

The Six Lessons I Live By

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1. Surround yourself with people who are smarter than you and move out of their way.

If you feel like you know everything, you're wrong. I know what I don't know and then I find partners who can teach me. A perfect example is my partnership with Patrick Whitesell, my co-CEO at WME. While we take on different roles at the company and focus on different things, we share the same goals and at the end of the day, we're working toward the same end. That's been the key to our success.

2. The only constant in business is change. Get comfortable with it.

When I started in the business, there were four broadcast networks and 19 cable networks. Now there are five broadcast networks, 117 cable networks, Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, HBOGo, iTunes, Amazon Prime, VOD – the list goes on and on. Next year there will be more distribution platforms, and in ten years the landscape will have shifted another 180 degrees. The business is changing quickly, and the only way to succeed is to change with it. I always tell my colleagues, there is no such thing as a traditional talent agent anymore. It's about pushing beyond that 10% commission and finding opportunity where it didn't exist before.

3. Fail often, fail quickly.

Nobody fucks up like I do, but you'll never succeed unless you take risks. Big ones. In 2009, we took Endeavor, a company that was doing incredibly well, and merged it with the oldest talent agency in the world. From a cultural and organizational standpoint, it was a big risk. People had their doubts. But we had a vision and a lot of help from very smart people (see #1.) Three years later, our business is stronger, our bench is deeper and smarter, and our deal-making is more innovative. It's a better company – period. You have to lead by example if you want to promote a culture where risk-taking is rewarded.

4. Your schedule makes you dumber.

Force yourself outside of your daily schedule. Be curious and take time to learn about worlds outside of the one you live in. Watch the news, read the paper, educate yourself. Don't be afraid to call people you don't know, start a conversation, and ask for things you need. At the very least, you'll be more interesting. At the most, you'll take your business in new and bigger directions.

5. You only get one shot – make it count.

I learned this the painful way. After being hit by a car and lying face-down in the middle of Wilshire Boulevard, I was confronted with a whole lot more than my mortality. Take advantage of each day that's given to you and do something to move the needle on your business, even if it's just an inch. You've heard it before, but life is not a dress rehearsal. Don't waste your time (or mine.)

6. Good ideas rule all.

In the end, it's all about creative ideas and content – it's the lifeblood of our business. I'm fortunate enough to work with the writers, directors, musicians and actors who are defining culture with their voices. It's why I come to work in the morning. In 100 years, when the world looks different, and we communicate in new ways, and we have more devices and platforms and distribution methods, I believe great artistry will still matter most.