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**The Buddha and the
Badass: The Secret
Spiritual Art of
Succeeding at Work**

Made by Blinkist



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Maybe these blinks will inspire you to dig deeper, or maybe they're enough to start you thinking and then on to something new. However you read blinks, we hope they help you become an even brighter you.

What's in it for me? Elevate your experience of life and work.

We've heard over and over that we need to work hard if we want to succeed. And so we hustle and strive, compromising our personal lives for the sake of jobs that, in most cases, we don't even enjoy. But what if it doesn't have to be this way?

Well, it *is* possible to be happy and fulfilled at work *and* in life. And achieving this requires activating two parts of ourselves: the Buddha and the badass.

The Buddha is deeply aligned with the inner self, and allows that self to guide. The badass is a changemaker, constantly improving and working to make a difference in the world. When we activate and combine the strengths of these two parts, we can easily identify inspiring goals and work toward them with joy and ease.

These blinks explore how to awaken the Buddha and the badass within and start mastering every aspect of your life.

In these blinks, you'll learn

- how to discover your foundational values;
- just how often Google fails; and
- that a few questions can change your life.

Knowing your foundational values brings clear direction and meaning.

Most of us know that every person has a unique fingerprint. Well, the author suggests that we also have unique *soulprints*.

While fingerprints form before we're born, soulprints are created by our early life experiences. Everything we go through, the good, the bad, and the ugly, leaves an impression. The result of this soulprint is a set of *foundational values* that guide decisions and behavior, mostly on an unconscious level.

Becoming aware of these foundational values is the first step to connecting to our inner selves and unlocking the Buddha.

**The key message here is:
Knowing your foundational values brings clear direction and meaning.**

Foundational values are instilled during childhood and adolescence. They remain quite stable throughout adulthood as well, changing only in the wake of life-altering experiences such as trauma. Think of these values like a constitution, amended

only rarely and for critically important reasons.

Once we're aware of our foundational values, we can connect with what we truly desire and need. This makes it easier to know what impact we want to have on the world, as well as the actions and roles that will resonate with us. If we don't know what our foundational values are, we might end up pursuing a career that makes us miserable.

So the question is: How do you uncover your foundational values?

The author recommends an *origin story exercise*. This involves careful reflection on your life to identify important experiences. Such events deeply inform your values because you never want to forget them – or hope never to go through them again. And this influences your future behavior.

Having singled out these experiences, the next step is to write them out in as much detail as possible. This should include what happened, who was present, and how you felt. Finally, think about what lessons and beliefs emerged from each experience, and what values

they represent. For example, when the author reflected on encountering bullying and racism, he realized that these moments had instilled the values of compassion and diversity in him.

Once you're conscious of your foundational values, you can use them to inform your decisions, the goals you set, and the projects you take on.

**To attract the right people,
communicate your deeper
purpose and your plan clearly.**

Once you're pursuing work and goals that match your foundational values, you need to surround yourself with people who can help you accomplish them. But you can't partner up with just anyone. The people you work with must be like-minded and aligned with your values. The good news is that you can ensure such people are drawn to you.

**The key message here is: To
attract the right people,**

communicate your deeper purpose and your plan clearly.

To inspire people to join you, you need to do more than share what you're doing; you need to share why you're doing it. As humans, we're wired to act based on emotion, and a deeper purpose – the why behind the what – appeals directly to our emotions. This deeper purpose is called a *big why*, and it's the reason people are drawn to some companies and brands over others.

For example, Apple's big why is to challenge conventions and think different. Nike aims to

inspire and innovate for athletes around the world. If you want to attract collaborators as effectively as these brands attract customers, you need to identify the big why that's rooted in your personal values.

Once you know your big why, you can communicate it to others. The author suggests doing this through a manifesto.

A manifesto is a public statement outlining your big why, and offering critical information such as how you operate. Things to consider when creating a manifesto include your beliefs, what makes

you unique, and the values you uphold. The clearer the manifesto, the better the chances of attracting the right people.

There's one final step to drawing the right people in, and that's having a vision. In work and in life, having a vision of what you're aiming for and how you plan to accomplish it is essential. It helps you act with intention, and it aligns and motivates everyone toward a goal.

The best way to create a vision is by looking into the future and asking yourself where you want to be three years from now.

What do you want to have accomplished, who do you want to be working with, and how do you want the world to see you? Once you've answered these questions, you can work backward to determine the steps that will help you bring your vision to life. We'll talk about this more later.

When you encourage social bonds, you increase happiness, engagement, and performance levels.

When collaborating on work or personal projects, what influences success?

You're likely thinking of strengths, communication, responsibilities, and timelines. And you're not wrong; these are definitely important when working with people. But there's another component that's absolutely essential – social connection.

Being socially connected isn't only a biological need. It's critical for survival. Being in a tribe helped our ancestors find food and avoid danger. Now, social bonds are important for happiness, productivity, intelligence, and creativity. This is why fostering social connections among the people you work with is a vital skill.

The key message here is: When you encourage social bonds, you increase happiness, engagement, and performance levels.

Social connections offer myriad benefits. They create a positive

working environment for you and others. They transform any team you find yourself in. They increase happiness and engagement. For proof, just consider the fact that having friends in the workplace improves employee performance. In their Employee Engagement Survey, analytics company Gallup found that those with good friends at work were seven times more engaged than their friendless colleagues.

Whether you're a team leader or not, there are tactics you can employ to make social connections more likely.

One tactic to spark friendships is establishing rituals and holding social events. Ideally, these take place daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. For instance, you might start each day with a gratitude exercise, for people to share what they're thankful for, and have regular gatherings outside of the workplace. Such events give people a chance to connect on a personal level.

Another tactic is to use safe spaces, like a WhatsApp group where people can share personal experiences and ask for support when it's needed.

This helps create a sense of belonging.

Many will likely find it difficult to be vulnerable, but it's a key ingredient in forming bonds. So take the lead by being authentic and expressing your own vulnerability. The author, for instance, makes a point of telling his team whenever he's going through a tough time in his life. This gives others permission to do the same, and creates an opportunity for them to support him in whatever way they can.

Choose a mission that will leave the world a better place.

Today, the world is connected in more ways than ever. This has many benefits, but it also creates significant responsibilities. Our actions and choices have far-reaching consequences, a fact that is especially true in business.

Some companies focus only on profit, ignoring the harm that they or their products are causing. These are what the author calls *Humanity Minus* companies. Needless to say, this isn't in alignment with either the

Buddha or the badass mentality. Merging the strengths of both the Buddha and the badass means being *Humanity Plus* – having a mission that adds value to the world.

**The key message here is:
Choose a mission that will leave
the world a better place.**

When you're focused on a mission that will change the world for the better, you derive meaning and fulfillment from your work. You also attract people who are passionate about solving problems and making a difference.

One way to become mission-oriented is having a *Massive Transformational Purpose*, or *MTP* for short. An MTP is a goal that will have an enormous impact. Like Google's mission to make information universally accessible.

Just like Google's, your MTP must be challenging. This makes it more exciting to work toward. You can identify an MTP by considering the issues and causes that inspire you, the people you'd like to impact, and the mission-driven brands that you already support. Once you have an MTP, start taking actions and creating initiatives

that bring you closer to achieving it.

But what if you're not in a position to make a massive difference? Perhaps your company's projects aren't bold enough, or you run a small business – or even work alone. In this case, a Massive Transformational Purpose may not work for you, but you can still be mission-oriented. You simply have to take a stand.

Taking a stand for or against something is a good way to infuse your work with meaning and make a difference. A social-media influencer, for example,

can make it a point never to promote unhealthy foods. Likewise, a T-shirt designer might build their brand around broadcasting positive messages.

And taking a bold stand isn't just the right thing to do; it's also good for business. A 2019 poll by software company Sprout Social revealed that 66 percent of consumers want brands to support political and social issues publicly.

*“You don’t have to save
the world. Just don’t
mess it up for the next
generation.”*

**Don't be afraid of bold visions;
they help you accomplish great
things.**

Have you ever heard of the flea-
in-the-jar experiment?

Scientists placed fleas in an
open jar, and, as you'd expect,
they all jumped out. Then they
were placed in a sealed jar for a
few days, and something
interesting happened. When the
lid was removed, the fleas didn't
jump out. Even though there
was nothing stopping them,
they'd been conditioned to jump
only as high as the jar's opening.

Despite being much smarter than fleas, people can be conditioned in the same way. When people get used to chasing small visions, they limit what they're capable of achieving.

The key message here is: Don't be afraid of bold visions; they help you accomplish great things.

Bold visions may be intimidating, but they push people to leave a mark on the world, which is exactly what a badass does.

So what's the secret in bringing bold visions to life?

Well, first remember that the bigger the vision, the easier it is to accomplish. Big dreams excite people, and excitement inspires action, even in the face of obstacles. It's also important to think ahead. Speak about what your project will look like in ten years; this will attract people who are interested in building the future.

But make sure you're clear on how to get to that future. Set measurable goals to help you achieve your vision. And while setting your goals, give yourself permission to fail. When people aren't afraid to fail, they experiment more, which can

lead to incredible results. Think again about Google. Forty percent of its projects fail, but its successes, from Google Drive to Gmail, are massive.

There's one more thing that bold visionaries do: they get other people to dream just as big. To do this, the author suggests using a *Presupposed Close*. This is envisioning something great for someone, and speaking as if they've already accomplished it. It's a great motivator because it shows people that you believe in them.

Richard Branson, the successful entrepreneur, used this tactic when he challenged friends to swim three miles from one island to another. When they completed the swim, he said to the winner, “I can’t wait to see how you’ll do on the way back.” The idea that Branson planted in his companion’s mind was so powerful that she became the first person to swim both ways!

For an optimal work environment, allow people to communicate freely and act quickly.

Picture this: you're brainstorming with a colleague and the two of you are on fire. You're completely in sync, building on each other's ideas with lightning speed. It's fun and exciting, and you both feel that you're on to something amazing.

There's a term for this. It's called *brain coupling*, and neuroscientists have found that when people experience it, their brains are literally on the same

frequency. This means they operate like one unified superbrain.

Now, imagine if everyone in your team, company, or even family could work together like this. You'd be unstoppable! Well, guess what? It's possible to create a unified brain environment.

The key message here is: For an optimal work environment, allow people to communicate freely and act quickly.

In a unified brain environment, ideas flow naturally. People are always trying new things, which

leads to rapid growth. To experience this in your own group or organization, free people from the rules of hierarchy.

Yes, roles should be respected, but if people are worried about following the chain of command, they won't exchange ideas easily. Pixar, one of the most innovative companies out there, realized this and did away with hierarchical communication. They decided that everyone could be approached directly, at any time, regardless of where they fall within the organization.

With hierarchy out of the way, you can work on the next quality of a unified brain environment – speed.

For this, learn from a military strategy that encourages people to act fast, even if they're uncertain. The United States Air Force colonel who developed it realized that while his best pilots shot down more enemy planes than anyone else, they also wasted more bullets. This is because they didn't wait to be 100 percent sure before firing. They simply saw an opportunity to shoot and acted on it.

The author implements this idea in his company by shortening the time it takes to make decisions. Instead of long email threads or time-consuming meetings, the entire team relies on quick messaging apps such as Slack or WhatsApp. So, instead of taking an hour or even days to make a decision, it happens in a matter of minutes. This leads to more wins and, if the wrong decision is made, faster learning.

For immunity to setbacks and pressure, know that you're enough and design a life that's uniquely yours.

You've probably met people who aren't bothered by other people's opinions of them. They march to the beat of their own drum, and easily brush off setbacks, be it a failed date or a bit of negative feedback. Such people have achieved something powerful; they've overcome the need to feel significant in the eyes of others.

This takes some work because humans naturally crave

approval. But when people are totally comfortable with who they are, their confidence is impossible to shake and they gain full control of their lives. This is a badass quality, and, luckily, it's an attitude that you, too, can develop.

The key message here is: For immunity to setbacks and pressure, know that you're enough and design a life that's uniquely yours.

The first step toward ditching the need for approval is realizing that who and what you are is enough. When you don't see yourself as lacking, your self-

esteem won't be affected by external factors such as a failure or someone not liking you.

To start feeling that you're enough, get into the habit of expressing love for yourself and practicing self-gratitude. The simple act of looking in the mirror and saying, "I love you" every day will, over time, lead to your caring more about yourself. To practice self-gratitude, make a mental list of all the things that you appreciate about yourself each morning. Focusing on your positive traits will magnify them.

The next step is designing a life that's unique to you.

Many people allow family, the media, and society in general to influence how they live. The result is a life created to appease others, which is ultimately unfulfilling. The author experienced this when he pursued a career in computer science based on his grandfather's advice. After studying for five years and landing himself a job at Microsoft, he realized he hated his job.

To avoid a similar trap, you need to determine what your dreams

and goals are, and then design your life around them. Begin by asking yourself what experiences you want in life, how you'd like to grow as a person, and how you want to give back to the world. Once you know the answers, you can craft a life that's a true reflection of you, not of what the world expects of you.

Aim for constant, deliberate growth in all areas of your life.

Do you remember when you started chasing success? Maybe your parents encouraged you to, or you noticed that successful people are celebrated and praised. However you came to the idea, you're not alone in thinking that life is all about how much you achieve.

But this isn't the point of life at all. You shouldn't be focused on pursuing success. Rather, your ultimate goal should be growth.

The key message here is: Aim for constant, deliberate growth in all areas of your life.

In order to grow, you have to experience a transformation, not just learn something new.

What's the difference? Well, something you learn can easily be forgotten in a day or two. But when you transform, it's irreversible. It's like learning to ride a bike. When you find that balance, it's impossible to misplace it.

A transformation might change how you view the world or alter a long-held belief. And it

happens in two different ways. You can experience something painful that forces you to change – a cruel heartbreak might teach you how to choose future partners. Or you can gradually and voluntarily gain new knowledge, by reading the biographies of important leaders, for example.

Opting for deliberate transformation means you're less likely to experience painful lessons. And you can work this kind of growth into your life by adopting a *transformation routine*. This means creating time and opportunities for personal growth.

The author's transformation routine includes improving the quality of his sleep with the help of supplements and sleep tracking. This leads to better moods and brain performance during the day. He regularly meditates, not only on mindfulness, but on compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, and even future plans. His transformation routine includes speed reading, which allows him to gain new knowledge much faster.

After designing a personal transformation routine, encourage growth in your work life by creating the right

conditions, as this will improve your performance. Start by freeing up your mornings. When people aren't under pressure to get to work early, they can prioritize things like sleep, exercise, meditation, and reading. It's also a good idea to set aside money specifically for growth opportunities such as training and wellness.

“Grow so fast that your friends who haven’t seen you in a month have to get to know you all over again.”

Your identity informs your experience. See yourself differently and your life will change.

What does your ideal self look like?

Maybe this perfect you is incredibly fit. Or in a fantastic relationship. Or rich enough to never worry about money. Now, what if someone told you that you can become that person? All you have to do is decide that that's who you are.

You might be thinking this is far-fetched, but it actually works!

How you see yourself shapes your experiences. So, if you adopt empowering beliefs about yourself, your behavior follows suit, and so does your life.

The key message here is: Your identity informs your experience. See yourself differently and your life will change.

This identity shift is the last phase of merging the Buddha and the badass. Once you complete it, your life will become truly fulfilling in every way.

The first part of the process is imagining your perfect life. Ask yourself, If things like money or location didn't matter, what would a perfect day look like? We're not talking about extreme experiences like climbing Mount Everest. Just consider an average day in your perfect life.

Journal about this day to understand the kind of person you'd like to be before moving on to the next step – fleshing out this person.

Determine how your perfect self fares in the four aspects of a healthy identity. These are: well-being, creativity and inspiration,

abundance and power, and love and connection. Write about how your ideal self is doing in each area. Is this self healthy and energized? Productive and driven? Does this self have access to money and resources, and enjoy high-quality relationships? The goal is to determine who you need to become to live that perfect day.

When you know as much as you possibly can about your perfect self, it's time to adopt that self's beliefs and behaviors. You do this using the *Lofty Questions* technique.

Unlike affirmations, which involve repeating statements until you believe them, the Lofty Questions technique poses a question and encourages your brain to find evidence. For example, in asking the question, “Why am I so creative?” your subconscious will look for proof of creativity. The more proof it finds, the more you’ll believe that you’re creative.

To implement the technique, come up with at most ten questions based on the perfect identity that you’ve created and then meditate on them daily. You’ll start adopting the behaviors they point to, and as

you do, you might add more questions. Given time, you and your entire life will change.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks:

Your life and work don't have to be hard. It's possible to create a happier and more fulfilling existence. It starts with aligning your purpose, work, and community with what you truly value. Next, you need to foster growth, strong social connections, and Humanity Plus values. These elements, together with bold visions, and the ability to collaborate effectively, will help you accomplish meaningful goals and achieve personal growth.

Finally, you need to believe that you are already the best version of yourself. This will alter both your identity and your lived experience.

Actionable advice:

Help others design the lives of their dreams.

While you're working on making your life a unique masterpiece, encourage others to do the same by nudging them toward their dreams. Ask the people around you what they want to experience, how they'd like to grow, and what contributions they want to make to the world.

Then, give them a small gift that will help get them closer to their dreams – a book, for example, or any other tool that encourages growth.

Got feedback?

We'd love to hear what you think about our content! Just drop an email to remember@blinkist.com with *The Buddha and the Badass* as the subject line and share your thoughts!

What to read next: *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, by Vishen Lakhiani

Our minds are very powerful, but they don't always lead us to what will make us happy and fulfilled. Instead, they often confine us to unhelpful rules and beliefs.

In *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, the author of *The Buddha and the Badass* explains how perception is shaped, and what we can do to change it and build stronger mindsets that will help us create incredible lives. Ready to learn more? Then head over to the [links](#) to *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, by Vishen Lakhiani.

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