



## The Inner Voices, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Your Life

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

When you consider all that you are capable of achieving, nothing is more exciting than imagining who and what you can and will become in your life. To do this, you must first learn to ignore that voice inside your head that may tell you otherwise.

- You have the ability to become happier.
- You have the ability to become more successful.
- You have the ability to become healthier.
- You have the ability to become a better friend.
- You have the ability to become a better wife or husband.
- You have the ability to learn new things.
- You have the ability to [get a better job](#).
- You have the ability to get a raise.
- You have the ability to live where you want.
- You have the ability to work how you want.
- You have the ability to do what you want for a living.
- You have the ability to pursue the hobbies you want.

In fact, pretty much whatever you want out of life is yours for the taking.

- When you see people who are in a state of perpetual unhappiness, they are most often listening to the negative voices in their heads--those voices that tell them they *cannot* achieve their goals.
- When you see people who do not enjoy what they are doing for a living, they are listening to the same voices.
- When you see people who have bad relationships, they are listening to the same voices.

Pretty much anyone you know who is in a state of perpetual unhappiness and is not living up to what he or she is capable of, is someone who is listening to the negative voices. The better you become at ignoring the voice, the better off you are going to be. The challenge of shutting out these negative voices is present in everyone's life, and in some ways, this is the test of our lives.

Prisons, for example, are filled with people who have listened to this voice--and doing so has gotten them into serious trouble. Conversely, when we observe a Buddhist monastery, or any group of people that has set itself apart from the world in an effort to live a holy life, we are generally observing a group of people that has successfully *tuned out* the negative voices. Historical characters who have left significant religious impacts on the world, like Jesus for example, are people who taught and practiced lives of not listening to the voices.

What are these voices doing? The voices:

- Push us to do the things we should not be doing, even when we know we should not.
- Tell us to walk past a piece of trash without picking it up.
- Tell us to eat something we should not, even when we are dieting.
- Tell us to pass along a rumor about someone, even when we do not know if it is true.
- Tell us to cheat by doing something the easy way, instead of the correct way.
- Convince us that the easy way of doing something is okay because no one will notice.
- Tell us that there is nothing wrong with cheating if no one notices.
- Tell us we do not need study when we are taking classes.
- Tell us there is nothing wrong with spending more money than we should.
- Tell us we do not need to practice to be good at something.
- Tell us there is nothing wrong with using drugs even when we are addicted.

Anything you know that you should do, that you do not do, is the product of these voices. All of our destructive and harmful actions will generally be justified by these voices. The voices are very good at telling us it is okay to do various things we know we should not. Throughout our entire lives, we are in a constant dialogue with these voices. *When people dominate the voices, they have very productive, happy, and meaningful lives, and when the voices dominate them, people have very unproductive, unhappy, and not meaningful lives.*

If you talk to most people about their lack of success and fulfillment in the world, they will point to something and someone else as the cause of their unhappiness. Most people believe that their greatest enemies are other people, society, their company, and so forth--not the voices they listen to on a daily basis, which exist inside their very own heads. Most people never realize that they are their own greatest enemy in the world. Most of us are controlled all the time by these voices. How many people do you know who spend the majority of their time overcoming this voice so they can get better and better?

Something I have found the more I have studied success and looked at the most happy and successful people out there, is that happy, successful people have the greatest self-awareness of this voice. They make the study of their own mind and their weaknesses a major part of what they do. They are constantly training themselves to be stronger and stronger, to realize and overcome their weaknesses. Instead of being complacent, they are continually improving themselves in

everything that they do. When you learn to overcome the voices, you have incredible potential and can accomplish great things.

I went to watch a boxing match in Las Vegas last night between Floyd Mayweather and Juan Manuel Marquez. I sat a couple of seats away from Arnold Schwarzenegger, and as I sat there watching the fight I began to think of these voices and the power of ignoring them. Both the fighters and Schwarzenegger himself have excelled at this in order to attain great success.

Before we left for the fight, my wife and I were waiting for a friend of hers to get ready, and we were all watching the television show *The Biggest Loser*. In this show, people who are a hundred or more pounds overweight all struggle to lose their excess weight. They are forced to diet, exercise, and change their lifestyles. In the episode I was watching, the participants were all taken to the doctor and were told that they were morbidly obese, and that if they were to keep up their lifestyles, they would all die early deaths. What was so interesting about this show was that the people on the show had, thus far, always struggled against the inner voices, yet the voices had continually won. As a result, the person had become heavier and heavier over the years. The TV show essentially deals with people confronting these voices and doing everything in their power to beat the voices.

Throughout the show, people were crying and saying they couldn't do it. Sometimes people quit. People's bodies are so out of shape that many of them end up getting sick when they start exercising. The show is fascinating because it depicts how difficult it is for people to win against the inner voices, as well as the damage these voices can inflict on our lives.

Last night, looking at Arnold a few seats over, I could not help but think about how much his life has been defined by not listening to the negative voices and by overcoming them. As most people know, Arnold came to fame as a bodybuilder and then became an actor. His work as a bodybuilder inspired an entire generation of men. When you read, watch, and learn about Arnold, you learn about the incredible power available to us in having discipline. One of my favorite Arnold quotes is the following:

A beginner does eight repetitions of a certain exercise with his maximum weight on the barbell. As soon as it hurts, he thinks about stopping. I work beyond this point, which means I tell my mind that as soon as it starts aching it is growing. Growing is something unusual for the body when you are over eighteen. The body isn't used to ten, eleven, or twelve reps with a maximum weight. Then I do ten or fifteen sets of this in a row. No human body was ever prepared for this and suddenly it is making itself grow to handle this new challenge, growing through this pain area. Experiencing this pain in my muscles and aching and going on is my challenge. The last three or four reps is what makes the muscles grow. This area of pain divides a champion from someone who is not a champion. That's what most people lack, having the guts to go on and just say they'll go through the pain no matter what happens. I have no fear of fainting. I do squats until I fall over and pass out. So what? It's not going to kill me. I wake up five minutes later and I'm OK. A lot of other athletes are afraid of this. So they don't pass out. They don't go on.

He is saying that pushing through the pain is what makes him grow. Not listening to the inner voices that make the average person quit is what makes Arnold improve and grow. I wonder what sort of life Arnold would have led if he had been like most people, just listening to the voice that urged him to quit? Most people never reach their potential because they listen to the voice that allows them to quit--usually just when they start to grow. How many people push through when they get to an uncomfortable state like Arnold?

The secret to having the most successful life and career possible is to push through and ignore the voices that tell us to cut corners, to not do things the best they should be done, to not see it through when things get difficult, and to not do the absolute best that we can, in everything we do.

In the legal profession you can spend up to \$1,000 an hour for an attorney. Since an attorney who does work for \$100 an hour is capable of doing the same sort of work that the \$1,000 an hour attorney does, one might ask *why would anyone possibly spend \$1,000 an hour for an attorney?* The biggest difference between the \$100 an hour attorney and the one who charges \$1,000 an hour is most often the discipline of thought that that \$1,000 an hour attorney exhibits. There are always going to be some other differences, of course, but for the most part, when you pay \$1,000 an hour for an attorney, this person is not going to cut corners; he or she is going to do the most difficult things instead of the easiest things; he or she will do more thorough research and will be more certain of their decisions; he or she will be *right* much more often than wrong.

What you find in the legal profession is no different than what you will find in any profession, product, or service. For example, the car that costs \$100,000 as opposed to \$10,000 is likely to be more carefully put together, with more attention to detail. It is like this with everything. The more thought, discipline, and work it requires, the more valuable it is likely to be.

If people were to set out to dream up ways to limit you in your life and career, what they would most certainly do is arouse that negative inner voice within you. They would tell you that it is okay to leave at 5:00 p.m. and finish the project in the morning although it is due at 10:00 a.m. and is very important. They would tell you it is okay to overeat and to not take care of yourself. They would tell you that it is okay to have several drinks every night, despite the fact that it makes you ineffective at work the next day. They would tell you that it is okay to steal if no one notices. They would tell you that it is okay to lie to people when it is more convenient than telling the truth. They would tell you that you should do whatever seems to benefit you the most right now, and whatever feels best to you; *never mind others and the long-term consequences of your action*.

The course of your career and life will be largely determined by how well you resist these inner voices. You can reach incredible heights of success the more you learn to resist the voices. When you are **applying to jobs** and are pursuing your career, it means you can give 200% effort--not merely 50%. This means you apply to every single job you can find; you call to follow up on applications; you apply a second time after being rejected the first time; you make sure you research every job in the market; you initiate mailing campaigns and do everything you can to make sure you market yourself as effectively as possible. On the job, it means you work extra hard, do not take shortcuts, and continually work at improving yourself. You make your mind tougher and healthier along the way. You develop more and more discipline. You push through the *pain zone*.

People who reach great heights of success and have the most fulfilling lives are those who are not afraid to go farther than others. They ignore the voices that tell them to take the easy way out. They choose to listen to another inner voice--one of *discipline*, which tells them to push through and to do all things the best way they can be done. You need to listen to the *other* voice inside of *you*, which pushes you to the greatest heights and helps you ignore the voices that seek only short-term gratification. By doing this, you will unlock the secret to unlimited potential.

## THE LESSON

When considering your capabilities, nothing is more exciting than imagining who and what you will become in life. To do this,

however, you must quash the negative voice in your head telling you to compromise or take the easy way out. When you see the people who are in a perpetual state of unhappiness, they are most often the people who listen and succumb to the negative voices in their heads.

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