

You Can Do Everything

Sep 27, 2025 - 1083 words

Christopher Kalitin Blog (<https://ckalitin.github.io/posts/you-do-everything/>)

Today I was put into the amazing situation that does not come nearly often enough of talking to one of the most intelligent and insightful humans I have ever met. Talking to this specific kind of human is always the best kind of conversation, as it makes at least my brain go to new territory that I have not explored before. I might as well document what my brain is doing in this moment.

He told the story of a coworker he had a few years ago. This man had two PhDs in extremely technically complex fields and was a very capable engineer. He worked exceptionally hard on hardware development programs at startups, to the point of sleeping in the office for weeks on end. All the while, his wife had given birth to their daughter, and he did not really get to know his own daughter for the first four years of her life.

Directly before hearing this story, I was sharing a thought that has been incessantly bouncing around my head for weeks. You Can Do Everything.

These four words have not left my skull in weeks and I haven't taken any time to figure out what my brain is telling me until today. The counter example of the extremely capable engineer who did not spend enough time with his daughter was a perfect counterexample to get me to reconsider what my brain was trying to tell me. I had several enlightening conversations that day with some of the most intelligent and capable people I get to spend my time with.

Just now I realized that I never liked saying "you can do anything." I deeply felt a counterexample to that statement about a year ago when I began doing honours math classes in my first year at UBC. I was easily in the bottom quartile, or in the second term bottom decile, of these classes. I was clearly not ever going to be a math PhD, I'm not sure my brain would let me do that.

Clearly you can't do any thing. I've found one thing I cannot do, so clearly that's a proof by counterexample that you cannot do any thing. Notice this is a slightly different statement than "you can do anything."

I've managed to track down why my brain got "you can do everything" stuck in my thoughts.

There's a [clip of Kanye with the Sunday Service Choir](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4Z9f5ZKsDY&t=729s) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4Z9f5ZKsDY&t=729s>) that the [LLMs helped me find](https://chatgpt.com/share/6993765b-cc10-8006-9796-448cb8fd13a7) (<https://chatgpt.com/share/6993765b-cc10-8006-9796-448cb8fd13a7>). "now we absolutely know everything is possible. *Not anything, everything is possible.*"

I spend a lot of time working while listening to either Kanye, Ye, and Logic songs or classical music in the background, and this thought clearly slipped its way into my head. I've gone on a few dates

recently with a girl who has a particularly [pure heart](https://youtu.be/i1nindf1meE?si=OWkjuLCkqPMV3s_o&t=178) - at least from my perspective! what a lucky young man I am, though always going all in when this happens - and have said “you can do everything” extremely often, as it seemed fundamental to who I was though I never fundamentally evaluated what that meant until today.

Any you really do everything? Elon did have to spend a lot less time at Starbase over the last year and this feels evident in the results of flights 7, 8, and 9. He tried extremely hard and eventually did come to the conclusion that [the government is basically unfixable](https://youtu.be/qeZqZBRA-6Q?si=DumfdQKxEogmzdXO&t=112), [3x'ing the economy with robots is apparently easier](https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1925975507759243741). The man who can seemingly do everything can't do this? Damning counterexample.

What I really think happened in my head is that “you can do everything” replaced “you can work harder” and grew with “a maniacal sense of urgency is our operating principle.” You can work harder is a statement about increasing your net productivity either through more working hours, or more importantly through higher marginal productivity of your existing working hours. “You can do everything” is a result from increasing the marginal value of your working hours. If you can endlessly increase the impact of each hour you work, you can do everything.

And you can endlessly increase your marginal productivity. This is possible through a constant maniacal sense of urgency (which hopefully your brain can take). Through living your life at a higher and higher level of intensity, you can increase the impact of every hour. This expands to everything, including maximally useful relaxation and maximizing the impact of the time you spend with your 4 year old daughter. This is fundamentally important to [increasing your impact on the future of humanity](https://ckalitin.github.io/idea/2025/04/26/low-leverage-university.html).

Unfortunately, the marginal increase in productivity seems to decrease as you get closer and closer to the asymptote of your maximum productivity, which is a theoretical maximum that I'm not sure can ever be achieved. This blog post is mostly off the cuff, I've previously written about maximizing the leverage of your time (and hence marginal impact of an additional hour, or net outcome of existing hours) [in a more structured way](https://ckalitin.github.io/idea/2025/04/26/low-leverage-university.html).

I've been losing my mind recently - but which I mean literally losing it as in not knowing where it's going or gone. Usually I have a very good mental model of my own head and feel very content with being in my own head all day. Recently I started drinking and going to a few parties - essentially leaning into the 19 year old university student aesthetic - and this introduced a lot of new edge cases and source data about my mental model of myself, which recently has been diverging from the actions I end up taking. Particularly in one moment today where I performed far worse in a potentially high-leverage opportunity than expected, potentially risking future opportunities (for a stupid reason really, *professionalism is absolutely something to strive for* and one particularly capable and intelligent person I respect quite a lot made this point to me). To improve my mental

model of myself I had to write some things down, and I don't particularly mind *you* seeing this, maybe you can parse some of it.

Maybe if I go platinum they'll remember me then
Maybe if I go platinum they'll remember me then, yeah

I used to wonder what it feel like
But now, I know, achieved the goal
I ran the race, I won the gold
I used to wonder what it feel like

You can really do anything
You can really do anything
You can really do anything
You can really do anything

- [Logic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJAUMlvTXF4&list=PLuvVjLDbzSdFKzS_SxKKB75gdqErTnMBC&index=1) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJAUMlvTXF4&list=PLuvVjLDbzSdFKzS_SxKKB75gdqErTnMBC&index=1)