

How to Plan Your Life: Lecture 1 – Between Order and Chaos

No Neutrality: Vision Is Inescapable

"You can either live out your vision or someone else's. There's no no-vision option."

- You're *always* governed by something — either a **conscious vision** or **unconscious impulse**.
- The danger lies not in being governed, but in being governed by the *wrong* thing.
- To avoid ruin — for yourself and those around you — it is essential to develop a **mature vision**.

Vision + Plan = Theory + Practice

- A *vision* is a **broad theory**.
- A *plan* is a **narrow and focused vision**, an implementation.
- The goal: conceptualize a **broad vision**, then **narrow it down into actionable steps**.

The Daoist Model: Chaos and Order

- Your experience is made of **order** (known) and **chaos** (unknown).
- Represented in the Daoist symbol (yin-yang):
- *White serpent (masculine)* = Order
- *Black serpent (feminine)* = Chaos

Key Insight:

"In the things you don't understand is all the potential of the world."

- Chaos = **Potential** for growth and transformation

- Order = **Stability** and predictability
- *Living well means balancing both* — stability with the potential for growth

Stance Toward the Unknown

- You can fear the unknown (paralysis), or welcome it (transformation).
- Tyrants cling 100% to what they know; but doing so sacrifices evolution.

"If your life isn't perfect, a little more transformation might be a good thing."

Meaning Emerges on the Edge

- The **border between chaos and order** is where *optimal learning* occurs.
- This is where you feel **meaning** — a signal of positive transformation.

"You're best situated when you have one foot in the known and the other in the unknown."

Example:

- **Music** is meaningful because it's structured (order) yet unpredictable (chaos).
- A meaningful life mirrors this balance.

Practical Territory: Physical and Metaphysical

- Animals fear unfamiliar territory — but **humans** also have **conceptual territories**.
- The edge of what you know — where you're just starting to understand something — is where the **instinct of curiosity** kicks in.

"Interest is the instinct that drives you to learn."

Beware Nihilism

- Some claim life is meaningless — but meaning *feels real* when you're learning and transforming.
- That feeling of **engaged meaning** is *evidence* that you're evolving.

Transform the Mundane

"Your life is mostly made of things you repeat. If you fix 20 of them, your whole life is different."

- Pay attention to the **small, daily rituals** — meals, transitions, bedtime.
- Make those moments better through *play, attention, and iteration*.
- Meaning is not in rare events — it's in what **repeats**.

Small Steps Lead to Acceleration

- *Shrink the task until you're willing to do it.*
- Allow yourself to begin as a fool — poorly, slowly, even embarrassingly.

"The fool is the precursor to the savior." — Carl Jung

Relationship Dynamics & Targeted Reward

- When improving relationships:
 - **Negotiate small, voluntary changes**
 - **Acknowledge small improvements** with specific praise
 - **Encourage slow, genuine progress**
- Recognize how often small interactions repeat — and master them playfully.

Career Planning: From Paralysis to Action

"Start where you are. Even a single resume sent is better than zero."

- Clean up your past (your CV, your narrative)
- Break fear into manageable steps
- Be honest about why you're stuck
- Create a **routine for small wins**

Progress Is Nonlinear (The Matthew Principle)

"To those who have, more will be given. From those who have nothing, everything will be taken."

- Progress compounds — success builds on success
- Excellence in a small job can open bigger doors
- You must **market your value** — even quiet excellence must be made visible

Reward Schedules & Communication

- Know **how often** you need recognition
- Teach your partner/family **how** to affirm you — be specific
- Reward is better than punishment when it comes to personal and relational growth

Summary: What to Do

- **Create a vision** for your life
- **Narrow it into a plan** that's implementable
- **Balance chaos and order** in everything
- **Start small** with transformation
- **Prioritize what repeats** in your life
- **Be playful**, not tyrannical

- **Reward growth**, in yourself and others

"You're not doomed to slow just because you start slow."