



101 Lessons I Learned by the Time I Turned 28

Boban Dedovic | May 1, 2017 | Business

I turned 28 last month and spent a bit of time reflecting on things I learned over the course of my life. I was amazed to find out that most of the things I know to be true are things that (i) my parents taught me; (ii) I learned through experience, or; (iii) I learned through experience after reading it in a book.

The following list of 101 items are lessons I learned (sometimes painfully) and things I wholly consider to be true before my 28th birthday. The list isn't exhaustive, and the things I consider true may not be true for others – so take it with a grain of salt.

On money

1. Nothing is free
2. Talk is cheap
3. Pride is expensive
4. Save/invest at least 20% of your income
5. Retirement planning starts when you turn 18
6. Pay off your credit card bill (in full) every month



[Share](#)



[Categories](#)

7. The best investment you can make is an investment in yourself
8. If you have to sweat your housing and car payment -- it's too expensive
9. Treat your time as if you are literally spending money every second -- don't forget about the opportunity cost too
10. The second-best investment on earth *is earth*
11. Whole life insurance isn't for everyone -- max out the IRA and 401K first. If you're self-employed, get a SEP IRA on the side and deposit the yearly maximum
12. Going to college is not an insurance policy (anymore) -- unless you're a STEM major
13. Always keep some physical gold in case government fails
14. Always pay your taxes and don't hide money
15. Cars are depreciating assets
16. Money is important, but not *everything*
17. Always carry cash
18. Be a good tipper
19. Who you marry is the most important financial decision you will make in your entire life

On luck

20. Luck doesn't exist, it's a myth -- [read more](#)

On health

21. You need at least 6.5 hours of sleep every night
22. Choose salad over fries
23. Nothing good happens after 2:45 AM
24. Humor is the spice of life
25. Meditation is 5,000 years old -- it has stuck around for a reason
26. Don't self-diagnose
27. Don't worry about things you can't control
28. "Buy a tuxedo before you are thirty. Stay that size" (from [Business Insider](#))
29. Driving is the most dangerous activity you do (see #91)
30. Learn how to be comfortable being alone
31. Drugs. Don't do them
32. If it tastes really good, it's either too salty or too sugary
33. Drink water -- go for a gallon per day
34. Think of your body as the only car you will ever have in your entire life -- treat it that way (courtesy of Warren Buffett)
35. Buy and use nice skin cream (without alcohol)

36. Replace whiskey, vodka, and coffee with tea as much as possible
37. Use melatonin instead of Ambien or other habit-forming sleep aids

On business

38. Every business decision has input metrics and output metrics -- calculate both before making a decision
39. Don't be your own lawyer
40. Remember people's names -- [read more](#)
41. Most business decisions come down to common sense and simple math
42. One A-player is better than ten C-players
43. Read at least seven books per year
44. In a capitalistic economy, you should endeavor to own the means of production at all costs. As my good friend told me: "get equity or die trying"
45. Marc Andreessen is still right, [software IS eating the world](#)
46. You are entitled to nothing (courtesy of Frank Underwood)
47. Don't be the smartest (or loudest) person in the room
48. You should have at least five mentors
49. Listen a lot more than you speak
50. Know exactly what your time is worth (per hour)
51. Practice your elevator pitch on anyone who will listen
52. Never work with (especially hire) friends
53. Always keep driving hard -- don't quit
54. Learn your weaknesses and surround yourself with people who fill that gap
55. Don't be a "Yes man/woman." Learn to say NO
56. Acknowledge calls/emails and reply back. If you are busy, tell the person when you will get back to them
57. Make goals every year, write them down, and look at them periodically
58. You have a personal brand whether you like it or not - build it accordingly
59. Learn how to negotiate -- you do it every single day
60. Your resume should be one page and not include acronyms you can't understand
61. Take the risk if the risk/reward ratio is in your favor (favor low risk and high reward - be wary of the opposite)
62. Experience is more important than book smarts

On you

63. Buy and wear clothes that fit
64. Invest in a nice haircut

65. Figure out your Myers Briggs personality type -- and the type for people around you ([read more](#))
66. How you treat service staff, homeless people, and those struggling IS a reflection of your character
67. Always use an internal frame of reference instead of an external one
68. Your word is your reputation -- guard it with your life
69. Stop being afraid
70. Never take advice unless you asked for it. Ask people for advice -- and then hear them out
71. Never give advice unless someone asks you for it
72. Use a password manager, don't reuse passwords, and turn on two-factor authentication for every account you can
73. Don't be a "taker"
74. Step out of your comfort zone -- it's how you grow
75. Learn how to drive a stick shift
76. Flush the toilet
77. Pick your battles carefully, and know when to walk away
78. Pick core personal values -- stick to them
79. Don't compare yourself to other people, it doesn't help you
80. Have a *basic* understanding of important concepts: evolution, gravity, geography, and how the internet works
81. If it would eat you if you died, it's *not* a pet
82. Give back to your community: money, time, labor, or whatever you can reasonably afford

On relationships

83. It's better to *do right* than it is to *be right*
84. Some things cannot be taken, they can only be given
85. You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with
86. Chances are, no person will ever love you more than your mother
87. You have less true friends than you think (turn your Facebook privacy settings to hide your birthday for one year -- see what happens)
88. When arguing with someone, avoid "[kitchen sinking](#) " and work through issues individually
89. When communicating you are upset at someone, use an XYZ statement: "When you did X at time Y, it made me feel Z"
90. Don't try to date (or sleep with) your friend's ex
91. Put your phone down
92. Write people letters and mail it to them

93. Keep a contact book with addresses -- update it every year
94. Use your calendar
95. Loyalty
96. Move on
97. Respect your elders (especially your relatives)
98. At all costs, avoid making enemies
99. The golf course *isn't* for doing business, it's for clearing your head

On blogging

100. Always use an Oxford comma
101. "Brevity is the soul of wit" - William Shakespeare

Bonus round - on entrepreneurship

102. If you need a contract longer than one page, you don't really "trust" them
103. Nobody really cares about stealing your "idea" and your NDA request is silly
104. Don't go around calling yourself a CEO unless your company does more than 500K in revenue per year -- even then, don't boast your title
105. The first seven people you hire at your company will determine its fate (courtesy of Steve Jobs)
106. Don't try to be Steve Jobs or Bill Gates -- learn from them and be you
107. Learn the difference between an A-player, B-player, and C-player -- hire/fire accordingly
108. Your company culture is who you hire, who you fire, and who you promote
109. Have a simple mission statement (what you do every day)
110. The world probably doesn't need another social photo sharing app
111. You are a million times more likely to build a million-dollar company than you are to build a billion-dollar company
112. Competition is for losers, avoid it at all costs -- [read more](#)
113. Don't try to raise money until you have demand and sales
114. Read [this book](#)
115. Know the difference between being an entrepreneur and an executive -- they're not the same
116. Understand that as your startup grows, everyone's job description changes every month
117. When you fire people you should only take away their job, not their dignity
118. If they lie during the interview, don't hire them
119. Poor profitability will hurt your business, poor cashflow will kill your business
120. Don't call yourself these things: guru, rockstar, or ninja

121. When traveling, find a room using AirBnB instead of a hotel -- you'll meet more people

If you liked this post and would like other useful ones, [follow me on twitter](#).

Tags

Business reflection life-hacks entrepreneurship Turning 28

Comments

Stephanie

Aug. 16, 2017 9:12 AM

Hey Bobby,

I was just catching up with you on Facebook like the weirdest stalker in the world, and I was pleasantly surprised by the number of things I agreed with and appreciated the places where we differ (flush the toilet? Not sure how important that is, could use more explanation there). I like to consider these things you list as part of my "basic operating policy" more than a list of lessons, since, as you said, this is what worked for you. I may just write my own operating policy now. Thanks for the motivation. Hope all is well!

[REPLY](#)



Boban Dedovic Author

Aug. 18, 2017 5:09 PM

Hey Stephanie, thanks for reading! The "flush the toilet" item makes a lot more sense if you ever lived in a house with four other males.

The list is surely my 'operating policy' and I try my best to follow it. I think it's a great thing for everyone to have for their own life goals and circumstances. If you do end up writing your own I hope you will share it with me!

All is well with me and I hope the same for you.

[REPLY](#)



Roger Scott Craig

Sep. 18, 2017 6:05 AM

Dave is obviously much smarter and more successful than you are, Boban. Would be interesting to have him come up with his '101lessons' so we can tell him what an asshole he is as well! And this is the problem with the Internet - malicious and insulting comments from people who always seem to know more than you do. Most of them are probably still living at home with their parents, unemployed and on welfare, LOL! From my perspective I found your lessons to be extremely interesting and informative and look forward to future comments on your life from you - somebody who excels in so many ways and sets the pace for a new generation of brilliant young men! Way to go my friend!

[REPLY](#)



Boban Dedovic Author

Oct. 10, 2017 12:03 AM

Thanks very much for the kind words Roger. As always, I appreciate your support.

[REPLY](#)



Will Powers

Jan. 27, 2018 7:53 AM

Happy New Year Boban!

Please allow me to introduce myself.

My name is Will Powers and I noticed you were pretty scant on the relationship advice so thought I'd share a few of mine.

1. Ask the most important people (family, peers, friends) in your life to honestly grade you (A+, B, C-, etc), then average it. That's your life grade. It reflects who you really are.
2. Love is a verb. Stop telling people you love them, show them.
3. Don't listen to LOVE songs - the lyrics are by people who often fail at relationships.

-Will

[REPLY](#)



Boban Dedovic Author

Feb. 1, 2018 1:46 PM

Thanks for sharing Will!

REPLY



Corey Avis

Jun. 4, 2018 11:53 PM

I like this post, especially number 105. I think I fall in that list, for the better I hope. I didn't even know you had this website until you sent out the email change email. But I'll definitely keep checking back and reading more posts.

REPLY



Boban Dedovic Author

Jun. 12, 2018 8:14 AM

Thanks a lot for reading Corey, it's nice to hear from you again. Yes, I have been working on this site for some time.

REPLY



Add comment

Join the conversation, but please make sure to show respect to others. Read the [comment policy](#) before posting.

Required and published

Required but not published

2000 symbols left

Notify me of follow-up comments

SEND

© 2020 Boban Dedovic
All rights reserved

[Home](#)

[Blog](#)

[About](#)

[Contact](#)

[Terms](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Sitemap](#)