rejection is at the center of why we were so drawn to video games in the first place. I know it was for me. After the intense bullying I went through in middle and high school and being rejected by girls I was interested in, games were an easy outlet to avoid having the potential to experience these again.

But, to live a great life you need courage. It takes courage to step up and say, you know what... I want my life to kick ass, and I'm unwilling to compromise on this desire. So over the next five missions we will work on exactly that. Each mission serves a purpose and they will get a bit more difficult each time, to keep your comfort zone expanding.

Last thing before we start: In order for me to embrace courage I had to make a deal with myself: that I was no longer going to take everything so personally. I had defined my values in how I wanted to show up every day, and as long as I was living in alignment with those (courage being one of them), I would be able to feel proud of who I am—without attachment to the outcome.

“Be open to all outcomes and attached to none.”

Zan Perrion once said this to me and it changed my life. I hope you will embrace it now as well as we begin this journey.

Notes: I encourage you to watch Angela Duckworth’s TED talk: The key to success? Grit.
This is just a sample of The Game Quitters Challenge

There are still 25 more missions to go:

Get The Full Ebook
Cam Adair is a speaker, writer and prominent thought leader on gaming addiction, who’s work has been seen by over a quarter million people. Cam founded Game Quitters to help gamers get their life back. He shares weekly videos on YouTube.

A talented hockey player, Cam’s life took a dramatic turn at the age of 11 when he began to experience intense bullying, leading him to drop out of high school, twice. Isolated, lonely and depressed, he played video games up to 16 hours a day until the age of 19 when he made a commitment to change.

His story has been featured on major media outlets and in two TEDx talks: Escaping Video Game Addiction and The Surprising Truth About Rejection.

Cam has spoken about gaming addiction at top international prep schools, computer science universities, corporate conferences and leadership development programs.

A world traveler, Cam shares his personal story and the lessons he's learned in a fun and practical way to empower and challenge others to use the adversity they face as fuel for growth, connection and purpose.

He lives in Vancouver, B.C. Contact him on Twitter and Facebook.
Also by Game Quitters:

Respawn

How to Quit Playing Video Games, Fill the Void and Take Control of Your Life Back

Learn More