

Maintain Your Focus

This book is dedicated to those who strive for improvement. The world of software development and testing can be one of chaos, stress, and confusion.

To those who navigate its deadline-driven currents and endeavor to forge a career amongst the turmoil of ever-changing demands, I offer these words as a calm to renew your focus.

While all those about you lose their perspective, their wits, and their minds...I present you a different choice. Peruse these pages and find a quote that resonates.

Focus on the real reason you are involved in your undertaking. Bypass all the noise that is rattling about and around you...and find your balance.

These tidbits are offered to help you quell the static and chaos. Silence the tumult, calm your nerves, and quiet the crowd.

Find words that are meaningful to you and re-focus on the important tasks. Do the right things and do them in the right way.

Leadership is action, not position.

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On Software Development...

Testing is a skill. While this may come as a surprise to some people it is a simple fact.

~Graham Fewster

The real reason for the use of pressure and overtime may be to make everyone look better when the project fails.

~Tom DeMarco

A crash is when your competitor's program dies. When your program dies, it is an *idiosyncrasy*. Frequently, crashes are followed with a message like *ID 02*. *ID* is an abbreviation for idiosyncrasy and the number that follows indicates how many more months of testing the product should have had.

~Guy Kawasaki

The last good thing written in C++ was the Pachelbel Canon.

~Jerry Olson

Every program starts off with bugs. Many programs end up with bugs as well. There are two corollaries to this: first, you must test all your programs straight away. And second, there's no point in losing your temper every time they don't work.

~Z80 Users Manual

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The sum of the bugginess in a system can be far greater than the bugs in the individual products that comprise it, and often exponentially.

~Chad Dickerson

When debugging, novices insert corrective code; experts remove defective code.

~Richard Pattis

There are two ways to write error-free programs; only the third one works.

~Alan J. Perlis

Everything really interesting that happens in software projects eventually comes down to people.

~James Bach

There is probably no job on earth for which an ability to believe six impossible things before breakfast is more of a requirement than software project management

~DeMarco, Lister

On Quality...

Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the customer gets out of it.

~Peter Drucker

Quality is not an act. It is a habit.

~Aristotle

It's not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what's required.

~Sir Winston Churchill

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

I don't care if it works on your machine! We are not shipping your machine!

~Vidui Platon

Quality is free, but only to those who are willing to pay heavily for it.

~Lister, DeMarco

We know about as much about software quality problems as they knew about the Black Plague in the 1600s. We've seen the victims' agonies and helped burn the corpses. We don't know what causes it; we don't really know if there is only one disease. We just suffer — and keep pouring our sewage into our water supply.

~Tom Van Vleck

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Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character.

~Albert Einstein

Space we can recover, time never.

~Napoleon Bonaparte

Documentation is not understanding, process is not discipline, formality is not skill.

~Jim Highsmith

On Testing...

Exploratory testing can be described as a martial art of the mind. It's how you deal with a product that jumps out from the bushes and challenges you to a duel of testing. Well, you don't become a black belt by reading books. You have to work on it. Happy practising.

~James Bach

A fool with a tool is still a fool.

~Grady Booch

Any sufficiently advanced bug is indistinguishable from a feature.

~Rich Kulawiec

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

~George Bernard Shaw

Testing a product is a learning process.

~Brian Marick

The impossible often has a kind of integrity to it which the merely improbable lacks

~Douglas Adams

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We are a bit of stellar matter gone wrong. We are physical machinery - puppets that strut and talk and laugh and die as the hand of time pulls the strings beneath. But there is one elementary inescapable answer. We are that which asks the question.

~Sir Arthur Eddington

QA didn't break anything, it was broken when we got it

~Compulsive Clicker-Kimberly

The real complexity in our jobs is that all planning is done under conditions of uncertainty and ignorance. The code isn't the only think that changes. Schedules slip. New milestones are added for new features. Features are cut from the release. During development, everyone - marketers, developers and testers - comes to understand better what the product is really for.

~Brian Marick

Re-examine all that you have been told . . .
dismiss that which insults your soul.

~Walt Whitman

Order and simplification are the first steps
toward the mastery of a subject.

~Thomas Mann

...no matter how small the chance of something
happening, with modern computers and modern
operating systems, essentially every possible
race condition or deadlock will be found within a
reasonable period of time...So nowadays,
whenever anyone comments on how unlikely it
is for some event to occur, my answer is simply:
"One in a million is next Tuesday".

~Larry Osterman

On Prevention...

Projects that set out to achieve 'aggressive' schedules probably take longer to complete than they would have if they have started with more reasonable schedules.

~Tom DeMarco

Act in haste and repent at leisure: Code too soon and debug forever.

~Raymond Kennington

When trouble is solved before it forms, who calls that clever?

~Sun Tzu

If the date is missed, the schedule was wrong. It doesn't matter why the date was missed. The purpose of the schedule was planning, not goal-setting.

~Tom DeMarco

The future has several names. For the weak, it is the impossible. For the fainthearted, it is the unknown. For the thoughtful and valiant, it is the ideal.

~Victor Hugo

The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.

~Steven Wright

A day lost at the beginning of a project hurts just as much as a day lost at the end. ... There are infinitely many ways to lose a day ..but not even one way to get one back.

~Tom DeMarco

On Success...

I will study and prepare, and someday my opportunity will come.

~Abraham Lincoln

Live out of your imagination, not your history.

~Stephen Covey

You can be discouraged by failure, or you can learn from it. So go ahead and make mistakes, make all you can. Because, remember that's where you'll find success - on the far side of failure.

~Thomas J Watson Sr.

People forget how fast you did a job - but they remember how well you did it.

~Howard Newton

Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air.

~John Quincy Adams

He, who every morning plans the transactions of the day, and follows that plan, carries a thread that will guide him through a labyrinth of the most busy life.

~Victor Hugo

I have always been a quarter of an hour before my time, and it has made a man of me.

~Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson

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Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.

~Joel Barker

Towering genius disdains a beaten path...It scorns to tread in the footsteps of any predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts for distinction.

~Abraham Lincoln

Work while you have the light. You are responsible for the talent that has been entrusted to you.

~Henri-Frédéric Amiel

Continuous effort--not strength or intelligence--is the key to unlocking our potential.

~Winston Churchill

On Leadership...

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

~John Quincy Adams

You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor.

~Aristotle

Give your workers more sophisticated jobs along with better tools, and you'll discover your employees will become more responsible and bring more intelligence to their work.

~Bill Gates

Great ability develops and reveals itself increasingly with every new assignment.

~Baltasar Gracian

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.

~Peter F. Drucker

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already.

~John Buchan

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On Learning...

The test is to recognize the mistake, admit it and correct it. To have tried to do something and failed is vastly better than to have tried to do nothing and succeeded.

~Dale E. Turner

Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

~Henry Ford

If people never did silly things, nothing intelligent would ever get done.

~Ludwig Wittgenstein

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestioned ability of a man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor.

~Henry David Thoreau

You live and learn. At any rate, you live.

~Douglas Adams

Seize the moment of excited curiosity on any subject to solve your doubts; for if you let it pass, the desire may never return, and you may remain in ignorance.

~William Wirt

Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings so that you shall come easily by what others have labored hard for.

~Socrates

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Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so

~Douglas Adams

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.

~Henry Ford

Ever Tried. Ever failed. No matter.
Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

~Samuel Beckett

On Communication...

The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.

~Confucius

Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.

~William Butler Yeats

When the great lord passes, the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts.

~Ethiopian proverb

Be wiser than other people, if you can, but do not tell them so.

~Lord Chesterfield

If you want to tell lies that will be believed, don't tell the truth that won't.

~Emperor Tokugawa Ieyasu

Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up.

~Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

On Problem Solving...

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

~Albert Einstein

It doesn't matter how beautiful your theory is, it doesn't matter how smart you are. If it doesn't agree with experiment, it's wrong.

~Richard Feynman

I'd take the awe of understanding over the awe of ignorance any day.

~Douglas Adams

Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason so few engage in it.

~Henry Ford

A priest asked the dying Spanish statesman and general **Ramon Maria Narvaez**, "Does your Excellency forgive all your enemies?" "I do not have to forgive my enemies," answered Narvaez, "I have had them all shot."

On Technology...

Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called technology. And art was simply called techne.

~Martin Heidegger

Man is the best computer we can put aboard a spacecraft...and the only one that can be mass produced with unskilled labor.

~Wernher von Braun

I wrote an ad for Apple Computer: 'Macintosh - We might not get everything right, but at least we knew the century was going to end.'

~Douglas Adams

Humor...

First law of Bad Management: If something isn't working, do more of it.

~Tom DeMarco

To err is human, but to really foul things up you need a computer.

~Paul Ehrlich

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.

~Herm Albright

There are two major products that come out of Berkeley: LSD and UNIX. We don't believe this to be a coincidence.

~Jeremy S. Anderson

If at first you don't succeed, you must be a programmer.

~Internet Humor

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they go by.

~Douglas Adams