

Chapter 21: Maintain Your Sobriety

Ego is the Enemy — Ryan Holiday • Executive Breakdown

EGO IS THE ENEMY

1 Angela Merkel's Stoic Demeanor

- ✓ German Chancellor Angela Merkel navigated 16 years of brutal geopolitical crises with zero theatrical flair, vanity, or drama.
- ✓ She dressed simply, avoided flamboyant soundbites, and methodically solved policy crises through quiet, unyielding persistence.
- ✓ Her sobriety proved that unpretentious, quiet competence commands far deeper authority than loud, egotistical showmanship.

2 The Intoxication of Triumph

- ✓ Success acts on the human brain like high-proof alcohol; it lowers inhibitions, fosters euphoric grandiosity, and impairs risk assessment.
- ✓ When intoxicating praise begins to flow, the sober practitioner doubles down on sleep, discipline, routine, and emotional restraint.
- ✓ Beware the siren song of your own hype; when you start believing you possess the Midas touch, you are on the verge of ruin.

3 The Plain, Unvarnished Professional

- ✓ The hallmark of supreme mastery is simplicity; as Bruce Lee noted: 'The height of cultivation runs to simplicity.'
- ✓ Strip away the corporate jargon, the performative posturing, and the entourage; remain an accessible, clear-headed craftsman.
- ✓ Sobriety is not grim solemnity; it is clear-sighted, unpolluted vision that sees the world exactly as it is, not as ego wishes it to be.



Chapter Summary

- ✓ Angela Merkel demonstrated that quiet, unpretentious competence wields far more enduring authority than theatrical political posturing.
- ✓ Success exerts an intoxicating effect on the brain that impairs strategic judgment and breeds reckless overconfidence.
- ✓ Bruce Lee's dictum that the height of cultivation runs to simplicity reminds masters to strip away jargon and vanity.
- ✓ Maintaining sobriety means preserving clear-eyed, unvarnished realism precisely when everyone around you is offering intoxicating flattery.