

## 29 Activities for the 29 Days of February (do in any order)

*Extracted from the January 2024 edition of his newsletter and reproduced with kind permission of Michael Melcher. Sign up [here](#).*

Goals can be helpful in certain situations. But they can be tiring and time-consuming. Instead, consider trying to establish a habit.

Goals require you to consciously think of what you are trying to achieve. Habits are different - because they are automatic they require less thinking time and reduce decision fatigue.

The 20 minute a day method helps you build habits. Although you are putting in consistent work, these are small actions that reinforce each other over time. Big gestures seem appealing but small and consistent habits can have more effect for less effort.

Here are 29 actions, one for each day of February.

Spend 20 minutes a day doing something from this list. You can do these in any order and not all of them involve reaching out. Try something different each day.

### Building Your Network

- Go on LinkedIn. **Spend 20 minutes liking, commenting on, and/or forwarding posts.** People always notice who is commenting on their posts.
- Go on LinkedIn. **Spend time looking up people from past jobs** and see what they are up to now. If you discover they are doing something new, write a quick note of congratulations.
- Introduce two contacts who have the same interests**—basketball or Korean food or start-ups, anything.
- Introduce two contacts who are from different generations.** Explain why you think they should meet each other.
- Search your laptop for the past several reaching-out messages**

you've sent and put them in the "drafts" folder, so that you can draw on them in the future.

### Maintaining and Deepening Relationships

- Find an interesting article or resource** that you can send to one or more contacts as a "ping"—a communication that doesn't require a response. Just say, "I love this sweet article" or "Check out this hilarious article" or something similar. I recently shared (with different friends) For South Korea's Senior Subway Riders, the Joy Is in the Journey (heartwarming category) from the New York Times; and Bad Hotels and Not Enough Wine: A Week With Billionaires (funny category) from the Wall Street Journal.
- Call your mom or dad.** If they aren't living, call another older person. Let them talk about whatever they want to

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talk about. Try not to be the one to hang up.

- Go to a card store, drugstore, or large supermarket, and stock up on birthday cards.** You can keep these as a backup supply or you can plan to send them out to specific people when birthdays roll around.
- Send a Hang in there message to someone.** This is an encouraging note to someone who is dealing with a challenge. “I was thinking of you and your kids being stuck in your apartment with COVID, and I just want to send along some good thoughts. Hang in there.”
- Leave a voice note for 3 different friends.** Not everyone listens to these but some people love them. For extra credit, use the audio notes function in LinkedIn messaging.
- If you have a child or pet, text a special or fun photo of them to a contact.** If you have neither child nor pet, text a picture of something you find appealing — a bird, a book someone is reading, snow falling. People love sweet pictures (see below).
- Invite your boss or a senior stakeholder to lunch.** If that's too scary, connect with a colleague or two and together invite your boss for lunch.

### Goals (see how I snuck that in?)

- Make a list of five people in your industry that you would like to meet** in the coming year. If you're not sure

who you should meet, write to two friends or colleagues, and say, “For my professional development, I want to challenge myself to meet five key people in my industry over the next year. Who should be on my list?”

- Make a list of your “A” people**—these are people who give you energy. Write down the top three names and put them on a Post-It note. Plan to spend more time with these people in the next months. Put the note on your computer or in your wallet.

### Self-Awareness and Reflection

- If you go from busy work to busy home life, **try pulling over a mile before you get home.** Be still and quiet for ten to fifteen minutes, then resume your journey home.
- Have lunch alone, without your phone.** Be willing to be bored. When you feel bored and are tempted to check your phone, say to yourself, “Being bored reminds me that life is long.”
- Complete this sentence five to ten times:** “This year, I’m interested in learning more about . . .” Drop some of these statements into your conversations in the next few weeks.
- For people forty-plus. Write down a short professional chronology of key steps**—college, first job, second job, etc. Next to each, write down the name of someone you spent a lot of time with or felt a close connection to at the time. Reach out to several of

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those people. Say, “I’m taking the time to look back on some of the key moments in my life and some of the important people, and I thought of you. I’d love to catch up. I am curious what you remember about me from that time.”

### Mentors and Sponsors

- Write a “**job description**” for a potential mentor.
- Write a list of **five people you could be a mentor** to.
- Ask a **senior or more experienced person** who their sponsors or mentors have been.

### Gratitude and Appreciation

- Write a **thank-you email or note for a social event**. You can write to the host or an invited guest. Say it was wonderful to spend time together and you appreciate being invited/their attendance.
- Write a **thank-you email or note to a past boss, teacher, or mentor**. Describe the ways they set a good example for you, and/or the difference they made in your work or life. If they gave you specific advice that you remember, remind them of that.

### Being Vulnerable

- Offer someone a “**You were right, and I was wrong**” message. “For a long time, I insisted that I knew how to manage money and I disputed you

when you said that I was a spendthrift and would regret it one day. But now I realize that you were right, and I was wrong.”

- Finish the following sentence five times:** “Something in my life or career that I haven’t really figured out is \_\_\_\_\_.” Use one or two of these lines in conversation in the next few days.

### Convening

- The next time you go to a professional conference, plan a small personal event**. Reach out to several people and ask them to meet for a drink, breakfast, coffee, etc.
- The next time you attend a party**, decide your job is to be consistently helpful to the host or hostess—to help them have a great event. Your attendance is merely a ruse for this SECRET MISSION.

### Being a Benefactor

- Spend **twenty minutes writing down your Career Manifesto**—your affirmative rules for a fulfilling and successful career. The rules should be prescriptive—“do this” and “don’t do that.”
- Invite a recent grad or young person to breakfast or lunch**. Alternately, reach out to the parent of a recent grad or young person and offer to talk to their kid about careers and networking.