

After observing Fifty and talking to him about his past, I decided that the source of his power is his utter fearlessness.

This quality does not manifest itself in yelling or obvious intimidation tactics. Any time Fifty acts that way in public it is pure theater. Behind the scenes, he is cool and calculating. His lack of fear is displayed in his attitude and his actions. He has seen and lived through too many dangerous encounters on the streets to be remotely fazed by anything in the corporate world. If a deal is not to his liking, he will walk away and not care.

If he needs to play a little rough and dirty with an adversary, he goes at it without a second thought. He feels supreme confidence in himself. Living in a world where most people are generally timid and conservative, he always has the advantage of being willing to do more, to take risks, and to be unconventional.

In the end, this is a book about a particular philosophy of life that can be summed up as follows—your fears are a kind of prison that confines you within a limited range of action. The less you fear, the more power you will have and the more fully you will live. It is our hope that The 50th Law will inspire you to discover this power for yourself.

One of the greatest fears that any child has is that of being abandoned, left alone in a terrifying world.

It is the source of our most primal nightmares.

This was Fifty's reality. He never knew his father, and his mother was murdered when he was eight years old.

50 Cent began hustling on the streets at any early age, and there was no way he could avoid feeling fear.

On a daily basis he had to confront violence and aggression. And seeing fear in action so routinely, he understood what a destructive and debilitating emotion it could be.

On the streets, showing fear would make people lose respect for you. You would end up being pushed around and more likely to suffer violence because of your desire to avoid it.

You had no choice—if you were to have any kind of power as a hustler, you had to overcome this emotion.

He quickly developed the habit of not depending on other people to protect or shelter him.

This meant that in every subsequent encounter in life in which he felt fear, he could turn only to himself.

If he did not want to feel the emotion, he had to learn to overcome it—on his own.

The new fearless types, as represented by Fifty, move in the opposite direction.

They find that the chaos of the times suits their temperament.

They have grown up being unafraid of experimentation, hustling, and trying new ways of operating.

They embrace the advances in technology that make others secretly fearful.

They let go of the past and create their own business model.

They do not give in to the conservative spirit that haunts corporate America in this radical period.

You came into this life with the only real possessions that ever matter—your body, the time that you have to live, your energy, the thoughts and ideas unique to you, and your autonomy.

But over the years you tend to give all of this away. You spend years working for others—they own you during that period.

You get needlessly caught up in people's games and battles, wasting energy and time that you will never get back.

You come to respect your own ideas less and less, listening to experts, conforming to conventional opinions.

Without realizing it you squander your independence, everything that makes you a creative individual.

True ownership can come only from within.

It comes from a disdain for anything or anybody that impinges upon your mobility, from a confidence in your own decisions, and from the use of your time in constant pursuit of education and improvement.

Only from this inner position of strength and self-reliance will you be able to truly work for yourself and never turn back.

If situations arise in which you must take in partners or fit within another organization, you are mentally preparing yourself for the moment when you will move beyond these momentary entanglements.

If you do not own yourself first, you will continually be at the mercy of people and circumstance, looking outward instead of relying on yourself and your wits.

Think of it this way: dependency is a habit that is so easy to acquire.

We live in a culture that offers you all kinds of crutches—experts to turn to, drugs to cure any psychological unease, mild pleasures to help pass or kill time, jobs to keep you just above water.

It is hard to resist. But once you give in, it is like a prison you enter that you cannot ever leave.

You continually look outward for help and this severely limits your options and maneuverability.

Premise

Introduction

Curtis Jackson

<p>Self-Belief and Self-Reliance</p>	<p>limits your options and maneuverability.</p> <p>When the time comes, as it inevitably does, when you must make an important decision, you have nothing inside of yourself to depend on.</p> <p>Before it is too late, you must move in the opposite direction. You cannot get this requisite inner strength from books or a guru or pills of any kind.</p> <p>It can come only from you. It is a kind of exercise you must practice on a daily basis—wearing yourself from dependencies, listening less to others' voices and more to your own, cultivating new skills.</p> <p>People who are self-sufficient are generally types who are more comfortable with themselves.</p> <p>They do not look for things that they need from other people. Paradoxically this makes them more attractive and seductive.</p> <p>We wish we could be more like that and want to be around them, hoping that some of their independence might rub off on us.</p> <p>The needy, clingy types—often the most sociable—unconsciously push us away. We feel their need for comfort and validation and secretly we want to say to them: "Get it for yourself—stop being so weak and dependent.</p> <p>Those who are self-reliant turn to people out of strength—a desire for pleasant company or an exchange of ideas. If people do not do what they want or expect, they are not hurt or let down. Their happiness comes from within and is all the more profound for that reason.</p> <p>In the beginning, fear was a basic, simple emotion for the human animal. We confronted something overwhelming—the imminent threat of death in the form of wars, plagues, and natural disasters—and we felt fear. As for any animal, this emotion had a protective function—it allowed us to take notice of a danger and retreat in time. For us humans, it served an additional, positive purpose—we could remember the source of the threat and protect ourselves better the next time.</p> <p>In the evolution of fear, a decisive moment occurred in the nineteenth century when people in advertising and journalism discovered that if they framed their stories and appeals with fear, they could capture our attention. It is an emotion we find hard to resist or control, and so they constantly shifted our focus to new possible sources of anxiety: the latest health scare, the new crime wave, a social faux pas we might be committing, and endless hazards in the environment of which we were not aware.</p> <p>We are all too afraid—of offending people, of stirring up conflict, of standing out from the crowd, of taking bold action. For thousands of years our relationship to this emotion has evolved—from a primitive fear of nature, to generalized anxiety about the future, to the fearful attitude that now dominates us. As rational, productive adults we are called upon to finally overcome this downward trend and to evolve beyond our fears.</p> <p>When we live in relatively comfortable circumstances, the environment does not press on us with obvious dangers, violence, or limitations to our movement. Our main goal then is to maintain the comfort and security we have, and so we become more sensitive to the slightest risk or threat to the status quo. We find it harder to tolerate feelings of fear because they are more vague and troubling—so we remain in the passive mode.</p> <p>As in all situations, the determining factor will be our attitude, how we choose to look at this reality. If we give in to the fear, we will give disproportionate attention to the negative and manufacture the very adverse circumstances that we dread. If we go the opposite direction, cultivating a fearless approach to life, attacking everything with boldness and energy, then we will create a much different dynamic.</p> <p>When you were born, you entered this world with no identity or ego.</p> <p>You were simply a bundle of chaotic impulses and desires. But slowly you acquired a personality that you have more or less built upon over the years.</p> <p>You are outgoing or shy, bold or skittish—a mix of various traits that defines you. You tend to accept this personality as something very real and established.</p> <p>But much of this identity is shaped and constructed by outside forces—the opinions and judgments of hundreds of other people who have crossed your path over the years.</p> <p>Many of these criticisms and opinions are not objective at all.</p> <p>People want to see certain qualities in you. They project onto you their own fears and fantasies.</p> <p>They want you to fit a conventional pattern; it is frustrating and often frightening for people to think they cannot figure someone out.</p> <p>Behavior that is considered abnormal or different, which may very well be coming from somewhere deep within you, is actively discouraged.</p> <p>Envy plays a role as well—if you are too good at something, you might be made to feel strange or undesirable.</p> <p>Even the praise of others is often designed to hem you in to certain ideals they want to see in you.</p> <p>All of this shapes your personality, limits your range of behavior, and becomes like a mask that hardens on your face.</p> <p>There is another, fearless way of approaching your life. It begins by untying yourself from the opinions of others.</p> <p>This is not as easy as it sounds. You are breaking a lifelong habit of continually referring to other people when measuring your value.</p>
--------------------------------------	---

Self-Belief

You must experiment and feel the sensation of not concerning yourself with what others think or expect of you. You do not advance or retreat with their opinions in mind.

You drown out their voices that often translate into doubts inside you. Instead of focusing on the limits you have internalized, you think of the potential you have for new and different behavior.

Your personality can be altered and shaped by your conscious decision to do so.

Moving towards such self-belief does not mean you cut yourself off from others and their opinions of your actions.

You must take constant measure of how people receive your work, and use to maximum effect their feedback. But this process must begin from a position of inner strength.

If you are dependent on their judgments for your sense of worth, then your ego will always be weak and fragile.

You will have no center or sense of balance. You will wilt under criticisms and soar too high with any praise. Their opinions are merely helping you shape your work, not your self-image.

The higher you raise this self-image, the fewer judgments and manipulations you will tolerate. This will translate into fewer obstacles in your path.

What block us from moving in this direction are the pressures we feel to conform; our rigid, habitual patterns of thinking; and our self-doubts and fears.

The following are five strategies to help you push past these limits.

The day you were born you became engaged in a struggle that continues to this day and will determine your success or failure in life.

You are an individual, with ideas and skills that make you unique. But people are constantly trying to fit you into narrow categories that make you more predictable and easier to manage.

They want to see you as shy or outgoing, sensitive or tough. If you succumb to this pressure, then you may gain some social acceptance, but you will lose the unconventional parts of your character that are the source of your uniqueness and power.

You must resist this process at all costs, seeing people's neat and tidy judgments as a form of confinement.

Your task is to retain or rediscover those aspects of your character that defy categorization, and to give them even greater play.

Remaining unique, you will create something unique and inspire the kind of respect you would never receive from tepid conformity.

Defy All Categories

People judge you by appearances, the image you project through your actions, words, and style.

If you do not take control of this process, then people will see and define you the way they want to, often to your detriment.

The powerful learn early in life that they have the freedom to mold their image, fitting the needs and moods of the moment.

Constantly Reinvent Yourself

You must follow this path and find great pleasure in reinventing yourself, as if you were the author writing your own drama.

Animals depend on instincts and habits to survive.

We as humans depend on our conscious, rational thinking, which gives us greater freedom of action, the ability to alter our behavior according to circumstance.

And yet that animal part of our own nature, that compulsion to repeat the same things, tends to dominate our way of thinking.

We succumb to mental patterns, which makes our actions repetitive as well.

What often prevent us from using the mental fluidity and freedom that we naturally possess are the physical routines in our lives.

We see the same people and do the same things, and our minds follow these patterns. The solution then is to break this up.

Subvert Your Patterns

By taking an action we have never done before, we place ourselves in unfamiliar territory—our minds naturally awaken to the novel situation.

In a similar vein, we can force ourselves to take different routes, visit strange places, encounter different people, wake up at odd hours, or read books that challenge our minds instead of dull them.

The higher your self-belief, the more your power to transform reality.

Having supreme confidence makes you fearless and persistent, allowing you to overcome obstacles that stop most people in their tracks. It makes others believe in you as well.

And the most intense form of self-belief is to feel a sense of destiny impelling you forward.

Think of it in these terms: you have a set of skills and experiences that make you unique.

They point towards some life task that you were meant to accomplish.

You see signs of this in the predilections of your youth, certain tasks you were naturally drawn to.

When you are involved in this task, everything seems to flow more naturally.

Create A Sense Of Destiny

Believing you are destined to accomplish something does not make you passive or unfree, but the opposite.

You are liberated of the normal doubts and confusions that plague us.

You have a sense of purpose that guides you but does

you have a sense of purpose that guides you but does not chain you to one way of doing things. And when your willpower is so deeply engaged, it will push you past any limits or dangers.

It is always easy to rationalize your own doubts and conservative instincts, particularly when times are tough.

You will convince yourself that it is foolhardy to take any risks, that it is better to wait for when circumstances are more propitious.

But this is a dangerous mentality.

It signifies an overall lack of confidence in yourself that will carry over to better times.

While others retrench and retreat, you must think of taking risks, trying new things, and looking at the future that will come out of the present crisis.

You must always be prepared to place a bet on yourself, on your future, by heading in a direction that others seem to fear.

Bet On Yourself

This means you believe that if you fail, you have the inner resources to recover. This belief acts as a kind of mental safety net.

When you move ahead on some new venture or direction, your mind will snap to attention; your energy will be focused and intense.

By making yourself feel the necessity to be creative, your mind will rise to the occasion.

EVERY NEGATIVE SITUATION CONTAINS THE POSSIBILITY FOR SOMETHING POSITIVE, AN OPPORTUNITY.

IT IS HOW YOU LOOK AT IT THAT MATTERS. YOUR LACK OF RESOURCES CAN BE AN ADVANTAGE, FORCING YOU TO BE MORE INVENTIVE WITH THE LITTLE THAT YOU HAVE.

LOSING A BATTLE CAN ALLOW YOU TO FRAME YOURSELF AS THE SYMPATHETIC UNDERDOG. DO NOT LET FEARS MAKE YOU WAIT FOR A BETTER MOMENT OR BECOME CONSERVATIVE.

IF THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU CANNOT CONTROL, MAKE THE BEST OF THEM.

IT IS THE ULTIMATE ALCHEMY TO TRANSFORM ALL SUCH NEGATIVES INTO ADVANTAGES AND POWER.

As a hustler on the streets Fifty had learned a fundamental lesson: Access to money and resources is severely limited in the hood.

A hustler must transform every little event and every trifling object into some gimmick for making money.

Even the worst shit that happens to you can be converted into gold if you are clever enough.

Instead of becoming discouraged and depressed by any kind of downturn, you must see this as a wake-up call, a challenge that you will transform into an opportunity for power.

Your energy levels rise. You move to the attack, surprising your enemies with boldness.

You care less what people think about you and this paradoxically causes them to admire you—the negative publicity is turned around.

You do not wait for things to get better—you seize this chance to prove yourself.

We live in a society of relative prosperity, but in many ways this turns out to be a detriment to our spirit.

We come to feel that we naturally deserve good things, that we have certain privileges due to us.

When setbacks occur, it is almost a personal affront or punishment. "How could this have happened?" we ask.

We either blame other people or we blame ourselves. In both cases, we lose valuable time and become unnecessarily emotional.

This hustler mind-set is more realistic and effective. The truth is that life is by nature harsh and competitive.

No matter how much money or resources you have accumulated, someone will try to take them from you, or unexpected changes in the world will push you backward.

These are not adverse circumstances but merely life as it is.

Hood Alchemy

You have no time to lose to fear and depression, and you do not have the luxury of waiting.

When things are going well, that is precisely when you must be concerned and vigilant.

You know it will not last and you will not be caught unprepared.

When things are going badly, that is when you are most encouraged and fearless.

When we go to work with what is there, we find new ways to employ this material.

We solve problems, develop skills we can use again and again, and build up our confidence.

If we become wealthy and dependent on money and technology, our minds atrophy and that wealth will not last.

An opportunist in life sees all hindrances as instruments for power.

The reason is simple: negative energy that comes at you in some form is energy that can be turned around—to defeat an opponent and lift you up.

When there is no such energy, there is nothing to react or push against; it is harder to motivate yourself.

Seeing Opportunity

Most people wait too long to go into action, generally out of fear. They want more money or better circumstances.

You must go the opposite direction and move before you think you are ready.

It is as if you are making it a little more difficult for yourself, deliberately creating obstacles in your path.

But it is a law of power that your energy will always rise to the appropriate level.

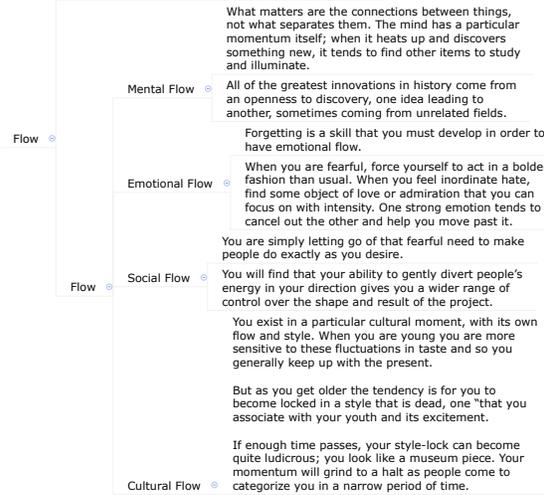
When you feel that you must work harder to get to your goal because you are not quite prepared, you are more alert and inventive.

Like the hustler, you must find your freedom through the fluidity of your thoughts and your constant inventiveness.

This means having a greater willingness to experiment, trying several ventures without fear of failing here or there.

It also means constantly looking to develop new styles, new directions you can take, freeing yourself up from any inertia that comes with age.

In a world full of people who are too conventional in their thinking, who respect the past far too much, such flow will inevitably translate into power and more room to move.



For our most primitive ancestors, life was a constant struggle, entailing endless labor to secure food and shelter.

If there was any free time, it generally was reserved for rituals that would give meaning to such a hard life.

Then, over thousands of years of civilization, life gradually became easier for many, and with that came more and more free time.

In such moments, there was no need to work the fields or worry about enemies or the elements—just an expanse of hours to somehow fill.

The principal means of distraction are all forms of public entertainment, drugs and alcohol, and social activities.

But such distractions have a drug-like effect—they wear off. We crave new ones, faster ones, to lift us out of ourselves and divert us from the harsh realities of life and creeping boredom.

To reach the end of anything, to master a process, requires time, focus, and energy.

When people are so distracted, their minds constantly moving from one thing to another, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain concentration on one thing for a few hours, let alone for months and years.

Under this influence, the mind will tend to short-circuit; it will not be able to go all the way to the end of a task.

The real secret, the real formula for power in this world, lies in accepting the ugly reality that learning requires a process, and this in turn demands patience and the ability to endure drudge work.

It is not sexy or seductive at first glance, but this truth is based on something real and substantial—an age-old wisdom that will never be overturned.

The key is the level of your desire. If you are really after power and mastery, then you will absorb this idea deeply and engrave it in your mind: there are no shortcuts.

You will distrust anything that is fast and easy. You will be able to endure the initial months of dull, repetitive labor, because you have an overall goal.

This will prevent you from short-circuiting, knowing many things but mastering none of them. In the end, what you really will be doing is mastering yourself—your impatience, your fear of boredom and empty time, your need for constant fun and amusement.

Too often our concept of learning is to absorb ideas from books, to do what others tell us to, and perhaps to do some controlled exercises.

But this is an incomplete and fearful concept of

Mastery

learning—cut off from practical experience.  
We are creatures who make things; we don't simply imagine them.  
To master any process you must learn through trial and error.  
You experiment, you take some hard blows, and you see what works and doesn't work in real time.  
You expose yourself and your work to public scrutiny. Your failures are embedded in your nervous system; you do not want to repeat them.

Progress Through Trial And Error

Often we have a general feeling of insecurity because we have never really mastered anything in life.  
Unconsciously we feel weak and never quite up to the task.  
Before we begin something, we sense we will fail.  
The best way to overcome this once and for all is to attack this weakness head-on and build for ourselves a pattern of confidence.

Master Something Simple

And this must be done by first tackling something simple and basic, giving us a taste for the power we can have.  
When you take the time to master a simple process and overcome a basic insecurity, you develop certain skills that can be applied to anything.  
You see instantly the reward that comes from patience, practice, and discipline.

Internalize The Rules Of The Game

When you enter a group as part of a job or a career, there are all kinds of rules that govern behavior—values of good and bad, power networks that must be respected, patterns to be followed for successful action.  
If you do not patiently observe and learn them well, you will make all kinds of mistakes without knowing why or how.  
Think of social and political skills as a craft that you must master as well as any other.  
In the initial phase of your apprenticeship your goal here is not to impress people with your brilliance but to learn these conventions from the inside.  
Watch for telling mistakes that others have made in the group and for which they have paid a price—that will reveal particular taboos within the culture.  
With a deepening knowledge of these rules you can begin to maneuver them for your purpose.  
If you find yourself confronting an unjust and corrupt system, it is much more effective to learn its codes from the inside and discover its vulnerabilities.  
Knowing how it works, you can take it apart—for good.

Five principal strategies for developing the proper relationship to process

Attune yourself to the details

Often when you begin a project of any kind, it is from the wrong end.  
You tend to think first of what you want to accomplish, imagining the glory and money it will bring you if it succeeds.  
You then proceed to make this concept come to life. But as you go forward you often lose patience, because the small steps to get there are not nearly as exciting as the ambitious visions in your head.  
Take pleasure in going deeper and deeper into these fine points—your research is intense.  
From this knowledge, you shape the project itself, grounding it in reality rather than in airy concepts in your head.  
Operating this way helps you slow your mind down and develop patience for detailed work, an essential skill for mastering any craft.

Rediscover your natural persistence

This is the dilemma we all face: to accomplish anything worthwhile in life generally takes some time—often in blocks of years.  
But we are creatures who find it very hard to manage such long periods.  
We are immersed in the day-to-day; our emotions fluctuate with each encounter. We have immediate desires we are constantly working to satisfy.  
In that long period of time that we need to reach a goal, we are assailed by a thousand distractions and temptations that seem more interesting.  
We lose sight of our objectives and end up following some detour. This is the source of so many of the failures in our lives.  
To force yourself past any obstacle or temptation, you must be persistent.  
As children we all had this quality because we were single-minded; you must simply rediscover and redevelop this character trait.  
You must understand the role that your energy level plays in mastering a process and bringing something to completion.  
If you take on added goals or new tasks, your focus will be broken up and you will never attain what you wanted in the first place.  
You cannot persist on two or three paths, so avoid that temptation.  
Try breaking things up into smaller blocks of time. You have a large goal, but there are steps along the way, and steps within the steps.  
These steps represent months instead of years. Reaching these smaller goals gives you a sense of tangible reward and progress.  
This will make it easier for you to resist any diversions along the way and fearlessly push ahead.

Try to look at boredom from the opposite perspective— as a call for you to slow yourself down to step

as a call for you to slow yourself down, to stop searching for endless distractions.

This might mean forcing yourself to spend time alone, overcoming that childish inability to sit still.

When you work through such self-imposed boredom, you will find your mind clicks into gear—new and unexpected thoughts will come to you to fill the void.

To feel inspired you must first experience a moment of emptiness.