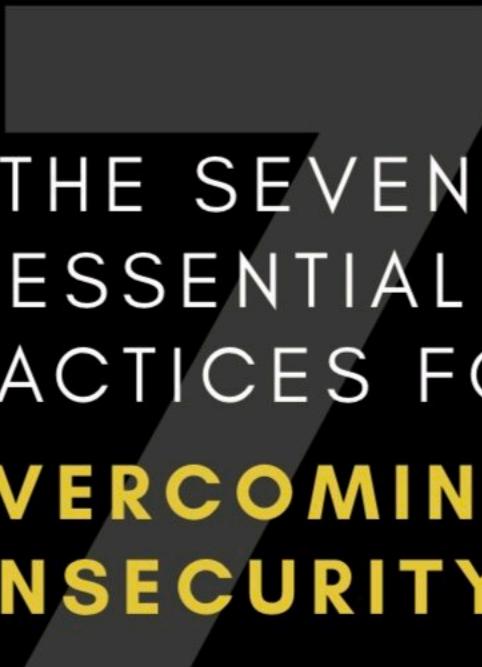


FROM THE FOUNDER OF THE INSECURITY PROJECT

Unhindered



THE SEVEN
ESSENTIAL
PRACTICES FOR
**OVERCOMING
INSECURITY**

JAEMIN FRAZER

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Preface

For the last ten years, the pursuit of solving the insecurity problem has become my obsession. It has entirely captured my attention and all ambition I have for my life is directed to this end.

This subject has occupied every spare corner of my brain and there are very few nights where the desire to understand and explain how insecurity can be overcome does not work itself into the fabric of my dreams.

This book represents the very best I have to offer on this subject. I have poured my heart and soul into creating a framework that is intelligent, effective and complete.

To set up the conversation about such a difficult and vulnerable issue, there are three vital distinctions to be made about the nature of insecurity:

1. It is natural
2. It is useful
3. It is removable

In understanding this triad, you will find the access point into the way of solving insecurity for good.

It is natural

It is unavoidable. Even perfect parents could not protect their children from developing irrational fears and self-limiting beliefs. Doubt and fear show us where the edges are. They let us know we are alive and that we deserve to be safe.

It is universal. Every human being who has ever lived, and is yet to live, will face this same longing for love, belonging and significance in the process of forming as an adult. Understanding the universal nature of the fear of not being good enough allows each of us to see our own struggle with insecurity as somehow special or unique. It's not that some people face the insecurity problem while others are spared, everyone develops this fear. If insecurity is the constant, the variable is what people do with it.

It is useful

There are seasons of life where having something to prove, driven by fear is incredibly motivating. In this book, I'll show you examples of insecurity driving up performance and boosting personal capabilities.

The issue is that while it starts out as natural and useful, there is definitely an expiry date on both the usefulness and naturality of this fear. In fact, the longer insecurity remains intact and unaddressed inside you, the more toxic and maddening it becomes. We are supposed to remove it.

The gift within our insecurity is the resistance it provides. Growth never exists in a vacuum or perfect condition. It requires some kind of oppositional force. We reach full stature as we reach for the stars while simultaneously being pulled back to earth. If there was no gravity, we would float off into space.

From the deep dark recesses of our mind a voice of fear taunts us. The terrifying question of what would be discovered if we were to be laid bare, can either paralyse or energise us.

What if it's true? What if you are no good? What if you are unworthy? What if you are not enough?

*Sure, but what if it's **not** true? What if there is no substance to this fear? What if I am inherently good? What if I am deeply worthy? What if I AM enough?*

The voice of insecurity gives us the opportunity to find out which one is true. The most meaningful victories in life always come in the face of the biggest challenges.

Insecurity proves to be a worthy adversary to test yourself against. Like a loving mentor, it desperately wants you to win while making it as difficult as possible for you to do so. This makes the victory real.

Nothing of value comes without a cost. To have the opportunity to genuinely overcome insecurity will cost you everything. If

you lose, you die. If you win, you get the holy grail and are able to drink from the well of everlasting life.

It is removable

I have no confidence in the common thinking about what one is to do with self-doubt, fear and limiting beliefs. The advice of podcasters, authors and athletes on dealing with fear frequently leaves me puzzled, while conversations about insecurity with practitioners in the personal development space rarely inspire me.

The general consensus seems to be to struggle against insecurity the best you can. Mask, medicate and manage the monster. It is my heartfelt conviction that we can and must do better than that. The natural cycle of insecurity is for it to be felt, faced, deconstructed, removed and replaced.

This book is devoted to the process of *solving* the insecurity problem.

Jaemin

Introduction

So, what's the problem?

Let me begin with 2 of my all-time favourite coaching questions:

1. What problem are you most looking to solve right now?
2. Are you sure that's really the problem?

Two interesting things happen when you allow these questions to work their magic.

Firstly, most people realise that they've never actually named the problem. They are not actually clear about what's wrong at all. This question forces you to be specific. What exactly is the problem here? You can't fix it if you don't even know what it is. What exactly is wrong? What specifically don't you like?

Being as precise as possible gives you clarity about where to focus your attention in order to fix the problem.

Maybe your marriage isn't great right now.

Is it everything about your marriage or only certain parts of your marriage? What's not the way you want it to be?

Maybe you haven't felt healthy in ages.

Yes, but what specifically is happening in your body that makes you feel unhealthy?

Perhaps your finances are stressing you out.

What do you mean by that?

Maybe you feel stuck or trapped and haven't been happy in ages.

Are you sure that's how you feel? And how do you know this is true?

Or maybe every time you arrive at work, there is an empty feeling in the pit of your stomach.

What exactly is the problem here?

When you remain vague or abstract about the things that aren't working, you have no capacity to improve your situation.

Secondly, just because you think you've accurately understood the problem doesn't mean to say that you have. Because

problems feel bad, they almost always come with an inbuilt sense of judgment. We feel that we must have done something wrong to be experiencing this problem in the first place. And if you've done something wrong, there must BE something wrong with you. It all becomes very personal.

The pain associated with this problem makes it incredibly hard to clearly see the true nature of the problem itself. It is impossible to do self-judgment and self-awareness at the same time. In the presence of judgment, we must defend and protect our interests instead. This invariably leads to a faulty diagnosis.

We see and feel pain on the surface and therefore imagine that's where the problem lies. Due to our inadequate diagnosis though, we waste effort solving the things that are merely symptoms of a deeper problem. This leaves us in more pain and more deeply impacted by the underlying problem.

Be precise

The value of letting these two questions do their work is that you move from abstraction to specificity. Embedded in this shift is the experience of moving from powerlessness to full empowerment.

When a problem is experienced in loose, abstract and imprecise language, you'll notice that the problem appears to be outside of you in a way that you have zero control over. The accompanying feeling is therefore to be overwhelmed and

anxious. There is nothing you can really do to solve the problem; you'll just need to manage the situation as best you can.

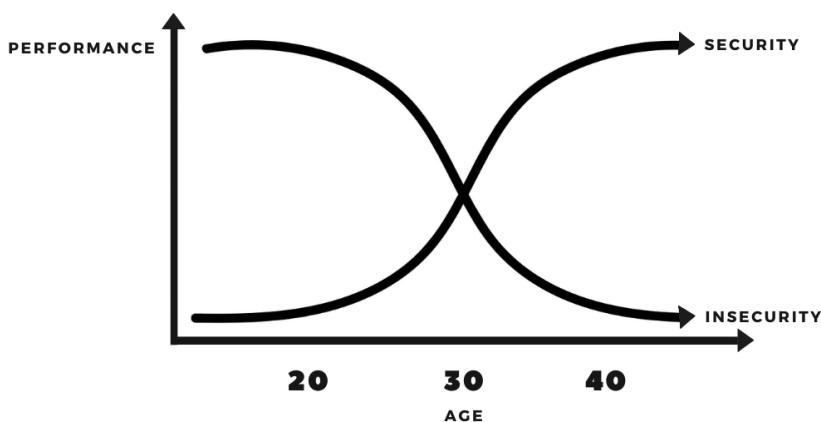
As you get precise and accurately identify the real problem, however, you'll notice that it is actually entirely within your aegis. You are therefore completely capable of solving the problem. The feeling about the problem changes significantly. As soon as you see clearly the exact nature of the problem, you also see that the problem is you. You discover that the problem is not due to what is happening to you, as first thought, but what you are bringing to the situation.

When you feel overwhelmed and anxious about a problem, this is simply clean feedback to let you know that you haven't properly understood what the real problem is. You will know that you've accurately understood the true problem when you feel clear about the solution and confident that you are capable of resolving the issue.

Let's try this idea in the five most common human pain points.

Ideal Conditions

The impact of insecurity on performance.



This diagram highlights the impact insecurity has on relationship between performance capacity and age.

Insecurity

In the judgment-free space, insecurity is neither good nor bad. If we explore the impact insecurity has on your ability to generate real results, you may be surprised. In fact, insecurity may be the thing driving up performance in your 20's. It is often the most insecure young people who do the most extraordinary

things. Being driven to desperately prove your value and worth to the world by what you can achieve is a powerful source of motivation.

This driven-ness makes people unrealistic, unreasonable and irrational, all of which drives up their performance capacity. The word NO does not compute as a reason to stop. In fact, it becomes the trigger to ramp up the intensity of their desire to prove that NO is wrong. The best way to motivate an insecure 20-year-old is to tell them they can't or won't. The word no is like rocket fuel.

At the time of writing this book, the 10-part Netflix documentary on Michael Jordan had just been released. One of the most remarkable things of the Jordan backstory is the exposé into what drove him to perform at such a high level.

Initially, it was the need to be recognised in the same category as Magic Johnston and Larry Bird as one of the all-time greats, but soon it became the drive to be the greatest. Jordan was unquestionably one of the most talented players the world had ever seen, but what unleashed the true superstar in him was the drive to prove he was better than everyone else. The moment someone appeared to cast shade on him or outperform him, it instantly became personal. This lit a fire inside him where failure was removed from the list of possible outcomes. From that moment it was win at all costs. No matter what.

This is the power insecurity has to drive up performance. Such

was Jordan's need to declare his power to the world by dominating others, there was nothing that could get in his way. By the end of his reign as the best sportsman the world had ever seen, it could be argued that he was aware of the power being personally slighted gave him and, therefore, deliberately attracted and hung onto such events to give him the necessary performance boost. In fact, he even went as far as fabricating a story of an opponent sledging him after a game just so he could use it as fuel to outperform this player in the following match.

While the Michael Jordan's example highlights the wonderful performance enhancing drug of insecurity from 20-30 years old, it also beautifully demonstrates the downturn as the years pass by.

Being fuelled by insecurity is unsustainable. It creates massive collateral damage, especially to relationships and health, and ultimately creates exhaustion and burnout. By the time Jordan had won his 6th championship, he was mentally and physically wiped out. Whether he could have gone on to win another title with the Bulls, had the management not dismantled the team, is forever debated. But what cannot be disputed is that sooner or later, some young buck would eventually rise up and take his crown. It is one thing to dominate all comers at 30, but if you still need to prove to the world how great you are at 40, you'll be laughed off the court. Your mouth will be writing cheques your body cannot cash.

To be still driven to prove your awesomeness to the world at

40 years old is incredibly exhausting. Not only are you running out of steam, but those around you are tired of you as well. It becomes harder and harder to force yourself to perform and the insecure 40-year-old is increasingly lonely and isolated.

From 40-50, insecure people either give up on their own performance goals altogether or transfer their ambition for significance into their kids' performance. If proving their value and worth through their own results can't work anymore, then maybe they will show they matter by having their children achieve great things.

It is important to state that insecurity in a person's 20's may also result in paralysis and inaction. At its best, insecurity will be a powerful motivator for all kinds of wonderful and bold action. At its worst, it will cause a person to run away and hide.

The point is, insecurity is more likely to drive up results than security is at this point in life.

Security

In contrast, the secure 20-year-old will often show up in the world pretty relaxed. If there is nothing to prove or defend, it doesn't really matter what they do. Their confidence may cause them to be more realistic about their lack of skills and knowledge. Then they would be more inclined to settle down, wait their turn, learn their craft and accept their place in the world. Compared with their driven friends, it would often appear that they are significantly under-performing.

In general, this relationship between insecurity and performance starts to change at around 30 years of age. This is often where insecurity starts to cost you more than it is benefiting you. On the other hand, this is also the point where security starts paying off in terms of your capacity to perform at your best. From age 30-40, this trend continues significantly.

Intimate relationships can be built on insecurity successfully in your 20's but put two insecure people together for 10 years and they will have sucked each other dry. If both parties fail to solve their insecurity problem, it spells disaster for the relationship.

Secure people's relationships start to really blossom in their 30's and 40's. They've done the groundwork together, sorted through most of the significant conflict two people face when joining their lives together, and are ready to capitalise on the fruit of their labours.

At the time of writing of this book, my wife and I are both 41 years old and have been married since 19. The deep personal development work we have both done overcoming insecurity in the last ten has strengthened us and brought a richness to our relationship. We are more in love than we've even been and are incredibly excited about our future together.

There is no way we could have done this work in our 20's. We were both finding our way in our careers, grappling with the overwhelming challenges of being new parents, and were desperate to prove that we could be responsible adults.

This is also true in the areas of finance, career, health, and happiness. Being driven to prove something is useful in your 20's but that insecurity will start causing grief into your 30's. As you head towards mid-life however, it is deep personal security in your own value and worth that radically drives up performance in every area of your life instead.

The point is, before you reach 30, insecurity may be working really well for you. In that case, it doesn't make sense to resolve the fear driving you at this point in your life. However, the older you get, less advantages can be found trying to prove yourself. Unresolved insecurity is now inevitably leading you towards madness. That is the only possible outcome.

As you age, insecurity becomes the number one inhibitor of performance in life and business and it is security that opens up new levels of growth and success. Therefore, until you solve the insecurity problem in your life, you'll never achieve your potential.

Solving the insecurity problem for good is entirely dependent on readiness for change.

Readiness for change

Change is hard.

People often overestimate their readiness for change and frequently miscalculate the costs involved. Dealing with unresolved insecurity will more than likely be the hardest personal development work you will ever do.

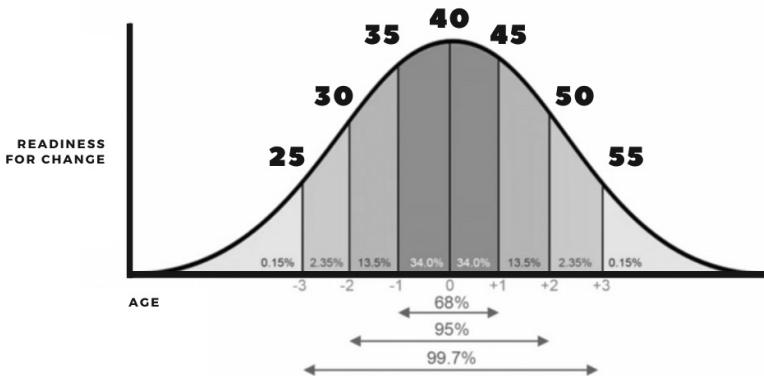
As a coach, the very first thing I assess is a person's readiness for change. In my experience based on over 10,000 hours of coaching, some clear patterns have emerged that would indicate when a person is truly ready for change and when they are not.

Interestingly, one of the most significant factors around this readiness is often a person's age. In my experience, readiness and the capacity for lasting change peaks at 40 years of age. In my observation, if there was a time in life most conducive to do this deep change work, it is somewhere around 35-45 years old.

Admittedly, there are many variables at play and things that contribute to readiness that I have not explicitly examined, however, in my observation, statistically 68% of the population will be most ready for change within the 35-45 window. 13.5% will be at peak readiness at 30 or at 50 and only 2.35% will be ready at 25 or 55. The great thing about the Bell curve ¹is that it clearly represents the outliers. There will always be people who are way ahead of curve and are ready for deep change at 20 years old. And, equally there will always be those who are completely ready and willing at 60. Obviously, you can change whenever you want, the point is that the further outside of the 35-45 window you find yourself when you are ready, the harder the change process will be.

It is never too late to change your life until it is.

The personal change bell curve.



Here's what makes the 35-45 year age group such an effective change window for solving the insecurity problem:

a) The pain levels are just right

As you will see in stage three of overcoming insecurity, pain is essential to all personal change. In general, 20-year olds don't have enough pain, and 60-year olds have too much. At 40 years old, there is certainly a lot of existential pain, yet it is also mixed with a sense of hope for the future. While the pain levels are high, there is also the awareness that it is not too late. Although time is running out, there is still enough time to turn things around. There is a sense of urgency that it's now or never.

In your 20's you assume you'll have all your shit together by 40. Arriving closer and closer to that age, you realise you're a long way from having it all sorted! And that brings about a lot of pain. The sense of pain at mid-life often comes with unavoidable deep questioning of all that you've done with your life. This pain drives up readiness for change because the inescapable

truth is that things won't automatically fix themselves unless you do something drastically different.

b) You are ready to be wrong about stuff

You realise you are wrong about a whole bunch of things you've always been closed and sure about. Best-selling author Mark Manson devotes a whole chapter to this idea in his book *The Subtle Art of Not Giving A F*ck*. He suggests that it's worth remembering that for any change to happen, you must be wrong about something. And until you are able to question yourself to find it, nothing will change.⁴ It turns out that being wrong is essential for growth and change.

"A man is usually 35 before he realizes that his 'job life', and his relationships with women, and with other men, are not working."⁵

ROBERT BLY

In your middle years, life has beaten some of the idealism out of you while not turning you bitter and hard hearted yet. The knocks and falls have given you humility and openness to learning. There is often a level of acceptance of the current reality rather than projection and fantasy about how they'd like things to be. 20-year olds often know too much while 60-year olds are too set in their ways.

4 "The only way to solve our problems is to first admit that our actions and beliefs up to this point have been wrong and are not working. This openness to being wrong must exist for any real change or growth to take place" *The Subtle Art of not Giving a F*ck*. P.134

5 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-03-19-vv-472-story.html>

There is a realism that comes with being 40 that opens your heart to new and different ways of thinking that idealism and pessimism locks you out of.

The role of failure plays a key part in the willingness to be wrong. While failure inevitably brings a measure of suffering with it, it also opens us to new possibilities like nothing else. The experience of embarrassment, disappointment and self-berating that come with failure create a desperation to never have this happen again. Admittedly, this can cause a person to retreat from life, but it also provides maximum opportunity for self-reflection and growth. The value of being wrong cannot be understated. We learn more from being wrong and falling on our face than by being right could ever teach us.

c) You are more likely to know what you really want

The instruction to follow your dreams as a teenager leads you down all kinds of strange and weird paths. For example, my high school dreams included being a marine biologist, physiotherapist, landscape architect, and becoming an engineer in the army. In the end, none of these things eventuated as I pursued a career as a church pastor instead! I look back at this list and wonder what I was thinking. I can't imagine what possessed me to imagine I'd enjoy being in the army, yet at 18, that is all I wanted to do. Award winning author Maria Popova says "You discover your dream or sense of purpose in the very act of walking the path"⁶

6 Tim Ferris, *Tools of Titans*, Vermilion, London, 2016, p410

An increased sense of increased clarity about what you want in life often starts with an aching awareness of what you don't want. This happens mid-life as the pain levels increase as mentioned above. You're ambitious to do something meaningful with your life before it's too late.

Being aware that you are not satisfied with your current position and are still ambitious to live a meaningful existence is an essential aspect of readiness for change. Without change, your life will continue to flounder and stagnate. You must take control of your destiny and do something different.

d) Emotional intelligence and maturity

40 years in your own skin is a long time. It is likely that all this time being you has allowed you to observe what you are really like. There is more awareness about your inherent strengths and weaknesses and the patterns of behaviour that keep showing up despite your best efforts to change or eradicate them. With this emotional intelligence comes the awareness that the major hindrances are all inside you in the form of doubts, fears and limiting beliefs rather than about what anyone else is doing or not doing. You realise that their biggest battle is inside your own heart and mind. It is not the external factors like lack of time, money, skills or support.

At 40 years old, it is more likely that you've made it out of the survival mode that comes with having toddlers in the house. There is also a good chance you've found some kind of financial stability and are settled in a career or business. No longer

being in survival mode gives you the chance to focus thought and energy on personal development and deeper life issues.

e) Cultural expectations and allowances

40-year olds are allowed, and almost expected, to make a few big changes. You are half-way through your working life, and now is a good time to pivot into the next season. The term mid-life crisis is used to understand and justify all kinds of dramatic changes made in this season of life. Typically, we afford friends and family much more grace to change everything at 40 than we do at 25.

People are more inclined to make decisions to do things differently on New Year's Eve, or their birthday or anniversary. Turning 30 often triggers feelings of unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life. It is much harder to pretend you are still a child with no care or responsibility. It is time to settle down and start taking life more seriously. If you haven't done these things by now there is pressure to decide on a career path, to settle down with a life partner and consider starting a family.

Obviously, we could make change at any moment in time, but having an external trigger certainly seems to help. Arbitrary milestones provide a reason to give yourself permission to make desired change.

f) Ready to move from level 4 to 5

The Spiral Dynamics model first created by Dr Clare. W Graves and published by Chris Cowan and Don Beck is one of the

most useful frameworks for understanding the path and process of growth as a human being.

The 7 levels of consciousness we can grow through are:

1. Survival
2. Tribe
3. Rebellion
4. The system
5. Entrepreneur
6. Contribution
7. Statesmanship

Typically, people move from level 3 to 4 in their early 20's and are ready to move from 4 to 5 in their late 30's or early 40's.

The longer a person remains at level 3 (rebellion), without learning the crucial lessons of this stage and moving on, the more likely they are to become misfits, conspiracy theorists and socially isolated.

The natural growth process is that the teenage rebel settles down somewhat, graduates from university or an apprenticeship and gets a responsible job. This represents a major shift in their consciousness and is evidence of much personal growth.

The aim of the game is to grow into an adult, not remain as a child or adolescent. The next trap however is to get stuck in the system. While it is definitely a big deal to step up as an

adult and land a decent job when you were fresh out of school or university, if you are still in the same place 20 years later, major problems start arising.

Working as an employee in the system (level 4) is all about making someone else rich and serving someone else's vision. To do that requires suppressing your own great ideas and just doing what you are told. Initially, to submit to leadership represents significant growth when you are young, but now that you have a few of your own grey hairs it is time for you to start leading rather than being a follower for the rest of your life.

While each of the 7 levels are essential and healthy in the beginning, the longer you stay there, the unhealthier it becomes and the more pain you will experience. At mid-life, it is a common experience to no longer be enjoying your job. However, this pain is a gift that serves you to finally take the step of doing your own thing and exploring your own entrepreneurial vision.

This is why the step in growing from system (level 4) to entrepreneur (level 5) is almost entirely about personal development. You've got to face your fears, get clear about what you really want in life, decide if you have anything of value to offer the world and be prepared to embrace uncertainty and back yourself.