

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Alex Banayan | Why Mentors Are Important and How to Get One (Episode 49)

After one-on-one interviews with Bill Gates, Maya Angelou, Steve Wozniak, Jane Goodall, Larry King, Jessica Alba, Pitbull, Tim Ferriss, Quincy Jones, and many more, [*The Third Door: The Wild Quest to Uncover How the World's Most Successful People Launched Their Careers*](#) author Alex Banayan discovered the one key they have in common: they all took the Third Door.

In [episode 49](#), Alex shares the story of his journey to track down these hard-to-reach people, what he learned from them about the role of luck and mentors in success, and the missteps and course corrections he made along the way.

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Luck Is What Happens When Preparation Meets Opportunity

While many of us are familiar with the above axiom, Alex describes in detail an anecdote from [Qi Lu](#), former Executive Vice President at Microsoft. Qi grew up impoverished in a small village near Shanghai, China; while attending school, he sat through a lecture given by Carnegie Mellon fellow Edmund Clarke on a Sunday night. While this may sound banal, it was the first time he had stayed on campus during the weekend in months because it was raining and he couldn't ride his bike home **(luck)**.

Because Qi was asking such insightful questions, Professor Clarke asked Qi if he had done any research on the lecture topic **(opportunity)**. Qi had not just done *some* research -- he had written five papers on the topic **(preparation)**.

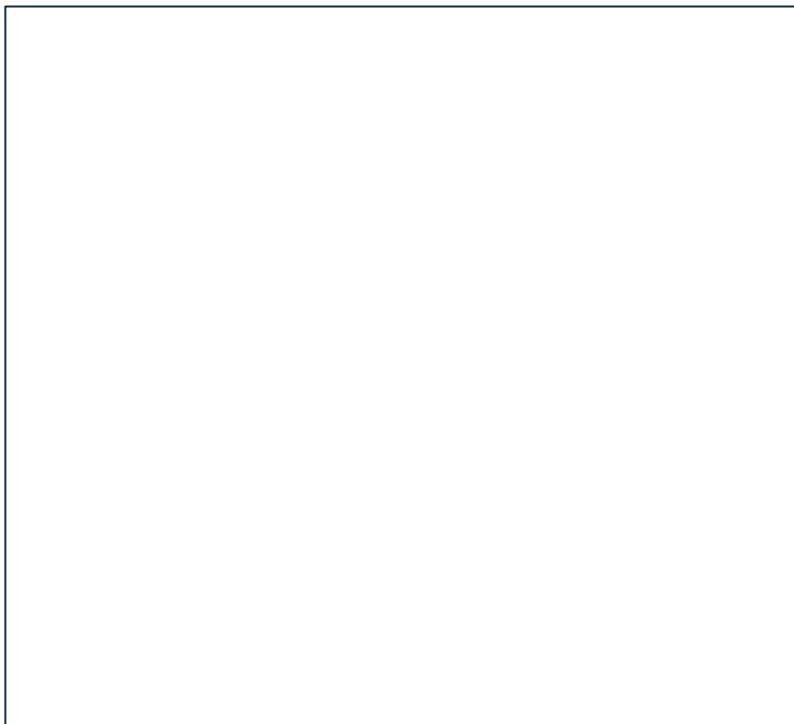
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This so impressed Professor Clarke that Qi was offered a full scholarship to Carnegie Mellon at a time when studying in America would have been otherwise impossible due to his limited financial resources.

Qi then compares luck to a bus -- where your preparation is your fee to board. "If you miss one, there will always be another if you are standing at the right bus stop. But if you aren't prepared, you won't be able to get on."

What opportunities are you seeking? Take a moment to write down some of your personal aspirations in business, romance, or life in general. Now list what preparations you are making in relation to these aspirations so that you may be *fortunate* enough to take advantage when the moment presents itself.

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Becoming “Subconsciously Lucky”

Data bears out that individuals who consider themselves to be lucky are actually more fortunate than those who consider themselves to be unlucky. Luck is not random, but rather a function of our mind operating at a subconscious level. However, conscious affirmations in a mirror will not yield the results we are looking for -- so what can we do?

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Alex then tells us how to create an internal bias that we are lucky through a process of journaling stories from our life in which we were fortunate. The key is in the consistency of this process. It is not achieved overnight, but rather over months of daily output.

Set aside 10 minutes every day for a minimum of 30 days and create a “luck journal.” For each entry, write down a personal experience in which you consider yourself lucky. Be detailed in your narratives (*In other words, don’t write, “I bought a scratch ticket and won \$10 once”*). These stories need to have a lasting impression on your subconscious. Describe the color of the ticket, the coin you used, and the silver flecks wafting from the paper in the autumn breeze...

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Connecting With a Mentor (Mistakes and Strategies)

Alex says the biggest mistake you can make while seeking a mentor is explicitly asking someone to be your mentor -- especially if you're just making first contact. Jordan compares it to going up to someone who catches your eye at a party and asking them to marry you.

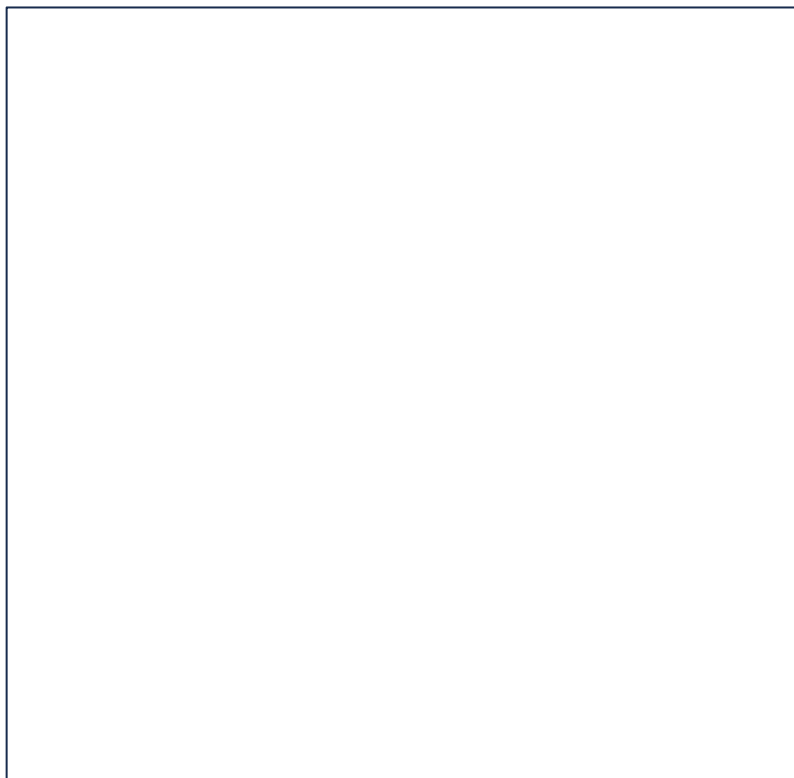
The second biggest mistake is seeking mentors who are currently in the limelight. They are likely far too busy to even casually glance at the email of someone they don't know, let alone carve out time for a phone call.

So when seeking a mentor, Alex gave three insights as to the underlying motivations of the mentor-mentee relationship.

- The mentor sees a part of themselves in the mentee.
- The mentor wants to help the mentee be more like them.
- The mentor wants to be more like the mentee.

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Recognizing these pitfalls and insights, take a moment and reverse engineer from the above a list of individuals who you fit in the mentor/mentee relationship. Highlight the individuals who seem like they might view you as a younger version of themselves. Now annotate next to their names some of the qualities you have that may add value to their lives.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to take notes or list individuals as instructed in the text above.

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How to Email a Busy Person (Cold Contact Email Template)

First paragraph (open): "I know you get a lot of emails, so this will only take you 60 seconds to read."

Second paragraph: In two sentences, establish credibility by describing who you are and why you're making contact.

Third paragraph: Ask your *very* specific question that can be answered in 15 seconds or less.

Final paragraph (close): "I completely understand if you are too busy to reply. If for some reason you have time for a one or two sentence response, it would mean the world to me. All the best!"

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Boiling the Frog

If you are not familiar with the above allegory, the premise behind it is that a frog would immediately jump out of a pot of boiling water if placed there, but could be cooked alive if placed in a pot of tepid water that was slowly brought to a boil. This is also the strategy Alex suggests once you have the attention of a potential mentor, perhaps by using the above email template.

The key is that once they have responded, you need “rapid timing” when it comes to showing a return on their invested time, illustrated in a letter of gratitude. If they suggest you read a book, you finish that book within days, and describe what you liked about it. If they suggest a course of action, you deliver results and insights as to how it went.

Once you have received a response from a potential mentor, use the above process: the simple request, take action on the advice quickly, and reply with results while providing gratitude. Now you can increase the ask slightly and repeat the process.

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Hack “The Price is Right” of Your Life

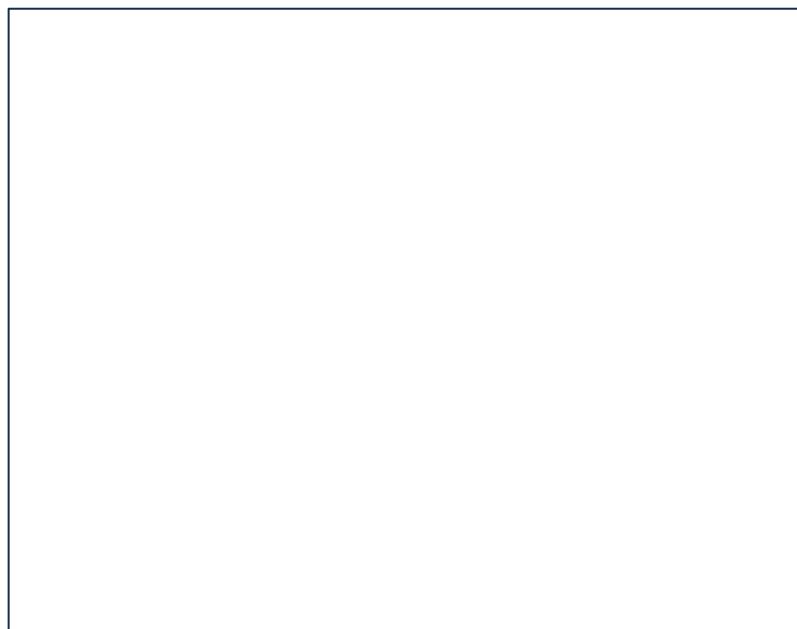
Needing money to publish his book, Alex decided that if he could be a contestant on The Price is Right, it would deliver the necessary funding.

The first obstacle was being selected from the audience, so Alex researched the deciding factors involved. One key piece of information was that the interview started when his wheels entered the studio parking lot through “undercover” casting producers.

Additionally, he took time to research everything possible about the casting producer. He knew the tells that indicated he would be called down before he was even on the show and did everything possible to ensure a successful outcome.

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Earlier we examined the concept of luck being the result of preparation meeting opportunity, and this is a great illustration of it. Circling back to your earlier list of aspirations, pick one and research how to “hack” it in order to guarantee a positive outcome. Now create a step-by-step recipe, share it with a friend, and compare results. Is it effective, or were you just lucky?



Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).

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About



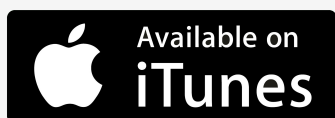
Join Jordan Harbinger (critically acclaimed host, formerly of The Art of Charm) as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary musicians to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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