

# 11 Principles To Live By

Sam Altman





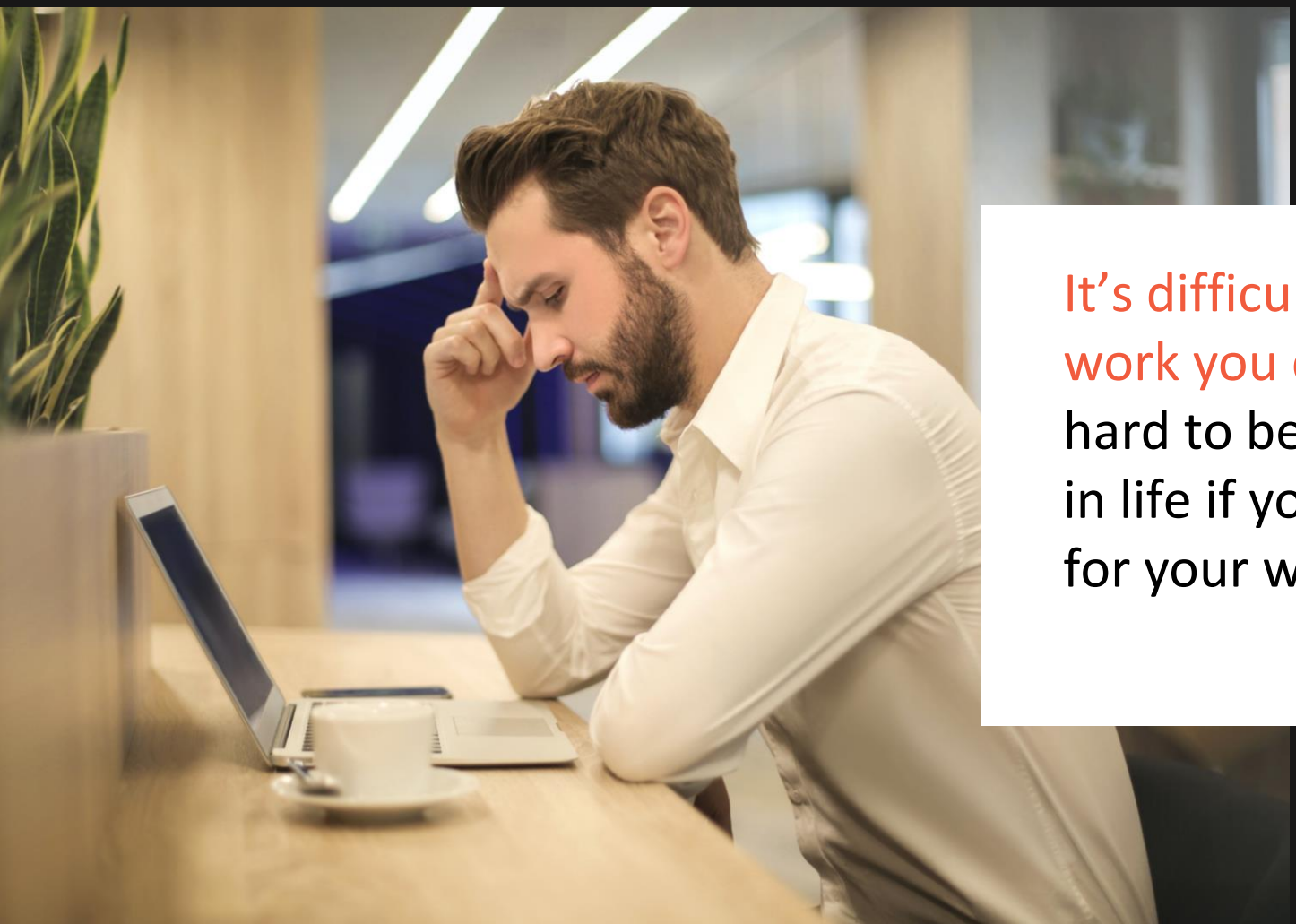
**Never** put your spouse, family  
or best friends low on your  
priority list.

Don't spend time trying to maintain relationships with people you don't like and cut negative people out of your life. **Negativity is really bad.**





Don't let yourself make excuses for not doing the things you want to do.



It's difficult to do a great job on work you don't care about. And it's hard to be totally happy or fulfilled in life if you don't like what you do for your work.

**Work very hard** — a surprising number of people will be offended that you choose to work hard — but not so hard that the rest of your life passes you by.



Making money is often more fun than spending it, though I personally have never regretted money I've spent on friends, new experiences, saving time, travel, and causes I believe in.





Don't let yourself get pushed  
around.

As Paul Graham once said to me,  
“People can become formidable,  
but it's hard to predict who”.



Go out of your way to be around smart, interesting, ambitious people. Try to spend time with people who are either among the best in the world at what they do or extremely promising but totally unknown.

**Don't worry so much.** Things in life are rarely as risky as they seem. Most people are too risk-averse, and so most advice is biased too much towards conservative paths.





**Existential angst is part of life.** It is particularly noticeable around major life events or just after major career milestones. It seems to particularly affect smart, ambitious people. I think one of the reasons some people work so hard is so they don't have to spend too much time thinking about this. Nothing is wrong with you for feeling this way; you are not alone.



**Do new things often.** This seems to be really important. Not only does doing new things seem to slow down the perception of time, increase happiness, and keep life interesting, but it seems to prevent people from calcifying in the ways that they think. Aim to do something big, new, and risky every year in your personal and professional life.

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