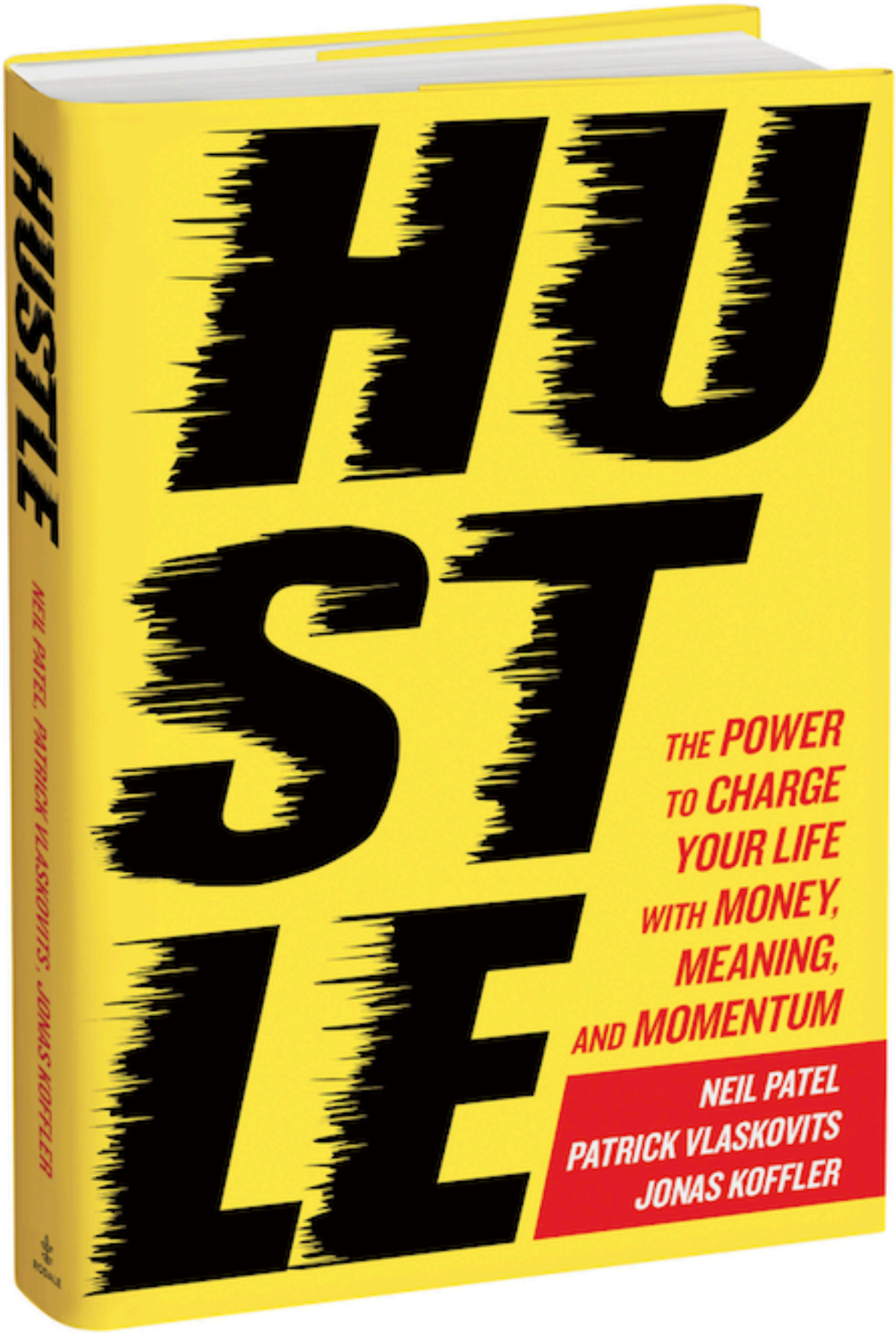
HUSTLE
THE POWER TO CHARGE YOUR LIFE WITH MONEY, MEANING, AND MOMENTUM
NEIL PATEL
PATRICK VLASKOVITS
JONAS KOFFLER
HUSTLE
NEIL PATEL, PATRICK VLASKOVITS, JONAS KOFFLER

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

PART TWO
HEAD

"In order to change the world you have to get your head together first."

—JIMI HENDRIX

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

SmartCreate®

049-058_152520_CH04.indd 49 07012016105154 7/1/16 10:30 AM

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

SmartCreate®

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

049-058_152520_CH04.indd 50 07012016105156 7/1/16 10:30 AM

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

4

SMALL DOSES OF PAIN

"The best people all have some kind of scar."

—Kiera Cass

SmartCreate®

Saving a Princess

In our favorite scene from the cult classic film *The Princess Bride,* the handsome blond protagonist, Westley, challenges the crafty villain Vizzini—who is holding the object of Westley's affection, the beautiful Princess Buttercup, hostage at knifepoint—to a battle of wits "to the death." (If you're unfamiliar with the film, *The Princess Bride* is a hilarious satire of the fairy-tale and adventure story genres.)

To commence the battle of wits, Vizzini pours two goblets of wine as Westley sits down across from him. Once seated, Westley presents a vial filled with a powder for Vizzini to sniff, and matter-of-factly, Westley explains, "What you do not smell is called iocaine powder. It is odorless, tasteless, dissolves instantly in liquid, and is among the more deadly poisons known to man."

As Vizzini watches bemusedly, Westley picks up both wine goblets and turns his back to obscure them from Vizzini's view. Westley slyly glances back at Vizzini before presenting both goblets and asking

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

melodramatically, "All right. Where is the poison? The battle of wits has begun."

The scene then segues into a hilarious sequence of Vizzini trying to triple-quadruple-quintuple-reverse-psychology Westley in an effort to figure out which goblet contains the poisoned wine.

Clearly frustrated, Vizzini distracts Westley with a "What's that over there?!" prompting Westley to turn away, allowing Vizzini to swap the goblets. Then, Vizzini announces he is ready to drink. Both Westley and Vizzini take hearty swigs, after which Westley deadpans to Vizzini, "You guessed wrong."

Cackling gleefully, Vizzini explains to Westley that he had *switched* goblets when Westley was distracted. Moments later, in midchortle, Vizzini keels over, dead. Princess Buttercup, who had been sitting blindfolded next to Vizzini during the entire "battle of wits," comments, "And to think, all that time it was *your* cup that was poisoned."

To which Westley smugly responds, "They were both poisoned. I spent the last few years building up an immunity to iocaine powder."

Delighting in Small Doses of Pain

Now, if you were lucky enough to have a teacher in school share a bit of strategic thinking or perhaps even some "game theory," you have the tools to win a "battle of wits to the death." To do so, you need to create a combination of best-response strategies by reasoning backward through the decision tree of your opponent.

You can be Vizzini—the smartest man on Earth. And if you're Vizzini, guess what? You're still dead, no matter how brilliant your strategy, because Westley executed the ultimate hustle. He embraced the risk of the poison and spent years anticipating this type of showdown. When it finally came, he was prepared because he had built up resistance to the deadly iocaine poison in a scientific process known as hormesis. He started out by taking a small risk that then got bigger and bigger as his immunity grew, and when the opportunity arrived, he was more than ready.

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

SmartCreate®

049-058_152520_CH04.indd 52 07012016105200 7/1/16 10:30 AM

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

Here's why hormesis and hustle go so well together: Hormesis shows that repeated exposures to small doses of stressors and risk don't weaken but, surprisingly, *strengthen* our biological systems.

The Benefits of Body Damage

Exercise is a good example of small doses of pain. When we exercise vigorously, lift heavy weights, or engage in challenging resistance training, we take on a bit of risk and do a small bit of damage to our muscles. Our muscles suffer "microtraumas," and our bodies respond by renovating and bolstering the traumatized muscle tissue. As our muscles grow, we experience temporary, albeit acute, small doses of pain. In the long run, these lead to gains in strength, endurance, energy, and vitality, and to better physical appearance, self-esteem, and confidence. Exercise is never much fun at the time we do it, but it affords us huge benefits. Simple association with the promise of exercise—better health—is the reason so many of us join a gym and pay a monthly fee but never actually go. Too little exercise and we don't grow. Not only that, but it's crushingly boring. Infrequently exercising, or frequently exercising but not pushing your body, is like playing level one of a video game over and over and over again. That's why a trainer will typically make you do many different types of exercises. On the other hand, too much exercise can lead to long-term damage to your body.

Finding the right level of exercise for small doses of pain is the key. Our bodies become stronger in response to a dose of mildly stressful exercise. And as we grow stronger, we can increase that dose by lifting heavier weights or adding sprints to our running routine. In other words, we can ultimately level up.

This is precisely why senior citizens are advised to lift weights and maintain active lifestyles, as it helps them combat osteoporosis. It's also why injured athletes are encouraged to get back on their feet and in motion doing rehabilitation as soon as they are able to move their injured muscles and joints.

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

SmartCreate®

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

As much as small doses of pain are about growth, they're also about preventing atrophy. A common manifestation of atrophy is when a child has a cast removed from his leg. The muscles on the previously injured leg are significantly smaller and weaker than those on the other leg. The muscles have atrophied due to lack of use. Here again, exercise is almost always prescribed to reverse this effect. It is plain to see that our bodies respond well to managed doses of stressors. In fact, our bodies *thrive* on them.

This is applicable to our careers as well. If you hate speaking in public, what's the cure? Your landlord will tell you to chill out and pop a Xanax. But that's sure to keep you from ever growing past the point that you're at now. A much better idea would be to seek out small doses of pain. Start by giving a 15-second speech at the dinner table—a simple toast. If just thinking about that right now is making your heart pound—*good!* That's the point. Do it every night until you're bored with it. Like Ahnold tells us, "No pain, no gain." Surfacing your talents will make you distinctly uncomfortable at times. That's good. If it doesn't hurt a little, you're not moving forward.

The Benefits of Brain Damage

Another somewhat mysterious wonder of small doses of pain concerns what happens in our brains on a day-to-day basis. With more than 85 billion neurons and even more support cells, called glia, our brains are bundled juggernauts of possibility.

Remember what they taught you in eighth-grade health class when they were teaching you to say no to drugs, *mmmmkay*? They told you that you were born with a finite number of brain cells, and every time you killed one of those cells—whether it was by banging your head in the mosh pit or guzzling a funnel of Milwaukee's Best—there was no way to get it back.

Well, guess what. They lied. Shocking, isn't it?

Brain cells continue growing throughout our lives. The catch here, of course, is that our brain cells don't grow without effort. That ability

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

SmartCreate®

049-058_152520_CH04.indd 54 07012016105214 7/1/16 10:30 AM

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

for growth is known as neuroplasticity. Growth occurs when we engage in cognitive activities, such as when we learn a new language, acquire a new technical or creative skill set, have a novel experience, take on a new challenge in unfamiliar territory, or solve a complex challenge. (Think of those situations where you need to "herd cats," like when you're bringing a new product to market.) The pain we feel in our minds is helping, not harming us.

Language works as a particularly potent example. Mastering a foreign tongue benefits us greatly in the short term. We learn new phrases, like how to say "I love you!" in Spanish (¡*Te Amo*!), or ask "Pardon me, but is that your dog peeing on my lawn?" in Hungarian.

But learning a new language is often an intensely frustrating exercise, as we struggle to shape our tongues and lips to accurately pronounce foreign sounds, to remember foreign concepts of time, and to recall odd grammar structures that are without equivalents in our native language—all in an effort to save ourselves embarrassment. But those tiny, repeated frustrations transform into long-term advantages. As we, sometimes painfully, sharpen our minds and learn to "code switch" in and out of our native tongue and the new language, we create a kind of neural fortitude. The more we practice our new modes of expression, the more we might be able to bolster our neurological health and recovery and delay the onset of traumatic brain diseases like Alzheimer's. In fact, recent research suggests that bilingual people tend to recover from strokes twice as fast as people who speak only one language.

Just a few days after Jonas experienced a stroke, he began a personal battery of unusual acts of hormesis of his own choosing that included everything from reading books in Spanish to brushing his teeth with his left (nondominant) hand to doing sophisticated math problems and crossword puzzles to spelling challenging words, like *Czechoslovakia,* backward. Jonas did each of these for a few minutes every day for a few months, mostly in secret. He feared others—especially coworkers at his company—would think the stroke and his subsequent cognitive challenges had gotten the best of him. These

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

SmartCreate®

049-058_152520_CH04.indd 55 07012016105216 7/1/16 10:30 AM

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

exercises helped Jonas regain confidence in his mental faculties, and he credits them with speeding his recovery.

Of course, another application of hormesis is in our careers, where to succeed we must stay on top of a blistering array of tasks at any given moment on any given day: new business, customer-relations challenges, technology issues, creative opportunities, cash flow management, marketing campaigns, planning, and scheduling. Because of this, we must hustle ourselves into "mindfields," areas in which we lack expertise, some of which will be uncomfortable.

Inherently, stretching occurs here, and the benefit of our discomfort is small doses of gain—in increased learning, in experiences and familiarity with a new task or subject—that enable new synapses or connections in the brain.

When it comes to our brains, small doses of pain pay us back in spades. And just like muscles can be retrained after serious injury, so, too, our brain tissue expands in new ways as we pursue knowledge and previously unfamiliar experiences. This is a good type of brain damage.

Whether body damage or brain damage, life is an incremental process of growth. And we can apply the same process of hormesis to countless aspects of our life and work, whether it's leading a team, learning a new language, launching a product, or anything else we might think of.

We actually *need* small amounts of pain to make gains to prevent our existing skills from atrophying, to grow our future skills and knowledge, and to anticipate and solve complex challenges.

And, paramount, we need to take small, manageable risks that, in aggregate, de-risk your downside risk profile and create upside potential wherever you may take your hustle. See—we just spoke a foreign language there. In English, that last sentence translates to "Good things happen when you take more risks."

Big Pain, No Gain

If your hustle is all-pain-nothing-but-pain, you're just a sadist, and you're doing it wrong.

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

SmartCreate®

049-058_152520_CH04.indd 56 07012016105218 7/1/16 10:30 AM

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

All you macho men and macho women reading this book—please take to heart that we have described hormesis as requiring *small* doses of pain. If you push yourself too far beyond your abilities and identities, you don't see any gain from that pain. And that pain can be too much to handle.

With hormesis, the message isn't "Whatever doesn't kill me only makes me stronger" but "The dose makes the poison." What we perceive as small is relative to the doer of the deed. So be sensible about it.

Prescription: Your Daily Dose of Pain

You must make sure to build incrementally so that you can get back on your horse and not get trampled underneath. For this, we suggest a "daily dose of pain."

Look in the mirror and think to yourself, What is the smallest thing I could do today to reap a long-term hormetic benefit? All it has to be is (a) small, (b) slightly annoying or odd, and (c) gainful or promising in some way.

Ten real-life examples you could start today include:

1. If you're out of shape, try to do 10 pushups or 5 minutes of yoga every day this week.
2. Know that coworker you cannot stand, the super-annoying loud-talker who won't leave your cubicle and constantly disrupts your work with her boring stories about her husband or her kids? Find something truly virtuous about her and compliment her sincerely.
3. Do you always order the same sandwich at your favorite café? Ask the waiter to surprise you with a dealer's choice. The waiter chooses an entrée without informing you, and you promise yourself you will eat it and even try to taste a few specific ingredients, no matter what he chooses. (This is exactly how Patrick learned that he loves Brussels sprouts.)

SmartCreate®

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.

© 2016 by Neil Patel, Patrick Vlaskovits, and Jonas Koffler. All rights reserved.

4. Find a different route home from work for a week straight.
5. Hold a conversation with a few friends and never mention "me" or "I" or "my."
6. Go to a movie on a Friday night *by yourself.*
7. When you find yourself listening to a friend trying to convince you of the merits of one of their ideas, resist the urge to cross your arms. (It's harder than you might think.)
8. Learn one new word every day. And use it at least 10 times that day.
9. Instead of heading straight into work, wake up an hour early and go for a walk.
10. Take a walk around your neighborhood and look for three new things you haven't ever noticed before.

Something, no matter how small a pain, is always better than nothing. The point isn't to punish or deny ourselves but to gently prod ourselves to grow a teeny, tiny bit every day, so that one day we'll be ready to save a princess or prince ourselves.

Aside from the hormetic benefits of small doses of pain, there is another major unseen benefit.

So tell us, are you feeling lucky, punk?

SmartCreate®

VISIT HUSTLEGENERATION.COM
TO ORDER COPIES, CONTACT THE
AUTHORS AND ENJOY SPECIAL OFFERS.

Advance Excerpt for Reviewers and Early Adopters ONLY.
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher Rodale Books.