


# Tapen's Fifteen Lessons in Life



Life in One Hour

# Lesson 1: Be punctual

- At a meeting, conference, or whatever other gathering you have to go to – be on time
- The opportunity cost of others
- Example: Bus driver late 
- Example: Professor late



# Lesson 2: Be truthful




- If you lie, you have to hide the lie with another lie and then another
- Eventually, people will figure out
- Better strategy: Be truthful



# Lesson 3: Educate yourself



- There is nothing more valuable in life than human capital (unless you inherit billions)
- Learn
- Learn some more 
- Not everything you learn you will use
- But you never know what will be useful
- The more you have in your toolkit, the better
- University, yes but learning is more than that



# Lesson 4: Educate others



- There is nothing more valuable than educating others
- This process is actually useful for yourself
- When you teach others, you find out more things about what you have learned
- I did not set out to teach others, but that is what I did
- Is teaching a good life?



# Lesson 5: Be a BIG dreamer



- Dream big – within reason
- Will that win you a Nobel Prize?
- That is a hit and miss proposition
- Being at the right place at the right time
- Solution: Be as many places as you can be



# Lesson 6: Push yourself – hard



- You would be surprise what you can achieve
- I was not the smartest kid in my school
- I was not the smartest student in College
- I was not the smartest researcher
- But I worked hard
- I studied long hours
- I repeatedly sent papers



# Lesson 7: Enjoy what you do



- If you do not, do something ELSE that you enjoy
- Making money is NOT everything
- But if you enjoy what you do, you get good at it and you WILL make money
- You may not get fabulously rich (which is a hit and miss) but you will not hate your working hours and counting the time to go home



# Lesson 8: Take care of yourself

- Exercise
- Not everybody can or will do the same thing
- I learned to swim, walk fast and do yoga
- Then I taught yoga
- At gyms for free
- At the university for the students
- In executive MBA classes





## Lesson 9: Take care of your family and friends

- Life is a journey that you cannot travel by yourself
- No matter how individually self sufficient you are, you cannot do all on your own
- I tried
- Your family and your friends are the ones who will help you when you need them



## Lesson 10: “How do you know that the door was not open if you do not push”



- That is what my father used to say
- If you want to achieve something – anything – you need to try
- A kid who lived in the same dorm as I did in Minnesota, Ed, was always asking women to go out with him
- Most of them refused
- But he just need a few successes
- He had more dates than I ever did





## Lesson 11: Get your associates to dream

- I get my students to dream big
- They do not believe they can do it
- I get others to identify their goals in line with mine
- Then, they are on MY side
- Listen to them, then they will listen to you



# Lesson 12: It is never too late to learn new things

- I learned BASIC in Graduate School
- I learned most of actuarial science by teaching
- I learned most of finance by teaching
- I learned Spanish after 40 and then I taught in it for two decades
- I learned paleobiology at 55 and wrote research papers and a book on the subject



# Lesson 13: Michael Faraday



- No formal education
- Worked as a book binder
- He read and educated himself
- He was eventually given a Doctor of Law
- He refused knighthood
- He refused to be the president of the Royal Society



# Lesson 14: Most of life is an accident

- “Life is what happens to us when we are making other plans” Allen Saunders
- Faraday just happened to be there when Sir Humphrey Davy needed an assistant
- I was not planning to go to Singapore, Australia or Mexico
- But I did plan my retirement



## Lesson 15: In the bigger scheme of things, what you think are important are not

- I do not have a cellphone
- In my business, if I do not immediately give a reply, nobody dies
- For most parts, if you are not there, life will go on without you
- You will really not be missed for long





# Lesson 15: In the bigger scheme of things, you do not matter

- There are 7 billion people in the world
- There were 108 billion people ever lived
- You are VERY small, I am very small too
- And of the 4.5 billion history of the earth, 100 years lived by one person is of no consequence
- And there are 400 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy
- And there are 170 billion galaxies
- $10^{24}$  stars: We are small and unimportant



**THANK YOU**

