

Jim Britt's

Cracking the Rich Code¹¹

Inspiring Stories, Insights and
Strategies from Top Thought
Leaders Around the World

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Cracking the Rich Code¹¹

Jim Britt

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Cracking the Rich Code¹¹

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DEDICATION

Entrepreneurs will change the world. They always have and they
always will.

To the entrepreneurial spirit that lives within each of us.
God Bless America and the World!

Foreword by Kevin Harrington

You probably know me as one of the “Sharks” on the hit TV show Shark Tank, where I was an investor in many entrepreneurial ventures.

But my life and business weren’t always like that. I used to be your regular, every day guy patching cracked driveways to make money. I had hopes and dreams just like most, yet I worked around people who didn't support my dreams. But you know what? I not only found a way out, but I found a way to my dreams... and so can you.

Now, I wake up every morning excited about my day, and I surround myself with only the people I want in my life; entrepreneurs who really want something more than just getting by paycheck to paycheck.

Today we hear stories -- mostly from the mainstream media -- everyday about how bad things are, businesses are closing, and jobs being lost, interest rates are on the rise, how the gap between rich and poor is growing and how you'll never make it on your own.

But here's what I know for sure. Entrepreneurs are going to change the world. We always have and we always will.

Forget the 1% vs the 99%. 100% of us entrepreneurs need answers. We need solutions. We need something more than what we're being told by those who don't have a clue. We need to start saying Yes! to opportunity and No! to all the noise.

The fact is that it's a new world and a new economy. The "proven" methods of doing business and investing that produced successful results, even two years ago, simply may not work anymore.

If you want to succeed (or even survive) in our new world, you need an entirely new set of skills and information.

You need to "reposition" yourself...often.

You need to revamp how you do business...often.

You need to change how you handle and invest your money...often.

Like any other situation, if you know **WHAT** to do and **WHEN** to do it, you'll not only be "safe"... you could easily skyrocket financially.

If you have the right knowledge for today, the right opportunities for today, the right strategies for today and most of all the right character and mindset for today, you can win — and you can win big!

What I've discovered in my over three-decade career as an entrepreneur, is that success in the face of financial adversity boils down to 3 things:

The right knowledge at the right time.

The right opportunities at the right time.

The right you... ALL the time.

The bottom line is this: you can no longer afford to rely on anyone else to navigate your financial future. You have to rely on your "self." The question is... do you have a "self" you can rely on? Unfortunately, when it comes to entrepreneurship and money, many people don't. They don't have the financial education, the mental toughness, the knowledge and the skills to build wealth... especially in an ever-changing marketplace. You need to get RE-educated. You need to REINVENT yourself for success in the new economy. You need to learn new strategies in the areas of business and career, finance and real estate that create wealth or at least financial freedom in today's new world. But that's not all...

Skills and strategies and all that profound new knowledge won't do you one bit of good if you don't have the **CHARACTER**, the **HABITS** and the **MENTALITY** it takes to get rich. If you have internal barriers, your road to success will be slow and full of pain and struggle. It's like driving with one foot on the gas and one foot on the brake and always wondering why you aren't getting anywhere. Your mind is working against you instead of for you.

I have seen business owners come to me with their business ready to go under — and have the next year be their best financial year ever. I've seen others that had a business that should skyrocket, yet fail because they didn't have the mental toughness to go the distance. I have seen people stuck in dead-end, dreary jobs break out

of their rut, get involved in a brand-new passion, and become wildly successful.

No matter what you do for a living...regardless of your education, level of business experience or current financial status...If you have a burning desire for financial change then you won't want to miss this rare opportunity to learn from the entrepreneurs within this book.

It will provide you with some of the same success strategies that Jim Britt and I have used personally and shared with tens of thousands of people who've had tremendous financial success...people just like you, who wanted to get out of the rat race and enjoy financial freedom.

In addition, you'll learn what others have done, the mistakes they made and how you can avoid them. You'll discover strategies that could make your business a major market leader. I always say, "Just one good idea can change everything."

Success is predictable if you know what determines it. This book offers some valuable tips, knowledge, insights, skill sets, that will challenge you to leap beyond your current comfort level. If you want to strengthen your life, your business and your effectiveness overall, you'll discover a great friend in this book. You'll probably want to recommend it to all your entrepreneurial friends.

Although I haven't followed Jim Britt's career over the last 44-years, I do know that he is recognized as one of the top thought leaders in the world, helping millions of people create prosperous lives. He has authored 15 books and multiple programs showing people how to understand their hidden abilities to do more, become more and enjoy more in every area of life. He is the brains behind the many online PR, Marketing, Branding and Lead Generation strategies each coauthor and reader of the book will benefit from.

The principles, concepts and ideas within this book are sometimes simple, but can be profound to a person who is ready for that perfect message at the right time and is willing to take action to change. Maybe for one it's a chapter on leadership or mindset. For the next,

it's a chapter on health and wellness, or relationships. Each chapter is like opening a surprise empowering gift.

The conclusion for me is an exciting one. You, me and every other human being are shaping our brains and bodies by our attitude, the decisions we make, the intentions we hold and the actions we take daily. Why is it exciting? Because we are in control of all these things and we can change as long as we have the intention, willingness and commitment to look inside, take charge of our lives and make the changes.

I want to congratulate Jim Britt for making this publication series available and for allowing me to write the foreword, a chapter in each book and be involved with the talented entrepreneurs within this book and series. I honor Jim and the coauthors within this book and the series for the lives they are changing.

As you enter these pages, do so slowly and with an open mind. Savor the wisdom you discover here, and then with interest and curiosity discover what rings true for you, and then take action toward the life you want.

So many people settle for less in life, but I can tell you from my experience that it doesn't have to be that way.

Be prepared...because your life and business, is about to change!

Jim Britt & Kevin Harrington

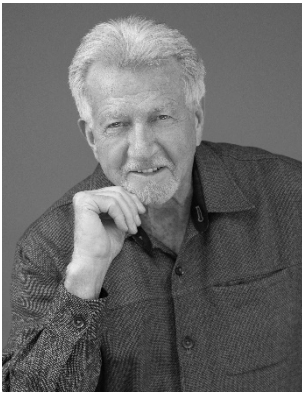
As co-creators of this book series Jim Britt and Kevin Harrington have devoted their lives to helping others to live a more prosperous, fulfilled and happy life. Over the years they have influenced millions of lives through their coaching, mentoring, business strategies and leading by example. They are committed to never-ending self-improvement and being an inspiration to all they touch. They are both a true example that all things are possible. If you get a chance to work with Kevin and Jim or to become a coauthor in a future volume of Cracking the Rich Code book, jump at the chance!

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Jim Britt



Jim Britt is an award-winning author of 15 best-selling books and ten #1 International best-sellers. Some of his many titles include *Rings of Truth*, *Do This. Get Rich-For Entrepreneurs*, *Unleashing Your Authentic Power*, *The Power of Letting Go*, *Cracking the Rich Code* and *The Entrepreneur*.

He is an internationally recognized business and life strategist who is highly sought after as a keynote speaker, both online and live, for all audiences. As an entrepreneur Jim has launched 28 successful business ventures. He has served as a success strategist to over 300 corporations worldwide and is one of the world's top 50 speakers and top 20 success coaches. He was presented with the "Best of the Best" award out of the top 100 contributors of all time to the Direct Selling industry.

For over four decades Jim has presented seminars throughout the world sharing his success strategies and life enhancing realizations with over 5,000 audiences, totaling almost 2,000,000 people from all walks of life.

Early in his speaking career he was Business partners with the late Jim Rohn for eight years, where Tony Robbins worked under Jim's direction for his first few years in the speaking business.

As a performance strategist, Jim leverages his skills and experience as one of the leading experts in peak performance, entrepreneurship and personal empowerment to produce stellar results. He is pleased to work with small business entrepreneurs, and anyone seeking to remove the blocks that stop their success in any area of their life.

One of Jim's latest programs "Cracking the Rich Code" focuses on the subconscious programs influencing one's relationship with money and their financial success.

Think Like Superman

By Jim Britt

"Waking up to your true greatness in life requires letting go of who you imagine yourself to be."

--- Jim Britt

FACT: Becoming a millionaire is easier than it has ever been.

Many people have the notion that it's an impossible task to become a millionaire. Some say, "It's pure luck." Others say, "You have to be born into a rich family." For others, "You'll have to win the Lotto." And for many, they say, "Your parents have to help you out a lot." That's the language of the poor.

A single mother with five children says, "I want to believe in what you're saying. However, I'm 45 years old and work long hours at two dead-end jobs. I barely earn enough to get by. What should I do?"

Another man said, "Well, if you work for the government, you cannot expect to become a millionaire. After all, you're on a fixed salary and there's little time for anything else. By the time you get home, you've got to play with the kids, eat dinner, and fall asleep watching TV."

Everyone has a story as to why they could never become a millionaire. But for every story, excuse really, there are other stories OR PEOPLE with worse circumstances that have become rich.

The truth is that all of us can become as wealthy as we decide to be, and that's a mindset. None of us is excluded from wealth. If you have the desire to receive money, whatever the amount, you have all of the rights to do so like everyone else. There is no limit to how much you can earn for yourself. The only limitations are what you place on yourself.

Money is like the sun. It does not discriminate. It doesn't say, "I will not give light and warmth to this flower, tree, or person because I don't like them." Like the sun, money is abundantly available to all of us who truly believe that it is for us. No one is excluded.

There are, however, some major differences between rich and poor people. Here are some tips for becoming rich.

Change Your Thinking

You have to see the bigger picture. There are opportunities everywhere! The problem is that most people see just trees when they should be looking at the entire forest. By doing so, you will see that there are opportunities everywhere. The possibilities are endless.

You'll also have to go through plenty of self-discovery before you earn your first million. Knowing the truth about yourself isn't always the easiest task. Sometimes, you'll find that you are your biggest enemy—at least some days.

Learn from Millionaires

Most people are surrounded by what I like to call their "default friends." These friends are acquaintances that we see at the gym, school, work, local happy hour, and other places. We naturally befriend these people because we are all in the same boat financially. However, these people aren't millionaires in most cases and cannot help you become one either. In fact, if you tell them you will become a millionaire, some may even tell you that it's impossible and discourage you from even trying. They'll tell you that you're living in a fantasy world and why you'll never be able to make it happen. Instead, learn from millionaires. Let go of these relationships that pull you down regarding your money desires. It's okay to have friends that aren't millionaires. However, only take input from those who have accomplished what you want to accomplish. Hang out with those who will encourage and help you reach the next level. Don't give your raw diamonds to a bricklayer to cut.

Indulge in Wealth

To become wealthy, you must learn about wealth. This means that you'll have to put yourself in situations that you've never been in before.

ON OCCASION, DO SOME OF THESE:

Fly first class and see how it makes you feel.

Eat out at the finest restaurant, and don't look at the price on the menu.

Take a limo instead of a cab or Uber. Watch how you feel.

Reserve a suite in a first-class hotel.

If you are used to drinking a \$20 bottle of wine, go for the \$100 and see how it tastes. It does taste different.

All I am saying is, try some things that wealthy people do and see how it makes you feel.

Believe it is Possible

If you believe it is possible to become a millionaire, you can make it happen. However, if you've excluded yourself from this possibility and think and believe that it's for other people, you'll never become a millionaire.

Also, be sure to bless rich people when you can. Haters of money aren't likely to receive any of it either.

Read books that millionaires have written. By gaining a well-rounded education about earning large sums of money and staying inspired, you'll be able to learn the wealth secrets of the rich. I just saw a video on LinkedIn with my friend Kevin Harrington from the TV show Shark Tank. He said that one of his new companies just had a million-dollar day on Amazon.

Enlarge Your Service

Your material wealth is the sum of your total contribution to society. Your daily mantra should be, 'How do I deliver more value to more people in less time?' Then, you'll know that you can always increase your quality and quantity of service. Enlarging your service is also about going the extra mile. When it comes to helping others, you must give everything you have. You just plant the seeds, and nature will take care of the rest.

Seize ALL Opportunities That Make Sense

You cannot say "No" to opportunities and expect to become a millionaire. You must seize every opportunity that has your name on

it. It may just be an opportunity to connect with an influential person for no reason. Sometimes the monetary reward will not come immediately, but if you keep planting seeds, eventually, you'll grow a fruitful crop. Money is the harvest of the service you provide and sometimes the connections you have. The more seeds you plant, the greater the harvest.

Have an Unstoppable Mindset

Want to know some of what my first mentor shared with me that took me from a broke factory worker, a high school dropout, to a millionaire?

First, he said, you must start thinking like a wealthy, unstoppable person. You must have a wealth mindset. He said that wealthy people think differently. He said, "I want you to start thinking like Superman!" Sounds crazy, right? Well, it's not. It's powerful, and here's why. How you think will change your life.

Wealthy people think differently. They really do. And anyone can learn to think like the wealthy.

I'm not talking about positive thinking, the Law of Attraction, or motivation. Let's get real. None of that stuff works anyway. Otherwise, we would all be prosperous and happy already. Instead, I'm talking about thinking based on quantum physics. Once you understand and apply it, it will change your life. You will become unstoppable!

If there was any fictional or real person whose qualities you could instantly possess, who would that person be? Think about it. Personally, I would say that Superman is the perfect person. Now, you are probably thinking I have lost it, right? Just stick with me here. You will like what you are about to hear.

Superman is a fictional superhero widely considered one of the most famous and popular action heroes and an American cultural icon. I remember watching Superman every Saturday morning when I was a kid. I couldn't get enough. He was my hero!

Let's look at Superman's traits:

Superman is indestructible.

He is a man of steel.

He can stop a locomotive in its tracks.

Bullets bounce off him.

He is faster than a speeding bullet.

No one can bring him down.

He can leap tall buildings in a single bound. Great powers to have in this day and age, wouldn't you say? What else would you need?

Now, for all you females, don't worry. We have not left you out. There is also a female version of Superman named Superwoman. She has the same powers as Superman.

Now, this is where it gets interesting. Let's first look at the qualities that Superman possesses that you want to make your own. And to make it simple, I will refer to Superman for the rest of this message, and you can replace him with Superwoman if you are female.

Again:

Superman is powerful and fearless.

Superman is virtually indestructible—except for kryptonite, of course.

Superman can stop bullets.

Superman has supernatural powers. He can see through walls.

Superman can stop a speeding locomotive.

Superman can stop a bullet.

Superman jumps into immediate action when troubles arise.

Superman can crash through barriers.

Superman can even change clothes in a phone booth in seconds. Not too many of those around anymore. You'll have to duck behind a building to change.

So, you're thinking right now, 'Okay, I know that Superman has incredible supernatural powers, how can that help me? What good will it do me to think I am Superman, a fictional character?'

Here is where science comes in. This is the part where you will be amazed when you learn about the supernatural powers you already possess! NO, REALLY!

Your brain makes certain chemicals called neuropeptides. These are literally the molecules of emotion, like love, fear, joy, passion, etc. These molecules of emotion are not only contained in your brain but circulate throughout your cellular structure. They send out a signal, a frequency much like a radio station sending out a signal. For example, you tune in to 92.5, and you get jazz. Tune in to 99.6, and you get rock. And if you are just one decimal off, you get static. The difference is that your signal goes both ways. You are a sender and a receiver.

You put out a signal, a mindset of confidence about your financial success, and people, circumstances, and opportunities show up to support your success. When you put out a signal of doubt and uncertainty, you receive support for your doubt and uncertainty. You've been around someone you didn't trust or felt less than positive just being in their presence, right? You have also been around people that inspire you. That's what I'm talking about. You are projecting a frequency, looking to resonate with the frequency you are transmitting.

Anyway, the amazing part about these cells of emotion is that they are intelligent. They are thinking cells. These cells are constantly eavesdropping on the conversation that you are having with yourself. That's right. They are listening to you! And others are listening to your cells as well. Others feel what you feel when they are around you.

Your unconscious mind and cells are listening in, waiting to adjust your behavior based on what they hear from you, their master. So just imagine what would happen if you started thinking like Superman or a millionaire.

Here are some of the thoughts you might have during the day:

"The challenges I face today are easily overcome, after all I am Superman."

"I am indestructible."

"I have incredible strength."

"Nothing can stop me...NOTHING."

"I have supernatural powers and can overcome anything."

"I can accomplish anything I want when I put my mind to it."

"I can break through any barrier."

"I can and I will do whatever it takes to accomplish my goal."

"I fear nothing."

The trillions of thinking cells in your body and brain listen, and they create exactly what you tell them to create. Their mission is to complete the picture of the you they see and hear when you talk to them. They must obey. It's their job!

Since you are Superman, you cannot fail. Why? Your thinking cells are now sending the proper signal because you told them to. They are making you stronger and more successful every day! You have the ability to fight off all negativity, doubt, fear, and worry—nothing can stop you!

Superman has total confidence. So, your cells of emotion relating to confidence will now create more neuropeptide chemicals to promote feelings of power and confidence that others will feel in your presence.

Superman is fearless. So, your cells of emotion relating to fear will now create more neuropeptide chemicals to create feelings of courage. You are unstoppable!

And here's the key. Others will respond to you in the same way that you are talking to yourself.

If you are confident, others will have confidence in you.

You have thousands of thoughts every day. Make sure your thoughts are leading you in the direction you want to go. Ensure you tell your cells a success story and not a 'woe is me' story.

Most have been conditioned to think that creating wealth is difficult or only for the lucky few. What do you believe? It doesn't cost anything to think like Superman, and it is much more inspiring!

Mediocrity cannot be an option if you decide to be wealthy and think like Superman.

Your decision and communication with your cells create a mindset; that influences how you show up.

None of that old type of thinking matters anymore. After all, you are Superman, and you can accomplish anything.

If you want wealth, you have to stretch yourself. You have to do the things that unsuccessful people are unwilling to do. You have to say "yes" to an opportunity, then figure out how to get the job done.

Maybe you are uncomfortable selling and asking for money. If that's the case, then learn sales and learn to ask for money every day until you feel comfortable asking for it. You will never have money if you don't learn to ask for it.

I've learned a lot in the past 40+ years as an entrepreneur. I've learned that in order to have more, you have to become more. I've also learned that if you are comfortable, you are not growing. I realized that I couldn't go from being a nervous rookie speaker with minimal self-confidence to hosting TV shows and speaking in front of 5,000 people overnight. I simply wasn't ready. I grew into that, one speaking engagement at a time. Every time I finished a speaking engagement, I would ask myself, "How did I do, and how could I do it better?" I still do that today.

And I've learned from the hundreds of thousands of people I've trained, coached, and mentored that none of us can do something we don't believe is possible. It won't happen if you're not ready to step out of your comfort zone and stretch yourself.

This has led me to understand the most important principle of wealth-building, which has meant the difference between poverty and riches for people since humans first traded for pelts.

Are you ready?

Come in just a little closer. Listen up!

Every income level requires a different you, a different mindset! If you think that \$10,000 a month is a lot of money, then \$100,000 a month will be completely out of reach. If you believe that having \$5,000 in the bank would make you rich, then \$50,000 won't miraculously appear. You will never earn more money than you believe is "a lot" of money.

What you do as a business is only a small part of becoming rich. In fact, there are thousands, if not tens of thousands, of ways to make money—and lots of it. I've learned over the years that focusing on who you want to become instead of what you need to do will multiply your chances of getting rich a hundredfold.

Ask anyone who's found a way to make a large sum of money legally, and they will tell you that it's not hard once you crack the code. And cracking the code starts with you and your mindset. The "code" I refer to isn't a secret rite or ancient scroll. It's not even a secret. It's a certain way of thinking and believing in which you've trained your mind to see money-making ideas.

That's where you see a need in the marketplace and jump on the idea quickly. It might involve creating a new product, or it may just be teaching others a special technique you've learned. It may even require raising capital to start a company or to market a product or idea on social media.

Don't Hold Back. You Have to Take Action to Change.

Start right now to imagine yourself as already having wealth. How would your life be? How would your day unfold? Start to own your wealth mindset now! The subconscious mind is unable to differentiate between fact and mere visualization. So, by imagining that you already have it, you're encouraging your subconscious mind

to seek the ways and means to transform your imaginary feelings into the real thing.

Find yourself some mentors. Nobody has all the answers. Surround yourself with people who will support, inspire, and provide solutions that keep you moving in the right direction. Having a qualified mentor is essential if you genuinely want to attain wealth, have a thriving business, or reach the top of your game in any endeavor.

Okay, let's come in for a landing...

Having a crystal-clear picture of what you want to accomplish is essential before you begin. If you want to attain wealth, you must learn to operate without fear and with a sharply defined mental image of the outcome you want to attain. This comes from thinking like a wealthy person (like Superman), making decisions like a wealthy person, and being fearless (like Superman) when stepping out of your comfort zone. Look at the result as something you're already prepared to do; you just haven't done it yet.

Think about this. You have been preventing your success; it's not something you have to struggle to make happen. The key is not letting fear, doubt, other people, or mind chatter push your success away. You'll find that the solutions taking you toward your goals will come to you in the most unexpected and sudden ways. You don't need the perfect plan first. You need a perfectly clear decision about your success, the right mindset, mentoring, and the ideal way to get you there will materialize.

The most significant transfer of wealth in the history of the human race is happening right now. Are you positioned to get your share?

Remember, in order to get a different result, you must do something different. In order to do something different, you must know something different to do. And in order to know something different, you have to first suspect that your present methods need improving.

THEN, YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

For more information on Jim's work:

www.JimBritt.com

<http://JimBrittCoaching.com>

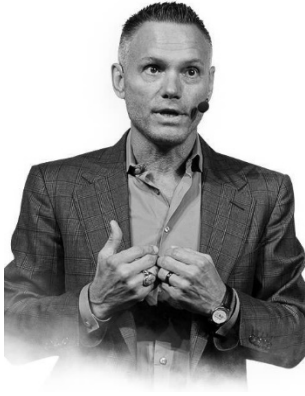
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programming regarding your relationship with money:
www.CrackingTheRichCode.com

Kevin Harrington



Kevin Harrington is an original shark from the hit TV show *Shark Tank* and a successful entrepreneur for more than forty years. He's the co-founding board member of the Entrepreneurs' Organization and co-founder of the Electronic Retailing Association. He also invented the television infomercial. He helped make "But wait... There's more!" part of our cultural history. He's one of the pioneers behind the *As Seen on TV* brand, has heard more than 50,000 pitches, and launched more than 500 products generating more than \$5 Billion in global sales. Twenty of his companies have generated more than \$100 million in revenue each. He's also the founder of the *Secrets of Closing the Sale Master Class* inspired by the Master of sales—Zig Ziglar. He's the author of several bestselling books including *Act Now: How I Turn Ideas into Million Dollar Products*, *Key Person of Influence*, and *Put a Shark in Your Tank*.

Becoming A KPI

By Kevin Harrington

The Key Person of Influence (KPI) in any given industry is the leader. It is the leader of the business world, the leader of automobile dealerships, the leader of selling hats—you name it. In other words, being the KPI means being the go-to person. The crazy thing? Anyone can be a Key Person of Influence. Any entrepreneur can be a KPI, a doctor, a salesperson, or anyone. Just follow five steps and you will be well on your way. What comes with being a Key Person of Influence is value, ideally a massive amount of money, and being the leader in your field. The KPI is the person who comes up in conversations when it relates to a certain product, business, company, industry, or field. This is the person others seek out, the go-to person. Being the Key Person of Influence is how I got on *Shark Tank*.

Here's the story: I got a phone call from Mark Burnett's company. Mark Burnett is a television producer. He produced shows like *Survivor* and *The Voice*. His office called to set up an appointment. Mark was starting up a new show and wanted me to go out to Los Angeles to talk business. I was curious as to how Mark Burnett's company found me, and why they reached out for my services. They told me it was because I was a Key Person of Influence. I was all over the internet as a result of everything I was doing. It was 2008, and I had been in the business for 25 years. I have created huge brands. I helped build Tony Little. I helped build Jack Lalanne. I helped build Food Saver. We did the NuWave Oven. We worked with people like George Foreman and countless others. The problem was, everybody knew the brands, which was good for business, but did nothing for my personal brand. Consumers knew about the Food Saver, they knew about Tony Little, and they knew about Jack Lalanne, but not everyone knew I was the guy behind all of these people. Nobody knew me.

At that point, I made a conscious effort to build my brand. I wanted to become the go-to person so I could get hot products and phone calls. I helped build Tony Little's business, but everyone called him; they weren't calling me. What's wrong with that picture? Well, for

one, I invested millions and millions of dollars of my own capital in Tony Little, and then he got all the phone calls. Shame on me for doing that, right? So, I decided to build my brand, and that's when I came out with my book, *Key Person of Influence*. I promoted myself by doing radio talk shows, TV shows, trade journals, speeches, etc. This is how I got on *Shark Tank*.

If I hadn't met Daniel Priestley, my book could have become *How To Become The Go-To Guy* because that's what I was looking to do, but Daniel very eloquently created this five-step system called the "Key Person of Influence." Realizing we were on to something, we co-authored and launched *Key Person of Influence*. Let's look now at the necessary steps to become a KPI.

Obtaining Customers

In 1984, I started a business of obtaining customers on TV. One evening, I was watching the Discovery Channel and suddenly the channel went dark for about six hours. I then called the cable company just in case there was a problem. They told me there wasn't a problem, that the Discovery Channel was an 18-hour network. That's when the light bulb went off. This was downtime. They put no value on those six down hours. Instead of showing something during this time, bars were put up on the screen. I started thinking about what I could put in place of that downtime, to sell something, obtain customers, and make money. I'm like the Rembrandt TV guy. I created and invented the whole concept of going to TV stations and buying huge blocks of remnant downtime. In all these years of me doing this, no one has challenged the idea that I was the person who did it, created it, and invented 30-minute infomercial blocks.

I was buying big blocks of time. Why? Because I wanted to obtain customers. How do you obtain customers? A lot of ways, but you ultimately have to get some form of media. How does it start? There are two metrics you have to look at when obtaining customers. What does it cost to obtain the customer? That is called the Cost Per Order (CPO). What is your Average Lifetime Revenue Value (ALRV), or Average Order Value (AOV)? The cost to obtain the customer obviously has to be less than the cost you are going to receive in income from the customer. The bottom line in obtaining customers:

you have to set up a system. You have to set up testing. You have to set up as many sources for obtaining customers as possible. Even though I was in the TV business, I didn't just get customers through TV. Customers came through TV, radio, the internet, retail stores, international distribution, home shopping channels, etc. The first step is to make a laundry list of every possible resource for attracting these customers.

Today, some people who are into the digital space are basically just getting customers on the internet. Some of the areas I mentioned above have become very expensive. It's tougher to make money on TV. Since we started on TV, the cost to get customers has become too high; so we now have made the switch to digital. When you talk about the internet, there's many different ways to obtain customers, from Google AdWords to Facebook ads to social media, etc. You can also attain customers with public relations and influencers. You have to decide what works best with your product. The bottom line is a lot of people do not realize they have to be sophisticated, from a business analysis standpoint, to set up a business. You need a marketing plan to obtain customers.

First, focus on two numbers: your Customer Acquisition Cost (CAT) and Average Order Value (AOV). Those numbers have to work. Customer service is crucial in the business world as well. A business can't have bad customer service and retain customers. This is especially true in this day-and-age.

Raising Capital

I had a 50-million-dollar-a-year business, making \$5 million a year in profit. Feeling confident, I met with seven banks to get some financing. I thought it was going to be easy because I had a very profitable business. Unfortunately, bank after bank after bank turned me down. I had great credit and all of that. The only asset I had was the business. Part of the problem was I didn't know how to approach the banks. I was a young entrepreneur in my twenties. I had no real credibility in the banking world; I was walking in and just showing my numbers from the year before.

So, what did I do to get the capital? Well, I ran into a mentor who was a former bank president, and he said, "Kevin, you went about it

all wrong. I come from the banking business, and if you walked into my office and said, ‘I need 5 million bucks,’ I would have told you to turn around and get the hell out of my office. What do you have to do? You have to sell them on the future. What you did last year is well and good, but they are giving you money because they know that you are still going to be in business three years from now repaying their loans. You need projections. You need your forward business plan. You need your five-year master plan. You need to talk the talk and walk the walk, otherwise they aren’t even interested.”

I hired my mentor as a consultant to the company. I brought him in on the ground floor as part of my dream team. To make a long story short, we went back to re-pitch some of the same banks. We didn’t get 5 million dollars, but we got a 3-million-dollar line of credit. It was all in how we talked to the banks. We had the same business, but it was all in the presentation. It’s all in how you talk and how prepared you are. Raising capital is mental. It’s in the pitch. It’s in the relationships you build, etc.

One of the biggest challenges with any business is having enough capital to do the things you want to do. You have to have a successful business plan if you want to raise money. Here are the elements of a successful business plan.

- (1) You need an executive summary (one page summarizing the whole plan). You need an industry overview, defining the problem you are solving and an overview of the market.
- (2) You need a description of your product or the service. How does it serve as a solution?
- (3) You need a competitive analysis. What/who is your competition?
- (4) You need a sales and marketing plan.
- (5) You need to identify your target customer and proof for your concept.
- (6) What is your method of operations?
- (7) Who’s on your management team, your board of advisers, your dream team?

(8) What are your financial projections?

(9) You need to outline your risk analysis and appendix.

If you are going to raise capital, you don't just talk to an investor. I get people all the time that come to me saying they have an idea, and boom... it's on a napkin. They tell me that they just need \$100K for 10 percent. I ask if they can send me their business plan. They then ask me what I mean when I say, 'business plan.' If they don't have one, that means I am going to end up giving them 100K and never see it again.

One of the most important parts of raising capital is coming up with a reasonable ask, and then explaining how the proceeds will be used. Many entrepreneurs don't understand this. For example, a guy came on *Shark Tank* saying he needed 150K for 10 percent of his company. I asked what he was going to use the 150K for?

His response was essentially this, "Well, I am going to use the money as a down payment for a piece of real estate where we are going to build a building, then launch the business."

"Okay, so you are going to build the building and then equip the building with furniture. Where is that money going to come from?" I asked. He said once he got the real estate, then they would figure out that batch of money at that time. I told him, "\$150K dollars doesn't get you in business. \$150K dollars gets you a piece of land. How are you going to build the business, generate revenue, and pay me back?" This guy told me he thought I would have more money for him after that. I said, "Well, no. You are not going to get the first batch of money based on the answers you are giving me."

Instead, he should have said he was going to lease a small office and start generating massive amounts of revenue with the money I gave them. Then, pay me back all of my money, plus a huge return on my investment, and then build it into a global business. That's what I wanted to hear. I want to know that people have a successful business plan, a successful marketing plan, and then I will talk about how to go about raising the capital, how to call on investors, and what the sweet spots are for the investors.

The bottom line on raising capital is, you can't just build yourself a huge global business without thinking about how you're going to finance it. In the old days, I thought if I built a successful business, money was going to be easy. It's not, unless you know how to do it. There's an art to raising capital. Part of it involves making sure you are prepared and know how to pitch your business properly.

The Perfect Pitch

While the actual product or service you are trying to sell is a critical part of the process, it is just as important to sell the customer on yourself, your services, and your business. Even though I have made thousands upon thousands of pitches, have spoken to thousands of people, and have seen a great amount of success, I still pitch myself and my businesses. No matter who you are, or what you do, you have to be ready to drop the perfect pitch. It doesn't matter if you are going to make this perfect pitch in front of a crowd of thousands, or a crowd of one. To help with the concept of a perfect pitch, I have created a 10-step system.

Before you can start perfecting the perfect pitch, you have to ask yourself a couple of questions. What are you pitching? In other words, what product, business, or service are you trying to sell? Next, what do you want to get out of this pitch? More customers? More sales? Nonetheless, these questions are for you to answer, and you need to answer them before devising your perfect pitch. The perfect pitch can be broken down into these 10 steps:

(1) The “Tease” is your hook; the period of time when you plant the seed. This is when you reveal a problem. You have to explain to your customers why you are giving the pitch. You also have to use showmanship, which sets the pace for the rest of the pitch. If your showmanship skills are demonstrated in the Tease portion of your pitch, then you will have your audience (or your customer) hooked from the very beginning.

(2) Next up is Please. In this part of the perfect pitch, you are telling your customer how your product or service can solve the problem you mapped out in the first step. Ideally, your product or service will solve this stated problem in the most efficient, elegant, and cost-effective way. You have to relay to your customer that your solution

is the best solution, and it will solve the problem better than anything (or anyone) else. It is important to also show off your features and benefits, and to display the magical transformation that will take place.

(3) The third step to the perfect pitch is *Demonstration/Multi-functionality*. First, you have to ask yourself if you can demonstrate your product, your service and your value. This is the key to any successful pitch, and it brings multi-functionality to the forefront. It shows it off. Think of this step as an added value. Ideally, your service or product is multifunctional. If you can show this off to your customer, then you just bring bonus points to the table.

(4) But Wait There's More! is the fourth step, and it's not just for infomercials on TV. This is the step where you give more value to your product or service by showing and adding more to the pitch—maybe added bonus items or “buy 2 get 1 free if you act now” incentives. At this point, your customer should already be biting, but now is the time to really win them over. So, show them what else you have to offer.

(5) Testimonials are the fifth step to creating the perfect pitch. You are now using someone else to do the pitching. In other words, who says so besides you? This is the proof behind your business, product, or service. Testimonials can include consumers (actual users of the product or service), professionals (leaders in your industry), editorials (articles, experts, press, journals, trade publications, magazines, newspapers), etc. Testimonials can also feature celebrities. Celebrity testimonials can be very powerful for the simple fact that people love celebrities. Then there are documented testimonials, which can include clinical studies, labs tests, and science. Once again, this is one of the most important areas for creating the perfect pitch.

(6) Another important step is *Research and Competitive Analysis*. For this step, you should be asking yourself if you have done your research. If so, then this is the portion of the perfect pitch when you show off all of that information. This can include information on the industry, market and competitors. It can also be facts, figures, and

statistics. This research should show off the fact that you, your company, and your product/service is unique.

(7) The seventh step is **Your Team**. In this step, you are bringing the credibility of your team and putting it right there on the metaphorical table. Who makes up your team? It could be advisers, management, directors, and strategic partners. Your team will help scale, open connections, add on the knowledge factor, and so much more.

(8) **Why?** is the eighth step. Why are you pitching? How will the person in front of you help? This step will change based on who you are actually pitching to. For example, if you are looking for funds, then this is a big section, and you need to incorporate many talking points.

(9) The ninth step is **Marketing Plan**. You have made your pitch and given out all your information. Now, how will you make everything happen? For instance, you need to know your marketing and distribution plan. As is the case throughout your entire pitch, it is essential that you show confidence. Sell whoever you are pitching on your product or service, and yourself as well. People invest in people all the time.

(10) The 10th and final step is **Seize**. You laid everything out, now ask! What are you trying to accomplish? Ask it! Being the final step, this is the time to present the final call to action.

Remember, each pitch will be different. Some pitches last for over an hour and others last only a few seconds or minutes. It just depends on how much time you are given or how much time you need. That is why you need to craft your pitches accordingly. Practice, practice, and more practice.

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BeNeca Ward



BeNeca Ward is a Brand & Leadership Development Expert, Executive Advisor, International Speaker, and Author recognized by the White House in 2010 for her leadership abilities. As an executive advisor and coach, she's called upon to help Fortune 100/500 companies, executives, entrepreneurs, professionals, athletes, and young adults develop and take their brands, partnerships, and

leadership to their next level.

She's been a featured speaker for the United State of Women Conference, National Football League (NFL) Players Association, 40th Annual California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce Convention, CA Board of Equalization's Connecting Women to Power Conference and more. She served as an instructor at the Center for Executive Development at UC San Diego's Rady School of Management. Her company Moments of Focus[®], helps clients fully develop their company and executive brands, business objectives, growth strategies, executive presence, leadership styles, and bottom-line results. Companies and universities bring their teams through their signature programs to help them develop professional brand identities that stand strong, partner well with their organizations and enhance their visions, values, patterns of thought and execution.

BeNeca also serves as an advisor for young professionals across the US working with organizations like Junior Achievement, California National Guard's Youth Academy and more. Her company helps clients focus on the purpose & positioning of their corporate, small business and professional brands through services, books, & keynote talks.

The POWER of Executive Brand, Leadership & Legacy Development

By BeNeca Ward

Three things that entrepreneurs at every level can invest their time in to enhance the position of their business in the market, their executive positioning in business, and how their industry shifts based on their contributions are:

Executive Brand Development

Leadership Development

Legacy Development

As entrepreneurs we are expected to have executive mindsets that build and lead successful businesses. Two leading measures of that success have to do with development and execution.

It is presumed that entrepreneurs are extremely skilled at using a business development process to grow their business. Many though, do not utilize that same approach for their personal growth and executive development. Being able to run one company may get you keys to an amazing office building. Having a global reputation as a business leader who's built a legacy within their industry will get you invitations to open doors around the world. While there is no standard picture of success, being able to pre-qualify yourself now for future options can be greatly beneficial.

Executive Brand Development

When people are introduced to you as an entrepreneur, it is assumed that you have the capability to build an entire enterprise based on your skill to brand a product and/or service that will make it distinguishable from others on the market.

Some business leaders don't realize that the very first brand they should ever build is their own. Cracking the Rich Code is about tapping into ideas that can enrich your life and allow you to be fulfilled, joyous and content based on the standards that you've set

for yourself. Taking the time to intentionally design what you want your executive brand name to represent within your company, industry and the world in general is essential for the success of your career and life's balance. Your brand name is like a bowl of life. Everything you do goes into that bowl and provides "ingredients" for you and others to eat from. The name that you develop for yourself has a story and reputation attached to it that tells people why others are drawn to working with you and why they may be interested in investing into your vision as well. There are millions of people in business. What does your brand name represent that differentiates you from the others?

Investors (banks, venture capitalists, peer to peer lenders, customers etc.) are not just investing in your products and service but also in your company's leadership. Your brand matters. Some people go with the flow of life and do well but when you can take the time to plan the end from the beginning, I guarantee you it will help you make the most out of the middle.

The first step in developing or redeveloping an authentic and balanced executive brand is to acknowledge the truth and values that lie within your personal brand. If you don't want to get tired of who you are in your day-to-day business, make sure that who you are in business, is who you really are. If you are purpose driven, trustworthy, passionate, community centered, decisive etc. in your everyday life, don't bottle those traits and put them to the side. Incorporate them into your executive presence and a company culture that you enjoy being a part of. Branding is not about becoming who other people want you to be. It is about becoming the very best you can be based on who you actually are, areas that you would like to grow in, what you believe your mission in life is and how you envision carrying that mission out to serve others.

People often say that in business it's all about who you know. However, it is really about who knows you because when people are clear on who you are and excited about what you stand for, they will "put you in their pockets" and continuously pull you out to advertise your greatness to their networks every time a conversation comes up in connection with your brand name or industry. They will often

have a desire to work with you, follow your lead and help you build the vision of your legacy forward.

You know you have a successful executive brand when someone halfway around the world can say, “there’s a person in *your city* who...” It’s our responsibility to prefill the... with what we want to be known for based on our plans, actions, and words.

Executive brand development is based on the same eight core principles used when branding a business, focusing on the:

Product/Mission:

Every brand typically has a product, service, or mission. When developing your executive brand your mission becomes your product. For example, my mission is to help people multiply their gifts by developing their purpose into their positioning in business. As the leader of your company, what is your mission and how are both your company and the people you bring on board an extension of that mission?

Vision:

How do you foresee carrying out your mission at a high level? What is the furthest you want to expand the business surrounding your mission? Some companies serve best as a mom-and-pop small business and others as a global enterprise. What is your vision? Often times we have to ask ourselves if we are strong enough to carry what we’re building or if we’ll need strategic partners. What strategic partners might be most beneficial for your very next step?

Identity:

How do you want your executive brand to be identified in the market? What do you want people to know, feel and say about you in general, your leadership, mission, values and working with you as a partner and/or employee? What does your name truly represent in a room when spoken of in your absence? What does your executive presence say when you walk into a room? Some people decide that they are going to be approachable, cheerful, and open when they walk in the door, but all about business when they sit down at the table. You get to decide how you want to be identified.

Quality:

We've all seen companies that sell their products for one dollar per unit. Many make millions of dollars because millions of customers buy their products just once. Because the quality is poor, they don't get repeat business. Some company leaders, however, don't mind because their goal was never to be a long-standing company. Rather, their intent was to make a quick buck and move on to something else. A great brand is intentional, consistent and enhances the market it's in for however long it stands. When you are known for being an asset that contributes at a high level, you will find yourself being invited to many places that align with your vision. What level of quality will people say that you bring to every table you're invited to?

Benefits:

What benefits do you personally gain from what you do? We all know that work is hard and often gets harder along the way so it's imperative to recognize what serves as gasoline in our tank when we feel as though we're running on empty. For some it's the benefit of watching people's lives change in real time. For others it's the financial gain. Some do it for the notoriety and others to change the world. The point is that you have to be clear on your incentives for the times when you need a boost.

Value:

What values do you add to everything you contribute to as a leader? What does your team know that you value as a leader and person in general? Your values as a leader in your business (i.e., integrity, respect, honesty, innovation, transparency, communication etc.) will contribute to the foundation of your company culture and what others will expect that you will expect from them and what they should expect from you.

Positioning:

At the highest level you choose to serve in, how do you ultimately want to be positioned in the market? As an entrepreneur, will you be an industry thought leader, a motivator, a board or committee member or a community leader? Where you want to be positioned

is where you will find yourself planted as a volunteer, serving, leading etc.

Marketing:

For an executive, marketing is all about developing authentic, non-robotic, 30-second soundbites that serve as quick promotional commercials for those who are interested and want to know more about you. They are always tailored to the audience, or person that you're speaking to at the time. Many brilliant executives don't do interviews because they don't have media training and/or have not taken the time to develop what they should say. For instance, how would you answer the following standard questions:

How do you describe your position in your industry?

Tell me about your business, its intent and its current status.

Based on your experiences, why are you the best fit to take your company to the next level to become an industry standard?

What part of your personal journey do you usually use in conversation as a soundbite to validate your expertise?

What brand statement do you use to highlight the benefits of your company in the market?

Leadership Development

The one person we will always be responsible for leading is ourselves. Therefore, we have to make sure that as the world is continuously changing, we are continuously researching, learning, and developing. It's not enough to only know what's happening in our companies, industries, or countries. As entrepreneurs we have to stay up on the trends around the world. Successful brands spend time and money on (R&D) Research and Development to help them lead in their industries. As successful entrepreneurs, we have to do the same. Three quick ways to grow as leaders are:

Networking and learning through conferences, mastermind groups, courses, organizations, and/or events.

Schedule (R&D) Research and Development days spent with other entrepreneurs and world leaders to stay abreast of how what's changing in the world can change our businesses.

Develop at least one business contact in countries that highly influence or are influenced by our work.

Leadership Assessment: 10 Traits of an Executive Leader

We all have moments when it's necessary to step back and evaluate ourselves in the positions/roles that we're serving in. We have to make sure that we are maintaining at the level of the goals that we set. There are many leadership traits to pull from. The following are a standard ten that I always recommend that every entrepreneur consider when building their executive brands.

Purposeful: Stands, plans, and moves on purpose. Extremely intentional and determined to have an impact through their work.

Driven: Has an internal drive that doesn't stop until it reaches the intended destination.

Dedicated: Is dedicated to the outlined mission and their team.

Visionary: Has a clear vision for where their company is heading over the next ten years while preparing for the possibilities of change.

Focused: Understands what motivates their focus and causes distractions.

Balanced: Sets goals and boundaries at work and home to stay balanced.

Educated: Comes to the table with a level of knowledge that benefits the team, while continuously seeking information to propel their company forward.

Confident: Has the ability to assess and be certain about their moves. Leads with a level of confidence that gives their teams, partners, clients, and customers a sense of security.

Leadership: Embodies the necessary leadership skills to lead by example.

Experienced: Has the experience to navigate the company through unforeseen circumstances.

“Are you developing leaders or creating followers?”

As a leader, we have a responsibility to develop up and coming leaders for their benefit, the benefit of our companies/organizations and our industries in general. We need to transfer as much knowledge as possible, especially with those who are aligned with our industry. Most entrepreneurs got into business to make a difference, but we cannot do it by ourselves. Developing leaders has a great deal to do with being able to identify the talent that we need to add to our team, the uniqueness of the talent that we have and what our company requires of its leadership. When we only create people who follow us, they will never be able to truly lead on their own.

Legacy Development

Short and sweet: *“If you’re not leaving a legacy, you’re just leaving.”* Why work on something that does not have the ability to grow? Why grow something that doesn’t have the ability to feed others?

Leaving a legacy in business is essential. It is the intentional way to make sure that other people across the world will inherit and have access to what you have created e.g., innovative products, systems, thoughts etc. Although some things cannot be shared until they are trademarked; in order to build a legacy, you have to be willing to share information of how you did what you’ve done for the greater good of others.

5 Quick Ways to Start:

Take note of the systems that you have created.

Continue to develop your creations and thoughts.

Speak to others about their benefits and why they should consider utilizing what you’ve developed.

Find organizations that can begin to use what you’ve built.

Mentor others to teach them what you've learned and gained in your experience.

As you continue to excel, always remember the power that Executive Brand, Leadership & Legacy Development can have on your journey.

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Laura DeLong



Laura DeLong is an extraordinary individual who has defied all odds to become a beacon of inspiration and success. Her journey began at a tender age, when she was faced with the daunting challenge of being a 16-year-old mother. Despite the adversities that life presented, Laura's unwavering determination and indomitable spirit propelled her towards greatness.

As a high school dropout, she was expected to be a failure, but she refused to let her circumstances define her. She embraced every obstacle as an opportunity to learn, grow, and pave her own way. Driven by an unyielding desire to create a better future for herself and her child, she embarked on an arduous journey of self-discovery and self-improvement.

Laura's work ethic eventually led her to the world of real estate. With a burning passion for the industry and determined to make a mark, she dove headfirst into the complexities of the market. Guided by her innate entrepreneurial spirit, Laura rose above the ranks and established herself as the proud owner of a thriving real estate brokerage.

However, Laura's success goes beyond her professional achievements. She has an internal compass that drives her to include people in the journey. For Laura, the more people that join in the success, the better. She gets great joy and pleasure from her own success, yet she gets true fulfillment from helping others succeed. Laura's heart is as big as her ambition.

Laura's story is a testament to the extraordinary strength of the human spirit and the boundless potential that lies within each of us. Through her inspiring story, Laura radiates hope, encouraging others to never surrender to adversity but instead, conquer it with boundless strength.

The Journey: Adapt and Overcome

By Laura DeLong

I am Joshua, and am honored to introduce my mother, Laura. I could write an entire book from a son's perspective but that's a story for another day. I am proud and grateful that my mom was able to teach the values she did while battling her own trials. She instilled in us the value of integrity, persistence and taking responsibility for our actions. My mom holds an immense love for her family and maintains high expectations.

She is an amazing woman and has shown that in a way most can't comprehend including loving a son who struggles with the disease of addiction. My mother isn't just a rarity; she is a once-in-a-lifetime. I wish for everyone to have the privilege of knowing someone like her, or even better, to emulate her remarkable character. The words of others often carry more weight than our self-expression. Deb Malewski, a respected figure in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, nominated my mother for the Ted Oliver Award. The award is named in honor of a volunteer firefighter who lost his life serving our community. The Ted Oliver Award recognizes an individual who has made outstanding contributions to our community. I've included an excerpt from Deb's nomination of Laura.

Laura grew up in Eaton Rapids and her youth was no bed of roses. She is someone who learns from and then shines through adversity. Now her mission is to make the world a better place.

Laura has a reputation for generosity and compassion. She sponsors food pantries, hosts fundraisers, and supports local businesses. Often, her efforts are anonymous because for Laura it's not about attention or a handout. It's about giving people a hand up.

I've never known anyone more giving, compassionate, and concerned about others than Laura DeLong. Her heart is always open--"What can I do to help?" is her mantra. She truly "lights up a room" and makes everyone feel like her closest friend. Laura's exceptional life has left an indelible mark on the Eaton Rapids Community.

The Journey: Adapt and Overcome

Inspired by Maurice, the 11-year-old who ignited my passion for sharing my life story by asking a simple yet profound question, "How did you build your business?"

Marines are trained to adapt and overcome all obstacles in all situations. They possess the willingness and the determination to fight and to keep fighting until victory is assured.

I believe that each of us possesses the ability to adapt and overcome. This is my story.

From the beginning, I struggled with insecurity and discomfort. Childhood memories are scarce, yet they are predominantly tinged with sadness. Throughout those tender years, I carried a profound sense of feeling unloved. I struggled with the reality that I didn't fit in. Reflecting on my past evokes heartache from the struggles my younger self endured.

Molested as a young girl, I quickly lost my sense of self. Any dream I had for myself evaporated with my innocence. The sexual abuse continued into my teenage years and deepened my insecurities, lack of self-worth, and brokenness. I felt for my abuse, almost like I "deserved" it. The weight of constantly feeling dirty, ashamed, scared, vulnerable, and unsafe was substantial.

Life was hard, but I held onto the times I had with the Smith family. They took a seven-year-old girl that was broken, insecure and damaged into their hearts. They loved me and showed me a better way. Looking back, it's evident that their influence made an incredible impact on the goals I would create for myself. Mr. Smith took the time to sit at the dining room table and teach me math, he pointed out strengths I didn't recognize in myself, and unknowingly played a major role in shaping the person I have become. Mrs. Smith showed me how much fun a family could have and encouraged us to implement our ideas. The Smiths taught me skills and introduced me to a life full of adventures along with the comfort that comes from a loving family. Because of the Smith's generosity and love, I was inspired to provide my kids with all the things I never had. I wanted my kids to experience lots of

laughter and joy. But most importantly, unconditional love. The Smiths are a huge reason that I have been able to realize my dreams of a long-lasting, loving marriage, two children, a waterfront home and the ability to travel. It was the little things that made a big difference.

At the age of 10, I was already pulling weeds on a muck farm and started working at PiiLani's restaurant after school where my mom was employed. Life may have been hard, but my strong work ethic would eventually give us a better life.

At 15, I discovered that my dad, the only person from whom I felt unconditional love, wasn't my biological father. This left me feeling shocked, hurt, betrayed, and took away the little sense of security I had developed. I went into a downward spiral, rejected potentially healthy relationships, and instead chose toxic partners. Partners who subjected me to physical, emotional, and mental abuse. I began to dabble with drugs and dropped out of school. During that period, the prospect of a brighter future seemed out of reach.

However, the turning point came when I was being sexually abused in the presence of my toddler. Determined to protect him, I found the strength to call the police, and finally seek an end to the madness. Unfortunately, the deputy said, "they will chew you up and spit you out in court" and that I should "let it go". So, I did. But I didn't give up. I was finally at a place where I knew we both deserved better, and I resolved to do what it would take to make that happen. As time passed, I took on cleaning jobs to support myself and my young child and was blessed to meet other great families that had a positive impact on my life.

Eventually, one of the families I worked for offered us shelter. The Langes offered us a hand up. With their guidance, in just three short months, I saved money and managed to get our own place. That was the beginning of creating a better life for us. Juggling a full-time job plus cleaning six houses on weekends was tough. But my determination paid off, and I was so proud to finally be able to support my son without needing state assistance.

Along my journey, various individuals planted seeds of greatness in my life. They believed in me, encouraged me, and set high standards

for me, which gradually led to personal growth and success. As the years went on, of course there were struggles and challenges, but I remained strong. I realized that success in the home was the key to building strong, emotionally healthy children. I chose to leave the corporate life in favor of embracing the most significant role: being a mother.

Several years later, ironically, despite my lack of knowledge in the field, the family that once took me in offered me a job at their real estate brokerage. I developed a passion for real estate, recognizing that I could make a positive impact on people's lives through this profession.

It wasn't until I was 50 that I would finally find my biological father. It was after a long, heartbreaking, emotional, miserable rollercoaster ride. And then, just two short months after we met, he passed away a few days before his 90th birthday. He was so incredibly proud and grateful that I found him. Although there isn't time to tell it here, it was such a beautiful story, and he and I agreed it should be a movie. The power of DNA is an incredible thing and it's astonishing how much people can be alike although they never met. I'm eternally grateful and feel much more complete after finding the missing piece to this puzzle that is my life.

It's been over 30 years, but the scars of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse persist. I have made a choice, though. I refuse to let the past, and my scars define me. I'm determined to live a productive and happy life. I have actively sought self-improvement through therapy, reading, seminars, and learning from admirable individuals.

I learned to view each person and situation as a lesson. I learned who I wanted to be and what characteristics I didn't like. I believe this made me kinder, more patient, more relatable and understanding.

I attribute the success of my business to the invaluable life lessons that have steered me over the years, which is now the standard for my team:

- Embrace the belief that there is always a better way. When your heart tells you to pursue it, don't accept "no" for an answer.
- Surround yourself with positivity and protect your vibe by keeping toxic people at a distance. Surrounding yourself with the right people can make a significant difference in your journey.
- Learn the power of listening. God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason—use them proportionately to understand others. Invest time in understanding people, as it will allow you to better serve them and meet their needs effectively.
- Building a successful business requires patience. It takes time, dedication, and persistence. Stay committed to your vision and give it the time and energy it needs to flourish.
- Understand that people come into your life for various reasons—some for a specific purpose, others for a certain period, and a few for a lifetime. Embrace these different connections and learn from each one.
- Trust in the power of visualization. Things you add to your vision board can manifest unexpectedly, so keep your intentions clear and focused.
- Life will throw distractions your way, but maintaining focus is crucial to achieving your goals. Stay determined and steadfast in your pursuits.
- Acknowledge and swiftly correct your mistakes. They are opportunities for growth and improvement.
- Recognize that not everyone will support or believe in your journey. Stay true to yourself and your vision, even if others doubt you.
- Avoid wasting energy trying to change people. Accept them for who they are and invest your energy in nurturing positive relationships.
- Remember the saying "Ducks Quack and Eagles Soar." Stay grounded and humble while aiming for greatness and soaring to new heights.

- Be kind but stand firm when necessary. Demonstrating strength doesn't require being harsh or aggressive.
- Be generous and giving, but also set boundaries to avoid being taken advantage of. Find a balance between helping others and taking care of yourself.
- Focus on serving others, and success and prosperity will naturally follow.
- Be strong and confident, but never pushy or abrasive. Treat others with respect and empathy.
- Balancing the demands of caring for others while maintaining your own health is vital.
- Offer an exceptional level of value that sets you apart from the rest. Aim not only to meet expectations but to consistently exceed them, leaving a lasting and positive impact on those you engage with. This entails a commitment to continuous improvement, innovation, and going the extra mile in every interaction.
- Serve clients equally, regardless of background, status, or circumstances. Approach each person with an open heart and a genuine desire to meet their needs and contribute positively to their lives.

These lessons have been instrumental in shaping my business success, and I continue to apply them every day to maintain growth and fulfillment in both my professional and personal life.

Today I have achieved many of the dreams I had as a child – a loving husband, two children, several waterfront homes, and even additional blessings in the form of two bonus daughters and now eight awesome grandchildren. But it's the memories and the family I've built that truly make me feel rich.

In the face of numerous challenges, I have defied the odds as a high school dropout and teenage mother. Through unwavering determination and perseverance, I transformed my life and grew my little boutique brokerage to \$50 million in sales. However, my accomplishments don't end there. I use this platform as an opportunity to give back to my community, making it my mission

to help others and pay it forward. My journey is a testament to the power of resilience, the power of support, and the impact one individual can have on the lives of those around them.

My life's path has been shaped by hard work and the belief that no matter what life throws at me; I WILL overcome it. I find comfort and joy in knowing that I am more than the sum of my past traumas – I am a survivor, a loving parent and a successful, fulfilled/happy person who continues to strive for personal growth and a positive impact on others.

In life, we are all bound to face tough challenges that require us to summon our inner strength and resilience. As you navigate through your own difficulties, I sincerely pray that you find the determination to endure and strive for the life you truly deserve. May you stand firm in the face of adversity and emerge victorious, embracing the opportunities that lie ahead. You may have to stretch to find it, but always remember, you possess the power to conquer whatever obstacles may come your way.

Remember, adapt, and overcome.

Much love,

Laura

I thank God for His outpouring of blessings and would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the incredible individuals who have profoundly impacted my life:

My husband, an unwavering pillar of support, showers me with unconditional love during the most challenging moments and stands by my side through every trial and triumph.

To my sons, who have given me purpose and strength, inspiring me to become the best version of myself, and for filling my life with immeasurable joy, and for giving us the greatest gift, our grandchildren.

To my mom, I want to express my gratitude for the gift of life you've given me, and for all the efforts you've poured into shaping the person I've become today.

Although he is no longer with us, I'll be eternally grateful for my dad who made me feel like the most lovable person in the world.

To my father who gifted me with DNA that inspired me with entrepreneurial spirit and the brains to implement my ideas.

To Jeanne, my father's caretaker, who, despite my brother's request to keep them hidden, decided to share my letter and photos with him. It's because of you that we connected, and I will always be grateful for that.

Dean Nixon from Turning Leaf Seminars. Dean is not just my life coach but also one of my best friends. Thanks a million for helping me through the tough times, sharing laughs when I needed them most, and expertly guiding me as I've grown and learned how to navigate my crazy life.

The Smith family, who introduced me to a different way of living. I must specifically thank Monique for showing me where to buy my lunch token and becoming my best friend for many years.

Sue Yelvington who cared enough to persistently encourage me to pursue my GED, pushing me towards a brighter future.

The Langes, for providing a nurturing home for both me and my son when we needed support.

Cheri Kenyon, whose impactful words made me realize that I possess all the inherent qualities necessary for success.

Penny Howard, my steadfast and reliable friend who never hesitated to lend a helping hand, even in the darkest hours of the night.

Kimber Jackson, my beloved best friend and cousin, the sister I never had, who has listened to and supported me throughout countless hours of my life's journey.

I am immensely grateful to each of my clients, agents, and employees, whose dedication and hard work have been instrumental in shaping DeLong & Co. Real Estate into what it stands for today.

Thank you to Teresa for cleaning my house and nudging me to finish my writing.

I'm incredibly grateful to Pastor Jim and my other eloquent friends for their dedicated effort in editing my thoughts, correcting grammar, and fixing spelling errors to make my writing more legible.

To all my other friends, your love and support have been invaluable, providing comfort and companionship along my journey.

Even to the haters, I owe a peculiar debt of gratitude. Your criticism and negativity have served as a powerful motivator, propelling me to work even harder and prove my resilience, as well as showing me who I never wanted to be.

With a heart full of appreciation, I recognize and cherish the profound impact each of you has had on my life's journey. Your presence has made all the difference, and I am forever grateful.

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Camella McIntosh



Camella is a certified Integral (whole person) Coach and Human Resources Leader. Integral Coaching is a holistic approach, taking into account the entire being as an individual as well as the social and cultural context in which they have lived and experienced the world. Camella specializes in working with others to live authentically - encompassing leadership presence and empathy, relationships, personal branding, and career-life integration. She also has Meditation Certification and Mindfulness training and facilitates guided meditations and workshops. She is certified in Katherine Woodward Thomas' Relationship coaching, "Calling In The One" and "Conscious Uncoupling" which focus on understanding patterns in relationships in order to heal, create new ways of being, and move toward a desired future and healthy loving relationships. Camella is passionate about helping people create and embody a life they love and are longing to have. She uses self-observation, reflection, mindfulness, and somatic practices to open insights and bring forth new possibilities for self in all facets of life and work. Camella enjoys partnering with clients in connecting to more joy, presence, personal power and passion.

Exploring Anxiety's Gifts

By Camella McIntosh

There is much to be anxious about in the world, with wars, climate change, social injustice, poverty, crime, the economy, and so many other topics of concern we hear about and read about every day. In addition to all the ongoing chaos and change, we all have personal challenges. We have hopes and fears of our own to try and cope with, and learn from, while we strive to succeed and be happy within our lives. Leaders from various walks of life are faced with unrelenting change and uncertainty in navigating decisions and priorities, while trying to stay present for those who work with them. Most leaders are challenged with constant pressure, long hours, and the frenetic pace of their daily work. This relentless pressure impacts their lives physically, mentally, and emotionally.

For those living with chronic anxiety, it can feel in the body and mind like a storm constantly brewing, a restless unease affecting everything in one's life to some degree- from day to day living and functioning to relationships and careers. More and more we hear and read about the mental health crisis around the world, with many people feeling anxiety has been exacerbated by the pandemic. However, there is also an increasing awareness of the importance of recognizing and prioritizing mental health alongside our physical health. This heightened awareness, public acknowledgment and the accepted vulnerability provides an opportunity to expand the conversation about anxiety.

I have lived with, and suffered from, anxiety much of my life. When my anxiety and frequent full blown panic attacks were at an all-time peak in my life, I believed having an anxiety disorder was something to hide from others. I was hiding it even though I was convinced much of the time I was near dying or going insane. Even when I so desperately needed to ask for support, I was hiding. Anxiety was my source of shame; I perceived it as a weakness. I did not share it with friends as it was so difficult to explain what was happening to me. I would never want to let employers know, or for them to find out, such a career-limiting condition.

Anxiety's looming and lingering presence can be exhausting. Every day becomes a battle, something to wrestle and struggle with, hoping to overcome this debilitating pressure. In our human coping, we may turn to many ways of escape. As the singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell says, "Pills and powders to get us through this passion play." Some use alcohol and drugs to try and ease the pressure. Others seek to avoid anything or anywhere that may trigger an anxiety or panic attack.

Those in more public positions, as within the fishbowl of leadership, sometimes exhibit their stress and anxiety in destructive patterns. It may be micromanagement, losing their temper, dismissing or shutting others down, or distancing themselves, to name a few negative behaviors. These defensive, emotional or stress induced responses can have a negative effect on the leader's teams, and lead to lack of trust from the teams they lead. Navigating these responses can lead to personal burnout, and other health challenges, for the leader.

With some leaders and other coaching clients, I notice their mental gifts and energies take up a great portion of their way of being, and become their way of interacting with themselves, others, and the world. They may end up disconnected from their emotions, or physical needs. In these scenarios they often recognize something is not working well but are unaware of how to change and reach their potential.

The experience of anxiety in the body can manifest so differently, depending upon a myriad of nuances. An individual's particular somatic makeup and personality are influencers. There is ongoing evolving and shifting within a person, depending on situations and experiences. Some people have specific anxieties they can pinpoint and anticipate, such as social anxiety at parties, or in crowds. Others have more generalized anxiety, which is not as easy to define, or pinpoint. Anxiety can arise and loom over one, impacting day to day life and relationships. Anticipation of, and the avoidance of anxiety, steals joy and peace of mind.

Many of us have a variety of anxiety patterns. Anxiety can be a mild unease or may be so profound it dictates aspects of a person's

lifestyle and presides over choices, consciously or subconsciously. It causes missed opportunities and limits potential for success. These blind spots in professional and personal relationships can limit the richness of life's experiences overall.

There is a lot of information about anxiety; it is written and talked about more openly than ever before. The old stigmas associated with talking about mental illnesses, and anxiety in particular, have lessened. With this softening of perception, more compassion has emerged when exploring anxiety. However, for many people, a goal has remained to better manage, to eliminate, or to release anxiety, ultimately to somehow be rid of it. Seeing anxiety as a force to fight against often hinders progress. From what I have observed, and for many leaders I work with, there is a continuing need to balance being authentic and vulnerable, alongside the need and desire to show strength and be in control.

It is an understandable desire to conquer anxiety once and for all, to rise above the tyranny of haunting thoughts and discomfort, or to simply eliminate the exhausting struggle of navigating life through a frayed nervous system and fatigued adrenals.

But what if we could also learn to understand our unique patterns of and manifestations of anxiety? Even if we do not befriend it, we may begin to see its presence more fully as a teacher. We develop the ability to learn from anxiety patterns and for them to provide a perspective from which we see ourselves more deeply, rather than dreading, avoiding, and fighting against a part of our very nature?

A personal recent experience in my yoga practice is a micro story within my life's journey with anxiety, of recognizing that this lifelong companion has been and can be my teacher. When I started practicing yoga in studio again after the pandemic shutdowns, the heat in the small studios, often with many sweaty bodies in close proximity, and little air circulation, was difficult for me physically. I would often feel nauseous and sometimes light-headed, or headachy, which would unsurprisingly cause me plenty of anxiety. I started noticing I was subtly battling the heat and anxiety, and again treating it as something to overcome and somehow master. When I allow myself to relax into the heat, and invite the anxiety to

co-exist, my body can respond and reveal what I need in my practice.

I have found when I turn toward and listen intuitively to my anxiety, rather than pushing it away, or working only to manage it, I discover what I need to be healthier, and to honor and cultivate what I need for greater balance and wellbeing in my life. It helps me better understand what I need, not only in the moment, but also in the long term in my life path, choices, direction, and decisions. It is not always easy, and I have also found it is an ongoing practice, to allow the discomfort a place, without bypassing its teachings and truths.

When I begin coaching work with leaders or other clients experiencing underlying anxieties, and imbalances, I start with some basic queries. I do this even if they are very aware of how anxiety is affecting them, and its way of showing up in their work, and in their lives. I often start with exploring how they perceive themselves in relation to themselves, their work, their relationships, families and their overall world view. For example, at basic needs levels I am curious to know if they are sleeping enough, eating healthily and regularly, getting some exercise, and being outside with nature? Are they spending time with family and friends? Although it may sound overly simple, it is easy to neglect aspects of our needs, especially in times of pressure, stress, or the busy daily pace.

We also explore stressors in life and work, and how the client is balancing demands on their time. How much time are they taking for themselves? How might they be spending that time? For example, are there worries and pressures in their lives; are they feeling overwhelmed? Are they lonely? Are they feeling out of alignment with relationships and emotional needs? Are there obligations or agreements which no longer align with personal integrity and values?

As we unpack the more holistic view of the client's life and work experiences, as well as their connection to their physical wellbeing, and other aspects of their lives and relationships within, we can uncover a deeper understanding of the level of awareness and connection to the somatic/body. It becomes possible to explore the patterns of thought and behavior, and the impact of all within the

mind and body lived experience where the deeper sources of anxiety may reside.

A disclaimer – I am not a therapist or counselor and am not approaching this work in that capacity. Sometimes clients who seek coaching may need more support through a particularly difficult life circumstance. Professional help may be the best choice, whether it be prescription medication, counseling, naturopathic support or other professional supportive treatments. They all have a rightful place in our lives to call upon when needed. I also have found for myself and others that it is helpful to have other supportive resources. There are many incredibly effective companion tools and practices such as tapping, yoga, sound healing and massage, to name a few, which I may also share with my coaching clients.

Initially, many clients find exploring their anxiety in both thoughts and in the body to be a difficult or painful task. As a key starting place, we see if we can find small ways to slow things down just a little. I ask my clients to cultivate a bit of time and space during each day just for themselves, and to intentionally create small habits of checking in with the whole self: mind, body, feelings and emotions. In creating mindful space to reflect, we can begin to further our inquiries, uncovering patterns of thoughts and habits. We begin to get a better understanding of the tone of the inner critic and anxious thoughts and discover where a client may have areas of disconnect or dissonance in the body and mind.

I would like to share a few practices I find helpful for my coaching clients. As you try them, I encourage your exploration in tuning in further to your body and emotional landscape, and allow the anxiety you may feel, and emotions that come up for you within the practices, to be a guide, a truth teller for your unique self, and the ultimate barometer for your self-care.

Breathe:

Find yourself a comfortable position, seated, if possible, but it can be lying down on your back. Sometimes it is recommended to practice breath work, seated comfortably, especially if you tend to fall asleep when you lay down. You may also either keep your eyes open, softening your gaze by allowing your eyes to partially close,

or keeping your eyes completely closed. You might try both to see what works best for you.

Start your internal inquiry by noticing your breathing just as it is, without changing anything. Take notice of the texture and rhythm. For example, Is the breath shallow or deep? Is it smooth, or choppy? Does it feel strained, or does it flow easily?

Practice feeling your breath first as it moves in and out of your lungs, and as you breathe a little more deeply, notice the rise and fall of your chest and belly. As you continue to breathe, try to slow the pace of your breathing. Inhale deeply and follow the intake of breath into your whole body, all the way through to your feet. During this exercise, try exploring and scanning along the way for tightness, holding or pain. Allow yourself to slowly feel into your whole body, noticing if you have areas of your body you cannot sense into as easily (you can practice connecting to different parts of yourself more fully over time). Breathe into each part of your body one part at a time, inviting a relaxing and softening of each body part, and letting go of any tension. Exhale fully and slowly and follow the exhalation from your feet up through your entire body, releasing anything you wish to release that does not serve you.

Breathe this way as long as you like, (you might start with 5 minutes). As you finish, take note of anything significant, such as emotions or insights, that arose during this practice.

Reflection:

A daily practice of quiet reflection and journaling can be helpful. The journal can become a practice for you to explore your inner wisdom and to become more familiar with the nuances of your particular patterns of thought. Often, we may become more aware of patterns of habitual focus (e.g., work, family concerns, relationship challenges, finances).

Begin by sitting quietly and taking a few deep and cleansing breaths. You may find it helpful to close your eyes.

When you feel ready to begin writing, open your eyes, ask yourself these questions and record your responses.

How am I feeling right now?... And what else am I feeling?... And what else is here?... And what else?

Keep asking yourself what you are feeling until you have the sense you are complete in your inquiry for the moment.

Notice as you write if you are censoring yourself, intentionally or not. Feelings are often multi-layered and complex. There may be history, trauma or personal stories adding to the layers of feeling and emotions. Sometimes we subconsciously shut ourselves down at a certain level, or at some point in our inquiry. If you are, gently ask yourself to let go and allow what needs to be revealed.

Next ask:

Where in my body am I most aware of any emotions and feelings arising, and what is the body sensation (e.g., a tightening in the chest or belly, a constriction in the throat, lightness in the head, etc.)?

What might these feelings be telling me, requesting of me?

Is there something I want or need?

Is there something I might do to honor my feelings and emotions at this time?

It is helpful to keep track of this inquiry over a period of time, such as a few weeks or months, and observe which may arise most frequently, or find new insights revealed.

If you can get outside:

I personally love, and recommend to my clients, finding some time (even a few minutes) in nature daily. It may encourage a deeper inward journey of exploring thoughts and feelings. It is also a healing and centering practice, as it invites a sensory experience, which can be soothing for anxiety. You do not need to be in the woods, at a beach, or even out of a city or neighborhood to experience the benefits. You might choose to walk to a local park, or sit outside in the yard or garden, or under a tree. If you wish, take a journal with you.

As you walk or sit outside, notice the sounds around you, both close in, and further away. Feel the air on your skin. Feel the warmth of the sun, or the chill in the air. Is there a breeze? Look around you and notice the colors and varieties of clouds in the sky, grasses and flowers, bushes and trees. Take some deep breaths and notice what you smell. Feel your lungs expanding and then slowly breathe out each breath, emptying fully.

You might enjoy taking off your shoes to feel the grass or earth under your bare feet. Feel the earth supporting and holding you, with gravity grounding you. Notice the textures and temperature of the ground as you wiggle and stretch your toes.

Allow yourself a few minutes to reconnect with the Earth, and be a part of nature around you, before returning to your day's agenda.

If anything arises in your thoughts and feelings while you are out in nature, you may wish to take a few minutes to journal either there, or when you return indoors. You may use the above journaling practice, or just simply journal whatever is coming up for you.

I invite you to try one or two of these practices regularly. Let your anxiety be one of your teachers and allow it to help you focus on what may need to shift or change in your life, as well as true self-care and compassion. You may open to more clarity in your experiences, your relationships, and your path forward, so you may live more fully, and more authentically, toward your goals and fulfillment in life.

I have found in working with my own anxiety over the years that every exercise or reflection is not always profound or leading to something important. However, over time these, and other practices, may help you to understand and become more present to your patterns and honor your needs more fully. The more I listen to the subtle messages living below the discomfort of anxious thoughts and body, and allow them to share my truths with me, the more I know myself and have greater capacity to make choices that honor my needs and my life's purpose.

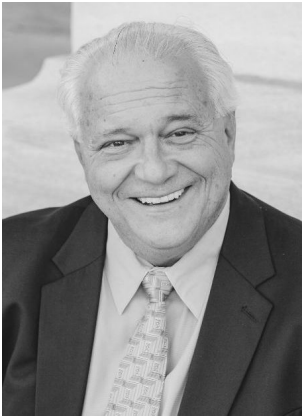
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Allen Costellow



Allen's first introduction to personal development was as an 18-year-old insurance salesman for Combined Insurance Company. The company promoted two books that changed his life. The first was W. Clement Stone's "The success system that never fails" and Napoleon Hills classic "Think and Grow Rich". Prior to these books Allen had never experienced any type of self-help literature. Over the past 40 years, his library has grown to well over 200 books from Jim Britt, Robert Kiyosaki, and many others. Success leaves clues is one of his favorite sayings. Without the breadcrumbs left by others Allen realizes he may have never found the success he was looking for.

Allen lives in Bowling Green Ky with his wife Glenda. He has five children, seven grandchildren, and a Weimaraner named Clementine! Allen and Glenda live on a small farm in a home Glenda designed. They love to travel and spend several long weekends each year in their motor coach and several weeks in either the mountains or at the beach. After a health scare in 2017, Allen left the corporate world and launched his own firm. Today Allen runs his own Financial Planning organization, Insurance Marketing Organization and Registered Investment Advisory firm with the help of his team and family members. Retirement is not yet on his radar, but slowing down might be in his future!

The Secret Ingredient to Building a Successful Business

By Allen Costellow

To undertake a chapter in this book with a title like I have chosen is at best presumptuous, but I plan to give credit throughout for all the many people, books, mentors, circumstances, and losses that brought me to the conclusion that this is what I wanted to share. I recognize as Solomon did four thousand years ago, that there is nothing new under the sun, but innovative ideas are constructed from the experience and challenges faced by each of us as we move through life. Solomon was correct in his assertion, and this is exemplified today in a quote from Tony Robbins “Success leaves clues.” There is no reason to not find a successful path if you are willing to look for the clues left by those who have gone before you. I am a lifetime learner, and I am so thankful for the start I received through the educational professionals who taught me to read, write, do math, and introduced me to the world of knowledge that is available, but I am even more thankful for those who actually DO vs TEACH. In every business I have ever begun, I first sought out guidance from someone who had DONE what I was attempting. It could be said that we all begin with knowledge, but we find success by using that knowledge in a wise way to create success for ourselves and those we love.

Let us begin with the idea that you want to start your own business. Beyond the legal and licensing or tax issues, what is your first step? I believe you must follow the words of Stephen Covey and begin with the end in mind. What will success look like when you achieve it? Will your business allow you to live a work/life balance that provides harmony with yourself and your family? Will your business provide jobs and a future for your employees and be here decades after you are gone? The answer to this comes down to the structure you plan to use. As Robert Kyosaki explains in his book “The Cash Flow Quadrant” you must first decide if you are building an S or a C business. S means self-employed. In other words, are you building a “job” for yourself and your family members.

Building a C business means you are building a business that runs on processes and systems that create results even if you are not present. As Michael Gerber says in his book “The E-Myth,” Most small business owners work *in* their business rather than *on* their business. He asserts that many times technicians have an “entrepreneurial seizure” and decide that since they are good at something, they should start a business doing what it is they are good at! Understanding the technical work of a business does not mean you understand a business that does that technical work. For the sake of this chapter, we are going to assume your desire is to build a C business that you can eventually walk away from and continue to reap the benefits of your work for years to come or sell the business to someone for an upfront cash amount.

So, let us assume you are moving forward with our own business, and you want to build a C type business. What is the next step? According to one source, EOS Worldwide, all businesses need the following key accountabilities at a minimum: Visionary, Integrator, Finance, Sales, Marketing & Operations. Day one of your new venture, it is likely that all these accountabilities belong to you! You must maintain all of these until you can afford to retain key personnel to be responsible for each of these. Over the years, I have begun many businesses with only myself, but the quickest path to success for me was to find a key person to manage operations as soon as possible. I have found that many entrepreneurial types have a head for marketing and sales, but the operational aspects may be a challenge. On the other hand, some people are extremely good at operations and desperately need someone to sell their products. Either way, the sooner you can add staff to fill one or more of these positions, the sooner you can begin to scale and move towards a profitable enterprise. We will come back to the other four positions outlined above in a few paragraphs. For now, let us discuss the number one reason businesses fail.

The biggest reason for failure in a small business is lack of capital or access to capital. Very few businesses are profitable in their first month, which means access to capital is critical until such time as the business generates sufficient cashflow to cover both overhead and fund your lifestyle. Having control of lifestyle expenses is by far one of the most important things to consider. The book of

Proverbs says to FIRST build your barn and then your house. Many businesses make the mistake of destroying a great idea by having too much drain on the business from personal consumption or excessive overhead. I made this mistake years ago. I was a partner in a successful business and was earning an excellent income until the day that we could no longer agree completely, and I left. While I received a buyout, my lifestyle consumed most of what I received before my no compete was up, and I jumped back into competing with the firm I had left without sufficient cash to cover both my lifestyle and the overhead of the new business. This ended badly. I wound up in both personal and business bankruptcy. My recommendation is that you have sufficient cash flow from investments or in the bank to cover your lifestyle needs for at least two years in addition to having sufficient access to cash to cover business shortfall until your modeling shows that you can cash flow. A well-run business should begin to cash flow within the first 12-18 months. You must be your own CFO in the initial stages of the business. Having a handle on future cashflows will make the difference between success and failure. Never judge yourself by the number of times you fail, but rather by the strength with which you get up and try again.

There are numerous resources available to help you through the financial modeling process, but my recommendation is to look into Dave Ramsey's *Entrée Leadership* for details and coaching on HOW to build a plan that has a high degree of potential success. Dave teaches to avoid debt and become self-funded before taking money off the table to spend on yourself. Whatever system or mentor you choose, just be certain that you can live with the possibility of failure. Many times, people jump into an idea and are devastated when it does not work out.

We have discussed cash flow, and this is the first and most important accountability in a business venture. Without cashflow, you have no business! Let us now discuss the other accountabilities you must fulfill or find in your process: Marketing, Sales, Operations. These three go hand in hand. Marketing finds people who raise their hand and show some interest in what you have to offer. Sales has a process to lead potential clients/customers to help them to have an experience that warrants their decision to part with some of their

money to buy your product or service. Operations has the responsibility to fulfill all that your marketing and sales teams have promised to deliver.

Marketing

Before a sales process can begin or the needs of a client/customer met, someone must raise their hand and say, “I’d like to know more.” This is the essence of marketing. Henry Ford once said, “stopping marketing to save money is like stopping your watch to save time.” Without new prospective clients/customers, a business will die. While there are many marketing ideas to fill your sales pipeline with prospects, the critical issue is that it must be done. Over the years I have tried cold calling, telemarketing, radio, TV, direct mail, public seminars, educational workshops, and client events. I have differing levels of success with everything I have tried. The missing link for most is they expect “suspects” (those who raised their hands) to always be “prospects” and that is not always the case. It is important to qualify those you market to as best as you can, but the real gold that comes from marketing is the step many fail to employ called business development. Business development is that missing link between suspects and true prospects. The ability to talk to a prospective client/customer and find out if they are a fit for your offering is the missing link for many. It took me years to figure this out and thus I spent an inordinate amount of time trying to sell my offering to people who either did not qualify or proved to be unprofitable clientele. Establishing this missing link in your marketing will result in higher closing ratios and higher sales per client/customer.

Sales

The key word for any type of sales is to have a process that you use every time you set down with a prospect. This not only shows your prospect that you are a professional, but it also keeps the new prospect engaged and keeps you from having to “fly by the seat of your pants” or produce something witty and new for every encounter. The relative cost of your product or service will determine the length of your process as well as the steps necessary. Some sales processes may take months from the initial meeting until

closing and others may be completed in one setting of only a few moments. Apart from retail sales every successful enterprise has a sales process that begins with some sort of discovery questionnaire and ends with the prospect becoming a client/customer. Over the years I have built systems that facilitated the full process in a few moments to some that took weeks to complete. As I mentioned earlier, the bigger the sale, the longer the process.

Operations

Marketing sometimes makes bold statements to get the attention of your audience and sometimes salespeople can get a little overzealous about what they promise. This is why the operations team **MUST** be coordinated with the marketing and sales process. If the operational team cannot deliver the experience promised by marketing and sales, you will lose clients/customers faster than you can bring them on. That type of situation can put you out of business before you can even get started. As a strong marketing and sales personality, I have always tried to surround myself with the absolute best operational people I could find. These people are not motivated by how many sales you bring in as it just means more work for them! They are motivated by being able to deliver at scale what you have promised without having too many “one off” situations to deal with. The “one off” situations can destroy your operations team’s morale. While customization is important, it must be able to be implemented at a scale to achieve sufficient traction to bring success. Do not ever skimp on what you pay your operations people. While they are usually not motivated by sales, we are all motivated by the security of a consistent paycheck and the ability to have some control over increasing our pay. Give your operational people a way to achieve this and they will make you and your new company look great.

Visionary

If you are reading this and considering jumping into your own business, then you are the visionary of your company. The visionary is the steam that runs the engine, but for long term success the visionary can **NOT** be the engine. He or she must find the right person to hand his ideas off to. Visionaries have lofty ideas and usually have more ideas than time to implement. Having the next

person on your team to give you the necessary feedback about your ideas is critical. EOS refers to this person as the Integrator and we will discuss them next. In my business the integrator keeps a file of my many ideas that she refers to as the “Disney” file! Not to poke fun at me, but rather to give them a home until they can be implemented or abandoned.

Integrator

The integrator in a business may or may not be the founder. Many times, the personalities of these two people are quite different and require different people. In some cases, one person can fill both. I have spent over 40 years searching for that special person who could help me to bring my visionary thoughts to life and I have finally succeeded in finding them. While this may be one of the final positions you bring into your new enterprise, it will be one of the most important. This person will know more about your business than you do eventually. This is the key person that can take your ideas and bring them to life. This is the person who can run things like you would (or better) and allows you to move on to the next idea.

Success leaves clues! I hope you have found a few more in these pages. I want to leave you with the final ingredient required for long-term success. That ingredient is Integrity. Integrity is who you are when the world is not watching. It is keeping your word even when it hurts. It means letting the buck stop with you and making things right when there is a mistake. It means being honest with your family about what taking on the responsibility of a business means as there may be times you have to forgo getting paid to keep your team in place. It will take you years to build a reputation of integrity or you will self-destruct it in a brief time. My sincere hope is that you find it in yourself to summon the courage to take that leap of faith to become an entrepreneur. The world needs what you have, and you need what the process can provide. In the words of Jim Rohn, making a million dollars is a good goal, but not for what you will have, but rather who you will become.

I look forward to hearing of your future successes.

To Contact Allen:

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Luc Cardinal n.c.



Luc Cardinal, NeuroCoach, is a passionate truth explorer and a dynamic speaker who engages audiences on subjects bridging the gap between perception and reality, reaching higher performance and freeing the most authentic version of themselves. He has an amazing ability to take complex research and simplify it, providing grounded practical methods to facilitate the full use of higher human intelligence. He shepherds you through a process that helps you to restore healthy and efficient communications with yourself and others. He demonstrates how well-being gives you better results with less effort, while experiencing an increase in presence and energy.

Luc helps progressive leaders cut through the nonsense about who they think they are or should be — so they can safely deal with their deeper issues, be their most authentic selves, and live the highest truth in their personal and professional lives.

With over 30 years of experience as a coach and speaker, he keeps himself at the leading edge of recent neuroscience discoveries, applying what he finds to business.

He has the following certifications:

- Certified Impact Alumni (Emergence-Derek Rydall)
- Certified HeartMath Coach
- Certified NeuroCoach
- MPO Analyst (psychometric technologies deciphering leadership traits and motivational needs)

Certified 6-Thinking-Hats and Lateral-Thinking Consultant (Edward de Bono)

He also had the pleasure of working with Dr. Stephen Covey back in the early nineties.

Luc's favorite saying is: Be True, Be You!

Be True, Be You!

Reconnect With Your True and Natural Leadership

By Luc Cardinal

In the journey of self-discovery and personal growth, one of the most profound realizations is the recognition of your creative power and the impact it has on your well-being. Often, this power becomes clouded by stress, which hinders your connection with your higher self, your true self. Furthermore, the predominant barrier keeping you from cracking your rich code and becoming the true and natural leader you are is the unconscious belief structure that you have in fact become the person you think you are.

Yet, who you think you are is not who you truly are! This belief network is nothing more than feedback-based data, derived directly from your childhood environment growing up. It arose from exterior stimulus, implying you were too much, or not enough. So you had to adapt and behave in a way that would meet your legitimate and imperative need for security, belonging and credibility. These millions of perfect adjustments molded an intricate set of conditioning that allowed you to make it to adult life in relatively good health. This is the mechanics of how we all unconsciously have built our personalities. We had to survive!

As a result, the way you now think, feel and act is largely determined by your personality's perception of reality; a survival *modus operandi*. When stressed, you cannot help but operate from the past, hoping for a different future. It's a perfect supersystem keeping you alive, but not designed to have you thrive.

If you are not your personality, then, who are you? What is reality? What is truly possible for you? Can recent neuroscience discoveries shed some light on how you can overcome difficulties, by realizing the truth; perceived limitations are the result of your own conditioning, not the truth!

Let's now explore the transformative potential that lies within releasing stress and embracing your true self, the creator of your

personality. By doing so, you can tap into a rich spiritual code that unlocks your creative potential and leads you to a more fulfilled and authentic existence.

Understanding Stress and Its Effects

By Luc Cardinal

Stress, in its various forms, has become an omnipresent aspect of modern life. It manifests in our relationships, work and even in our internal dialogues. The negative effects of stress are well documented, ranging from physical ailments to mental health issues. However, we often overlook its profound impact on our capacity to be true to ourselves. Stress creates a disconnection between mind, body, and soul, preventing us from consciously accessing our creative power.

The brain's response to stress always remains the same. For instance, faced with an external danger, such as finding yourself face to face with a menacing wolf, you will launch a series of survival reactions, resulting in one of three known automatic reactions: fight, flight or freeze. Under stress the cerebral amygdala automatically shuts the top part of the brain off (this is called cortical inhibition). Indeed, its functions are not needed for survival. Who needs inspiration, vision, natural talents or the capacity to learn when facing imminent danger? The problem is that you can't be who you truly are without a strong connection to these areas of the brain!

Nowadays, internal stress permeates our daily life. Even though no real external threat is present, the brain handles the internal tension the same way it would a wolf. This is when your conditioning from the past, or your personality, leads your life.

What Happens When You Identify with your Personality?

A majority of leaders find themselves trapped in their personality, prisoners of a mental projection of "what life should look like". They're unconsciously hiding behind a mask to maintain the image of success. Do you ever act that way? The identification with your personality is a sure way to literally become your conditioning. You no longer are the human being who collected information in order

to express his individuality and experience a healthy relationship with the world. Your creation, your personality, now rules your life! You are convinced that you know who you are, without ever stopping to wonder who or what is generating your automatic thoughts and emotions. Identifying with your conditioned identity leads to the experience of stress, fatigue, lack of power, restlessness or overall apathy.

Yet, you can no longer be bound by your personality and its hunger for security, belonging and credibility. Our society is currently undergoing a major paradigm shift, as we are becoming more conscious. We are realizing we are not our personalities. We are returning to who we truly are; sentient human beings. And the only mode in which we can fully express ourselves is when we are calm, experiencing coherence, with the top of our brain and our hearts being connected. In other words, when our vision, our thoughts, our feelings, our words and actions are aligned, we are experiencing fluidity and magic, having restored all of our powers. This is what my favorite saying is all about, “Be True, Be You”. This is also called “presence”.

According to Eckhart Tolle, *“Presence is the arising of a dimension of consciousness from where you can become aware that there is a voice in the head. That awareness is beyond thinking. It’s a space of consciousness where you can be the observer of your own mind, the awareness behind the thought processes.”*

At this point, your automatic thought processes might tempt you to look for new ways to fix yourself. Instead, consider introducing one of the most powerful tools yet available, so more of your heart’s energy is accessible and soothing to the mind, making you feel better. You can train yourself to become the natural leader you are by practicing a technique called Heart Coherence. Let’s now find out how it works, beginning with what neuroscience calls the coherence of the brains!

This is not common knowledge; nevertheless, recent discoveries confirmed what was known for millennia. The human body holds three brains: one in the head, one in the chest, and lastly, one in the gut. While each one is responsible for countless functions, we will

focus on the ones pertaining to our purpose, which is being true, being you.

The head brain treats logic, reason, academic knowledge, decision-making support and preparation. We previously referred to it as your mind. Under stress, this is where the “monkey” rules, especially when we unconsciously keep it fed with negative emotions.

The heart brain has legendarily been associated with positive emotions such as goodness, courage, appreciation and love. What differs nowadays is that technology enables science to prove that the heart is responsible for natural and intuitive leadership. Contrary to common knowledge, 80% of the information flowing between your heart brain and your head brain actually originates from the heart. This brain is our ultimate and most reliable guide. It is the seat of intuition, or our ability to understand something immediately, without the need for reasoning. Thanks to these discoveries, evoking the heart in business has become acceptable. It enables us to state that you cannot be a natural leader, unless you connect to your heart, its intuitive guidance, emotions and feelings. You can manage, but you’ll never inspire the people around you. Does that make sense?

Finally, the gut brain is associated with instinct. This brain constitutes the raw, black and white, most definitive type of data, the unequivocal yes or no. When connected to intuition (heart) and logic (head), it synchronizes for the utmost decision-making process to unfold. But under stress, the gut brain will override your perception, maintaining your set of conditioning in place, preserving life at all cost, even if your heart would like otherwise. Doesn’t it make sense, once you are aware of this, to find ways to keep a fluid and open communication between all of your three brains?

If the Baby Boomers went through the motions, younger generations go through e-motions! They demand we reconsider what true leadership is in order to be committed and motivated. In fact, a study revealed that 34.9% of North Americans referred to as the “cultural creatives” find themselves embracing four core principles: welcoming feminine values (intuition), ecology and sustainable development (we are one), societal involvement, and personal growth (we are more than our conditioning). Get ahead, open

yourself back to your heart! All you need is a practice that will enable you to reestablish a sound communication between your brains.

Introducing Heart Coherence

If you search online for “Heart Coherence”, you will get over thirty-one million results. Yep, folks, heart coherence is definitely trendy! Over thirty years ago, the HeartMath Institute conducted various studies to determine if well-being could be quantified. Their conclusion positively identified Heart Rate Variability (HRV) as that reference measure. It documents graphically the micro accelerations and decelerations of the heart. When stressed, you are experiencing something called “heart chaos”. When calm and present, you are experiencing “heart coherence”.

Heart coherence is a high performance and healthy state, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, that brings out the very best in us. The term coherence implies harmonious order, connectedness, stability and efficient use of energy. The heart therefore plays a key role in how we feel. Heart coherence notions reveal, among other things, our innate capacity to regulate not only our emotions, but also our “head brain” structures. This can be learned, and practiced anywhere, including the office.

To quote The International Mindfulness Institute: *“Leaders who dedicate time to Heart Coherence Techniques improve on managing their stress and are more efficient, both in accomplishing their objectives, and dealing with emotions and conflicts thus enjoying better relationships as a whole.”* Just a few minutes of daily conscious heart coherence exercises holds the power to regulate the central nervous system, reduce the effects of tension in the organism, improve immune system response while promoting a better decision-making process and sustaining the development of intuition. In addition, it keeps all three of the brains aligned!

Understandably more and more leaders resort to this new tool which is capable of revealing the beacon they truly are. They are experiencing better stress and anxiety management, better emotional regulation, proficiency in relationship building, conscious distance from negative emotions, accessing new expertise and improving

memory acuity, better decision-making skills, intuitive guidance and expansion of the heart. Now, will you integrate it in your daily routine? Simply search for heart coherence exercises and choose what works for you.

You'll find that inner coherence is defined as the optimal state in which the heart, mind and emotions are aligned and in-sync. Remaining centered energetically increases mental and emotional flexibility, along with your ability to stay in charge of yourself.

Increase Your Energy and Be True, Be You!

Your ability to remain in a coherent state is determined by your capacity to self-regulate emotions and prevent energy drainage. Think of energy as water in a bucket. If the bucket is full of holes, will you keep the water? When experiencing depleting emotions like anger, frustration, anxiety or resentment, you're like the perforated bucket; your energy is leaking out, and you don't even know it. Becoming conscious of your emotional state, and acknowledging when you feel frustrated, angry or resentful, will help you shift away from this predicament to a more coherent state, thus opening the path to higher emotions such as appreciation and compassion. Plug the holes, stop the leakage and feel energized.

Moreover, when I refer to depleting emotions, I imply the way you feel, rather than the fashion in which you think. That being said, what impacts our train of thought the most is the way we feel. The interrelation between the two cannot be overlooked. If in the past, you attempted to modify your thinking, applying effort only; you already know that this carried limited success. In order to affect a long-term change and install new and more durable behaviors, the coherence between the head brain (thoughts) and the heart brain (emotions) must expand. True leadership begins here.

I recommend practicing a heart coherence technique three times daily for five minutes; early in the morning, before lunch and in the mid-afternoon. Doing so will help build energy, increase the quality of your presence and reconnect you to your true coherence and your natural leadership, even when faced with challenging circumstances. When you reach the state of coherence, all three brains align, producing a calmer mind better able to access the

intuitive guidance of the heart and instinctual data; namely your gut feeling.

Everyone can relate to episodes in their lives where all seemed easy, fluid and fun. If only for a brief moment! This is precisely what the state of coherence feels like. When emotions are regulated, energy is endlessly renewed, and the battery is running on full. Despite exterior factors, reaching overall well-being is readily available. Bringing consciousness into your emotional structure when frustrated or angry is equivalent to plugging the holes!

Various heart coherence applications can be found on your mobile phone. Many are free while others charge a minimal amount. Some are passive; they give appropriate breathing patterns. Others are interactive; they measure your heart rate variability (HRV) while providing neuro-feedback. I highly recommend Inner Balance from HeartMath. You can easily download the app and order your feedback device online.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of introducing a daily practice for durable change to take place. Technology provides the necessary tools to facilitate a regular and pleasant training, which in turn, is the most assured way to incorporate new behavior. Also, feedback-equipped apps allow you to visualize your progress, so you notice best practices, i.e., places and times. It is your personal assistant helping out, reminding you when to exercise your heart.

The whole idea is to move yourself gradually towards the true, coherent and natural leader you really are. Enjoying leisure times like fishing, taking a vacation or joining the gym are all helpful, of course. But what about at work where you spend most of your time? What will you do to keep your brain aligned? You will now carry out heart coherence exercises every day! Won't you? Of course, you will!

Ignite Your Creative Powers

“You are to become a creator, not a competitor. You are going to get what you want, but in such a way that when you get it every other person whom you affect will have more than he has now.” This is a quote from the book: *“The Science of Getting Rich”* written by W.D.

Wattles at the turn of the twentieth century. This forward thinker points to a very avant-garde direction, doesn't he? Indeed, modern science demonstrates that you are the creator of your reality, whether you like to believe it or not. In fact, you have always been, you presently are and always will be.

Becoming the natural leader who already lives within you is more about reconnecting with who you truly are, rather than learning new tricks. With continued commitment, discipline and daily heart coherence practice, all will naturally fall into its rightful place! Your commitment to this discipline will implement permanent changes. Not only will you come face to face with the leader you truly are, but you will also reach an epiphany; You will undoubtedly become the conscious creator of your reality!

If you aspire to being who you truly are, you must ask yourself who ruled over your life until now? Was it the head brain or the chest brain? Which one is leading your life right now? Did you know that your heart radiates its own electromagnetic field? It conveys your posture, your emotional signature; in other words, the way you feel here and now! If monitored, it will read one of two things; either chaos or coherence. Do you grasp that the choice is entirely yours? Doesn't it make sense to bring awareness into your state, so you can consciously choose coherence over chaos? Keep in mind that chaos is intrinsically part of life; therefore, it is inevitably recurrent and to be expected. When you catch yourself in a state of chaos, what should you do then? Hint: practice heart coherence and switch your state.

I hope that I succeeded in bringing forth a different perspective here. At least you learned one thing for certain; you are not your set of conditioning, nor can your personality define the true self within you. Your personality will lure you to believe that obstacles are real, while they are merely a figment of your imagination.

The present chapter provides the knowledge and the means to assist you in stirring your sense of self towards the one who came way before the construction of your personality. Use it to open up to yourself as a human being, as opposed to a "human doing". The door to pure potentiality opens before you once you realize that, at your

core, you are something other than your personality. You will free yourself, in time, from these automatic behaviors.

In the journey of self-discovery, releasing stress and connecting with our higher selves hold the key to unlocking a rich spiritual code. By embracing our true selves, we tap into our creative power and live a life that is authentic, purposeful and fulfilling. As we release stress and connect with our higher selves, we step into the realm of infinite possibilities, where our unique gifts and talents can positively transform our lives and the lives of others. So, let us embark on this transformational journey, allowing our true selves to shine and our creative power to flourish.

May you connect to the true, coherent and natural leader you are!
May you Be True, Be You!

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To book a meeting here: <https://calendly.com/luccardinal/lets-catch-up>

You can also visit: <https://nucointernational.com/en>

For keynotes, visit: <https://orizon.ca/en/keynote-speaker/luc-cardinal.html>

For the Inner Balance technology, visit:
<https://click.linksynergy.com/link?id=EsLqnokBq/A&offerid=469069.11732971798&type=2&murl=http%3A%2F%2Fstore.heartmath.com%2Finnerbalance>

Sara Centanni



Sara Centanni is a CPA and ex-Finance Executive turned High Performance Leadership coach and consultant. Sara experienced years of burnout firsthand as a Finance Executive. She was so focused on climbing to the top of her profession and having a “successful” life and job title, that she sacrificed her health, her relationships, and her fun. It wasn’t until she reached burnout that she realized she couldn’t sustain that lifestyle for another thirty years. She dove into personal

development and coaching, where she discovered that she was actually the cause of most of her pain and it was up to her to fix her life.

Now on the other side of burnout, Sara is thriving as a High-Performance Leadership coach and consultant, where she helps ambitious high performers find Elegant Alignment so they can achieve long-term success, confidently live their potential, master their time and energy, maintain their well-being, and find true fulfillment.

“Confidence is essentially being aligned with your true potential.”

- Sara Centanni

Elegant Alignment

By Sara Centanni

“Change happens when the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change.” – Tony Robbins

I experienced a life of being out of alignment, leading to burnout, troubled relationships, unhappiness, disconnection from joy, and physical symptoms. Let me give you some history. While running with my high school cross-country team, I noticed my left shoe scraping the ground. As months went on, I started having a pattern of injuries from my neck all the way down to my ankles. They weren't just from running; I knew something wasn't right. My doctor took x-rays and found I had moderate scoliosis, with the most significant curvature at 25 degrees in my lumbar spine, a leg length discrepancy, and other structural abnormalities.

Being very ambitious drove me to succeed in school, my career, and life. I always wanted more and kept focused, disciplined, and consistent until I reached my goals. Naturally, from the moment I was diagnosed with scoliosis in high school, I needed to *fix* it. I asked myself, “How could my body be so far out of alignment, and I barely even notice it?” The truth was that, until that point, I lacked awareness that my current lifestyle was not sustainable over the long term.

When life gives you a twisted spine, you make...lemonade?

As the years went on, I tried to balance my life the best way I knew how. I continued to run, rowed competitively on a crew team, had a social life, bought a house in my early twenties, graduated magna cum laude with two bachelor's degrees, obtained my CPA license, and quickly advanced in my career. Yet I still felt more physical pain. I listened to my body, sought out dozens of specialists, and they all told me the same thing: My moderate scoliosis, if not treated, could progress about one degree per year and could lead to a host of other ailments, including breathing difficulties, chronic pain, and decreased mobility. I needed to keep my body as strong as possible so the curvature wouldn't worsen.

The last two decades have been a never-ending battle to straighten my spine. After all the strength and conditioning work I've done, I've accepted that my spine may never be perfectly straight, but I *can* make my body as optimal and aligned as possible.

According to Merriam-Webster, **alignment** means to be “brought into line or proper arrangement.” My desire to fix my spine was to put it into a straight line, which is the “proper” arrangement of a spine, where it functions properly. I wanted less pain and a spine that moved freely on a sturdy foundation. I was so jealous of people with straight spines. But jealousy is just a clue pointing you towards something you desire. Little did I know that this quest for physical alignment would be the underlying theme of my life, and morph into a hunger for gaining complete alignment in *all* aspects of my life.

Spine Alignment vs. Life Alignment

While fighting daily for optimal physical alignment, I also craved a peaceful, adventurous, fun, and successful life. Not only was my spine full of twists and turns, but so was my life. By the time I graduated high school, I wanted to work at NASA and help send people to space. After learning that even with all the required schooling, getting hired as an astrophysicist at NASA was extremely difficult, I settled to be an accountant. I didn't have the confidence to do what I wanted. I let my dream die and failed to realize my potential.

As an Executive Finance Director at the top of my career at age thirty-two, I knew that when I used my ambition for good, I could accomplish anything I focused my energy on. As the months went on, I realized my ambition was actually hurting me. This is where my life started to shift. I was people-pleasing, trying to prove my worth to others, and didn't take care of myself. I reached burnout.

Coming from a family who enjoys classic muscle cars, “burnout” to me was when my dad would test out his latest car in the cul-de-sac, create an awesome smoke show, and leave some rubber from the tires tattooed on the pavement. I didn't know burnout was an actual medical syndrome.

The World Health Organization defines burnout as “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.”

Once I was aware I was in burnout, I took a closer look at my lifestyle and noticed all the little things that led there. My body started screaming at me in more significant ways: I had a miscarriage, then a debilitating migraine landed me in the ER, and then a migraine that lasted for five days. At first, these seemed like isolated incidents, but my body was sending me big signals that it was hitting a wall and couldn’t plow through. My body was filled with stress, and I kept putting myself through more stress without releasing it. It seemed logical to keep advancing in my career and popping pills to get through the next meeting or event, but it was a lifestyle I created and couldn’t handle anymore.

Following traditional societal norms combined with my laser-focused ambition led to real-life costs: health, hobbies, social life, joy, fun, ambition, attitude, time, and fulfillment. Barely surviving, I was NOT the person I wanted to be. I could only handle the relentless climb up the corporate ladder for so long, then crashed hard. Continuing this lifestyle for another thirty years was not sustainable. I needed to step back, rest, recover, and reevaluate my priorities. I was winning at the game of life for so long, and now I had to sit the game out? Not cool!

As an avid learner, personal development was my first place to start recovering from burnout. Gaining awareness and clarity of who I was and how I could take better care of myself became a priority. I took action and found a High-Performance coach to help me achieve faster results than I could accomplish alone. High Performance Coaching uses research-backed frameworks created after conducting the largest study globally on high performers who achieved long-term success while maintaining their well-being and

positive relationships. I was ambitious and didn't want to be in burnout any longer. Hiring a coach was an easy decision!

My coach guided me on an archeological dig where I uncovered the real me, buried under everyone else's years of opinions. Working with a coach helped me to reach down and grab that true me, discover my values and beliefs, and clearly understand who I am.

The most life-changing discovery was that I was just living a "comfortable" life; I had settled into being someone who looked like I had a great life on the outside, but on the inside, I wanted more and felt guilty about it. MY CONSTANT DRIVE FOR MORE LEFT ME DRAINED AND UNFULFILLED because I was out of alignment with my true potential.

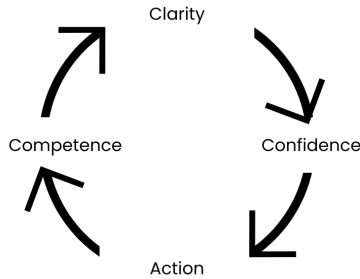
My quest for Elegant Alignment

"When you examine the lives of the most influential people who have ever walked among us, you discover one thread that winds through them all. They all have been aligned first with their spiritual nature and only then with their physical selves." – Albert Einstein

While it seemed like my true quest was for physical alignment, it was actually for complete life alignment. I call this **Elegant Alignment**. To have Elegant Alignment, you dare to do the internal work to know who you are and reveal your values and beliefs to create inner harmony and peace. Once you know your identity and what you stand for, you are more confident, giving you the courage to shift from just surviving your life to thriving.

Striving for full-life authenticity is an ongoing process. Like my spine, there will always be twists and turns, but we want to be as optimal, or Elegantly Aligned, as possible. Why is it essential to be aligned? True Elegant Alignment feels like joy, so much joy that you can't contain it internally, so you light up and smile, bringing you to a 10/10! You feel empowered, fulfilled, and at ease. You are confident and trust yourself to make decisions that will move you towards your best self and desired life.

To help you achieve Elegant Alignment in life, follow the "Elegant Alignment Loop" (see diagram below).



This is similar to psychology's Confidence/Competence loop, where success is accelerated when you are more confident. First, you need to know who you are and what you want. Then you have the confidence to be your authentic self to take action towards your truth, which builds more competence.

When I don't feel aligned, it's because I haven't made it around the loop. It's uncomfortable until I make an adjustment to get myself congruent with my inner truth. It's similar to the feeling when you need to pop your neck or knuckles, and the subsequent relief you feel when the tension subsides and the joints pop into place.

I aim to close this loop as fast as possible, but this doesn't mean rushing each step. I know how satisfying it can be to complete something and check it off a list but be thoughtful and intentional in each step. Sometimes, it might take me multiple times around the loop, or I may toggle between steps for a bit until I can move to the next step. Alignment isn't linear, and the process will repeat until you can close the loop.

One thing to note: I willingly sit in an open loop when I'm growing towards something that feels true to me, like growing pains when you stretch outside your current capabilities or comfort zone.

In the following four sections, I will discuss the Elegant Alignment Loop. Grab a journal and a pen and find a comfy chair to answer the questions at the end of each section. Be thoughtful with your answers. Set a timer for 25 minutes in each section and just let your answers flow.

Clarity

My first stop on my journey for Elegant Alignment is seeking clarity. When you have clarity, you have purpose, motivation, and are clearer on what needs to happen each day to move you towards your goals and the person you desire to become. Clarity lights the internal fire *inside* of you. YOU need to determine WHY you want to change and WHY you want to live to your potential.

While working with my coach to find my way through burnout, I realized I was my best self when empowering and helping others learn, grow, feel respected, understand their value, and gain self-confidence. In my management roles, I loved being an influential part of a team that could help make real change from the top down and the bottom up. I had difficult conversations and took bold moves because I knew the end result was worth the fight. I brought joy, laughter, knowledge, and fun wherever I was.

Clarity Questions:

What three values describe the best version of you?

Do you *feel* like you're living in alignment with the best version of you?

Who do you need to become to be the best version of yourself? What does this person sound like, act like, do on a daily basis, etc.?

Why is it important to you?

What vision do you see for yourself in the next five to ten years? Allow yourself to dream and trust that your dreams are hints to what's possible for you.

Confidence

"Confidence is essentially being aligned with your true potential."
- Sara Centanni

Once I gain clarity, I have more **confidence** in my identity and the life I want to achieve. I feel empowered, courageous, and ready to take action when I'm confident. I feel sure of myself and trust I can problem-solve my way through obstacles. As Tim Grover, Michael

Jordan's personal trainer, once said: "When you're good, you trust your instincts. When you're great, your instincts trust you."

Confidence Questions:

What are three qualities you love about yourself?

What would give you more confidence or trust in yourself?

What would stand in your way of achieving what you desire? Think of any fears you might have whether it's fear of failure, success, the unknown, loss, or pain.

Action

I take intentional, inspired action now that I'm more confident in myself and what I want. As a recovering perfectionist, I didn't realize perfectionism kept me from forward momentum, freezing me in analysis paralysis, where I was too afraid to make a decision. Action is the best teacher.

Understanding what alignment should feel like, I knew a lovingly rich, meaningful, and joyous life was aligned with the true me, so I took action. First, I left my twenty-year finance and accounting career. Second, I decided to become a High-Performance coach after discovering that my mission is to help ambitious high performers find elegant alignment so they can achieve long-term success, confidently live their potential, master their time and energy, maintain their well-being, and find true fulfillment.

Once I was aligned with my career, the rest of my life also started to fall into place. I significantly reduced my headaches and migraines (decreasing from daily to *maybe* once per month), lost excess body fat, gained muscle, found joy and fulfillment, and gained so much energy! I could spend time with loved ones, create a close group of friends on similar paths and with similar values, and help serve others more than I could while sitting at a desk crunching numbers.

When taking action, start small and work your way up to your overall goal, chase some squirrels, and make learning fun. Then the real magic happens. The result of the action you take will either end up with the result you were expecting or will be a great learning opportunity to bring you closer to your authentic self. Here is where

you will also determine if you want to go to the next step in the loop or maybe you need to go back to seek more clarity or gain more confidence.

Action Questions:

Looking from a high level, what milestones do you need to achieve to become more aligned?

Take intentional action: What is one small thing aligned with your goals that you could do today? Try it out.

How can you hold yourself accountable each day to ensure your actions and behaviors align with your best self?

Competence

Once you know who you are and who you must become, you can take inventory of your **competence**, which is the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience necessary to continue progressing in the Elegant Alignment loop. Now you can focus your time and energy on what you want to develop in life and what to avoid, or you'll see a lack in skills you want to level up.

To gain more competence, read books, take courses, listen to podcasts on areas you want to learn more about, etc. Be more strategic about mastering your competence to help you feel more aligned.

Competence Questions:

What did you learn from your actions?

Do you need to go back to seek more clarity or gain more confidence?

What are three skills you want to learn?

How long, on average, does it take someone to learn each skill (a quick internet search can help with this).

How could you obtain the skills you desire? If time is of the essence, paying for a mentor, coach, course, or training is worth it.

Make a list of all the trusted people you know doing exciting things. Invite them to coffee, pick their brain, and learn about how they accomplish what interests you.

Each time you close the loop, you gain more clarity, you trust yourself more, you're able to take quicker and more thoughtful actions, and you gain more competence. Then you can return to the top of the loop by seeking more clarity to hone in on fine-tuning your Elegant Alignment.

Success isn't a straight line

The way you perceive your life and obstacles determines your reality. I am grateful for my scoliosis because it serves as a 24/7 reminder that I have the ability to persevere. I have the power to choose my perspective about my scoliosis. I was given this curvy spine for a reason, and I'm using this physical setback to symbolize how I can make a less optimal situation into an extraordinary life-changing event.

Don't give up on yourself; listen to your body and instincts and live in your potential. It's *your* life, not anyone else's, so don't expect everyone else to understand your vision completely. You too can turn pain into purpose.

Never settle

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something—your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life." – Steve Jobs

Remember when I settled to be an accountant instead of working at NASA? I don't regret my accounting career because it led me to see my true potential and the impact I'm making. Now as a coach, I may not be sending people to space in rocket ships, but I am helping them live out-of-this-world experiences by living their potential, being Elegantly Aligned with their genuine selves, achieving the success they desire, ensuring their well-being, and positively impacting others.

Before I started my coaching career, my dad told me, “Sara, you can put your footsteps on the moon.” The younger me didn’t believe in myself or take care of myself. It took me a long time to realize that I was living life for others. Refrain from settling like I did. Having freedom and autonomy to craft your desired life can fuel your ambition and help you create a road map to Elegant Alignment.

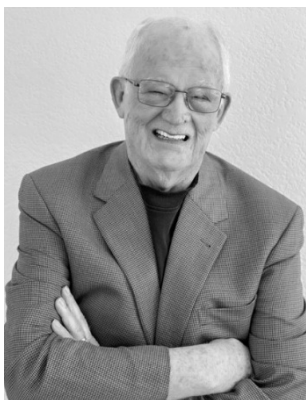
Let me help you achieve Elegant Alignment!

To contact Sara:

Apply for 1-1 coaching with me at www.saracentanni.com/apply

As my gift to you, download the workbook to guide you in this chapter: www.saracentanni.com/CTRCworkbook

Thomas Gay



Tom Gay is a highly accomplished serial entrepreneur who has made a career out of solving complex business and marketing problems through innovative web solutions. He is currently the CEO of EngagePro.com, a sales building platform, and the creator of ChatBridgeConnect.com. Previously he founded Refer.com and served almost 5 million users.

Throughout his career, Tom founded several other successful companies, including National Decision Systems (NDS), which pioneered advanced target marketing technologies and earned two coveted INC 500 Awards, and VistaInfo, (NASDAQ) that provided geo-targeted property risk info to banks, insurers, realtors, and home buyers. Tom was also recognized by Individual Investor Magazine as one of the "5 Best Undiscovered Small Company CEO's" in the USA.

In 2001, Tom and his wife, Patti, moved to Cape Town, South Africa, to start Monte Christo Ministries (MCM), an organization focused on helping people caught in institutional poverty. MCM implemented feeding programs reaching up to 7,000 children a day, built infrastructure to help youth and families and assisted in supporting children and infants afflicted with HIV.

Tom's served on numerous corporate and community boards, and frequently speaks on topics like referral and relationship marketing, leadership development, and building socially responsible businesses.

It's Time for the "Great Relationship Reset!"

By Thomas Gay

Section 1: Losing Touch in a Hyperconnected World

In an increasingly interconnected world, it seems paradoxical that we are losing touch with one another. Even before the onset of the Covid pandemic, technology had been gradually eroding the personal connections we once cherished. While these amazing technological advancements were designed to enhance communication efficiency, they have inadvertently left us feeling more disconnected than ever before. The consequences of this disconnection are becoming alarmingly evident. In addition to intrusive marketing, a flood of tools and apps and less focus on personal communications, there's a social cost seen in rising levels of depression, increased drug usage, and a surge in suicide rates across our communities.

We find ourselves facing numerous obstacles in building meaningful relationships, and now, even bots, virtual reality, and AI are replacing genuine personal interactions. Instead of reaching out and engaging in real conversations, we rely on technology to speak for us. Then, we take pride in installing filtering or blocking tools to shield ourselves from the overwhelming digital and "social" noise that permeates our inboxes and messaging systems.

Everywhere we look, the signs of personal distancing are evident. Even when families gather for a meal at a nice restaurant, we often see each person engrossed in their mobile phone, captivated by the allure of a tiny screen rather than engaging in genuine conversations together.

Instant messaging, social media platforms, and relentless marketers inundate our consciousness. Yet, amidst this flood of digital noise, we are losing the magic and value of thoughtful personal contact and genuine conversations that strengthen relationships, opting instead for a simple "smiley face" or a "thumbs up" emoji.

As our personal connections dwindle, time is ticking, and I argue that this eventually leads to dire social, cultural, and personal

consequences. Back in the mid-1980s, John Naisbitt's book "Megatrends" highlighted the need to combine "high-tech with high-touch" activities for future success in various industries. Today, this need is more critical than ever, not only in business but in all aspects of our lives.

We find ourselves amidst the ongoing "great workplace reset," where the conventional office setting has drastically changed due to the impact of Covid. Many individuals are no longer willing to return to the traditional office environment. Forced to undergo lifestyle resets, they have opted for new careers, self-employment, and side-hustles. As we navigate economic uncertainties, inflationary pressures, and rapid technological shifts, more people are distancing themselves from the typical settings where face-to-face communication and personal relationships once flourished.

Abundant evidence suggests that we must refocus on "high-touch" activities to drive successful business relationships and, ultimately, to find greater personal fulfillment. In the following sections, let us delve into specific examples that illustrate the benefits of prioritizing relationships in our business growth strategies and a simple personal-touch tool to help.

Section 2: The Power of Personal Relationships in Business

The coaching and consulting industries have experienced explosive growth in recent years, driven in part by senior-level departures and cost-saving measures within major corporations. Economic circumstances, such as the need to work after retirement or the desire for self-employment, have also led to a surge in professionals seeking opportunities in coaching, consulting, training, and other self-employed service sectors.

For the past two decades, my work has revolved around helping professionals in these fields launch successful practices, whether as independent practitioners or as franchisees for renowned coaching and CEO advisory/consulting firms.

In my experience, there is a critical distinction between those who thrive and build successful practices and the much larger number of individuals who struggle, barely survive, or ultimately fail. That

distinction lies in recognizing that businesses built on a foundation of trust seldom prosper without a systematic and recurring focus on personal relationships.

As one of my early mentors wisely stated, building trust requires demonstrating both competence and character in our interactions with others. This principle holds true not only in business but also in all aspects of our personal lives. If we aim to forge friendships or even find love, trust-building must be an active endeavor. We cannot delegate this task to bots, dating apps, or LinkedIn profiles.

To achieve this, we must understand what I call the "secret of engagement." I have witnessed countless professionals lacking sales skills or marketing experience transform into top performers by prioritizing personalized activities that build trust. There exists a proven and lucrative roadmap for trust-building, and following this path is not as daunting as it may seem.

However, this pathway remains less traveled in both business and personal spheres. We have surrendered much of our focus and succumbed to the distractions of digital marketing, automated and outsourced lead generation, AI, and various social media advertising options. The noise around us has grown to such an extent that everyone is now shouting, while fewer people are genuinely listening.

Allow me to share one of my favorite stories: the tale of an experienced sales training coach who was struggling to generate new business. Though it may appear contradictory, this coach found that all the leads lists and marketing mechanisms from his global company were yielding no results. It was only when he made a slight shift in focus, turning towards a genuine understanding of relationship building, that he achieved a reset. This led to immediate and explosive six-figure growth and numerous new business closings in just four weeks. He always knew what to do but had been distracted from what always worked. Moving back on track, he's since had many years of amazing success.

When we talk about a relationship reset in business, it requires us to pause, reflect, and ask ourselves the crucial "why, how, and who" questions. What intentional actions can we take that differ from our

current approach? Moreover, what unique strategies can we employ to differentiate ourselves from others in our field and become more visible and appealing to the audiences we seek to connect with?

In a marketplace saturated with uniformity, being intentionally different becomes a key element of standing out from the noise. By focusing on forging connections with individuals on a distinctive and personal level, we benefit from what Dr. Robert Cialdini calls the "principle of scarcity" in his book "Influence." Being distinctively personal in our communications fuels the "trust engine" because people gravitate towards those who genuinely care about them. In a landscape where such focus is scarce, these individuals become magnets, attracting more people towards them through positive word-of-mouth and top-of-mind awareness.

Section 3: The Real Estate Industry and the Power of Personal Connections.

To further emphasize the significance and need for a relationship reset, let's examine the challenges faced by real estate agents. In an industry where traditionally over 80% of new entrants leave before their second anniversary, one would expect that exceptional technologies, comprehensive training, and extensive engagement in digital marketing would yield greater success. However, the reality is that only a select few agents thrive while most others falter.

In my view, the key to unlocking success in this market lies in executing a relationship reset that challenges the prevailing practices of real estate agents today. Startling data from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) reveals that over 90% of agents never reach out to a client they have previously served after closing a transaction. Surveys also indicate that more than 80% of buyers and sellers express their willingness to work with the same agent again in the future. Despite this satisfaction, only 11% of buyers and sellers actually follow through and do business with the same agent, opting instead to engage a different professional.

Now, imagine the impact on this industry if agents chose to reset their approach and deviated slightly from the norm. What if their focus shifted towards building a loyal following of clients, friends, neighbors, and influencers, where personal relationships, staying in

touch, and fostering trust were paramount? What kind of repeat and referral business could they expect to generate?

It's late in the day, and I've just deleted yet another email bombarding me with appeals to sign up immediately for access to the secrets of unimaginable success, promising discounts of up to 85% if I act now. The noise is overwhelming.

Let's pause and reflect.

Yes, many of us use some of these tools, but they can never serve as a substitute for building genuine connections with individuals who genuinely want what you offer. Imagine having people who not only want to engage in conversation with you but also want to spend time with you, befriend you, and refer you to others they know. It's simpler than it seems.

This isn't just about increasing sales or business—it's about pursuing what truly matters in life. It's about bringing together friends and family or joining forces with like-minded individuals to support the causes you care about. As some of my friends have attested, "this approach just works!"

Section 4: The Bridge of Trust: A Personal Story

Allow me to share a personal story that I've come to refer to as the "bridge of trust" illustration. This metaphorical phrase stems from a journey my family and I embarked on over two decades ago when we traveled to South Africa to visit a ministry we supported. It was dedicated to assisting individuals trapped in institutional poverty. In this community, countless children lacked access to food, and the devastating impact of HIV-AIDS was palpable. The scarcity of resources and hands willing to help was further overwhelming.

After a few visits, we felt a calling to relocate there and establish a new non-governmental organization (NGO) in an effort to make a difference. With my background as a business leader, I believed that with careful planning, focused strategies, and clear goals, we could bring about change and break the cycle of hopelessness that had gripped so many lives.

However, upon our arrival, we quickly realized that despite our sincere desire to help, we were still seen as "outsiders." We were regarded as those "who brought gifts" rather than individuals who were trusted and welcomed within the communities we sought to support.

As we later discovered, we had not yet built the necessary "bridge of trust" that would allow us to cross over and be embraced as "belongers" in the community. Initially, we failed to grasp the nuances and cultural distinctions that shaped this perception. However, fortune favored us.

In our eagerness to offer assistance, we learned about an elementary school where most children likely arrived each day without having had a meal at home. Seeing a need and sensing an opportunity to help, we approached a group of mothers in the neighborhood and proposed the idea of bringing food to them that they could turn into soup, which could then be served to the children.

The mothers gladly accepted our proposal but did not expect that we, a white, American couple with unfamiliar accents, would join them in preparing the soup at the school and serving it to approximately 50 children that first day.

The soup-making endeavor continued into the afternoon, with the mothers finishing up by taking the initiative to clean the children's restrooms. Since the school lacked maintenance staff, you can imagine the conditions of those restrooms for the children. However, when my wife and I donned plastic gloves, just like the mothers, and actively participated in the cleaning, the barriers separating us from the neighborhood mothers began to crumble. It was during this moment that the initial "bridge of trust" was established. We shared and cared together, metaphorically "walking a mile in their shoes." We eschewed the conventional "fly-by" approach of dropping off food and leaving, distinguishing ourselves from others who had done the same.

From there, the story unfolded in truly remarkable ways. With that small start, we embraced the mantra that "a hungry stomach has no ears to learn."

We asked ourselves, if we could feed 50 children, why couldn't we feed 100, 500, or even more? With the foundation of trust now firmly in place, we could practically address the answers to that question with the members and leaders of the community. As accepted belongers of the community, who could confidently cross the bridge and work together, we realized there were no limits.

In collaboration with the local community and a growing global network of supporters, we transformed that pot of soup feeding 50 children into a cross-cultural program that provided daily meals for 7,000 hungry children in schools and community centers throughout the region.

It all started by getting up close and personal, learning what really matters to the others we were engaging with and then focusing on communicating on that first. That was the key to our success in South Africa and is the key to your networking, sales success and to everything other personal relationship objective we desire.

Section 5: Participating in the Your Relationship Reset

As you've likely heard time and again, "no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care." No software program, bot, social media platform, or technology can substitute for your personal leadership in initiating a "relationship reset."

If you're in agreement and eager to participate in what I'm calling the "great relationship reset," then here's a remarkably simple way to kickstart it for yourself. I guarantee that if you follow these steps today, you'll witness immediate results and open doors to building the "bridges of trust" and communication I've described.

Let's get started with following these precise steps that have yielded remarkable outcomes for thousands of people I've shared this with from all walks of life:

Create a list of 10 or more people in your life—family members, past customers, "former" friends, or anyone you feel you may have let slip away from your relationship.

Open your mobile phone and access or enter a person's cell phone number.

Compose and send a short, personal text message to each person. Use your own words and convey something like, "Hi Fred, I was thinking about you just now and wanted to reach out to say (how sorry I am that I let our relationship slip away. I really appreciate you.)" or "(I want to express my heartfelt thanks for all you mean to me and...)" or "(I just want you to know how much I appreciate you and the moments we've shared...)" Make it personal, focusing on them and expressing words from your heart.

Send out your first 10 text messages right away, completing the task within 30 minutes. Don't hesitate, put your phone down, or procrastinate. You're not selling anything, and there's no need for a call to action. Don't get stuck searching for the perfect words—just do it!

Now, step back and prepare for what you've set in motion. Every person I've guided through this appreciation exercise of rekindling relationships has experienced wonderful, and at times, life-changing responses. Consider the impact when previous clients say things like, "Hey, give me a call" or "I'd like to introduce you to someone you should meet..."

Is there a family member you'd love to reconnect with or an old friend? This exercise will make it happen. The simplicity of this exercise has led some of my CEO clients to set calendar reminders to reach out to 10 people (mostly clients) every other week. It significantly enhanced client satisfaction and retention and catalyzed uncountable numbers of referrals to new business.

I can assure you, taking this step to rekindle relationships will be one of the most valuable actions you can take in your life. But don't stop there. For those who respond to your initial text, follow up with a personal call, send a note or card, and create reminders to stay in touch. In all areas where you apply this approach, you'll give and receive, foster trust and influence, and help rebuild personal bridges of trust.

Your participation in a "relationship reset" has the power to bring people closer in ways we all desperately need. Imagine families reuniting, children reconnecting with parents, individuals feeling valued and important, and flourishing business relationships and

success. There's still time if we all take the first step together. Just get started today and you will be amazed and richly rewarded.

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Lara Augusta



Introducing Lara Augusta, a renowned Human Development Specialist and an accomplished leader in personal and professional enhancement programs. More than a decade ago, Lara transitioned from International Relations to corporate training, leading numerous successful initiatives for top-tier organizations within the biotechnology, insurance, sports, food, hospitality, and entertainment industries, inclusive of the Olympic Movement.

Lara's esteemed credentials are backed by renowned institutions such as Harvard, McGill, Yale, Purdue, and the Institute for Professional Coaching (iPEC). She has expertise in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.), Core Energy Leadership Coaching, Energy Leadership Index (E.L.I), Social-Emotional Learning, and Positive Intelligence (PQ).

A Brazilian native, Lara finds her purpose in empowering individuals with the necessary tools and guidance to deepen their self-understanding and enhance their personal and professional relationship dynamics. This process ushers them into a space of greater awareness that cultivates joy and heightened satisfaction in their lives. Utilizing innovative neuroscience and psychology practices, Lara employs distilled techniques and acute energy shifting to help her clients tap into their inner wisdom and develop strategic plans to enrich their lives on their own terms.

At the helm of her Life & Leadership Coaching company, Embracing Potentiality, and through her podcast, In Strides, Lara nurtures a multicultural, multi-passionate approach to learning and development. Lara's unique perspectives are drawn from having lived, studied, and worked in Brazil, Canada, China, Switzerland, Russia, South Korea, the U.K., and the U.S., complemented by travels to over 60 countries. These expansive and varied experiences

equip her to offer deeply transformative journeys, propelling her clients towards unparalleled growth and achievement.

Become The Leader You Would Follow

By Lara Augusta

First things first

Soften your eyes and let your imagination take flight. Visualize a world where leaders stand tall, radiating an aura of inspiration and motivation. In this world, individuals are empowered to unleash their full potential, driven by leaders who believe in their abilities and nurture their growth.

Picture organizations prospering under the stewardship of extraordinary leadership, their corridors brimming with vigor and ingenuity. Visualize groups bound by a common goal, working in harmony, and realizing extraordinary accomplishments. Imagine teams united by a shared vision, collaborating seamlessly, and achieving remarkable results. In this world, every individual feels valued, respected, and encouraged to bring their unique talents to the table.

Experience the tangible thrill as leaders emerge, prepared to reshape the environment. They demonstrate relentless resolve and a profound comprehension that excellence is within their reach. Limitations or restrictions do not confine these leaders; they acknowledge the limitless potential of their influence and impact.

Sounds too idealistic to be true? That's because it is.

First, leadership is not merely tied to a designated role or a professional title; it seeps into every facet of our lives - be it as children, friends, students, parents, professionals, or community members. Both management and leadership skills are vital in our life journey. While managers may oversee tasks, procedures, and outcomes, genuine leaders serve as visionaries, risk-takers, collaborators, and innovators, persistently acquiring knowledge and evolving, thereby equipping themselves with the capabilities to inspire and energize others. Every step forward nudges this vision towards realization, and the inception of this transformation is rooted in self-awareness—a deep understanding of one's emotions, values, and strengths. Through enhancing their self-perception and

cultivating self-awareness, leaders gain a clearer view of their driving forces and their influence on others. This awareness forms the bedrock for influential leadership, enabling leaders-in-the-making to sincerely connect with others, build trust, and effectively advocate for their vision. When bolstered with powerful interpersonal skills such as self-knowledge, clear communication, active listening, and empathy, leaders kindle passion, instigate motivation, and steer individuals, organizations, and communities toward exceptional achievements despite all the challenges along the way.

While leadership often makes the cloak of unwavering inspiration, motivation, vision, and infallibility, it is inherently interwoven with potential pitfalls, errors, and miscalculations, a testament to our shared human condition. This propensity for shortcomings arises from our innate human susceptibility to biases, oversights, and mistakes. Across the tapestry of societal structures—be it politics, commerce, or beyond—leaders can find themselves caught in the crossfire of decision-making pressures, personal ambitions, and external influences, all of which can precipitate flawed judgments with expansive repercussions. This human aspect of leadership underscores the criticality of instituting checks and balances, emphasizing the requisite for transparency, accountability, and shared decision-making processes to temper the risks associated with leadership missteps. It also further illuminates the importance of acknowledging and validating the myriad layers of our human experience.

Notwithstanding its intrinsic fallibility, leadership evolves as a journey of self-reflection, self-observation, and the crafting of profound connections with self and others. Acknowledging one's shortcomings or missteps is not a display of weakness but rather an exhibition of self-awareness and humility. This open communication about vulnerabilities engenders trust, nurturing more robust relationships with followers and creating a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Leaders who unmask their vulnerability often become more approachable, cultivating an environment where errors morph into steppingstones for growth rather than pitfalls of blame. Additionally, self-compassion is a cornerstone of resilient leadership, allowing leaders to extend

kindness towards themselves during times of failure, thereby nurturing resilience and the audacity to take risks. Acceptance of leadership fallibility, therefore, catalyzes personal growth and team advancement, reinforcing the conviction that leaders not only can but should embrace their inherent human imperfections. It is a testament to their authenticity and a pathway to collective growth.

Now, as this visualization crystallizes, an enlightening truth emerges—this envisioned world is not a mere mirage but an achievable reality within our grasp. It dawns on us that the cornerstone of this transformative journey is rooted in our self-awareness, a deep understanding of our innate leadership potential in all layers of our lives. Coupled with the commitment to self-leadership, we are driven to guide our actions and decisions with intention and integrity. This is a call for us to cultivate our growth, continuously evolving, not just into individuals but also leaders who invigorate and inspire, but more significantly, into leaders who lead by example and are truly worth emulating.

About Self-Awareness: Understand What is Needed

Self-awareness is a cornerstone for impactful leadership, whether in personal spheres or within team dynamics. When it comes to personal leadership, self-awareness encapsulates a profound understanding of one's emotions, strengths, shortcomings, values, and beliefs. This is where the distinction between comprehending what one desires versus what one needs becomes crucial. Wants can be transient, often driven by external influences, while needs are fundamental and closely tied to one's values and fulfillment. Recognizing this difference empowers individuals to lead authentically and make mindful choices that resonate with their vision and purpose. By discerning their triggers and responses, self-aware leaders can effectively manage their emotions and communicate in a way that fosters trust and respect among others. This understanding of one's inner workings is not just a hallmark of personal growth but a vital asset to inspirational leadership.

Mirroring this, within the domain of team leadership, self-awareness proves to be an indispensable element. Leaders steeped in self-awareness demonstrate a keen understanding of their competencies

and limitations. This cognizance informs their decisions, enabling them to curate teams that augment their skills and address deficiencies—a shift from ego-centric choices to a strategy more attuned to collective needs. By acknowledging their personal biases and blind spots, such leaders actively incorporate diverse perspectives within their teams, thus cultivating an inclusive atmosphere and kindling innovation.

Leaders possessing an elevated level of self-awareness foster an environment where team members feel recognized, heard, and appreciated. They understand the profound impact of their words and actions on others and proactively engage in feedback, continually striving to refine their leadership prowess. This heightened self-awareness also empowers leaders to navigate conflicts and challenges more effectively, encouraging open communication and collaborative problem-solving within teams. Importantly, this awareness extends to recognizing the shared humanity in each team member, promoting connection, empathy, and mutual respect. Through this lens of humanity, leaders can engage with their teams in more collaborative and co-creative ways, fostering a culture of inclusivity, innovation, and shared success.

Self-awareness is a fundamental attribute of leadership, encompassing both individual and collective dynamics. It serves as the bedrock for cultivating trust, authenticity, and empathy, resulting in stronger connections, heightened collaboration, and, ultimately, superior achievements. As leaders continuously refine their self-awareness, they adeptly navigate their inner landscapes, concurrently inspiring and empowering those around them. Moreover, as this journey of self-awareness progresses, another critical skill begins to emerge and gain significance: self-advocacy. This complementary skill, when synergistically combined with self-awareness, forms a potent alliance within the arsenal of effective leadership, further propelling growth, influence, and impactful outcomes.

About Self-advocacy: Ask for What It Is Needed

Self-advocacy is a critical aspect of effective leadership, both in personal life and within teams. In the realm of personal leadership,

self-advocacy involves confidently expressing one's thoughts, ideas, and values while asserting boundaries and standing up for oneself. Leaders who embrace self-advocacy take ownership of their needs and goals, ensuring they are respected and met. By effectively communicating their aspirations and respectfully asserting themselves, they inspire others to do the same.

Within teams, self-advocacy becomes equally important. Leaders who encourage self-advocacy within their team members create an environment where individuals feel empowered to express their ideas, concerns, and aspirations. This fosters a culture of open dialogue where diverse perspectives are welcomed and valued. By encouraging team members to advocate for themselves and their contributions, leaders unleash the team's collective potential, driving innovation and creativity.

In both personal life and teams, self-advocacy is a key leadership skill that cultivates assertiveness, fosters self-confidence, and encourages personal and collective growth. It involves both acknowledging one's abilities and accomplishments as well as emphasizing the strengths and successes of team members. By championing themselves and their team, such leaders create an environment where individuals can display their skills and grasp opportunities for personal growth and career progression. Leaders foster skill enhancement, confidence growth, and meaningful participation in the team's triumphs by allowing everyone to voice their contributions. Leaders who embrace self-advocacy create a culture of empowerment where everyone's voice is valued, respected, and given the opportunity to thrive.

Additionally, self-advocacy empowers leaders to effectively embody and express their vision, values, and expectations. When leaders confidently express their ideas, they inspire others to believe in their shared purpose and create a collective drive toward success.

By intertwining self-awareness and self-advocacy, leaders cultivate a powerful combination that inspires and motivates others. They lead by example, encouraging individuals to embrace their unique strengths, passions, and aspirations. This holistic approach to leadership fosters an environment where everyone is empowered to

contribute their best, resulting in a culture of inspiration, growth, and achievement.

In our own lives, we have the power to be leaders, walking the talk and serving as a beacon of inspiration for ourselves and others. As individuals, we possess the ability to communicate a compelling vision for our future, crafting a sense of meaning and purpose that drives our actions. Embracing effective self-leadership ignites our passion and commitment, pushing our boundaries and unlocking our hidden potential. With this mindset, we become the architects of our success, inspiring ourselves to strive for excellence and achieve extraordinary results. Through self-leadership, we create a life filled with purpose, growth, and personal fulfillment, setting an example for others to follow in their journeys.

Being aware of and only then crafting a compelling vision is a transformative process that shapes both individuals and organizations. It involves defining a future that inspires and resonates with personal values, aligning aspirations with purpose. A clear sense of purpose provides a guiding light, fueling motivation and commitment. When leaders effectively communicate this vision, they spark enthusiasm and create a shared sense of direction. Through storytelling and compelling narratives, they inspire others to join the journey and contribute their unique talents. By rallying individuals around a shared vision, leaders foster collaboration, unlock potential, and drive remarkable achievements, leaving a lasting impact on both the organization and the lives of those involved.

About Becoming a Leader: Do What is Needed

Self-leadership is a fundamental pillar of effective leadership, encompassing personal and team dynamics. In the realm of personal leadership, it demands an unwavering commitment to assuming responsibility for one's actions, emotions, and choices. To practice self-leadership, individuals must begin by setting clear, meaningful goals that align with their values and aspirations. They must devise strategies to manage their time wisely, allocating it purposefully to tasks that contribute to their overarching vision. Cultivating self-

discipline is paramount, enabling them to stay focused on their priorities and resist distractions that veer them off course.

In parallel, self-leadership in team settings calls for astute leaders who recognize that their behavior sets the tone for the entire group. They lead by example, embodying the very qualities and behaviors they seek in their team members. Integrity, resilience, and adaptability become guiding principles in their actions and decisions, fostering a culture of accountability and excellence. By practicing self-leadership, these leaders inspire trust and admiration within their teams, fostering an environment where individuals feel empowered to take ownership of their roles and contribute their best efforts toward shared success.

Self-leadership, whether it's on a personal scale or within a group setting, needs a variety of key characteristics. One of the essential traits is self-awareness, which allows individuals to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and behavioral tendencies. Another pivotal trait is self-motivation. Leaders need to constantly nurture their ambition and passion, which not only fuels their personal growth but also serves to inspire others. Lastly, self-discipline serves as the cornerstone for leaders. It helps them stay focused, overcome challenges, and maintain a consistent course of action that aligns with their goals.

By embracing self-leadership, individuals and team leaders become architects of their own success. They proactively shape their destinies by making deliberate choices that propel them toward their goals. Through their commitment to self-leadership, they serve as beacons of inspiration, motivating and empowering others to embark on their personal and collective growth journeys. Self-leadership catalyzes personal and collective excellence, propelling individuals and teams to reach their full potential and achieve remarkable feats.

About a Leader: Become Who is Needed

Our unwavering commitment to the things we value, boundless enthusiasm, and clear vision have continually served as powerful catalysts, illuminating a path that encourages others to pursue their passions. This force, this sheer excitement for a specific endeavor,

is contagious, inciting a similar spark in the hearts of those around us. It not only enhances our capacity to influence results but also enables others to participate and contribute to a common vision. When we boldly chase what truly lights our soul on fire, we unintentionally give others the freedom to do the same. We transform into living symbols of possibility and potential, demonstrating that aligning our lives with what truly excites and satisfies us is not just achievable but deeply rewarding. Each time we let our passion shine brightly, it guides others, reminding us of our shared ability to turn dreams into reality. In this manner, our enthusiasm and vision transcend personal limits, becoming shared gems that trigger a chain reaction of inspiration and ambition, potentially uplifting entire communities.

Embarking on the path to leadership is a solemn and deliberate endeavor. The main goal isn't merely to better understand ourselves but also to mold ourselves into the leaders that are needed. This journey starts with introspection, a deep dive into discovering our inherent capabilities, unrealized potential, and genuine passions. We then identify our strengths, weaknesses, and values and gauge our ability to influence others. With self-awareness and self-understanding, we gain crucial insights that assist us in enhancing our skills and charting a path for personal growth.

However, self-awareness alone isn't sufficient. We also need to take full accountability and ownership of our actions consistently. This includes viewing our missteps as vital opportunities for learning and using them as steppingstones for improvement. To "become who is needed," we must learn from these experiences and adapt our strategy, behavior, and mindset to effectively lead and influence progress. Simultaneously, self-advocacy is vital. Expressing our needs, values, and objectives while acknowledging diverse views helps us align with collective needs, making us the type of leaders that are required in any given context.

By effectively leading ourselves, we can remain focused, motivated, and resilient. We lead not only with our words but also through our actions, which should sincerely reflect who we are and the leaders we aspire to be. The journey to becoming the leader we strive to be and the leader who is necessary is a continuous process of personal

growth and self-enhancement. It demands great courage, utmost honesty, and an insatiable hunger for continuous learning and development. As we navigate this journey and take these steps, we become more adept at addressing the needs of those we aim to lead.

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Dr. Kerry Turnbow



Dr. Kerry Turnbow is a speaker, lecturer, professor, and Executive Coach with years of leadership experience to lead you and your team to higher levels of excellence. He understands the pressure of being at the top of an organization, having worked as an executive leader for over 35 years.

Dr. Turnbow brings proven successes developing leaders into becoming the best administrators, managers, and leaders of people they can be. He engages leaders to change the way they interact, facilitate, and to learn how to nurture staff inside an organization.

Prior to becoming a Certified Executive Coach, Dr. Turnbow developed his own non-profit company quadrupling in size in less than 10 years. He worked at the Executive Director level for several highly productive organizations; has taught classes on leadership development, relational development; and assisted the U.S. Army with a re-integration program for soldiers returning from deployments. Dr. Turnbow received recognition from military leaders for his work and professional services in this field. He has counseling training and over 20 years of experience as a therapist, conflict, and mediation training.

Dr. Turnbow has earned degrees in business, communication, counseling, and theology. He has worked as an adjunct professor of psychology for the University of Alaska since 2001. Dr. Turnbow has given presentations.

The Heart of an Entrepreneur

By Dr. Kerry Turnbow

The word entrepreneur means to take financial risks in the hope of profit or gain. It is to be enterprising. Merriam-Webster defines entrepreneurial as having to do with the creation and development of economic ventures.

In my early thirties, I had the privilege of working with an organization that set me up for my first entrepreneurial endeavor, although I had little idea of what would come. I had been on staff for four and a half years with this organization, and I was responsible for the development, implementation, and management of a counseling center offering support to benefit the organization's employees. The counseling center provided an in-house opportunity for those needing or seeking counseling to have a resource they could easily access.

One day in mid-November, the executive team I was part of gathered with the executive director to present our goals, objectives, and our future visions. The day of our yearly annual vision and budget meeting was always an exciting time. The gathering together of all our executive staff gave us an opportunity to celebrate our successes and created excitement about possibilities that could happen in the upcoming year. I was filled with anticipation about presenting a proposal to expand our counseling practice beyond its current scope, which would not only make it a more financially viable resource for the organization but would also provide a counseling resource for the community.

I waited patiently for my turn to arrive. When my time to present finally came, I handed each person my proposal for expansion. First, I identified the successes of the year. I shared the overall number of the people who had utilized the counseling center and specifically outlined the number of people who had requested to use the counseling center who were from outside our organization. I also demonstrated the financial savings the counseling center had provided the company before finally proposing my expansion idea. I practiced my speech several times and when I was finished, I felt

that I had articulated not only the growth we had already experienced but also the possibilities for expanding the counseling center beyond the walls of the organization into the community. I discussed how the counseling center could be a viable outreach for our organization as well as a financial benefit to the organization.

My entire proposal took about 20 minutes. When I finished there was silence in the room. A numbing silence that caught me off guard. The executive director sat back in his chair and looked at me for a moment with a silent gaze. He then said to the group, "You know, staff, most of you are comfortable in the position you're in. You're in management positions that work well for you, and you are satisfied with those positions. Others of you are not satisfied with where you are in the organization because your dreams and visions are bigger than your current position. For those of you who have bigger dreams and visions, you need to be able to have the opportunity to follow those dreams." He then looked directly at me and said, "Kerry, I think your vision for the counseling center is bigger than mine. You and I need to meet to discuss where you want to go and what you want to do with the counseling center."

Honestly, I was a little surprised by his response. I naturally agreed to meet, and he suggested we get together in the upcoming week to discuss my proposal. We continued the meeting as I sat contemplating what all of this meant.

The next week, when I met with my executive director, he reiterated his statement. "Kerry," he said. "It looks to me like your vision is bigger than mine for the counseling center. You must decide whether you want to remain in this position and continue to do the counseling for our organization or think about taking the counseling center to the next level as you proposed. Why don't you take some time to think about it and process it and let me know."

I took about a week to think about what I wanted to do before telling him I wanted to transition the counseling center into a community-based counseling center. At the time, I vacillated between excitement and anxiety. Little did I realize this was the beginning of a wonderful adventure for me. I felt an enormous amount of anticipation for the possibilities ahead, and yet I felt an incredible

amount of fear and anxiety because I was leaving the security of a steady and regular paycheck. Choosing to leave my organization to run a community-based counseling center meant that I alone would be responsible for my path to financial success or face the possibility of financial ruin.

I don't know if I would classify myself as an entrepreneur because honestly, I didn't know what it took to be a true entrepreneur. I simply had a vision that I wanted to develop, and I had a deep passion to move it forward. I also knew it was going to take some risk to pursue the vision. I did my best to calculate the risk and pad my possibility of success through strategic business planning, marketing design, and hard work.

This book says a lot about how to break the rich code. Breaking the rich code is not necessarily always about monetary value and gain. It can also include intrinsic motivation and value. Although I certainly wanted the new endeavor to pay off financially, I had a strong intrinsic motivation to develop an organization that was richly staffed with qualified and skilled people with a passion to support the community. Being rich is not always about money. It can also be about the value of providing a service to the community that deeply enhances its members. I set out to develop a counseling center that had high-quality trained staff equipped and prepared to deal with and support the mental health issues of our community.

What follows is a list of the characteristics I believe necessary to take the risk of stepping out as an entrepreneur. None of the following list of items were researched apart from what I believe were the qualities I needed to be successful and accomplish my goal. It represents a hindsight view of what was necessary to develop my own business.

One fundamental aspect of building my own business was having the *support* of the people around me. Leaving the security of the organization I was a part of was a risk to our family's financial stability. After in-depth discussions with my wife, she was completely supportive, and we were 100% on board for me to leave the organization and develop a community counseling center. Her

support and confidence in me were vital in making this endeavor a success.

Risk is naturally built into any entrepreneurial endeavor. I don't know anyone who is absolutely 100% comfortable with risk. If you were to put me on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being very uncomfortable with risk to 10 being okay with taking financial risk, I would say I am absolutely on the lower end of the scale. Although I have taken several risks in my life—like picking up my family and moving 3,500 miles to Cordova, Alaska for a job opportunity—I would still not categorize myself as a risk taker.

Oftentimes, people will develop **backup plans** when taking a risk. I am that type of person. I like to have a backup plan. Moving out from underneath the organization I was a part of to develop my own company felt like taking a risk without a clear-cut backup plan. We had about six months' worth of income in savings.

An analogy that comes to my mind when I think about how it felt to be on staff with an organization, I wasn't satisfied with is like being a baby bird in a nest too small for comfort. When it comes time for the little ones to leave the nest, the nest becomes an uncomfortable place to be. When the nest becomes too uncomfortable because it is overcrowded with the little birds maturing, it's time to spread their wings and learn to fly. Leaving the nest is risky. The little birds rely on mom to teach them how to fly and to be able to support themselves. I was the little bird learning to fly!

I could put my decision-making process into a correlation variable. Correlations can be either positive, negative, or neutral. In my situation, as my dissatisfaction continued to grow in a negative direction, my desire to spread my wings and follow my dream grew in a positive direction. The excitement of being an entrepreneur must be weighed against the risk. For me, the ultimate decision was how uncomfortable or unsatisfied I knew I would be if I stayed in my current position. I had an internal desire to follow the dream that was birthed within me. I did not want to get to the end of my life and look back over the choices I made and regret not taking the opportunity to pursue my dream.

I liked (still do) the idea of being my boss. A television commercial I recall was for a company that would help you find a new job. They used small children dressed up like adults using “adult phrases” to justify the job they had but were very dissatisfied with. One child in a business suit would say, “When I grow up, I want to work my way up to middle management.” The idea of course is no one should settle for middle management. I wanted more for myself. I wanted to create my own destiny.

One of the main ingredients necessary for being a successful entrepreneur is being *dissatisfied* with a dream unfilled. That dissatisfaction caused me to pursue my passion and dream.

I love to play basketball. I played basketball in junior high, high school and college, and it was during those years that I developed my philosophy of leadership. It started in college when my team, which was very good, was up against another equally as good team. At 6’5” tall, I was a pretty good player in college, averaging just over 20 points a game. The other team had another good player on their team who also averaged over 20 points per game. As we prepared for the game it was noted that it was going to be a competition between me and the opposing team’s also good player. Our coach told us we are going to take the floor as a team of five not a team of one. He said it was not about who scores the most points on our team but rather about winning the game as a team. If we win it will be a complete team effort. Not only did we win that game, but we won every game thereafter against that team. What stood out for me was the philosophy our coach taught us about the power of teamwork. Five players playing with each other cohesively is stronger than one dominant player not utilizing his teammates.

At the heart of being an entrepreneur must be the understanding that you are not going at this alone. Success is a complete *team* effort. You need to develop a *cohesive team of people* around you with skillsets that are different and stronger than yours. The unit together is stronger than the sum of its individual parts. My point with this is as you are developing your business make sure you are building a team around you of experts that can give you input into your development. Learn to rely on people who are smarter than you are with strengths different from your own. I have learned over the years

that putting people around me that are smarter than I am makes me appear more intelligent.

In collaboration with the organization I was leaving, I was preparing to transition the current counseling center into a community-based organization, which would no longer be under their umbrella. I reached out to a colleague who had done something similar. We met several times and he acted as an advisor and mentor providing me with both successes and pitfalls of his journey. This was extremely valuable as I began creating my business plan and model. Each of our business plans had several similarities, I had one strong deviation from his plan that I intended to pursue, which was met with great opposition. He was discouraging and did not believe my approach would be successful. Together we reviewed the structure, outlining my intentions and vision to make it work. He was pessimistic but skeptically supportive and remained a mentor and advisor along the way. Two years later, we had a conversation and he stated that he didn't believe my business model would work but he was very pleased that I not only made it work but made it successful!

There are two points about the above paragraph that are important to remember. 1) make sure you put skilled, intelligent people around you that will scrutinize and critique your process while also encouraging you; and 2) believe in yourself and your ideas. Make sure you listen to the advice of others but also realize if you believe your idea has the capability of being successful then follow your idea completely.

Back to my basketball team analogy, I recruited a board of directors I knew would hold me accountable as the executive director of the new company, providing me with expertise in many aspects of a startup company. I shared my passion and vision with each person individually before recruiting them to join the executive board. Each member was a competent, successful business owner and each person believed in my vision providing their entrepreneurial support. Utilizing their business acumen and expertise allowed us to work together as a cohesive unit. Once this team was formed, we met monthly to review the progress and health of the organization.

The energy and inspiration they provided during our meetings also translated into a continual kindling of my inspiration.

I realized quickly as the organization grew and expanded over the coming years; I had found a ***niche*** in the community that was necessary, meeting the mental health needs of the area. Without a niche, it is difficult for any organization to be successful. Find your niche based on your passion and desire then develop the business plan to make it work.

Were there mistakes along the way in the new startup? Absolutely there were. Were there times of self-doubt and personal reflection as to whether I had done the right thing? Absolutely there were. But I carried with me the internal resolve that I was going to make this counseling center a success.

What do you do when you make mistakes? I think it's our nature to try to run from mistakes, to hide from them, or to transfer responsibility onto others rather than take responsibility ourselves. In the field of counseling when you're working with a person who is struggling with addiction you want to make sure you develop a relapse plan. Some people have identified relapse in slang terms as falling off the wagon. Regardless of how you want to categorize it, relapse means you've slipped back into using the substance you're struggling to be free from. Relapse is a part of the recovery period. If you've developed a good relapse plan, you can utilize "falling off the wagon" in a positive way so that recovery is still an ongoing process versus failure.

Mistakes, miscalculations, or even misdirection will be part of the process in the initial phase of developing your new organization. Just like a relapse plan, work out the mistakes and continue to move forward. Don't let those things discourage you. Use those experiences as growth opportunities and utilize the strengths of your trusted advisors to overcome the mistakes, the miscalculations, or the misdirection to put the organization back on track. This is a great opportunity for personal reflection and assessment of the new organization. It's a time of growth and a good opportunity to develop a risk analysis plan and a crisis management plan. You can use the

strength of a risk and crisis plan to help as future growth problems emerge.

The last ingredient I want to talk about is the necessity of **marketing**. My college undergraduate degree included several marketing courses enriching my understanding of the need for marketing. Quality marketing was not only important but invaluable. Advertising and creating awareness of our organization in the community were vital. Utilize all the resources you can to market your product or your business so there is plenty of name recognition so when people need your services, they think of you first.

I've talked about several items in this chapter I believe are important for every entrepreneur. I don't believe this is a complete list of everything necessary, however, I used my own experience to help you recognize some important features of developing your dream and owning your own business. Being dissatisfied in your current role or where you are is a very important ingredient in motivating you to make the decision and move forward. If you are in a relationship with someone it is vital to have their support going forward. You will need to be comfortable with risk. Mitigate risk as much as possible but take the opportunity when it is time to spread your wings and learn to fly. Don't be afraid of setbacks, use them as growth opportunities. Build a great, supportive team— people who will embrace your passion and vision, and provide you with the inspiration, vision, and energy you need to continue forward. And finally, marketing. This service is an expense that is vital to the growth and stability of your new pursuit, providing a positive return on investment!

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Dorease Rioux



Dorease Rioux grew up near Natchez, Mississippi where sweet tea, colorful contradictions, and impeccable Southern manners ruled the day. Whether she gussied up to socialize with local aristocracy or saddled up at home on their rodeo family's ranch, she acquired a taste for authenticity.

Over several decades, Dorease was a plane-hopping, award-winning account executive and trainer in Corporate America, and a Registered Nurse in Critical Care before that.

Now, Dorease is an *entrepreneur*, two-times **#1 International Bestselling author**, and soon-to-be four-times *published author*. She's an inspirational *speaker* with a dynamic, relational style. Dorease is frequently featured on Podcasts, Television, and Radio regarding narcissistic abuse, the power of forgiveness, healthy boundaries and more.

Through speaking, training, and coaching programs, Dorease equips and empowers other entrepreneurs and corporate professionals as ***"The Victory for Purpose" Coach***. She helps them discover their **gifts**, activate their **purpose**, and **rescript their future**.

Dorease expresses her creativity as a visual artist, and as a writer with an adventure-seeking storyteller's imagination, and descriptive, artistic script.

After living out West for three decades, Dorease and Tim recently left behind their mountain-top ranch at 10,200 feet to return to Mississippi where they enjoy a country-living lifestyle with seven delightful dogs and see her parents often. Wherever Dorease is, she's passionate to use her gifts and fulfill her purpose while helping others to reclaim theirs.

A Purpose-Powered Folktale

By Dorease Rioux

“Someday you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.”

— C.S. Lewis

(Lewis, C.S. The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe.(2002).Harper Collins.)



Crowned to Reign

Once upon a time, in a land far away, lived a joyous lassie who sang and danced with the butterflies around wildflower meadows and up into the hills above the village. The townspeople were cheered by her presence and uplifted by her heartfelt sentiments and joyful songs.

Some of Sarah Elizabeth’s earliest achievements included the rescue of a drowning honeybee from a bird bath filled with water, tending well to a motherless lamb, and liberating a scarlet rose finch stuck in brambles, then mending its broken wing.

As the girl grew up and neared adulthood, she never lost her big heart for helping others find freedom and inspiring them to be and do what they were meant for.

Sarabeth’s father was the town Vicar with a bladesmith business on the side. He was a wise man of immense inner and outer strength, yet an esteemed servant leader who others trusted.

Sarabeth’s mother and sister had been apprentices in their father’s apothecary. They grew up at his side, tending the garden and turning medicinal plants into teas, tinctures, syrups, salves, and other herbal remedies. Her mother had stayed to carry on his legacy as an accomplished, compassionate healer.

One early spring day, while on a picnic with her parents in their favorite fragrant meadow, her father read to them from the sacred

living book. Then he said, “Sarabeth, your mother and I love you, and, as entrepreneurs, we want to help nurture your dreams. *If you could do anything in life that you wanted and knew you would never fail... what would it be?*”

Sarabeth answered, “Oh, Father, I would love to write books about my adventures and the wondrous things I learn as I work alongside you and mother. I hope my storytelling will enlighten readers. Nothing brings me greater joy than to encourage others and help them fulfill their dreams.”

Sarabeth continued, “Also, I daydream about a wonder-graced haven with a stone cottage in the mountains where I’ll *tend an herb garden and apothecary*. I’ll *help others* and also support my *artistic pursuits, writing and speaking so I can teach and build others as you have poured into me*. Then, every month, I’ll lead art classes to help heal hurting hearts. Afterwards, we’ll break bread together and savor herbal tea selections from mother’s tasty recipes. My greatest joy of all will be *to help others discover their purpose and achieve their dreams*.”

Sarabeth’s parents gasped in amazement at her enterprising mindset. Her father continued, “Well, Sarabeth, *most become what they decide to be*. I believe your dreams will come true. You’ll be a tremendous help to anyone who partakes in your entrepreneurial offerings. Sadly, many will never realize their dreams or reason for being here.

I’ve officiated the burials of multiple parishioners over the years. I’ve observed many who just *went with the flow* but didn’t use their gifts to serve the King or help others. I’m convinced that *one of the greatest tragedies in a person’s life is not in dying but in overlooking their true purpose for being here*. The kirkyard near the village is filled with the bones of many good, well-meaning people who died with their heart’s desires and purpose still lying dormant within.”

Her gallant, good-hearted father was impassioned to teach others how to fulfill their Kingdom purpose. Emphasizing this, he said, “My dear daughter, you must *be intentional to live each day with purpose*. *This is how you’ll make your life count*. In the meantime, you must continue to *develop the gifts and strengths you were born*

with. They were instilled in you for the enhancement of your purpose, which will always seem bigger than you.”

The Vicar further explained how each human being was created in the image of the Highest Sovereign. Thus, all people are three-part beings born with a capacity to *connect, commune, and co-create* with Him. He reminded Sarabeth that she was a *spirit*, had a *soul* (her mind, will, and emotions), and lived in a *body*.

Her father told her that the Highest Sovereign had designed each three-part person to *connect* with Him, to *create* like Him, and to *contribute* toward the life enrichment of others. Her father had learned some of these principles from his revered mentor, Bishop Wayne Malcolm.

Her mother added, “Sarabeth, after you understand your true identity and fully embrace who you are and whose you are, you’ll be ready to step into your purpose. Also, I beseech you to read the sacred living book every day and apply its rich Kingdom principles to your life. You’ll discover that the book is about personal relationship with the Most High Sovereign and not about ‘religion.’ That’s merely what humankind has made it.”

Within the pages of the sacred living book, we learn about the King’s royal family and the authority we’ve been given. Remember, The King of kings is not a King over peasants, serfs, and slaves, but He is the King over other kings and queens. *Each member of the royal family, in principle and essence, is to rule and reign with purpose over their own domain. We are each crowned for purpose.”*

Her mother continued, “Sarabeth, as a result of choosing wisely each day to do what you were born for, you’ll better build and bless other people. *Your innate gifts should always enhance your purpose.* I envision you’ll write inspirational stories and speak at gatherings to equip and empower others to gain clarity about their gifts and callings so they can better fulfill their purpose too.

With that in mind, Sarabeth, *you cannot go the way you cannot see.* As a brave-hearted visionary, *hold fast to your vision* and keep it stirred up inside.”

Her father added, “Sarabeth, your mother has eloquently spoken life-enriching truths. I ask you to secure them close to your heart. And remember this: you must focus on and follow the bishop’s three Cs.

Be aware we live in a fallen world where bad things can happen to good people, even to those who understand their identity and live their life purpose. No matter what might happen, good or bad, it’s essential that you stay *connected* to the Highest Sovereign and use and develop your inherent gifts and abilities to *create* so that you’ll *contribute* well to blessing, building, and helping others. Then, *as you intentionally connect, create, and contribute, you will most assuredly live up to your potential and fulfill your purpose.* That’s the best way for ‘*cracking the rich code*’ for a life well lived and helping others do the same.”

Sarabeth’s father concluded, “The best part is this... by walking out your destiny with the three Cs, you’ll *please* the Highest Sovereign. From His good pleasure, He will continue to entrust you with greater opportunities and privileges in this life and beyond. Will you hold these truths close in your heart, dear daughter?” Sarabeth prized learning and assured her father she would.

The Vicar’s family was grateful for their time in the sunlit meadow. When the sun sank low in the sky, they meandered downhill toward home, leaving behind the happy hum of honeybees returning to their queen with increase.

In the center of the village, their charming cottage, with herb and flower gardens, was their beckoning refuge and would soon be aglow with candlelight.

Little did they know that the cloaked, dark deceiver would ride through on his fire-breathing dragon after nightfall. He would spread a plague that would quickly kill many villagers over the days ahead.

Cloaked in Courage

On the day after the dragon and its heartless, evil rider had skulked through to steal, kill, and destroy, Sarabeth’s parents told her they were desperately needed and must leave their safe abode to help

others. They decided to send her up an old deer path to a mountain village that many passers-through had exclaimed about.

They quickly helped Sarabeth fill her father's linen-lined sheepskin knapsack with rustic breads, cheeses, dried meats and fruit. They chose a few pieces of her mother's finest china and wrapped them in three of Sarabeth's best dresses before placing the fragile pieces inside the oversized knapsack, along with her grandfather's hand-carved wooden eating utensils and her father's pewter tankard so she could drink water from the river that flowed down from the mountains above.

They helped her wrap the large sacred living book in the soft-teal wool blanket from her parent's bed. To the book was added another treasure: their family oil-on-canvas portrait from when Sarabeth was eight. Their resemblances had been captured accurately by Mr. Allan Ramsay, an artist who had visited kinsfolk there a decade earlier.

With her mother's fanciest ribbons of teal, blush-pink, and gold, the three of them strapped onto her knapsack, the lovingly wrapped book and similar-sized portrait swaddled in her mother's wedding dress.

They wanted Sarabeth to take her maternal grandmother's garnet ring and her enduring hand-woven basket with foraging tools and grandfather's herbal remedy recipes inside.

Before leaving their cottage, Sarabeth's mother thoughtfully removed her luckenbooth pendant with a reminiscent smile. Her betrothed had placed the beautifully fashioned keepsake around her neck twenty years earlier. In like manner, she tenderly placed the necklace around the warmth of her sweet daughter's skin as she reached around and kissed Sarabeth on her cheek.

Then, her father gave her his hand-tooled leather belt, which held his sporran, and a hand-crafted sheath holding his favorite full-tang fixed blade with a stag handle that he had benchmade several years before.

Sarabeth secured her father's bounteous gift over her skirts. Then, her tearful parents embraced and kissed their sobbing daughter once more inside their heart-warming home. They placed Sarabeth's wool

tartan plaid cloak around her body and fastened it with her paternal grandmother's ornate penannular brooch. They hurriedly departed and escorted Sarabeth out of the village on the least-traveled trail to get her up to the wooded edge of the wildflower meadow.

Before the benevolent couple courageously descended the hilltop to do as they must, they ensured their daughter's safe distance from the village, prayed over and blessed her, and provided Sarabeth with an abundance of coin and practical guidance for survival. She was instructed to hug the banks of the river all the way up to the acclaimed village in the high country.

A Rich Legacy Lives On

It was three days later, and from her overlook, Sarabeth watched as dozens of survivors torched their village. After no one came for her and she saw their own home engulfed in flames, the brave young girl sensed her parents had given their lives in service for others, and she would never see them again in this lifetime. Sarah Elizabeth was grief-stricken.

Most of the dejected survivors who walked past down below were headed toward the city. Some shared how they were alive only because her parents had given wholeheartedly. Reportedly, Sarabeth's parents had succumbed to the pestilence before dawn that very morning. Friends dressed the Vicar and his bride in their finest, covered them in Sarabeth's rosy-pink wool blanket, and buried them side-by-side. Their grave was marked with the large heart-shaped stone moved from beside their front door.

It greatly distressed Sarabeth that she had not been there for her parents. Also, none of their old neighbors seemed concerned about her well-being, yet her family had given them everything. No one invited Sarabeth to join them on their journey to start over. As reality and sorrow set in, so did offense against those who should've been honorable to become her protective covering.

Sarabeth could almost hear the Vicar's voice say, "*Daughter, don't give up... but get up and become.*" So, she mustered her strength, gathered priceless belongings and began her arduous journey.

The Harp Inside the Heart Inspires Hope

When she was young, her grandmothers had taken Sarabeth on frequent foraging expeditions. She became familiar with the edibles. They would return home with brimming baskets of delicious herbs, roots, and wild foods like chanterelles, nettles, and hazelnuts. This knowledge served her well on her upward trek as she sat down each day to tasty feasts of knapsack morsels partaken with wild lettuces, berries, nuts, and more. The river water was deliciously refreshing as it streamed down from the mountaintops above.

Each morning, she awakened to a serenade of river rhythms with birdsong. They roused her to press on and count her blessings. During the daylight hours, Sarabeth meandered up along the winding deer path. At night, she slept on boughs of fir, spruce, or pine.

About two weeks into her journey, Sarabeth climbed onto a boulder to trim off some soft-looking branches. She slipped, fell, and hurt her leg. For several days, Sarabeth limped along, up and through the wilderness wildlands. Finally, she decided to take a full day to rest in the sun-dappled sunlight by the river.

Sarabeth was angry that the Highest Sovereign had allowed her noble-hearted parents to die from the cloaked, dark deceiver's assault, that so many people were slain, and that a vulnerable young maiden was left stranded by the wayside to fend for herself.

As she leaned back against a tall tree, she glanced across the river and was stunned to see a sturdy Highland pony drinking water. He was white with a long, flowing mane. After taking several gulps, the horse looked up and saw her. With his eyes never leaving hers, he slowly bent down his gorgeous head for more.

Sarabeth coaxed him across for some dried apple slices. At her side, the pony whinnied with enjoyment as he munched, then asked if she was Sarah Elizabeth. The astonished girl replied with an affirmative nod. She wondered, "*When did animals start talking, and how did he know my name?*" The pearlescent-coated creature introduced himself as Sir Wins-a-Lot. He explained that he had been

commissioned by a kind-hearted royal couple in a mountain village to find and bring her there.

For hours, Sarabeth wailed long and hard under the moonlight. She had never before cried so thoroughly. The lass yearned for her parents, yet some measure of hope was ignited. Her salty tears intermingled with the river, which mysteriously changed course, just on that one starry night, to tenderly wash through the charred village below.

Crowned for Freedom

The next morning, Sarabeth limped over to climb atop a fallen log to get onto the waiting horse. As the sure-footed pony and his grateful rider meandered up the path, he told her his name was given to him by the King of kings three summers ago.

Formerly, he had been called “Chalky.” Sir Wins-a-Lot told her how he suffered mistreatment by a former master. Not only was he kept in a shackled, filthy stall, but the drunken man often skipped days providing food and water. Over time, the Highland pony sank deeper into despair with resentment and bitterness. This diminished him to a *shackled soul*. On the days Chalky’s raven friends brought him sweet-grass bundles, they explained why it was *vital to break free from the chains of unforgiveness*. Although he felt justified, gradually, he forgave the undeserving man. Soon thereafter, Chalky was *free to flee* when the stall door was left unchained. With the raven pair’s jubilant and croaking send-off, the horse ran for days and made his way across mountain ranges, where he discovered a resplendent village. A loving couple in their forties welcomed the bag-o-bones horse and restored him to wholeness.

That’s when Sarabeth told Sir Wins-a-Lot about her own recent struggles with deep hurt and hard feelings. He helped her see that *her soul was limping along in the wilderness* just as she had been with her injured leg, thus, *forgiveness is key for freedom of soul*.

That day as they gained elevation, the white Highland pony taught Sarabeth how *one’s purpose can be hindered when you hold onto and justify hard feelings against anyone else*. If you don’t bypass offense and quickly forgive, negativity and resentment will distract

and hamper you. Eventually, unforgiveness will grow deep roots of bitterness, which will damage you and defile others.

Although Sir Wins-a-Lot mentioned other potential *hindrances to fulfilling one's purpose*, unforgiveness was the one that resonated with Sarabeth. She decided there was *too much at stake* in her life; thus, she would not permit herself to be held back from her destiny by justifying and staying entangled with offense, unforgiveness, or bitterness.

Crowned for Purpose

On their third day of meaningful companionship, they stopped for a midday meal. While they were eating, in the near distance, Sarabeth heard a woman's lilting, lyrical soprano singing voice, followed by speaking and joyous laughter.

After hurriedly snacking, Sarabeth repacked her knapsack and climbed atop the back of her newfound friend. Slowly, they ventured upwards. When they rounded a bend by the river, up ahead in a clearing, about thirty ladies were sitting on downed trees and big rocks while another stood at the bottom of a large stone bridge with a gold-embellished book in her hands. The travelers stood back in the trees as the lady read aloud. There was a luminous glow that emanated from its pages. Sarabeth recognized that the powerful passage was from the sacred living book.

The captivating speaker delivered a riveting message that gripped Sarabeth's heart. At the end, the lady lifted her lyrical soprano voice once more.

When the song concluded, the graceful lady paused and gazed around the clearing, then she said: *"Someone is here today who feels weighed down with sorrow and uncertainty. As a royal Kingdom citizen, be reassured. First, you've found a safe place where living waters and love flow deep. Here, you'll experience restoration. Secondly, as you yield to the Spirit of Truth, you'll gain clarity on how to rescript your future, and skirt needless detours and delays. Thirdly, the Sovereign King is greatly pleased that you've set your heart on His Kingdom and on the empowerment of others. You are crowned for a purpose bigger than yourself."*

If this message is meaningful to someone, I hope you'll come see me afterwards. I discern you have a significant Kingdom purpose and destiny to fulfill."

Sarabeth knew the Spirit of the Highest Sovereign was speaking to her through the lady who softly shimmered. Like a hummingbird to nectar, the shaken, teary-eyed, limping young woman made her way through the foliage and the crowd. Sir Wins-a-lot stayed right behind her. When the forlorn Sarabeth reached the lady, she was taken into a long, warm embrace. They both dissolved into quaking sobs.

What unfolded next would forever be etched like gold onto Sarabeth's heart.

The lady at the bridge glanced over and smiled affectionately at Sir Wins-a-lot and thanked him for finding precious treasure. Then, she looked at the lass and said, *"My name is Anabel. Many years ago, I met a kind and handsome laird who traveled down to the village where I grew up. He was in search of a healing elixir for his mother that only my father could make. Once in hand, he whisked the remedy back up the mountain. Three months later, the young laird returned with news that his mother had fully recovered. He made plans to stay in our village for the summer. We soon wed. We went to the city for several years. However, when we received word his father grew frail, he brought me up here to live in this majestic place. It has been my wonder-graced haven ever since."*

Sarah Elizabeth, your ten-talent mother was my sister. I am your aunt. I last held you in my arms when you were a wee toddler with your sweet, sunny nature. You look just like our beautiful Ayrabel." It was then Auntie Anabel gently lifted and gazed upon the cherished Luckenbach pendant, and they wept together again.

Sarabeth was overwhelmed with profound relief, gratitude, and countless questions but merely asked, "How did you learn what happened?"

Her choked-up auntie replied, "A determined little scarlet rose finch braved numerous hardships to find and tell me. His once-broken-wing is still adorned with a wee lassie's rosy-pink woolen threads.

The honorable creature will make his new home in the trees near our garden with seeds aplenty.”

Auntie Anabel tenderly looped her niece’s arm through her own and asked, “Sarabeth, are you ready to cross over to the other side?” Then, with a step toward the bridge and a nod to Sir Wins-a-Lot, she said, “Let us take you home. Your destiny beckons.”

Better Than a Fairytale

Just in case you’re wondering...

Sarah Elizabeth would carry forth her parent’s *purpose-powered legacy*, flourish and thrive with *the three Cs*, and *fulfill her Kingdom purpose* as she empowered and helped countless others.

And... as you might imagine...

Sarabeth would *‘live happily ever after.’*

The End



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*When you’re ready to discover your gifts and reclaim your true purpose, schedule a free 30-minute “**Crowned For Purpose**” coaching call with Dorease.*

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“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.” – Pablo Picasso

David Kincaid



David Kincaid is a Clarity Coach who supports clients generate clarity in their endeavors by connecting them with their authentic inner selves and aligning their actions with their vision for the future. Through compassionate inquiry, David empowers clients to break through the obstacles that hinder them from realizing their full potential; his clients report experiencing transformational breakthroughs in employing their natural abilities and talents to create meaningful

work in their professional and personal lives.

Mr. Kincaid's previous work has taken him all over the world, including Eastern Europe, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. He worked as a diplomat in Indonesia and as Southeast Asia's Digital Attaché. Mr. Kincaid has consulted with hundreds of companies in civil nuclear energy, renewables, education, tourism, financial technologies (FinTech), banking, insurance, medical devices, franchising, and others; as well as worked with associations, think tanks, governments, and special interest groups around the globe. In addition to fluency in two foreign languages, Mr. Kincaid is a Presidential Management Fellowship recipient and holds a master's in international affairs and economics, an undergraduate honors degree in anthropology, and has completed more than 125 credit hours of education and training in coaching principles and methodologies.

The Camino of the Self

By David Kincaid

Six thirty a.m. came early. Butterflies in my stomach had never settled throughout the night, and sleep had been scarce. Excitement replaced exhaustion. I launched from my bed in an eight-room boutique hotel in the heart of St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, France. I had packed the night before and had gone to sleep in a fresh pair of underwear I planned as my “day pair” for the coming month. A pair of hiking pants, a long-sleeve thermal, a wicking T, and a light puff jacket completed my ensemble.

Earlier that morning in March 2019, I had heard pilgrims on their way to The Camino de Santiago progress *en masse* outside my window. Competitive thoughts of starting too late stirred my mind. Then I remembered why I was here.

I love breakfast, and there is simply no better place than the private dining room of a European hotel’s garden-side café to enjoy the breaking dawn. A formidable outlay of utensils sparkled in the dim lighting, and the smooth black of European coffee against white porcelain bookended this morning’s perfect sentence with an exclamation point. Two croissants served as a vessel for salted butter, hazelnut spread, and a tasteful selection of cured meats and pungent cheeses. Light peeked through the double glass doors where I was the only guest remaining to luxuriate in the wondrousness of the dawning day.

Having satisfied the urge for one final indulgence, I stepped into the gray chill. For a few moments, I wandered up and down the street and then crossed the canal toward the fortress before finally arriving at my starting point. There, in a magnificent wave of emotion, I knelt before the gate of St. James and took in the moment.

The Run-Up

I had been a talented high school student who showed promise in classical piano and academics. But growing up a gay man in a conservative Baptist household in the 1980s did little to further those talents. Shame, the threat of losing all I had known, and the specter

of AIDS set me at war with myself. I tried to pray the gay away. I recorded my voice and worked to modify my speech in an effort to hide any hint of femininity—something I was convinced labeled me as a homosexual. I practiced “appropriate” hand gestures and walking in a more masculine fashion. I joined the Nashville chapter of Exodus, an organization whose aim was to heteronormalize wayward gay men. I even attempted suicide. But nothing worked. I continued to be attracted to other men. And, by twenty-five years of age, I found myself homeless, having been cast out by my family, my church, and my university; I hated myself.

I entered my thirties severely overweight, struggling to find joy in a mediocre job, and in an emotionally abusive relationship. So, I left the relationship, quit the job, lost eighty pounds, and returned to university.

Anthropology was the perfect field of study for me at that time; it enabled me to begin thinking about my human nature in more constructive ways. Intellectual pursuits had always inspired me, so my undergraduate studies were fulfilling. Before long, I had graduated with a bachelor’s degree with honors, had completed a master’s degree in international affairs and economics, and had been awarded a Presidential Management Fellows position at the US Department of Commerce.

Over the next ten years, I drove myself to overcome the failures of my past. I rose to become the nation’s top civilian nuclear energy trade analyst. I facilitated advisory meetings at the White House under the Obama administration, traveled to far-flung countries promoting US interests, and rubbed shoulders with cabinet ministers and industry leaders from the world over.

But ladder climbing didn’t make me happy.

After a lengthy application process, I became a US Foreign Service officer assigned to Indonesia where I took on a vast array of industry sectors, including tourism, education, financial technology (FinTech), banking, medical devices and services, and smart cities technologies. Together with my Indonesian team, I connected US manufacturers and service providers to projects across the Indonesian archipelago. My access to exotic travel was

unprecedented. In my personal life, I maintained a fifteen-year relationship with a man to whom I had the privilege of marrying in full recognition of the law; something I had never imagined possible.

Yet still, happiness and fulfillment eluded me.

One night, after a particularly difficult week, I hit a wall and collapsed to the floor, where I lay crying for a solution. Unable to bear the weight of my discontent, I resigned from my job and set out on a year of travel to discover my joy, my riches.

El Camino de Santiago (The Way to Santiago)

Kneeling before the Gate of Saint James, the starting point of The Way, I whispered a prayer and opened my heart to what lay ahead. I wondered, “What transformative power does The Way have in store for me?” Without further ado, I launched a scallop shell--the symbol of The Way--hanging from my overstuffed backpack, into the gray chill of a March morning.

According to legend, the apostle Saint James traveled throughout the Iberian Peninsula to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and intercede in conflicts between the French and Basque peoples. James’s route gave birth to one of the most famous pilgrimages in the world: El Camino de Santiago—The Way to Santiago, or The St. James Way. The year I traveled, more than 350,000 pilgrims¹ took to The Way in the direction of Santiago de Compostela, where the body of the apostle Saint James was purported to be buried. For some, the journey meant checking an experience off a bucket list, accomplishing a physical feat, or experiencing Spain.

For others, like me, it was a spiritual journey.

Let the Rain In

The trail runs 500 miles from St. Jean Pied de Port on the Spanish–French border to Santiago de Compostela on the western side of Spain and encompasses a variety of environments. Footwear that supports the traveler, while allowing for varying terrain is important. The weather ranged from dry temperatures in the high 90s to ice and

snow in below-freezing temps to wet forests. My shoes needed to be able to handle this diversity.

Blisters were the primary malady and accounted for the majority of pilgrims who aborted their trip by day ten. When the upper layer of skin (epididymis) becomes damp and rubs repeatedly against another surface, it separates from deeper layers and forms a bubble of fluid between the layers that will eventually tear at the surface, bleed, and become infected if not treated properly. Moisture is the enemy. However, if the skin is allowed to dry, it will harden from daily use, a callous will form, and prevent blisters. Callouses, in this way, are desirable.

Dozens of blog posts and outdoor-store salespersons regaled me with the benefits of Gore-Tex for keeping the rain out. But I knew that it also kept sweat in. So, against all advice, I bought a pair of Salomon trail runners with ventilated technology. No waterproofing.

Rigorous adherence to a routine of walking for periods of one and a half to two hours, followed by removing my socks and shoes to allow my feet to dry, together with permeable shoes ensured that I arrived in Santiago without a single blister. Rain was inevitable. Sweat was inevitable. I had decided to accept “what is” and let the rain in.

Throughout my client work and world travels—I’ve been to fifty-three countries and speak two foreign languages—I have observed that a majority of us have difficulty accepting “what is.” Many faiths—in particular, Buddhism—and the art and practice of meditation, seek to foster acceptance.

In the West, we are particularly poor at acceptance. We are socialized into the idea of analytical, or critical, thinking, in which we identify what’s wrong and extrapolate a solution, a way to overcome the undesirable. We seek to change or optimize the current reality in favor of an ideal. Or, worse, perfection. Our language reveals this tendency. We “fight to overcome,” “struggle to beat the odds,” and “claw our way to success.”

There is violence in the language of this approach.

Yet there is little evidence that violence, war, or resistance has contributed to forwarding the human species.

Challenging your neighbor's political views does not alter them; it strengthens them. Shaming those whose lifestyle practices you deem unacceptable does not change them; it creates resentment and hatred. Killing your enemy does not abolish confrontation; it fosters its perpetuation. As the saying goes, "What you resist persists."

Shoring up my feet against the rain only seals the sweat inside. Moisture would remain an opponent to my success.

Only two choices are available to me for change: 1) Change the circumstances in which I find myself or 2) change the way I think about the circumstance in which I find myself. So I changed my shoes and the thinking that resisted rain from entering. I decided to let the rain in.

Create a Favorable Decision-Making Environment

An hour or two into my Camino journey, I happened upon a waterfall off the beaten path that cascaded over high cliffs, meandered through dense foliage, and filled a sparkling pool below. Again, emotions overcame me. For the first time in more than twenty-five years, a hymn came to my lips: "When peace like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

Something special was happening here.

From others on the trail, I learned of three transformative phases of The Way: The Camino of the body, The Camino of the mind and heart, and the Camino of the soul. Even now, a wave of goosebumps passes over my body as I recall the truth of this observation.

Just beyond the waterfall, the path took a jagged turn upward, and for hours I pressed against the rising slopes of the Pyrenees Mountains. I stumbled. My pack grew heavy, and my muscles burned. Soon, tears rolled. Anger. Rage. Sorrow. Regret. Hatred. I hated my body. Why did it not perform for me with the same ease it did as a youth? Why did it bulge in these unsightly ways? Why did

my feet hurt and my back ache and my quads scream in agony? Why did I still carry the suffering of my past?

And then I fell to the ground and sobbed and beat my fists against the earth and cried aloud, while others passed me by. When I rose to press on, it seemed I had not an ounce of strength—yet, somehow, I carried on.

I crested the ridge at the Spanish border, looked out at the vast expanse, and took in the idyllic village of Roncesvalles and the many ridges that lay before me. Suddenly, I knew: this edifice of flesh and bone into which I had been poured was my vessel, my treasure.

That evening, along with a dozen other pilgrims, I toured the monastery at Roncesvalles. In one cavernous room, a young Korean woman began to sing, her voice lilting high above in the ancient spaces of those millions who had come before us. Other Koreans joined in, and then those from Spain and Italy and Germany and Australia and America. We didn't know the words, but we knew that song common to us all: a song of gratitude.

According to one study, the average human makes more than 35,000 decisions per day¹. One researcher asserted that, of these, 90 percent are unconscious¹, leaving 10 percent that are conscious. Conscious decisions are made with intent. Unconscious decisions are made through routine, habit, or some underlying governing standard. Survival, safety, security, and belonging are values that powerfully drive our unconscious decision-making, even though such values typically remain unexpressed.

This means that 35,000 times a day, we make decisions that carry us toward our future. And 35,000 times a day, we are granted the choice to transform our world. More than 35,000 times a day, we are afforded an opportunity to change our lives.

Your body, mind, heart, and soul are all environments in which your conscious and unconscious decision-making occurs. Take a mental inventory of your mental, physical, and spiritual environment. Are you tired? Confused? Overwhelmed? What are the anticipated

results of decisions that come from these states of being? Are these the kinds of results you desire?

Become Grounded in Clarity and Well-Being

Mostly, we exercise habits that reflect our past, not our intended future. We eat foods that irritate our guts and cause us to be overweight and feel depleted of energy. We select partners who mistreat us and fail to honor our boundaries. We strive to prove our worth from a place of having no worth. We drink alcohol, a depressant, and wonder why our mood is low. We endure countless maladies but disregard poor habits that disrupt the vital function of our bodies and minds. We blame politics and social trends and global events and media reporting for causing our failing mental and physical health.

Yet the solution to many of our personal and societal woes is a focus on becoming grounded in clarity and well-being.

Research has shown that stress, lack of sleep, and poor nutrition are the major causes of poor health and brain fog, while statistics on the benefits of meditation, cardiovascular exercise, and other mindfulness habits continue to mount. The environment in which your 35,000 decisions a day take place drives your future. What hinders your ability to care for your Self in ways that allow your 35,000 decisions a day to work in your favor?

For nine more days, my body suffered. Yet exhaustion gave way to force of will. When I could no longer speak of the pain, I committed myself to silence.

Suddenly, clarity.

For four days, I resided in the silence of my vessel and grew to love its delicious sentiments: pain to indicate overexertion, joy for giving it rest, hunger and thirst, and exhaustion and loneliness to teach me to respond with grace and generosity. Others followed me and asked “yes” and “no” questions as they learned I would only shake or nod my head in response. They wanted to know what drove me on in silence.

As I approached the town of Burgos, many followed who had learned that I intended to break my silence in the capital city of Castilla y León. Stepping across the city limits, a dry, throaty cry burst forth. I released my suffering and surrendered. This was my body, my home.

They say pilgrims carry their fears in their packs. Throughout my silence, I connected with this truth, and in Burgos, I released ten pounds of fear.

I had completed The Way of the body.

The Way of the heart and mind was no less challenging. For two more weeks, I crossed the *meseta* of central Spain. The sun's soaring temperatures beat upon my body without a trace of shade. High up on the Spanish plateau, loneliness, isolation, and desperation again gave way to suffering. "When will this end?" I asked aloud on more than one occasion. I shouted into the emptiness of that place against my parched lips and swollen tongue. No response. I tired of the endless complaints and bitterness that cycled like a hamster on a wheel through my mind. My heart ached under the pain of rejection and loss. Again, I surrendered, just as the town of León emerged from the hot shimmering horizon like the promise of Camelot, and I quieted my mind and embraced the big emotions in my heart.

I had completed the Camino of the heart and mind.

From León, the trail took another jagged turn skyward. Soon, snow fell, and freezing temperatures pillaged my once-energetic body. Upward I climbed to Cruz de Ferro, where I looked out over the lush lands of Galicia, home to my final destination. I fingered my scallop shell and smiled.

Long ago, the church had violated my earnestness, and I had shoved the religious devotion of my youth into the dark corners of my heart. But there, a slumbering spirit awakened and, as upon the wings of an eagle, I soared down the Galician range, through dense forests and across lush meadows, through cobbled streets and past monuments commemorating two thousand years of pilgrims passing this way. I was no longer alone in this world. Their exuberance and sorrow bled from the earth beneath my feet, and I passed with

lightning speed along roads traveled by millions before me who sought to cast their burdens off the ends of the earth. They carried me on wings of celebration into the outskirts of Santiago, down its narrow alleyways until I burst into the plaza of the Cathedral of Santiago. Hundreds of pilgrims gathered there that midday. Silence reigned. With tear-stained faces, these exhausted seekers wandered aimlessly, their legs not yet ready to cease their momentum.

I had awakened from my decades of slumber. I had completed The Way of the soul.

In completing the Way of the body, heart, mind, and soul, I had also completed the Way of the Self, which gave birth to clarity.

The Source of Happiness

During each stage of the Camino, I developed an intimate relationship with my body, heart, mind, and soul. I had focused on the environment of my decision making, and it made all the difference. I now knew how to alter the destiny of 35,000 decisions a day.

Where are you on your journey? Are the outcomes of your past actions satisfying? Are your current actions in keeping with your desired future? Are you at odds with “what is” in your world? Have you found satisfaction in your job or career path? Are you in relationships with people you love and who love you without question? Can you be at peace in a world of turmoil? Can you face the conflict that is a part of our human experience? Can you come to stillness, even with the injustices perpetrated against and around you? Are your 35,000 decisions a day moving you toward your creative evolutionary future?

There is no magic formula, no bullet, that will grant any of us the happiness and joy—the riches—for which we long. There is only one place in the universe where your happiness, your riches, come from: you. Are you ready to embrace “what is” and settle into your beautiful, divine Self?

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¹“The Camino de Santiago Hits Record Numbers in 2019,” Follow the Camino website, January 27, 2020, <https://followthecamino.com/en/blog/the-camino-de-santiago-hits-record-numbers-in-2019/>.

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Kohila Savis



Meet Kohila, the founder of Learning Success Coaches, a dedicated professional who is passionate about helping teachers and educators succeed in their careers by helping them launch their own Learning Success Coaching practice. With her unique blend of MathCodes and SuccessCodes her methodologies are rooted in neuroscience and neurolinguistics; Kohila brings a cutting-edge approach to learning to learn and coaching.

Kohila's coaching methodology, backed by research in neuroscience, empowers educators to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to enhance student learning outcomes. Using her proven methodologies, she taps into the power of the brain to optimize learning and maximize results.

As an online holistic Learning Success Coach, Kohila specializes in providing personalized coaching services to students of all ages and their parents. Kohila tailors her coaching process to meet the unique needs of each student and family.

But Kohila's expertise doesn't stop at education. She is also the driving force behind Holistic AI Marketing, a cutting-edge business that offers comprehensive coaching and digital marketing solutions to businesses of all sizes. Kohila helps businesses unleash the power of their marketing strategies and leverage AI-driven techniques for their success.

Kohila's ultimate mission is to serve 1.5 million or more students by 2035 and assist businesses in launching successful marketing initiatives. Whether you're an educator seeking career growth, a student striving for academic excellence, or a business aiming to revolutionize, Kohila's proven methodologies will empower you to achieve your goals.

Everything is Solvable!

By Kohila Sivas

As I awoke in the hospital bed, I had just one question,

“How did I get here?”

In retrospect, from where I sit today, that question has several answers. There is no one single reason. My journey towards that moment had been full of challenges.

At the age of 13, I had experienced more than most people should in a lifetime. The build up was compounding.

I grew up amidst the chaos of a civil war Sri Lanka where the sounds of gunfire echoed through the streets. We lived in a constant sense of fear and uncertainty. It was a daily struggle which weighed heavily upon me. I was constantly worried about my parents. At that age, it was difficult to comprehend the reasons behind the violence, but I saw the devastating consequences it had on the lives of so many people.

My dad vowed to get us to safety. And he succeeded. It was very sudden. We left everything behind including my beloved grandparents.

The move to a new country in search of safety and a better future brought with it a bittersweet mix of hope and isolation. The unfamiliarity of the language, customs, and traditions instantly made me an outsider. It was an unsettling feeling, of not fully belonging.

The weight of these differences created an invisible barrier between myself and those around me. It intensified the loneliness which had taken root within my heart. At that time, Canada was a different place, and the sting of racism deepened the isolation. I knew I was different and not fully accepted by society.

The language barrier became a towering wall, separating me from connection. The frustration of not being able to express myself, of struggling to convey my thoughts and emotions, was a constant internal struggle. It was a daily battle to bridge the gap between

cultures, to navigate conversations with patience and humility, and to find the courage to persist in learning and growing.

During my struggles I made a decision to be silent. It was born out of self-preservation. Fear of judgment, ridicule, and rejection stifled my voice and I retreated into a shell. I hid my thoughts, opinions, and emotions from the world around me. It was a survival mechanism. In this self-imposed silence, I felt invisible, as if my presence went unnoticed by those around me.

The choice to remain muted was not an easy one. It required immense strength to suppress my own desires for self-expression, to deny myself the fundamental human need for connection and communication. It was a lonely existence. I felt like an observer, yet I yearned to be seen, to be heard, and to have my voice acknowledged.

Over time, the silence became a heavy burden to bear. It weighed on my spirit, creating a sense of emptiness and loss.

Then came the news of my grandparents. When they died, I was struck with a deep sense of sorrow and grief. Memories of their love, wisdom, and presence echoed through my mind. They were my final connection to the roots I once called home. It was a devastating blow that shattered my world. The distance and the war had separated us, and my inability to be there to bid them farewell added an extra layer of heartache to an already overwhelming situation.

But there was an additional burden that weighed heavily on our family—the struggle of my father coping with the profound loss of his livelihood. Unable to find a healthy outlet for his pain and grief, he turned to alcohol as a means of escape, seeking temporary relief from the immense emotional turmoil he was enduring.

The loss of his livelihood was a devastating blow, stripping away not only his financial stability but his sense of purpose, identity, and security. He was left feeling powerless. My father, faced with the overwhelming weight of these circumstances, found solace in alcohol. It was his crutch, a way to escape his new reality.

Witnessing my father struggle was painful in more ways than one. It was distressing to see him change, but it also resulted in a cycle of abusive behavior towards his own children.

The abuse within our family had long-lasting effects. Being subjected to mistreatment from a parent, someone who is supposed to provide love, support, and protection, caused confusion, hurt, and betrayal.

Living in a constant state of fear took a toll on my emotional well-being and sense of security. The anticipation of being singled out and subjected to his bullying left me feeling vulnerable, powerless, and afraid.

This is time when I was also abused by another adult, someone we trusted who shattered my trust in others. I could not explain my feelings, but the pain, confusion, and betrayal that accompanied such a violation cut deep into my soul. The darkness of those moments cast a long shadow, and I began to question the intentions of everyone around me.

This went on for years until one day, at the age of 13, it all consumed me.

I felt so lost and alone.

I remember sitting alone in the park, my heart heavy with despair. I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders.

I had lost hope.

The bottle of pills was meant to relieve the pain that consumed me. My mind was filled with a mix of emotions - sadness, anger, frustration, and hopelessness.

I had so many conversations with myself that day. I thought of all the people I would miss, the ones who had shown me kindness and love throughout my life. I couldn't bear the thought of leaving them, but at the same time, I knew I was a burden to them.

I also thought about all the things I would never become, the dreams and aspirations that now seemed so far out of reach.

That sense of loss was overwhelming.

I knew it would be better for everyone if I was gone. There was someone inside me who should no longer live.

So, when I found myself waking in a hospital bed, I was struck with a sense of disbelief.

Against all odds, I had been resuscitated.

It was a strange feeling, to be suspended between life and death, unsure of which way to go. I stared up at the white ceiling above and I was filled with emotions.

Part of me was relieved that I had been given a second chance at life. Another part of me was angry, angry that I had been stopped, that I couldn't even control my own destiny.

I felt trapped, a prisoner in my own body. As if I was drowning, suffocating under the weight of my own thoughts and feelings.

During this darkness, there was a glimmer of hope. That I was still alive and breathing meant that there was a chance for me to start over, to begin anew.

For the first time in my life, I recognized and understood the power of the mind. I realized that the conversations I had been having with myself, about death, were conversations with my brain.

My suicide survival marked the beginning of a journey that taught me the true power of perseverance and resilience in the face of adversity. Little did I know this experience would become the foundation of my coaching methodology, the Meta-Learning DeStress Method.

It was a turning point in my life. It was my wake-up call, a reminder that life is precious and that every moment counts.

As the days and weeks passed, I knew there was more to life than the pain and darkness that had consumed me. Something inside of me took hold and I found a new inner strength.

I made a promise to myself - a promise to NEVER give up. Even if the road ahead would be difficult and filled with challenges, I knew that I had to keep moving forward.

I am grateful for the second chance that I was given, and for the opportunity to make a difference.

When I finally re-entered the world, my attitude and energy were different. I struggled at school, but I discovered mathematics. That was when I discovered how it could become my therapy.

I channeled my energy and focus into it.

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay longer with my problems.”

These words by Albert Einstein gave me hope. I didn’t need to be smart. All I needed to do was to commit the time to figure it out.

This was when I realized that every problem held a solution waiting to be discovered. And in life, instead of being limited by my current reality, I embraced challenges as new opportunities to create a better tomorrow.

With my new perspective, and with a focus on talking to my brain, I was able to excel in math. I did it through hard work and determination. Math was my passion, and I pursued it with all my heart. I started hacking and cracking the codes of math, to make it more easily understood, and it was through this pursuit that I found a sense of purpose and direction in my life.

After completing my education, I became a teacher’s assistant and then a teacher so I could share my methods with other students.

However, I soon found that the traditional education system didn’t suit me. I felt frustrated and limited in my ability to make a difference in the lives of my students.

"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it."

Because I knew I had more to offer, and I began to explore how to create my own environment and an alternative income.

I started my own tutoring business, but I soon found that it wasn't enough. I was driven to create something that would truly make a difference.

This is when I started to formulate and develop my coaching methodology, drawing on my experience and expertise in mathematics, as well as my own struggles and challenges. I refined it over time, until it became something truly unique and effective, the Meta-Learning DeStress

Method.

But my journey didn't end there.

Today, I train and certify teachers under my methodology, sharing my expertise and I share my experience with others who want to make a difference in the lives of their students.

Through my work, I have been able to touch the lives of countless people, helping them to find their own purpose and direction. Collectively, we are on a mission to serve 1.5 million or more students by 2035.

When I entered the entrepreneur world, about eleven years ago, marketing was a challenge that held me back and kept me stuck. I had hired many so-called 'experts' who promised everything but delivered little. I learned many hard lessons from my failures.

As I journey through my life, I learned to embrace the challenges that come my way, because I know from experience that within them lie the catalysts for growth, innovation, and transformation.

So, what did I do? I applied myself to learn marketing, just as I had learned math.

When I found success, I launched my own marketing agency, using the same approach that had brought me success in other areas of my life. Now I have added AI to power my marketing strategies.

Through my company, Holistic AI Marketing Agency, I am positioned to help passionate coaches, authors, or anyone with an amazing superpower who has a desire to build their own thriving business. My mission is to help others achieve their goals and realize their potential.

Looking back on my journey, I have learned a few key lessons along the way:

First, NEVER give up. No matter how difficult the road may seem, there is always a way forward. Even when things seem hopeless, there is always a glimmer of light that can guide you towards a better future.

Second, focus on your strengths and your superpowers. Identify the areas where you excel and find ways to use those strengths to create a better life for yourself and those around you. You don't have to be naturally gifted; you just have to stay longer with your problems to find the solutions.

Third, be open to change. If something isn't working, don't be afraid to try something new.

Sometimes, it's the unexpected twists and turns in life that lead us to our greatest successes.

Fourth, surround yourself with supportive people. No one can achieve success on their own.

We all need the support and encouragement of others to help us through the tough times and celebrate the good times.

Finally, believe in yourself. You have the power to overcome any obstacle and achieve any goal you set your mind to. All it takes is a little bit of perseverance and learning to work smarter.

If you NEVER GIVE UP and focus on the opportunities that challenges present, you can achieve great things in life. Whether it's finding your passion, starting a business, or making a difference in the lives of others, we all can create a life that feeds forward and helps others.

Along the way, remember to NEVER give up on your life or on your dreams.

Everything is solvable.

As I reflect on my journey, I am filled with gratitude for the experiences and people who have helped me along the way. From the hardships that once consumed me, to the moments of triumph and joy, every experience has taught me something valuable about life, myself, and others.

I am grateful for the power of my mind, which has allowed me to overcome challenges and pursue my dreams. Through my work as a teacher, a coach, and an entrepreneur, I have been able to make a positive impact on the lives of others, sharing my knowledge, experience, and passion to help them reach their full potential.

I am grateful for the support of my family and friends, who have been with me through the highs and lows, providing love, encouragement, and inspiration. They have believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself, and I am blessed to have them in my life.

I am also grateful for the power of technology, which has enabled me to connect with people around the world and share my message on a global scale. Through my Holistic AI Marketing

Agency, I can help others achieve their dreams and make a difference in the world.

As I look to the future, I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. I am committed to continuing to learn, grow, and evolve, and to sharing my knowledge and experience with others.

I am passionate about helping others find their purpose and direction in life, and I am dedicated to making a positive impact on the world.

So, let me end this chapter with this quote:

Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts. ~ Winston Churchill

You know, I wanted to share my story with you because I truly believe that there is a point to your life, to my life, to everyone's life. It's like we're all playing this big game, the game of life, and within it, there's a purpose that we have to discover.

I've been through so much in my life, faced tremendous challenges and pain. It's been like navigating through a maze, trying to find my way. But you know what? Despite everything I've been through, I've come to realize that there is meaning in it all. Each struggle, each triumph, and every experience has shaped me into who I am today.

Life is like a journey of self-discovery. It's about uncovering our unique purpose, the reason why we're here. And that purpose, it's deeply personal. It's influenced by our passions, our values, and the impact we want to make in the world.

Even in the darkest moments, I've found strength and resilience within myself. Those difficult times have taught me so much about who I am and what I'm capable of. And now, I share my story with others because I know that they can inspire and encourage someone else who may be going through similar struggles.

I want to encourage you to embrace your own journey of self-discovery. Follow your passions, pursue the activities that bring you joy, and be open to the unexpected twists and turns that may lead you closer to your purpose.

Remember, your story matters. By sharing your experiences, you have the power to inspire and influence others. Your resilience and determination to find your purpose can be a guiding light for someone else who may be searching for their own path.

You have the power within you to overcome any obstacle and achieve greatness. It may not be easy, but it's worth it. There is a point!

Remember that success is not just about achieving your goals, it's about the journey you take to get there. Embrace the challenges, learn from your mistakes, and keep moving forward.

Life is precious, and every moment counts. So, live your life to the fullest and NEVER give up on your dreams.

Keep pushing forward, with this mindset, you can transform your life and achieve anything you set your mind to.

Now, it's your turn. What challenges are you facing in your life, and how can you apply the lessons from this chapter to overcome them.

Take a moment to reflect and set your intentions for the future.

Remember, everything is solvable!

You have the power within you to create a life that feeds forward and makes a positive impact.

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Dan Gilman



Dan Gilman has made his mark as a Design Director for over 25 years. His entrepreneurial spirit shines through the founding of Hummingbird Radio. This forward-thinking company aids hosts and creators in building their brand and formulating effective communication strategies. Dan's other initiatives include radio, television, social media, and various social audio applications. He currently holds a Board Member position

on Traverse TV.

Media and communications have been an integral part of Dan's life, deeply influenced by his mother, Cindy Gilman. Cindy was a celebrated radio talk show host, with her show, "Discover Your Potential," which inspired audiences for over 40 years. With her passing in April 2021, Dan has dedicated himself to continuing her legacy of touching lives and fostering personal development.

Dan is presently under the mentorship of globally renowned motivational speaker, Les Brown, and the accomplished Mario Armstrong, with a focus on nurturing sponsorships. Joining him in this mission is his new co-host, Anna Devere, a formidable presence who brings her own brand of talent and expertise. Together, Dan and Anna are committed to globally inspiring and motivating people.

Dan mirrors his mother's ultimate goal: to touch lives and make a lasting, positive impact on individuals worldwide. Dan is eager to honor his mother's legacy while creating his own unique path in the world of media and communication.

An Encounter with My Destiny

By Dan Gilman

Nestled in the warmth of my childhood, there resided an awe-inspiring world of media that fostered, nurtured and molded my enthusiasm for streaming audio and television. This world was largely influenced by my mother, Cindy Gilman, a lady of extraordinary talent who helmed a radio show titled “Discover Your Potential with Cindy Gilman,” that graced the airwaves for over 15 years. The family home hummed with the electric energy of TV and radio production, sparking an undying fascination within me for the media industry.

These formative years instilled in me a deep appreciation for the power the media holds in creating a vibrant, thriving community. This chapter serves as a canvas upon which I’ll paint the story of my journey and the insights I gathered about how media, with its tremendous potential, can aid in personal growth and facilitate the creation of a network that brings prosperity to both personal and professional domains of life.

A Story Told in Strums: The Power of Media

Media, in all its forms, possesses the unique and awe-inspiring ability to unify people from disparate walks of life. It crafts a beautiful tapestry of shared experiences and camaraderie that underpins the foundation of a united community. Throughout my life, I have had the privilege of experiencing the magic of media that fosters connections and constructs strong, caring

communities firsthand.

The radiant memory of my mother hosting her radio show still echoes in my mind. She sculpted a space for listeners to learn, grow and discover their potential, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support. This spirit of unity and upliftment forms the backbone of my enduring passion for streaming audio and television in the present day.

A memorable encounter that furthered my bond with the media world was with none other than the “King of the Blues,” B.B. King. This momentous meeting took place at the Newport Jazz Festival in the late 1980s when I was just seven years old. To say the experience was transformative would be an understatement. Sitting with B.B. King for three hours, I listened to his stories about Lucile, his beloved guitar, and his roots. His words were like a song, flowing with a rhythm and wisdom that shaped my understanding of passion, dedication, and music’s.

power to connect and inspire. He bestowed upon me his guitar pick, imparting a piece of his legacy, a symbol of the heart and soul he put into his music. He told me to hold it close whenever I felt discouraged, to think of him and find inspiration. B.B. King believed that one day I would grace the big stage, thus passing a torch, that is still a part of what I am and what I do today.

Growing Your Network: The Les Brown Chapter

As I delved deeper into the realm of public speaking, I crossed paths with Les Brown, a renowned motivational speaker and author. His mentorship over nearly two years significantly enhanced my speaking skills and nurtured my understanding of the integral role that networking plays in growth and success. His wisdom-filled aphorism, “Your network is your net worth,” resonates with me. It underscores the importance of building a robust, caring community, which is the cornerstone of the rich code.

Nurturing a sturdy network broadens your horizons, enabling access to resources, support and opportunities that can tremendously impact your life. This interconnected web offers invaluable insights, opens doors of possibilities, and guides you through the labyrinth of life’s challenges. The experience of working with Les Brown enriched my life with a wealth of knowledge and expertise that significantly influenced my career path and personal growth.

The Rich Code in Action: Beyond the Network

Building a resilient community is a vital pillar of the rich code, but it extends beyond merely increasing your network. To genuinely thrive and harness the power of your connections, it is essential to

invest in relationships and foster a supportive, nurturing environment. This commitment to community includes active engagement with your network, offering value and support, embracing diversity, cultivating trust and respect and developing storytelling skills. By adhering to these principles and nurturing your network, you can cultivate a caring community that fosters growth and success. Your network is your net worth, and investing in these connections paves the way to unlocking your potential.

Reflecting on My Journey: From Radio Waves to the Digital Age

My journey, woven with the threads of media, mentorship, and storytelling, transformed me in ways I could have never predicted. As I look back, I am filled with profound gratitude for the influences of my mother and Les Brown. They have significantly shaped my understanding of the rich code and the power of connections. From my mother's inspirational radio show to Les Brown's unwavering guidance, I learned that the true essence of success lies in our ability to foster meaningful relationships and to nurture a sense of belonging within our communities. These connections, when cultivated with genuine care and support, become invaluable resources that possess the power to transform lives - our own and those of the people around us. As I continue on my path, carrying their wisdom, I am reminded of their enduring lessons: never give up, never look back and always follow your path. Embrace the power of your story and let it guide you as you build your network and create a thriving, caring community.

In our constantly evolving world, it is vital to remember that our connections are our most significant assets. Investing in our relationships forms a strong foundation for growth and the fulfillment of our dreams. As we continue to share our stories, support each other and work together, we unlock the rich code's true potential and create a legacy that transcends time and boundaries.

Through this story, I hope to inspire you to understand the power of community, networking and storytelling. May you harness the rich code principles to create stronger connections, cultivate trust and respect and foster a supportive environment within your network.

Remember the importance of resilience, determination and self-belief as you face challenges and march towards

success.

The Rich Code in Action

Building a strong community is an essential part of the rich code, but it goes beyond merely growing your network. To truly thrive and harness the power of your connections, you must invest in your relationships and create a supportive, nurturing environment. This includes:

1. **Actively engaging with your network:** Attend events, participate in conversations and share your knowledge with others. This will strengthen your relationships and enhance your reputation within the community.
2. **Providing value:** Offer assistance and support to others when they need it and be willing to share your experiences and insights. By contributing to the success of others, you will create an atmosphere of mutual support and goodwill.
3. **Embracing diversity:** A diverse network brings a wealth of different perspectives, experiences, and skill sets. Embrace these differences and learn from them, as they can enrich your understanding of the world and inspire new ideas.
4. **Cultivating trust and respect:** Trust and respect are the foundations of any strong community. Be honest, transparent and consistent in your interactions, and strive to maintain a high level of integrity.
5. **Becoming a storyteller:** Les Brown and Steve Jobs emphasized that the most powerful person in the world is the storyteller. Develop your storytelling skills to captivate, inspire and move people with your words. A compelling narrative can be transformative not only for your career but also for your personal growth.

My journey with media, from being surrounded by TV and radio production to streaming audio and television today, has shown me how powerful media can be in building a thriving community. Under Les Brown's mentorship, I learned the importance of storytelling and honing my craft to create a powerful narrative that resonates

with others. By following the principles of the rich code and nurturing your network, you can create a strong, caring community that will help you grow and succeed. Remember, your network is your net worth, and investing in these connections are the key to unlocking your potential.

Conclusion

My journey through the world of media, mentorship and storytelling has been transformative in ways I could never have imagined. As I reflect on my experiences, I am deeply grateful for the influence of my mother and Les Brown, who have both shaped my understanding of the rich code and the power of connections.

From my mother's inspiring radio show to Les Brown's unwavering guidance, I have learned that the true essence of success lies in our ability to cultivate meaningful relationships and foster a sense of belonging within our communities. Our network, when nurtured with genuine care and support, becomes an invaluable resource that has the power to change lives – our own and those of the people around us.

The lessons I've learned about storytelling have not only enriched my professional pursuits but also profoundly impacted my personal life. By developing the ability to share my story with authenticity and emotion, I have been able to forge deeper connections with others, inspire positive change and create a lasting impact on those I encounter.

As I continue on my journey, I am reminded of the enduring wisdom that my mother and Les Brown have imparted upon me: never give up, never look back, and always follow your path. Embrace the power of your story and let it guide you as you build your network and create a thriving, caring community.

In this ever-changing world, it is crucial to remember that our connections are our most valuable assets. By investing in our relationships, we can create a strong foundation upon which we can grow and achieve our dreams. As we continue to share our stories, support one another, and work together, we unlock the true potential of the rich code and create a legacy that transcends time and

boundaries. Let us carry these lessons with us as we forge our paths, knowing that our network is truly our net worth, and that by building strong, caring communities, we can create a brighter future for ourselves and generations to come.

From this story, you can gain valuable insights into the importance of community, networking, and storytelling, as well as the impact of mentorship and personal growth on your journey to success. Specifically, you can:

1. Understand the power of media and its potential to build strong, caring communities that foster personal and professional growth.
2. Learn the significance of nurturing your network and the role it plays in unlocking opportunities and resources for success.
3. Discover the importance of storytelling as a means of captivating, inspiring, and moving others and how it can be transformative for both your personal and professional life.
4. Realize the value of mentorship and the lasting impact that guidance and wisdom from experienced individuals can have on your growth and development.
5. Draw inspiration from the personal experiences and lessons shared, applying them to your own life as you pursue your dreams and aspirations.
6. Embrace the rich code principles to create stronger connections, cultivate trust and respect and foster a supportive environment within your network.
7. Recognize the importance of resilience, determination, and self-belief, as exemplified by the story's protagonists, in overcoming challenges and achieving success.

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Letty Gutiérrez-Bujak



Letty Gutiérrez-Bujak is co-founder of The Sales Farm, dedicated to providing continuous improvement to help business owners achieve optimal growth. Delivering customized solutions for our clients and/or their sales team results in increased satisfaction and exceptional outcomes.

Letty Gutiérrez-Bujak is a native of Chicago Heights, Illinois and now calls Round Rock, Texas her home, where she resides with her two sons and fiancé. She is an avid fitness enthusiast and has completed two marathons and a handful of triathlons and other races. She is actively involved with her son's various academic and sporting activities and still plans social activities for her sorority, Alpha Sigma Alpha. She also helps motivate others at their fitness studio in Austin.

Letty found her love of sales early in life earning the highest cookie sales in her Girl Scout Troop, then in college as top Alumni association telemarketer. Through the years she has contributed more than \$100,000,000 in new business. In addition to business development, she has worked in a variety of sales roles including recruitment, training, customer success, implementation and operations. She has trained hundreds of individuals, from new AEs to CEOs, on how to elevate their business development needs. She is known for infusing a company with the enthusiasm and expertise depended upon to achieve remarkable results.

Seven Sales Insights Proven to Speed Up Your Results

By Letty Gutierrez-Bujak

It is reported we see as many as 10,000 ads a day. While we are being sold to, we are also selling! Yes, you are a salesperson and don't even know it. We sell, defined as a transfer of goods or services for a price or desired outcome, when we convince our family of our next vacation destination or invite friends to agree on a restaurant to meet for dinner. It's a simplified process of convincing our target to go forward with a desired outcome. I believe everyone is born to sell, and with my insights, you will speed up your results.

Many sales authorities offer a sales cycle with three, five, seven, and even ten steps to complete a sale. I'm not arguing the number of steps, but I do find there are seven aspects in the sales cycle that, when given the attention they deserve, will help you achieve faster results.

#1 Prospect

Your prospect list is one of the most underestimated pieces of the sales cycle. Yet somehow, my experience shows many salespeople often do not dedicate the time and resources to stack the deck in their favor. You can boost conversion by understanding the story behind the lead list and filling in the unknowns to prioritize who you will call to achieve more immediate results.

My son Charlie loves Chipotle. I believe it's because he had eaten it so much when I was pregnant with him. When Charlie wants to sell someone on the idea of Chipotle, he qualifies his prospect. Of all the people he could ask, he narrows his options to those he is certain he can fix a problem. Charlie understands he can fix a problem for his brother, like cleaning his room, but his brother doesn't have the ability to pay for or drive him to Chipotle. That disqualifies his brother, so Charlie knows not to spend too much time on this prospect. There may be a day when Charlie would consider his brother a prospect, but until then, he moves on to a prospect whose sense of urgency is more aligned with Charlie's dinner goals. In this

case, Charlie knows one of my pain points is a messy garage. He offers to clean the garage, and his price for doing so is getting Chipotle for dinner. The added bonus he offers is I don't have to cook dinner. He knows he is more likely to achieve his desired outcome if he plans his ask far enough in advance and not an hour before dinnertime. Charlie picked a prospect allowing him a better chance to get Chipotle, and because he doesn't want to wait weeks for his favorite burrito, he worked on an agreeable deadline too. This results in a win-win situation. I received a clean garage, Charlie ate a carnitas burrito from Chipotle, and I saved a little time not cooking dinner that evening. His brother knows Charlie can solve some of his problems, but they both know the timing isn't right, so if this were a real lead, he would be added to the sales funnel with no immediate urgency, but they remain in contact.

Typically prospect leads are curated or purchased. Curated lists often come from prospects who have self-identified as wanting more information. Whether from a contact at a trade show or your website's online form, countless studies show that the first to respond to the lead wins the business. Understanding the age of the prospect list allows you another data point to make an informed decision to help prioritize who to call first. The more time that goes between when a lead comes in and a connection is made with the prospect, the more time you allow other companies to win the sale.

The more you know about your prospect list and the more relevant information it contains will help determine the viability of the leads and, ultimately, your success. The age of the lead list is also a contributing factor in achieving success. If the list was purchased two years ago, a good number of decision-makers on your list may be no longer relevant or even employed at the same company. It is also possible the criteria used to purchase the list has expired, and the probability of the list being good is no longer true. Even if that list hasn't been used yet, it will not likely be as good as a list generated today for the same audience. Decision makers change, the timing of the fiscal may be different, budgets and priorities change, and what was important two years ago may not be relevant today. The more intelligence gained from leads on your list, the better you can prioritize who to contact first and who will most likely be in the market for your offering.

When it comes to speeding up your sales results, no question having an abundance of ripe prospects is imperative. Still, other contributing factors include using a multi-touchpoint approach to reach your decision-maker. Studies suggest securing your first meeting takes seven, ten, or more contacts. Furthermore, the majority of salespeople give up before they reach the threshold. Many salespeople also don't understand that even after the first meeting, many more contacts must be made. Here is my favorite time-saving tip I've used for years with prospects in a plethora of industries. I learned this tip from my mom, who owned a salon. It worked for her, it's worked for me, and it will work for you. Secure your follow-up meeting during your initial meeting. It does not matter what is promised during your meeting, even if the prospect tells you he/she will call you back on a certain day and time. Do yourself a favor and ensure the appointment is on your and their calendar. Trust me when I tell you your decision-maker has other priorities, and rescheduling with you is far easier and less time-consuming than returning one of your many calls to set something up.

Aside from your curated or purchased prospect lists, know that getting the easiest and most lucrative leads can be right under your nose and free. Incremental business from existing customers is incredibly efficient. The Harvard Business Review reported increasing customer retention rates by 5% increases profits by 25% to 95%. Nielsen adds referral customs are four times more likely to buy. They also close faster and spend more. No differently than wanting to ask your prospect for the next meeting while you are in the current meeting, ask your client for a referral when they are singing your praises.

#2 Objections

Eddie is my youngest son and has been negotiating for as long as I remember. A few years ago, his baseball league had a fundraiser to sell \$20 pizza bonus cards. Every purchase made with the card would result in double the order, which in essence, meant it would pay for itself after one or two uses. For example, buy a large pizza and receive an additional pizza for the price of one pizza. Eddie was confident in selling the card. Eddie would ask me to walk the

neighborhood with him every day after school. He understood if he asked prospects a qualifying question, and they affirmed they had ordered pizza at least two times in the last year, the card would be a good purchase. He concluded that if the car was in the driveway or lights were on in the house, his prospect would likely be home. What he did not consider, as a ten-year-old, was getting paid would be difficult. While he nailed his talking points, he was getting objections and wasn't prepared for how to handle them. His enthusiasm quickly deflated. Eddie turned to his sales coach mom for advice. I asked him to write down every objection he received and determine how to turn those rejections into wins. Luckily, the form of payment was the only rejection. Eddie learned many people rely on electronic forms of payment. By role-playing and being comfortable and confident in his objections, Eddie went back at it with incredible success. Sales became fun again, and no one said no to Eddie. In fact, when someone gave Eddie the objection that initially burst his enthusiasm bubble, "sorry kid, I don't have cash," he quickly responded, "lucky for you I take PayPal, CashApp, Venmo or Zelle, which one is best for you?" Eddie was prepared! Whether it's baseball or sales, being prepared to tackle as many objections as possible before reaching out to prospects is critical to succeed. For a salesperson, knowing how to overcome every objection builds confidence and makes this sales game fun. In case you are wondering, Eddie's team did win the grand prize and had a memorable experience at the Dell Diamond watching the Round Rock Express.

#3 Mindset

Perhaps these stories of my sons sound too elementary to provide value to your type of sale, but I assure you, you can sell. One of my favorite quotes, "*Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right,*" from Henry Ford, illustrates mindset is everything. Everyone can sell, but not everyone is willing to sell. For those of you who are willing to sell, I hope you will find value in reading this chapter. For those of you who are not willing to sell, there are companies out there that offer sales outsourcing services.

During my sales career, I have had the pleasure of training and coaching hundreds of individuals, from fresh-out-of-college sales

associates to C-level executives. Sales is quite simple. The more you know about every aspect of the sales cycle, and the more confident you become with all the possible curve balls that may be thrown at you, you gain the confidence to piece together data to accelerate your success.

I never thought I could run a marathon, but I told myself I could do it, and I did it. As I write this, my fiancé is preparing for an Ironman. It sounds impossible to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles, and run 26.2 miles, but he's done it before and will do it again. Even Tony Robbins has said, "Success comes from 80 percent psychology and 20 percent skills." If you believe it, you can achieve it.

#4 Problem

When it comes to solving a problem, there is a filter we can all use. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." When you learn the prospect has something broken, the probability of needing a solution, with the urgency to fix it, is greater than if it's not broken. That, along with securing additional data points, such as budget, the effectiveness of an existing solution, desired improvements, and the competitive landscape of options, all help properly direct the meeting into the sales funnel.

When a prospect has a solution, they are happy with and still under contract for a period of time, your ability to give that meeting a high probability to close is not there. Can it be done? Sure. There are ways to buy out contracts and negotiate creatively, but the truth is a prospect with something broken will need a solution faster than one who doesn't. Use the data points you capture to properly guide your probability of success and where you invest your time.

Often a seller will meet with a prospect, share the agreed perfect solution, and report to the office that the prospect loves and wants the product. While that may be true, a novice seller will put the prospect in the sales pipeline with a high closing probability, as he hopes the adoration of this perfect offering will close in the current fiscal. Hope is not a closing strategy. Understanding right away if a problem needs fixing it's critical because when there is a problem, there is a better pipeline. Understanding the problem a prospect has, and the urgency to fix it, is analogous to playing poker. Kenny

Rogers would say *You've gotta know when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em*. When you drill down on all aspects of the problem, you may find your prospect is not a good one or not a prospect for now. Knowing how to classify timing and the ability to solve a problem will help determine if you keep or eliminate a prospect, both being equally important.

#5 Team

The Center for Sales Strategy reports less than 30% of a salesperson's time is spent on selling activities. Paperwork, research, internal meetings, and accounting-related activities consume much of the time a salesperson could be selling. When players have a team behind them, they can achieve more than flying solo. Often the salesperson is chasing collections, drafting PowerPoint presentations, and working on numerous administrative tasks. Yes, these duties are necessary, but I argue the salesperson doesn't necessarily need them. When you look at history, there are countless examples of the positive impact of a team. Yet, we continue to see salespeople responsible for duties that others can do equally well and more affordably. Together Everyone Achieves More.

#6 Trust

I had a boss who gave the analogy of an artichoke with sales. She said you must carefully peel away the layers to get to the heart of the choke. This meticulous process a salesperson goes through when building a rapport with a prospect is critical. It takes numerous touchpoints of communication that add value to the decision-making process, a sense of urgency in responding to the prospect, getting to know more about the prospect personally and professionally, and more. Trust in any type of sale can ultimately make or break a deal.

Whether it's the roofer, attorney, software salesperson, or even a drug dealer, they will not buy from you if you don't find a way to establish trust. I have a family member who worked as a Special Agent for the Illinois State Police State as part of a Drug Enforcement Task Force. He and I would compare notes occasionally about what we were working on and how our sales prospects and quotas were doing. One of the main differences I

found was that if he didn't use the precision of a surgeon to build trust and close the deal, he could end up shot or even dead. Thankfully, he's now retired. Most of you reading this probably don't have to worry about that extreme outcome, but I leave you with this. In the words of world-renowned Zig Ziglar, "If people like you, they will listen to you, but if they trust you, they will buy from you."

#7 Timing

Early in my sales career, I received a voicemail around noon the Wednesday before Thanksgiving from a man with the last name Bongiovi. I was curious if he was related to Jon Bon Jovi. That day in the office, most had taken a vacation day before working from home was an option. Some salespeople would have waited until the following Monday to call him back, but I didn't. When I returned the call that Wednesday, Mr. Bongiovi was shocked. It was because I promptly returned his call; two things happened. First, he believed because I called him right back, regardless of the holiday weekend ahead, I would always be prompt to respond, which was important to him. Second, being the first to respond greatly contributed to earning his business. He didn't want to wait to talk to others and was ready to get started. I later learned he was indeed related to Jon Bon Jovi. To this day, every holiday or long weekend when I am working, I remember the impact of returning that call and believe every day is a good day to make and return calls. For those who get caught by the gatekeeper, these are the days when many gatekeepers are out of the office, making your chances to reach your decision-maker easier.

Your urgency does not matter to the prospect. Their urgency is what matters. When prospects have a need, they will contact you if you do a good job of leaving valuable touch points along the way. I was on a flight to Chicago, sitting next to a Chief Technology Officer from a well-known company. We exchanged cordial conversations and asked what we did for a living. I recall asking what advice he would give someone like me who was trying to earn business from someone like him. He said, don't stop calling. The lesson learned here is unless someone asks you to stop calling, do not stop. He told me he's busy and receives more calls and emails than he has time to return. Occasionally he would save the ones he believed may be

useful, but he often is disappointed that by the time the people he hoped would call, they had already stopped calling.

I want to leave you with these thoughts as you digest my advice to help you achieve your newfound sales success. Living in central Texas, there is no shortage of excellent grill-masters. Some of their eateries have lines out the door and even take hours or weeks to try a meal. While they may be perceived as successful, only each one of them knows if they have achieved their version of success. The same is true for you. Take the necessary knowledge and create the desired experience to determine your success. If you believe you are a success, you will be successful.

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Shekhar Srinivasan



Shekhar Srinivasan is a Career Confidence Coach on a mission to empower 1 million graduate students to lead a life brimming with self-confidence. After graduating from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Petroleum Engineering, he started his career as a Reservoir Engineer working for PetroTel Inc, an oil and gas consulting firm based in Plano, Texas in 2006. In 2008, he enrolled for another Master of Science program at The Ohio

State University pursuing Material Science and Engineering.

In 2010, he relocated to Mumbai for good, where he took up a role as an R&D Manager at Hindalco Industries. After a series of quick transitions across research and consulting industries between 2010 and 2014, he joined the strategy team at Ingevity Corporation, a Charleston based pine chemicals company. After four years, he landed his dream role at a Swiss fragrance company called Firmenich, where he was employed until July 2023.

His 19 years of experience spans engineering, consulting and sales. He is currently leading a company by the name of Confidence Coaching Academy that conducts webinars, seminars and other forms of training for graduate students and freshers, while helping them fulfil their career ambitions. He runs a YouTube channel under the same name and a podcast by the name “The Confidence Gym” on Spotify.

Cracking the Confidence Code

By Shekhar Srinivasan

It is never easy taking ‘No’ for an answer, is it? I am sure all of us have faced rejection at some point in our lives. Rejection is something that impacts us at a very deep and visceral level. It triggers all kinds of emotions. Left unfettered, they can wreak havoc in our lives leaving us disheartened & dissatisfied. I want to share with you a lesson that has helped me R.I.S.E. above rejection.

It was 2014 and I was working in a research and consulting firm based in Mumbai. On the morning of 7th February 2014, I was called into the CEO’s office and asked to leave. Apparently, my company was downsizing and within 9 months of joining the company, I was out. No reasons were cited, and I had no closure. Deep down inside, I felt frustrated and helpless. Next morning, as a part of the usual routine, I was getting ready when I realized that there was nowhere to go. Disappointed, I sat down on the couch.

As I was ruminating in a state of gloom, a sudden thought crossed my mind. I was taken back to my days in high school. Back in those days, we had summer holidays for 3 months and we would await it with bated breath for experiencing the magical moments. There was so much joy in waking up every morning without a schedule. Wandering off to the hills with friends, plucking raw mangoes from the neighbour’s garden or simply playing box cricket while losing track of time, was truly blissful. We would come home for dinner; food would be kept ready and then we would go to bed happy. The next day, we would start a new fun routine all over again. Each of those moments were such a beautiful blessing.

Alas! I had no way to go back in time. Quickly, I began rushing through the job classifieds, hunting for new opportunities. An unusual restlessness about the future had gotten the better of me.

Four weeks had passed, nothing materialized. I was feeling lost and did not know what to do.

One cold, wintry morning, I dragged myself out of bed and stepped out for a walk. The air was damp & foggy. The sun was just peeping

over the horizon. As I was wandering in the neighbourhood, a young girl dressed in her school uniform, caught my attention. She was being pulled on a wheelchair by her mother. Her foot deformity was supported by an orthopaedic device. She had a white flower in her hand and a vibrant smile on her face.

Curious, I walked up to her and asked, “Hi, Is there something special about this flower? You seem to be mesmerized by it.” She smiled and replied, “Sir, I have polio but thankfully my mother takes me to school every day. I am poor but thankfully I still have an opportunity to study. I am unable to walk comfortably but thankfully I can smell the scent of this beautiful flower.” She then handed me the bud and said, “Why don’t you experience the scents of life?”

That phrase, “Scents of Life” began to tinker with my imagination. I kept ruminating over it the whole night. The next morning, I stepped into the shower. As the cool water began grazing my hair, I reached for the shampoo. As I began lathering it, I felt a moment of truth. To my amazement, I was taken back to the scent of the flower. A light bulb turned on in my head.

I experienced an epiphany. This led me to follow a new exercise.

With my eyes closed, I began recalling my daily routine. I revisited each of those activities, only this time, being more mindful of those scents. As I began crushing ginger for making tea, something surprising happened. The unforgettable scent of wet earth, the splashing of the water puddles with school friends and the irresistible scent of Mom’s tea flashed in front of my eyes. While doing the dishes, the scent reminded me of my childhood memories from a school picnic to an orange farm. As I went through each daily chore, the suite of scents brought back vivid memories of a specific place and time. Now, I was really beginning to enjoy this time travel.

From that day onwards, I began incorporating those activities into my routine that would help me recreate such extraordinary experiences. I started trekking to experience the natural scents of wildflowers that were peppered along the forest trail. I began experimenting with new food recipes, becoming more aware of the aromas arising from the ingredients. A routine activity such as

grocery shopping in a retail store, suddenly became very exciting. The power that scents exert on our memory is incredible.

Few years later in 2018, I stumbled upon an opportunity in a Swiss fragrance company to learn the fine art of perfumery. Back in 2014, I had not even imagined the uncanny link between the phrase ‘Scents of Life’ and this real-world opportunity of working with a group of people, who design scents for re-creating memorable experiences. In hindsight, it appeared like my visualization had translated into my new reality. I discovered that the law of attraction was indeed true.

Through that journey of transformation, I learnt some very important and impactful lessons.

REFLECT - When I was let go from the company, a feeling of self-pity had engulfed me. I began questioning myself, “Why me?” Luckily, a messiah came along and shared her pearls of wisdom. Her magical phrase “Scents of Life” opened my doors to a new reality. This experience shed light on some new insights.

Please remember that rejection is not a reflection of our worth or abilities. When viewed in the right perspective, it is in fact a redirection towards something more aligned with our values and our path to success. If we choose to remain curious, we will discover that setbacks and failures are a natural part of life. They provide invaluable lessons for our personal growth. We have to embrace the hurdles along our journey to ultimate success. We ought to allow ourselves to feel the disappointment without letting it define us. If we can reflect on the turn of events with the right frame of mind, we cultivate the ability to bounce back even stronger and wiser than before.

By shifting our perspective, we can turn rejection into a powerful fuel that propels us forward and ignites our determination to succeed.

INTERNALIZE – That girl was an angel of God, who cemented my faith in the ‘Law of Attraction’. Sometimes, things don't work out because there is a better opportunity waiting for us down the road. We have to trust the timing of our life. We need to understand that what may seem like a setback now might actually be a blessing in

disguise. All that we need to cultivate is the faith that the universe has something even more fulfilling and rewarding in store for us. If we keep moving forward with optimism and an open mind, a new door will certainly open.

Joseph Murphy in his book “The Power of the Subconscious Mind” says that whatever thoughts or ideas we internalize, we can accomplish. If we internalize becoming the best versions of ourselves, then we will indeed become the best versions of ourselves. If we internalize our fears, then almost certainly they will come true. Therefore, all that we need to do is visualize positive outcomes, internalize positive thoughts and be amazed at how we accomplish many great milestones.

STRATEGIZE – Rejection often presents an opportunity for growth and improvement. Although I was seeking a new goal to latch on to, I wasn’t quite sure where the new direction was leading me. Nonetheless, with the realization that rejection is not a dead-end, but a detour, emerged a feeling of trust. Trust reinforced a firm belief, that through the manifestation of my own thoughts and feelings, I had the power to create my own reality. That intuition helped me strategize the next course of action. It was as if a higher power was working through me laying ahead the path for my actions.

I assessed my goals and identified areas where I could enhance my skills or cultivate new ones. I sought feedback from mentors, coaches, and trusted individuals who provided me constructive critique on key areas of improvement. Armed with this valuable input, I devised actionable plans to bridge the gap between where I was and where I aspired to be. In essence, rejection had transformed into a catalyst for personal and professional development.

EXECUTE – When a difficult situation arises in our lives, panic tends to strike us faster than our curiosity. During such times, it is easy to get submerged under its powerful influence. When I was let go by the company, a latent anxiety about the future had hijacked my attention. I couldn’t comprehend how to rationalize that event. Had it not been for the gratitude lesson from that young girl, I probably wouldn’t have emerged out of that situation. Gratitude helped me embrace rejection wholeheartedly.

While there was gratitude for the present moment, and a Godly faith in the law of attraction, I was missing a key ingredient in my endeavour for success i.e., purpose. Purpose provides us with the necessary push to execute our strategy.

It was 2023 and I had recently been promoted to a new role within my company. Despite the encouraging outcome, I was living with a deep sense of internal conflict. I had reached a point in my career, where my job had begun to feel very comfortable. It had become monotonous. I was not learning anything new. I found myself yearning for something more fulfilling and authentic. My heart craved a deeper sense of purpose and the ability to create a positive impact on other people. It was time to break free from the shackles of comfort and embark on a path that truly resonated with my soul. While I had realized the significance of manifestation, I was struggling to find a higher purpose in my endeavour.

In April 2023, I sought the help of a dear mentor, who recommended that I attend the Millionaire Mind Intensive (MMI) seminar. This was the very first time that program was happening in India in the city of Chennai. During the second day of the MMI program, the host asked us to participate in a short meditation routine. The objective of the meditation routine was to eliminate any limiting beliefs that held us back from creating a life that we desired.

As the routine commenced and my eyes closed, my mind went back to a moment in my life in America. It was January 2007. I was living in my lonely apartment in Plano. I was seated inside a bathtub. I had a blade in my right hand. It was about an inch away from my wrist. My eyes were sore. I felt the pain of loneliness. I felt helpless. I did not know what to do. I wanted to end everything.

The thought of my family, my parents, my sister came rushing in. I didn't muster the courage. And thankfully so. Right at that moment, I heard a knock on my apartment door. I set the blade aside. I stepped out of the bathtub and opened the door. It was Rohit, my friend. He had come to invite me for dinner.

Seeing me in that state, he figured something was wrong. He dragged me with him. We went to a restaurant nearby. I was lost in thought. I could barely eat anything. Then, he shared his story. At

one point in his life, he was lonely too. I was hooked. I started paying attention. I was keen to learn how he recovered from that feeling.

I asked him, “How did you recover from that feeling of isolation?”

Rohit gave me a gentle smile. What he told me next changed my entire outlook. Loneliness is not such a bad thing. It is a spiritual cleansing process. You get to penetrate the core of your being, the centre of your confusion and discover the root of your reality.

Suddenly, I had found a new ray of hope. I began enjoying the conversation. I also started relishing the food. My attention started returning to the present moment. The feeling of loneliness gradually started fading away. From that day onwards, I began thinking of loneliness differently. I didn’t resist it. Instead, I started embracing it.

On my journey back to my apartment, I picked up a pocket diary from the stationery store. I started using the diary to write down my thoughts and feelings. Writing helped me clear my mind and structure my thoughts. An extraordinary clarity emerged. Within a few weeks of consistent practice, these thoughts transformed into goals. As I continued writing them, they reinforced my commitment to take action and realize them.

New questions and challenges began to emerge as I began taking action. Now, the loneliness had transformed into curiosity. And the curiosity activated my commitment to attack each challenge with renewed enthusiasm. With that newly found momentum, my life changed. I began to excel at my craft.

Rohit came as a blessing and opened my eyes to a new reality. Loneliness is a gift. It comes to a select few. Either we can use it to go inwards and discover ourselves; or we could begin to sulk by looking outwards.

By revisiting my experience of loneliness and being so close to the face of death, I discovered what my true purpose was. It was to empower freshers and graduate students cultivate and boost their self-confidence. It was at that moment, I experienced an inner calling, a divine spiritual intervention bolstering my self-confidence.

Today's youth are at the cusp of a radical transformation. They are prone to distractions from various sources such as digital devices, social media platforms and last but not the least, loneliness. They have more than a 'zillion' friends on their social media profiles but when it comes to cultivating true intimacy in these relationships, they appear to be disengaged and lost.

On carefully assessing the lives of some of these graduate students and the problems they were facing, I could see a mirror image of my own life. It cemented a firm conviction that my pursuit of coaching them to boost their self-confidence was after all, congruent with my journey. And it was at that moment when I understood what the significance of having a higher purpose actually meant. It is purpose that reinforces our self-confidence – that purpose, which is congruent with our journey, that purpose which the Universe shows us a glimpse of, and that purpose which sets the road ahead for execution.

On 15th May 2023, I quit my job and started my own business. The decision appeared daunting in the beginning, as I was leaving behind the stability of a corporate job and venturing into the unknown. Doubts and fears of all kinds crept into my mind, making me question my abilities and the likelihood of success.

During this time, faith, that profound revelation from the Universe, became my guiding light. I had a strong belief in my skills, my passion, and the value I could bring to my audience. I trusted that gut feeling that things would work out for the best. This unwavering faith provided me with the confidence I needed to take the necessary steps, make bold decisions, and use my creativity to persevere through challenges. And so I did.

I started writing my 6-monthly goals and translated them on to monthly, weekly and daily goals. I began taking consistent action. When I look back at where I was 3 months ago, I can't wrap my head around the things I have accomplished; be it creating a course curriculum or building & expanding my influence.

Rejection no longer holds power over me; instead, it has become a steppingstone towards personal growth and success. I have understood that managing rejection requires taking consistent action

towards our goals. And by doing so, not only have I acquired new skills but also feel incredibly more confident, resilient and successful. The acronym R.I.S.E. has transformed my perspective on rejection, empowering me to reflect, internalize positive beliefs, strategize, and execute with unwavering determination.

Over the years, I have come to cultivate a belief that has helped me find meaning in such obstacles. Every event, every outcome and every experience in our lives serves a purpose. It is entirely up to us to discover it.

“When we change the way, we look at things, things that we look at change” – Dr. Wayne Dyer.

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Sue Kostyk



Integrative Health Practitioner, Level II
High Performance Health and Longevity
Coach, Certified Nutrition Coach,
Transformation Specialist

Sue Kostyk is more than a mom, grandmother and child of God, she is a transformation specialist.

After 2.5 years of watching her daughter go through intense chemotherapy and steroid treatment for Leukemia she discovered the negative impact of that lifesaving protocol on her daughter's metabolic system, hormone production and mental wellness. She also found herself 30 pounds heavier, with high blood pressure, pre-diabetic, unable to sleep and literally just feeling bad and angry all the time due to the unmanaged stress and bad habits collected throughout the journey.

After finding Integrative Health, Sue understood the miracle that the human body is and the ability it has to heal and rebalance when given the proper "ingredients". A forever student, Sue certified in 2 levels of Integrative Health and certified in High Performance Health and Longevity.

Sue helps men and women discover the root cause of symptoms through functional lab testing and *natural* protocols to overcome symptoms and dis-ease they are experiencing, to live their lives to the fullest.

Sue has helped countless clients find sustainable health, vitality and joy, and is a speaker, author and sought after coach on the topics of longevity, nutrition, stress management and toxin removal without the use of harsh pharmaceuticals.

Rich in Health, Mind, and Spirit

By Sue Kostyk

I don't like throwing around cliches, but the one I can't escape in my work is "health is wealth." There is so much truth to this saying, with bookshelves overflowing on this topic. We all say we want to live an excellent long life, and an increased life span is a great goal. Striving to live a long life without good health is like putting your textbook under your pillow and hoping to absorb its contents, so why bother?

There is a statistical overload that tells us that what we do in our 20s and 30s will impact us later in life, yet we grossly neglect this scientific fact that our lifestyle will catch up to us.

We have to give a brutally honest answer to the question, "How am I doing?" If you don't like the answer, you need to change it.

One morning, my phone rang, and a text was coming in; my daughter was frantically trying to reach me. "Mom, the check engine light in the car just came on, *what do I do?*" I went through the checklist: turn off the engine. Unscrew the gas cap. Pray. Lay hands on the car – all the things!

Statistics say that about 30% of us will race to the mechanic the moment the light comes on in our car. That means roughly 70% of us are driving around, ignoring the indicator of doom!

I use this as an example because we can all relate to this. We ignore the warnings because unless our car won't start or comes to a screeching halt, we keep driving until we can't.

Like our car, we have three God-given "check engine" lights. They cover our Physical, Mental, and Spiritual health. They are our personal warning system.

I have some experience with this. When my daughter (who phoned about the car) was 5, she was diagnosed with leukemia. I could hear my husband's voice when he called me, and his words were barely understandable as his voice was cracking and full of grief. I was on

the other end in total disbelief as we both cried. My healthy daughter was diagnosed with leukemia.

There is no greater gut punch than receiving news that your child has cancer, and as a parent, you are going to dive in headfirst because there is nothing you would not do to get them through this.

This story is not about her; she is fine, thriving, and God blesses her in many ways.

But three years of unmanaged stress, poor diet, and virtually no exercise resulted in high blood pressure and pre-diabetes – my chart said I was obese. My “check engine” light was bright red, but I ignored it...until I couldn’t.

Like the 70% that ignore the “check engine” light in their car, many of us ignore the “check engine” light of our lives...until we can’t. Mine was my health, and I will make a bold assumption that many of you reading this are in the 70% club of one of the areas of our lives.

I want to return to the question, “How am I doing?” If your answer is not positive, I have great news – even to those saying, “It’s too late” or “I am too far gone.”

The human body is truly an amazing machine. There isn’t anything like it. It was meant to survive for a long time and will heal itself when given what it needs. It’s also brilliant and will shut down systems in order to survive - a literal “rob Peter to pay Paul” existence until Peter has no more to give. Who’s hungry when afraid? Who wants to have sex when in the middle of an anxiety attack? Strange questions – but if you think about it, you will understand that when your body thinks it’s under attack, it does not need digestion nor reproduction. These are just two very primal examples, but if fear and anxiety are not dealt with, your digestive and reproductive systems will cease to operate correctly over time.

The biggest lie the enemy wants you to believe is that you cannot change, or you are too far gone to change. He wants you on that hamster wheel of Excuses – Guilt – Resolve to do better – Beat yourself up – Resignation – Things won’t change – Excuses – Guilt – Resolve to do better – Beat yourself up – Resignation – Things

won't change and so on - playing the generational blame game of rationalizations. The enemy wants you to believe that the one thing necessary to change or give up is too important or too challenging. Rationalizations are also appealing, but they will get you nowhere fast.

I am reminded of the Bible story in Matthew 19:16-22. It's the story of a wealthy young man who followed all the rules but wouldn't get into heaven because he would not give up his wealth and follow Jesus. He was too full of his riches to see that his soul was malnourished. Jesus didn't mean this as a sweeping command for everyone with a lot of money. *He meant this for any of us who crave something so much that we literally place it on the altar of our lives, and it becomes an idol we regard so much higher than our physical, mental, or spiritual health.*

Our issues are directly linked to our choices, and with each choice comes a consequence.

Have you ever been in the middle of a consequence and had no idea how you got there?

Our health is just that – decisions we make, sometimes decades ago, put us in a consequence that leaves us looking to the heavens asking, WHY!? Denying ourselves is hard, and if it's an unhealthy thing keeping you from physical, mental, or spiritual health, then the question is not "Can I change?" The question is "Do I want to change?"

To get healthy in any of the three areas of our lives, we have to recalibrate our souls so that we want to change. Change doesn't happen by chance but when you choose to do better.

To conquer anything, we must make the choice to redirect our misguided cravings and excuses. Simply telling one to eat healthier food, exercise, and/or get mindful doesn't address the heart of the matter. I truly believe we all WANT to do better but our wants have to result in action. Constant diligence comes on the heels of genuine desire; to do anything worthwhile, you must pay the price. Let me warn you: when you decide to change, your brain runs the numbers. The over/under on how hard, is there pain involved, and what will

this decision actually mean? The hardest part of a decision is the fear of failing, and our brains tell us failure is painful, so we decide against change if we have any doubt.

Let's go back to my story. I was in a three-year battle with my daughter, fighting a life-threatening disease. It seems reasonable that I would let myself go, eat crap, stop exercising, and drink wine every night. I was in a battle, but I wasn't fighting the fight with tools and knowledge I knew would get me through. I was sitting on the battlefield, grabbing at anything that would numb my experience if I lost. I thought I was jumping into the ocean to save her, but in reality, I was drowning in my neglect. Whatever you mismanage, you will lose, and I mismanaged my health. The moment I heard the Doctor's words telling me that the direction I was going in was early death was the moment I decided I needed to override my brain and take the steps necessary to turn things around.

I want to pause here and remind you I have been there. Change. Is. Not. Easy. But change is necessary to step into richness in any area of your life. Being involved in a process to take care of yourself is key so you can weather the storms of life, which will always be coming.

There are steps you can take right now:

Diet: Fad diets may get you quick results but are not sustainable. The most important aspect of getting healthy, both physically and mentally, is what we eat. What we eat has a direct impact on our mind and brain. Focus on an anti-inflammatory, colorful diet void of processed food, refined sugar, and bleached flour. Eat organic, pasture-raised food from the earth, not a factory. Limit alcohol and give up smoking or vaping.

Exercise: Walk 10,000 steps daily if you are not on an exercise regimen. If you sit at a desk most of the day, for every 50 minutes, you sit, get up and walk around for 10. Outside is best but not always possible. The idea is movement.

Stress: Manage it and reduce it. Stress triggers the body's fight-or-flight response, and chronic stress can cause adverse health effects on your mood, immune and digestive systems, and cardiovascular

health. This response was designed to protect you in an emergency by preparing you to react quickly. But when the stress response keeps firing, day after day, it will put your health at serious risk. Do what you need to do to ensure the stress you face is managed. This looks different for everyone but is a considerable component of living a life rich in good health.

Toxins: Toxins are everywhere, and while we can't always control what is around us, we can control what goes in us. Start to look around and see where you can be better. There are over 77,000 manufactured toxins, and, for the ladies reading this, our makeup, beauty, perfumes, and skincare products are full of them. Remember that our skin is our largest organ, which absorbs everything we put on it within seconds of application. Cleaning products, detergents, air fresheners, and candles are good places to start looking for products that don't hurt you or the environment. A great source is the Environment Working Group (EWG.org) to check products you think are questionable.

Rest: How is your sleep? Some of us think of sleep as downtime or a waste of time, but in actuality, your brain and body are hard at work. All the learning we do during the day is stored and organized as we sleep. Sleep is also when your body goes into "fix it" mode. Toxins get flushed out, and muscles, bones, and other tissues are repaired. A chronic lack of sleep can lead to depression and anxiety, raising your risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer, and dementia. If you are under the recommended 7-9 hours a night, try increasing in 15 -20-minute intervals until you reach a minimum of 7.5 hours. Limiting screen time before bed, keeping the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet, limiting alcohol and caffeine in the evening, and eating dinner a good 3 hours before bed are some things that will help.

Emotions: This goes hand-in-hand with stress. Attitude is everything, and one of the most significant discoveries of the late 1800s is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude. When we can't manage our emotions, our well-being pays for it. We need to feel our emotions, express them healthily, and then let them go - otherwise, they turn toxic within our bodies. Our psychology affects our physiology. Many of our emotions are tied to our phones,

email, and social media. Unplug for at least an hour before bed, and don't open again for at least an hour after you wake up. Dedicate that first hour of waking up to inspirational reading, meditation, or prayer.

Supplementation: I had always stood by the mantra that if I ate a well-balanced diet, I did not need to supplement with vitamins. That may have worked until the 1970s, but now we have soil depleted of nutrients and minerals, crops over-sprayed with pesticides, and genetically modified seeds and food. The Standard American Diet is high in saturated fat and lacks essential nutrition. More than 131 million people in the US take a prescription drug, with the average number of medications being 4. A pill for every ill has become the norm, yet we are not depleted of chemicals; we are depleted of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. Proper supplementation is key to longevity and healthy living.

Success Mindset: The power of positive thinking is real, and statistics and scientific backing support the notion that how we think affects our lives. Negative self-talk will defeat you before you even get started. What you focus on, you find, and focusing on the negative will impact your life and health. Habits we form may be the downfall to our success. The people who cannot get well and succeed at achieving their wellness goals are usually those who aren't letting go of their unsuccessful habits. You may be doing what is needed to succeed, but if you are unwilling to let go of the things that counteract those positive habits, you may never reach your goals. If you tend to focus on the negative things, a good place to start is gratitude. When you begin to look for the things you are thankful for, the negative things don't seem quite so large. An excellent way to start is to find a place to volunteer. When we help others, we get a dose of endorphins, and we tend to start seeing our lives more positively.

And as you look at yourself, look at your goals and dreams. Protect your mind. When things happen to us, we tend to focus on the things that take our power away - the things that take away our strength and deplete our healing presence and power. When we are in a state of dis-ease or distress in any area of our life, the focus becomes very inward. How can you step into your calling when the focus is

inward? God has called each one of us out for a purpose, and that purpose is not to be sick, tired, and popping pills to get through the day. It is to walk in a rich and abundant life, living out the purpose He called us to. Be present.

I'm being present in taking care of myself, turning tragedy into purpose and helping others activate their faith, helping others engage in activities and natural protocols that will improve their health and well-being. I am helping others to be full of joy and harmony with their whole selves and optimistic about the possibilities of life, even when life knocks on the door. Getting healthy, body, mind, and spirit, is not easy. Many people who come to me say they wish they hadn't waited so long.

Leading a rich life means being healthy in all three areas and asking for help when needed. You don't know what you don't know, and hiring people who have walked your path is essential. Investing in your health now will pay dividends later, no matter where you are in your journey. You owe it to yourself and your maker to live as rich a life as possible and walk in the calling laid before you. It is possible, and in the words of my mentor, Les Brown, "It is necessary!"

Ignoring the "check engine" lights of your life and managing symptoms with a handful of pills is hardly the definition of living. Get to the mechanic. Is it a Doctor, Health or Life Coach, or God? Be one of the 30% that figures out what you need before things come to a complete halt, and you tell me you wish you hadn't waited so long. You can start right now!

To contact Sue:

<http://itsaboutyourgut.com/> and grab my free gift to get started. To learn more about Integrative Health and how High-Performance Health Coaching works, go to:

<http://symmetryhealthandwellness.com/>

Mike Van Pelt



Mike Van Pelt is an entrepreneur, author, speaker, and men's life coach leader. He founded True Man Life Coaching and hosts the popular men's podcast, *True Man Podcast*.

His focus on coaching, guiding, and mentoring men began as a six-year-old boy with impaired vision. Little did he know what God's plan entailed for him. As Mike struggled trying to figure out things on his own, he eventually learned the massive impact that asking for help provides. This, plus deeply developing a trusting relationship with God, altered his life's trajectory.

Today, Mike coaches men and leads Christian men's groups bringing forward his personal achievements, trainings, podcasts, and 20+ years of leadership experiences in Corporate America and collegiate sports. In addition, he is an international bestselling author and has been featured in two books. His upcoming book is *True Man True Ways: A Roadmap of Discovery to the Masculine Heart*.

Mike is happily married to his wife and best friend of 27 years and has two talented children. When he's not coaching, he's probably enjoying time with family activities or getting in a quick round of golf with friends.

The Power of Asking for Help

Mike Van Pelt

The concept of asking for help has captured my curiosity. As a men's life coach, I've heard all the stories of going it alone, including not asking for help until it was almost too late. Asking for help is nothing new. It's what you lose out on by not asking that can leave you feeling empty and frustrated when trying to live life on your own. Have you experienced this?

Childhood Experiences

I was diagnosed with a lazy eye when I was six. This is a common condition where the vision of one of your eyes doesn't develop properly. Without treatment, your brain will learn to ignore the image from the problematic eye, and it grows weaker over time. So, the diagnosis was glasses and wearing a patch over the strong eye to strengthen the weak one.

I remember when my optometrist diagnosed my lazy eye. He asked me to perform a simple eye test by looking at an image. I saw the moon jumping over a cow. What I should have seen was a cow jumping over the moon. How did I take that? As a complete embarrassment. I felt dumb. To make matters worse, I was experiencing a conflict between feeling dumb and others perceiving me as intelligent because I was wearing glasses.

You see, back in 1976, a six-year-old wearing glasses wasn't common. As you might suspect, bullying occurred, and the phrase "four eyes" was often hurled in my direction. However, it wasn't the bullying that hurt most, it was the stereotype of wearing glasses, so I must be smart.

Of course, I was smart. Unfortunately, I stopped asking questions because I didn't want to be considered dumb. Full disclosure: I was also very introverted during my formative years. A combination of being introverted and not asking questions is a recipe for disaster.

What did this all lead to? Searching! Searching for answers on my own. I became isolated and unable to raise my hand to ask for help.

Why? Inevitably, the truth would be revealed that I may not be as *smart* as the glasses made me look. This was a difficult way to live in my young life.

Do you move through life with a similar story? Have you noticed that you can never run from the questions? The answers are always simmering inside you. It's like they're constantly trying to bubble out.

When these answers bubble up, do you see it as an invitation to explore? Perhaps you label it as something that may not be valid and then move silently?

This was a starting point for me, leading to a life of searching in silence and not asking questions that could help me along the way. Was I curious? I don't know. Did I have the desire to learn? Unless it was sports related, not really.

Reflecting on it now, I see where I was bullheaded, selfish, and stubborn enough to think I'd eventually find a way to fight through everything on my own.

Before I judge myself too harshly, maybe I should ask, "Am I alone in my stubbornness of not asking for help, or am I more like the average guy on the street?"

A 2022 survey conducted by OnePoll on behalf of Nutrisystem with 2,000 Americans found that 73% of people don't ask for help before starting something new. Half the respondents wait to ask for help until things are overwhelming. Additionally, 53% of people feel held back from goal achievement because they try to do it alone. Has doing it alone ever affected your goal achievement?

Adult Experiences

While on a recent retreat weekend, I had the opportunity to observe a group of men on a team-building exercise. It began with each member being blindfolded. Next, the group was guided to a ropes course and instructed, "Keep both hands on the rope. Keep your blindfold on. If you have any questions, raise your hand and ask for help."

The goal was to find your way out of the ropes course. There was no way out unless you put your hand in the air and asked for help.

As one might suspect, it took about 10 minutes before the first participant put his hand in the air and nearly 30 minutes before everyone realized that the instructions also came with the answer, "Put your hand in the air and ask for help."

How many times have you followed a path, or a rope, only to realize you're going around in circles? Searching for a way out or a different approach on your own can leave you feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and exhausted.

When we feel lost or think something is missing in our lives, we search to fill the void. We search for love, career fulfillment, or whatever gives us pleasure. But unfortunately, instead of asking for help to find our true path and honest answers, we commonly fill the void alone, or with things like medications or addictions.

Perhaps we don't want to deal with the answers or fear what may happen if we hear what God has in store for us. Is fear, shame, guilt, or something else holding us back? Yes, it could be any of those and more.

Yet when we isolate ourselves, we create a life of searching alone that can weigh us down like a boat anchor. It's that heaviness that holds us back in life.

As a coach and podcaster, the lifeblood of what I do is asking great questions. I often laugh because the guy (me) who wouldn't ask for help now guides men through this powerful process.

Over time, I've learned the value of staying curious and seeking to understand the true answers. Instead of rushing into advice or fixing problems, I serve much more effectively when I remain curious. Through the power of prayer and discernment, I've come to understand that we all have the answers inside of us; we might just need a guide to pull them out of us. An effective resolution comes by asking for help and the power of working through deep questions.

Let's face it, the resistance to asking for help is powerful. As I watched the blindfolded men go through their team-building

exercises on the ropes course, the dazed and confused looks on their faces reflected their thoughts.

Yes, this was a safe environment for the men, but their desire to figure it out independently was clear and unmistakable. They would find freedom and attain their goal if they could only figure out how to overcome this barrier and get to the open space. Here's the caveat: until they raised their hand and asked for help!

We live in a culture that values finding a way out and overcoming obstacles. My podcast guests tell their stories on the True Man Podcast each week. Typically, guests share about a low point in their lives. What separates them from others is their ability to pivot and attempt what they didn't think was possible.

Their success stories commonly reveal how they successfully found themselves maneuvering through their situations because they asked for help. They also found the answers along with support and encouragement from loved ones or others who walked alongside them.

Like many of my podcast guests, I can report the same finding. In fact, through the help of a redemptive God, a few good men, and a great deal of self-work, I can attest that you gain massive power when you release your unwillingness to ask for help.

Biblical Experiences

When I allowed my curiosity to guide me, I found that *asking for help* is embedded in our DNA from the source who has created us. The King James Version of the Bible mentions the word *help* 264 times. Why? Our redemptive God understands that humans were created with limits and can't do everything independently. In fact, the God of all things cares about our needs and our ability to find answers in Him.

Perhaps this explains why there are approximately 3,294 questions in the Bible. The reason for this is simple: when we ask for help through the power of questions, discernment, and confidence, we come to conclusions, peace, and understanding.

Moreover, *help* is commonly found with the word *ask* or *asking* in front of it. According to The Britannica Dictionary, the word *ask* has two meanings:

To request an answer to a question. Such as, "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:14

To request something more than just an answer such as directions, or help, as in, "Seek, and you find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

The Bible also addresses *requesting* help, "Let your requests be made known to God." Philippians 4:5

All this scripture involves *asking*, *requesting*, and *helping* provide critical information on how we gain answers to questions through prayer and an intimate relationship with Christ.

Here are some additional scripture verses centered around asking for help:

"Whatever you ask in my name, this I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." John 4:13-14

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

"Whatever you ask in name, this I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Matthew 21:22

"And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." 1 John 5:14.

Besides solutions and answers to questions, confidence was one of the greatest gifts I received in my life journey. This confidence developed from a more intimate prayer relationship with God, daily self-improvement, and the support and encouragement from the people I surrounded myself with.

My experience led me to create the True Outcome Formula:

God + Help = Hopeful Outcomes

You might be asking, "Why hopeful outcomes?" Hopeful outcomes focus on positivity, optimism, and possibilities.

Look at other words connected to help encourage, support, alleviate, further, promote, assist, aid, be of service, solution, benefit, comfort, guidance, and cooperation. These are positive and promising words. On the other hand, the opposite of *help* can be experienced as hindering, afflicting, missing, staying in place, lingering, refraining, and disorganizing. What way would you prefer to live?

When you go to God and ask for help, He will not abandon you. He will go to work through people and prayers. While making your request, expect to experience a feeling of anticipation that something good will occur through your Father.

Life Experiences

I don't know about you, but being supportive, solutions-oriented, and encouraging gives me much more peace than being hindered or staying in place. But, even with that, the obstacles you can run up against can paralyze you if you don't know what they are and how to fight through them. As I work with men, the following Four Obstacles of Fear frequently appear in our coaching sessions.

The Four Obstacles of Fear

Fear of Rejection – This is a biggie. So many people have been taught that asking for help is a weakness. This misinformation keeps us from asking questions or seeking support. We fear being rejected or laughed at, so we don't ask for the help we desperately need.

Some of my most significant victories happened by being bold, brave, and taking a risk by asking for the help you need.

TRUE MAN TIP: Like anything, this may take practice. The worst thing that can happen is you may be told "No." However, if overcoming your fear doesn't work the first time you try, keep working on it.

Fear of Uncertainty – Whenever we take a risk, we take an action with an uncertain result.

Life is full of unknowns and fears, considering what will happen next. Even though you can't change things outside of your control, the way you think is the key to dealing with challenging situations and meeting the unknown with confidence.

TRUE MAN TIP: View the unknown as an opportunity to experience something new and turn a negative thought into a positive self-belief.

Fear of Authenticity – Do you want people to love you for you or the disguise you hide behind? What is looking back at you if what you see in the mirror isn't your authentic version of yourself?

If your mantra is "Fake it until you make it," you may be hiding behind something you're not.

TRUE MAN TIP: To lose this imposter, you must face and embrace who you truly are. Being vulnerable can help us understand ourselves better while cultivating and strengthening our relationships. It can also help us better understand our growth opportunities, enhance our self-awareness, and flex our emotional intelligence muscles.

Fear of Feeling Unworthy –

It's comfortable to compare yourself to others. Do you even find yourself competing via cars, houses, and money? It can lead you to tell yourself that you're no good, and it might begin to feel like everyone is against you.

Don't fall for this type of victim mentality; it puts the focus on suffering instead of solutions.

TRUE MAN TIP: We all have something to contribute to the world. Find ways to increase your self-worth. Remember: Even those who look like they have everything together, have struggles too.

Learning Experiences

CAUTION: Throughout my journey, I've experienced all four of these fears – and likely more. I learned that asking for help requires taking a risk and overcoming fear. While taking a risk may not end with your desired outcome, you can learn great things when you

make the attempt and uncover opportunities you may not have realized existed. And in the end, that risk may lead you right to where you are supposed to be.

TRUE MAN TIP: Seek wise counsel when seeking help. What does this mean? Prayer and self-reflection are essential choices. Additionally, find a coach who helps you navigate options, make decisions, and take action. This person should offer insight, discernment, and knowledge. Most importantly, this person should ask good questions, actively listen, and help you connect to your heart for answers.

Overcoming these fears and finding the power of asking for help can build hope and confidence. Furthermore, having the humility to ask for help shows tremendous character and resolve. Most of us know we don't have everything figured out and can benefit significantly from asking others for help.

Typically, the challenge we perceive or the situation we find ourselves experiencing differs from the result. The reality is the way we frame our problems can dictate the outcomes we are able to see and achieve. If your attitude is, "I'm going it alone," or "I'm not asking for help," you may get what you ask for in a highly negative way.

Did my *lazy eye* start me on the road I planned to travel? No, but how I felt about wearing glasses certainly triggered something I never intended to happen. My mindset toward the situation was not the best, and I'm amazed at how events at such a young age can affect how you see things even later in life. Despite this challenge, I learned how to take more control of my life by asking for help and having an intimate relationship with Christ.

Throughout my journey and while working with other men, I've never met a man who enjoys feeling guilty, burned out, depressed, or isolated. Have you? Most men crave connection and support. Unfortunately, the discomfort of staying where they're at in life sometimes feels less painful than the comfort of finding helpful answers.

Helpful Experiences

Asking for help is a healthy, vital, and powerful way to live. What can you do? Be assertive, take action, discern options, and confront your emotions directly.

Admittedly, it took me a long time to figure this out. My transformation came with much practice. However, it also emerged by developing a closer relationship with Christ and through understanding that my prayer requests were being heard and that my answers would be ready when I was.

Renowned motivational speaker Les Brown states, "Ask for not because you're weak, but because you want to remain strong." Author Robert Kiyosaki states it differently, "One of the biggest defects in life is the inability to ask for help." But, like many things in life, asking for help is a choice worth making.

Asking for help is a life skill worth learning because the true discomfort is not in asking, but in the isolation of moving through life alone.

It's often said that "Help is just a phone call away." And, as mentioned earlier in the Bible, "Seek, and ye shall find." Matthew 7:7 However you look at it, I believe help is all in the ask. If you knew asking for help was all it took to begin making a massive change in your life, would you?

If all you had to do was raise your hand in the air and ask for help, would you let someone help you?

May I ask you this? If you're searching, frustrated, and confused at the daily grind of life, or if you're isolated and wondering, "Is there more to life than this?" Please put your hand in the air and ask for help. Go to my website: <https://TrueManLifeCoaching.com> There are plenty of no-cost resources available to immediately assist you. If you prefer, you can also schedule a time for us to talk.

By using the power of help, you can become the True Man you seek.

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Lori Bruton



Lori Bruton (pronounced Brew-ton; like brewing a ton of coffee) is known as the Queen of Hope and Transformation. She is an author, speaker, travel writer, and teacher. She enjoys coffee, dark chocolate, dancing, writing, music, movies, travel, kayaking, and essential oils. Her favorite role is mother. She says the two greatest gifts in her life are her two grown married sons.

Lori surrounds herself with books, pens, and paper wherever she goes (unless she is dancing). She creates Lori's Stories By the Water speaking life, love, and hope into people inspiring them to live the life they were born to live.

She is author of the books **Hole To Whole: Journey To Hope And Transformation**, **The LORI Factor: Living the Life You Were Born to Live** and children's books. She is co-author of **Hunger for the Hustle** and this book, **Cracking the Rich Code, Volume 11** with Jim Britt and Kevin Harrington.

Lori offers classes, courses, resources, and writing services that help people heal by telling their story and knowing their true identity. Lori is a Les Brown Endorsed Author and Certified Speaker. She has been featured in articles and on podcasts. She is a published freelance writer.

The LORI Factor: “I” is for Identity and Invest in Yourself

By Lori Bruton

“I’ve learned that making a ‘living’ is not the same thing as ‘making a life’.” Maya Angelou

There was a time I looked at my life and said, “That’s not me.” I knew I was created for more. It took time to realize that. I didn’t know my true identity. I allowed other people’s opinions to become my reality, affecting my self-image, self-worth, and true identity. I was seeking my identity in all the wrong places, relationships, food, and people-pleasing. I relied on other people to define me. All those things left me empty and hopeless. How did I get here? What happened to the happy-go-lucky days of childhood?

One day I asked my dad, “What kind of work do you do?”

“I am an entrepreneur,” he answered.

Since then, I have been intrigued to learn the meaning of entrepreneur. I found that an entrepreneur is a person who identifies a need in the marketplace and works to fulfill it. I thought that fulfilling other people’s needs would bring fulfillment to me.

First and foremost, I had to know *who* I was and *whose* I was. Not knowing that left me feeling unfulfilled, unloved, and uncertain.

My mom took me to church for years. I gained knowledge, but it wasn’t personal or tangible to me. I tuned out. I ran from religion. Then, instead of relying on others to define me, I found the Truth, which gave me the foundation and answers I needed in the bestselling book of all time. I stopped tuning out and had ears to hear.

The Living Word of God in Psalm 139:14 says, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” Hallelujah! That is Good News. The same is true for you.

Allow that Truth to fully sink in. Let it grow your confidence, not in yourself, but the confidence that only comes from knowing exactly who you are in Christ. In the beginning, “God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them,” Genesis 1:27.

There is no uncertainty in those words. I was created female. My identity is in Christ. His work is perfect. I won’t mess up what He made and intricately designed. My life has a purpose, and so does yours. Embrace the words of Your heavenly Father and feel His love, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” We were all uniquely created for a purpose. The strengths, abilities, and talents were given to you for a reason. You have the ability to impact this world powerfully. Your life matters. Let your light shine.

The path I took had many winding twists and turns. There was a time when my light was shining. I had a faithful, loving husband and two wonderful sons. Life was good until my past hurts caught up with me. I let go of God, which led to destruction, divorce, and a trail of hurt. I wanted to end my life. I thought everyone would be better off without me. That was a lie from the pit of Hell! It was a scary place to be. It took time to recover from shame, guilt, and self-sabotage.

Thankfully, God meets us right where we are. Even when I let go of Him, He never let go of me. Even if you don’t believe in Him, He believes in you. You are never alone. There is hope.

We tend to hold on tightly to our failures, weaknesses, and mistakes that steal life from us. God’s love is so great that He made you alive with Christ. You are saved from all those dark parts of yourself, the words you wish never to say, and the actions and temptations you regret. Accept the gift to be made alive!

Take hold of Ephesians 2:4-6, “But God still loved us with such great love. He is so rich in compassion and mercy. Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, He united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by His wonderful grace!”

I reclaimed my identity, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7. It was time to do life God's way, not my way. I learned that I can do nothing that truly prospers or matters apart from Him. A relationship with Him is the best decision I ever made.

If you identify as a child of God, the Creator, know that we are in the world, not of the world. The world looks to the Universe as their source. They leave out the Creator of the Universe. Jesus is the missing piece. He will never leave you nor forsake you. You are not a mistake! We make mistakes, and God makes miracles out of mistakes.

I began to put the pieces of my life together. It started with forgiveness. The person I needed to forgive most was myself. I struggled to accept God's forgiveness and kept beating myself up about my mistakes, robbing me of the core piece of my identity. Forgiveness is necessary, not for the other person, but primarily for yourself. Because when we are forgiven, we can live in the freedom Christ has given us. I decided to forgive myself and received God's forgiveness. I broke up with self-sabotage, suicidal thoughts, and toxic relationships.

"You are not the mistakes of your past. You're the resources and capabilities you've gleaned from it." ~ Jordan Belfort

My transformation journey brought me to a place of wholeness. Seeking Kingdom wisdom was essential. I am a new creature. I had an experience of rebirth. I reinvented myself. You can too. The eyes of my heart were opened. I saw my spiritual Truth. My senses were turned on. I had an awakening, which gave me a new vision.

Romans 12:2 was pivotal, "And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs] but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on Godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you]."

Ready, set, go. It was time for action and living the life I was born to live.

*“Decide upon your definite major purpose in life,
and then organize all your activities around it.”*

~ Brian Tracy

I stood on the Rock and let God take the wheel. This verse set things in motion, 1 Peter 1:13 – So prepare your minds for action, be completely sober [in spirit—steadfast, self-disciplined, spiritually and morally alert], fix your hope completely on the grace [of God] that is coming to you when Jesus Christ is revealed. That revelation gave me hope. Now people call me the Queen of Hope. Speaking life into people, including myself, turned things around. I was chosen. You are chosen. You are wanted. You are loved. You are a child of the One True King. You didn’t have to earn that position; it was freely given to you.

It was time to get to work. “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” Philippians 1:6.

Are you called to write, paint, sing, own a business, or be an entrepreneur? There is an unlived part inside of you. You will face resistance. Any passion that helps you grow and succeed will come with resistance to stop you and kill your calling and dreams. The biggest enemy that will come against you is you, not the real you but the inside critic who chatters in your head, trying to sabotage and stop you. You can put the sail up but can’t make the wind blow. Do what you can do. Don’t get stuck in reasoning. Birth your idea. Make it happen. Take action and launch it. People need to hear my message. People are waiting to listen to yours too.

Les Brown asked me to tell him about a defining moment in my life. That moment birthed The LORI Factor. My life and my name had a new meaning.

‘L’ is having a larger vision of yourself beyond your circumstances. ‘O’ is having an Optimistic spirit. ‘R’ is Reinvent yourself and make

a radical change. 'I' is Invest in yourself. I even wrote a book about it.

That brings me to 'I' Invest in yourself.

Warren Buffet was asked, "What is the best investment you can make?"

He answered, "In yourself."

First, I made God the CEO of my business. Second, I practiced OQP; I surrounded myself with Only Quality People, which I learned from Les Brown. Feeling confident and free, I was having fun discovering the real me. Life took another turn when health challenges created obstacles and limitations. Wealth has no value without good health. You are enough. Vitality and longevity are possible.

A confirmation was revealed of why I was at a health and wellness event. It was to be on the speaker panel to talk about The LORI Factor and hear a keynote speaker. He told his story and shared his results. I now have a new resource that is restoring my health. I can't wait to share it with those wanting to ignite their wellness journey. Know that UR Worth IT.

My healing journey is ongoing. I am working on wellness and inviting others to join me. That way, I can help myself and many others too. There is still much to do, places to go, and people to meet. Writing is my superpower. It is a gift from God. My favorite type of writing is travel writing. It fills up my adventure cup and makes my heart sing.

Too often, I got caught up in doing things that were not the right fit for me. People made suggestions of what I should do. That kept me stuck and in a state of confusion. I let outside voices speak to me. I wasn't seeking the voice that knows me best.

"Everyone tells you what to do and what's good for you; they don't want you to find your own answers; they want you to believe theirs."

~ Dan Millman

When I listened to my heavenly dad, I got clarity. My gifts and talents were magnified right before my eyes. I didn't see it before because I didn't believe in myself, got distracted, and was influenced by people who didn't know what was best for me. When you find the right fit for you, you'll know. It will flow freely. Yes, it takes work, but you will enjoy it and feel fulfilled.

"A warrior does not give up what he loves, he finds love in what he does."

~ Dan Millman

Remember to include the essential piece of fulfillment. Work is what we do, not who we are. Don't look through a telescope, a microscope, or at a horoscope. You'll only see the emptiness of the universe. Look to the savior, Jesus Christ. That is when you'll realize and experience true identity and fulfillment.

My favorite book says in Colossians 2:10, "And our own completeness is now found in him. We are completely filled with God as Christ's fullness overflows within us. He is the head of every kingdom and authority in the universe."

Don't wait until it's too late. I almost did. Thankfully, now I know where I'll spend eternity and leave a lasting legacy with my books. Unleash your superpower. Let your voice be heard.

Writing is healing. I am called to heal the brokenhearted and help people get their stories onto paper and into the hands waiting for them. Write your story. It will be healing for you and for those who read it. Some people enjoy writing but don't have time. Others do not like to write, but they have a story to tell. Don't take your message to the grave. Use your gifts and talents to make a difference. Too many people die with the music, book, or dream still inside them.

"The graveyard is the richest place on earth, because it is here that you will find all the hopes and dreams that were never fulfilled, the books that were never written, the songs that were never sung, the inventions that were never shared, the cures that were never discovered, all because someone was too afraid to take

that first step, keep with the problem, or determined to carry out their dream.”

~ Les Brown

Let me ask you this, based on what you just read, does this resonate with you? Do you like what I shared? If yes, what I can offer is a perfect fit for you. I am a Les Brown-endorsed author and speaker who brings your story to life.

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

~ Maya Angelou

Certainty, clarity, and compassion are empowering. I am confident that I can help you get clarity, and I have the compassion to take you to a place inside yourself that you can't get to by yourself.

Speakers, coaches, and entrepreneurs can benefit from my services. It will add value to your clients and give you time to do what you do best, speak and coach. Let's take your video and audio content and repurpose it. I can create blogs, eBooks, workbooks, social media posts, and even poems and thank-you notes. Yes, there is 'artificial intelligence,' but with me, you get an authentic, personalized, and customized experience that aligns with who you are.

Let's write your story and leave a timeless legacy. It will change and impact lives, especially yours.

Let's get started now. Seize the day.

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Dr. Mindy Gewirtz



Dr. Mindy is President of Collaborative Networks, a leadership and executive coaching firm. Driving exponential client growth, results from Integrating executive coaching with her prior leadership experiences. A Master Certified Coach (MCC), Mindy is accredited by both the International Coach Federation (ICF) and the (EMCC Global), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council. Mindy's passion is helping clients train

their brain to quiet limiting perspectives and thrive in life and work. Clients crack the rich code, by successfully leading, *and* living a rich life. Her global executive clients span high tech, biotech, financial services, government, and professional services. Mindy specializes in neuroscience-based coaching and is certified in Conversational Intelligence (C-IQ), team coaching, The Hogan Leadership Assessment and (AQ), Adaptability Intelligence. She is a dynamic speaker, author, and entrepreneur. Mindy's 2021 book, *Conversation Secrets for Tomorrow's Leaders: 21 Secrets Leaders Do Not Use Enough*, is coauthored with Carrie Gallant and Stephen Hamilton Clarke, is preceded by five book chapters on leadership and teaming. The book is ranked as an Amazon #2 bestseller, and #1 Hot New Release in Business Leadership.

Mindy's Ph.D. *summa cum laude*, is earned at Boston University. She taught *Coaching Methodology* and *Coaching/Mentoring* for several years in the master's program for *Organizational Leadership*. Currently, Mindy is a mentor for individual coaches around the world, who are applying for their MCC credential from the International Coach Federation. She is also faculty for WJM, a global coaching and consulting firm, Ace-UP, and Potential Genesis HR, a coaching school in India.

Cracking the Code of Worklife Adaptability:

7 Secrets and Strategies

By Dr. Mindy Gewirtz

Of all the emotional intelligence competencies, strength in adaptability predicts success most often. -Daniel Goleman, Ph.D.

In this chapter, we are going to do some myth-busting about worklife balance. We will also suggest exchanging the idea of balance with the more dynamic concept of *adaptability* and discuss 7 strategies to achieve worklife adaptability.

Balance is the de facto term we use to describe the optimal *outcome* to achieve in work and life. Who doesn't need or want to find balance in life and work? The concept of worklife balance intuitively makes sense. What changed my perspective of balance recently is the difficulty in finding worklife *balance* (physically, mentally and emotionally) given the accelerated pace of black swan events. Climate disruption, a first-ever global pandemic, the years long war in Ukraine, and the entrenched recession have led to a significant upswing in chronic stress and work overwhelm. Mental health is now at a crisis level that plays out in work and life. If worklife balance has been elusive up until now, then today, it seems positively mythological.

Of significance today is the number of women and more men than ever before, particularly millennials and Gen Z, who are openly expressing that worklife balance is an important consideration in choosing where to work. After two decades, worklife benefits have gone mainstream. Companies have listened. They provide support - - from childcare services to eldercare information and referral to flex time etc. Women, however, still get penalized for taking out time to raise children. A talented, fast-tracked VP of benefits at a large insurance company shared with me that she was placed on the "mommy track," after the company found out she was having her second child just eighteen months after the first one.

We propose replacing the myth of worklife *balance*, because balance as an expression of a goal to attain is misguided. This is

where adjusting our terms becomes necessary. In recalibrating the journey, we need to restart with some fresh terms. I believe that *worklife adaptability* more accurately captures both the goal and how to achieve it. Balance is about equilibrium as in two sides of a scale with equal weight. Given the exponential pace of change in our work and lives, this image of balance and homeostasis is outdated with limited applicability.

We consider worklife adaptability an *input* or process that impacts worklife, as opposed to what is known as *output*, such as looking for worklife *balance* as an outcome. The premise of adaptability as an input or process is that adaptability can help us to crack the rich code of life and work. The evidence-based research about adaptability is clear: it points us to the key to the secrets and strategies of living a fulfilling worklife. Sometimes, the wheel of life and work hurls us forward along bumpy roads. The skill of worklife adaptability can buffer the fear and stress that comes with the uncertainty of the unknown. Worklife adaptability is an ability that can be learned. It is linked to innate characteristics, and it is influenced to a degree by how we respond to our environment.

Worklife adaptability issues often surface when I coach executives and top leadership teams. Given that adaptability is recognized as a top ten characteristic of successful leadership – as Daniel Goleman points out in the quote above -- it follows that adaptability in both work *and* life would account for success in both areas. And achieving success in work and life organically triggers the rich code. Being rich comes in many forms beyond financial wealth which is an *output* or result. Living a fulfilling life and career, one is rich beyond measure.

Worklife adaptability refers to changing the *input* or processes. It is the foundational *input* that leads to achieving the *output* we're looking for, such as successful organizational leadership *and* thriving in our life and work. As we shall see, leaders have been compelled to unlearn old ways and learn new ways of doing things. Based on our coaching experience we have observed that leaders who let go of old ways of doing things move into adaptivity mode more smoothly and quickly. These are most often the perpetual

learners who also possess mental flexibility, where they easily manage to hold and consider two opposing ideas at the same time.

Applying the Research on Adaptability to Worklife Adaptability

Thornley defines Adaptability Intelligence (AQ)¹ as *the capacity to adjust one's thoughts and behaviors in order to effectively respond to uncertainty, new information or changed circumstances*. I extend (and personalize) Thornley's integration of AQ as also facilitating worklife adaptability.

1. *Learned abilities* (learning to let go, flexible thinking, grit etc.)
2. *Intrinsic characteristics* (harder to learn such as motivation and thinking styles and hope) and
3. *The environment* (influence of the work environment, team support, work stress, company support)

Integrating these three in the service of worklife adaptability creates a powerful roadmap. Let's see how this works.

1. Learned ability refers to skills that can be learned including:

Mental flexibility. Flexibility often refers to *exchanging* one idea or possibility for another. Adaptability is about *adding something new* to the process. This is what we bring that is new when we move from balance to worklife adaptability.

Resilience is also a subset of *learned ability* in adaptability. Resilience refers to the endurance we bring to a situation and the ability to cope well with it in a sustained manner. Adaptability, however, is more than bouncing back from difficulty. Resilience in adaptability is the ability to bounce *forward*. Similarly, in worklife adaptability, the learning we do helps us move forward which is much more dynamic than the aiming for the stasis of balance.

Unlearning is a third important subset of *learned ability* in adaptability. Brassey and De Semet propose², a *meta-skill* of unlearning and being uncomfortable in the not knowing. Learning how to learn is one thing. Consciously propelling the learner to act by adding something new of value is another. Applying that

knowledge across situations goes to the heart of adaptability.³ This is the input we're looking for in worklife adaptability. We learn what works. We keep adding new things as we learn. Then we apply it across different situations and keep adding value from the new learning.

These learned abilities are quickly becoming sought-after values for today's major corporations. IBM's 2016 global research surveys on leadership indicate concern about a shortage in technical skills. By 2018 that worry shifted to social skills.⁴ Moving from "balance" to "worklife adaptability" is a social skill that can be learned, making it a far more relevant useful concept than "balance." Unlearning the old ways of balance and beginning to apply the dynamic new approach of practicing resilience, flexibility and other social skills is at the root of adaptability in work and life.

My personal experiences with *worklife adaptability* have become integrated with my professional experience over the decades. For example, during the pandemic, I could use the time I was no longer flying or commuting to meet clients to coauthor my latest book *Conversation Secrets for Tomorrow's Leaders 2022*. Instead, I invited clients into my virtual office overlooking the ocean. Writing the entire book with fewer distractions took me as long as it did to write a book chapter for *The Promise and the Practice of Eldercare Initiatives in Human Dilemmas in Work Organizations*.⁵

Coaching executives during the pandemic, I recognized that attempts at balancing work and life often only triggered more stress, not less. This led to formulating a new principle: Work and life are not an either/or proposition (although we talk about it that way). The "life" part of the worklife continuum I envision as a wheel with different spokes. We audit the wheel of life with clients, with each spoke representing an important part of life, such as family, good health, self-care, friends, relationships, and spiritual life. This diffusion of worklife from an aggregated concept of life makes it easier to tease apart the causes of the worklife stress and take active steps to increase or decrease areas of engagement.

7 Secrets and Strategies for WorkLife Adaptability

I now recognize that adaptability has been a go-to strategy throughout my worklife journey. Since the pandemic of 2020 I began to integrate worklife adaptability concepts into coaching clients, helping them assess and build their capacity for change.

I share these hard-won secrets and strategies for cracking the rich code with worklife adaptability. I trust these strategies can spark change and inspiration in a way that works for you as a leader. Remember that we are all leaders in one way or another, whether at work, at home, or in our communities. These seven adaptive secrets are the same ones that I learned throughout my career. I trust that as you apply them in your own life, you too will find yourself cracking the rich code.

Secret One: Worklife balance is a myth. It is a social construct that is not as useful as in prior decades.

Strategy One: Surrender the holy grail of worklife balance as the goal. Shift your mindset to worklife adaptability as an input, with specific skills you can learn.

Let go of the paradigm that says work and life are two opposites that vie for your undivided attention. Consider that life consists of many areas. You can choose to turn the dial up and focus on one or dial down to reduce stress or anxiety in any of these areas.

Application: Roadmap Exercise

Draw a circle and create a spoke for each area of life and career that is important for you. For example: Unpack what worklife means to you beyond career and family and audit how you are doing using a 1-10 rating system (10 being the highest).

Taking care of your health

Practicing good eating habits

Maintaining good sleep habits, so your body and your brain can replenish and regenerate energy to achieve your worklife goals.

Engaging with your spirituality in a way that speaks to you.

Making time and being present for your family whatever your definition of family is

Maintaining supportive relationships, and friendships

Other

Rate how you are doing 1-10 (10 being the highest).

Then, look at the areas and make a list of your highest priorities.

Where are your gaps? What do you want more of, less of; what can remain the same?

Secret Two: Let go of the need for perfection. Let go of expecting yourself to be superwoman or superman. Let go of the notion that you can be all things for all people, all the time, whether at work or in your broader life. Let go of being the “Lone Ranger” and doing everything by yourself.

Strategy Two: Practice adaptability and unlearn what no longer works.

Application: Practice saying or singing one of the following three sentences. Sometimes you will need one. Sometimes all three:

1. *Know when to hold them, when to fold them, and when to let go.* I like to sing this line from old Western, Kenny Rodger’s song. This reminds me that I have a choice and letting go is probably my best option, even if I don’t like it.

2. *I can let go of this.* Anytime I have the urge at work and say yes to another request (because I am a people pleaser) I pull out this little gem of a phrase when appropriate.

3. *I don’t have to do this.* Figure out what must be done by you, what you might outsource, and which things can be dropped from the agenda altogether. I like the last one best (even though it is the hardest for me).

4. *I am good enough.* Say it as often as you need to. Surrender into being okay as the *good-enough* mother, wife, and friend to others. I say this one a lot.

5. Add your own sentence here (Get creative and have fun with it!).

Practice asking for what you need and want. Your partner (or anyone else) is not a mind reader. They will appreciate the clarity.

Yes, I know it is tough for us A-type personalities to think we need help and then to ask for it. You can do it. Get help from a coach or therapist when you need to.

Secret Three: Stop accepting everyone else's values and opinions as being better than your own in determining what you should be doing with your life and/or your career.

Strategy Three: Get in touch with your life values and live them in your life and work. Learned abilities refers to a set of skills you can practice and improve on as discussed above. Now let's visit the second cluster (or subset of adaptability): Character. Character is intrinsic to you and much harder to learn or change. According to Thornley, this includes a person's motivation and thinking style, their capacity for hope and emotional range.

I propose adding values to this list. When you are clear about your intrinsic life values, you can then translate them into your daily life and reference them at work. The more you conduct yourself in sync with those clarified values, the more the stress goes away. One flows out from the other and back in a kind of healthy loop. If your values are not in sync with your work you have a choice to make.

Application: Develop a List of Your Work and Life Values and Live Them

Identify and clarify your core values so they become your guiding stars.

Trust them to guide your adaptability decisions in work and life.

Keep following your values through life. They will help build your resilience.

Secret Four: Every stage of work and life requires an adaptive mindset as the new set of circumstances and or environment could require new adaptability strategies.

Strategy Four: Be ready. Don't expect your worklife to remain static. Become accustomed to fluctuations of life and work. Anticipate as potentially changing every three to five years or sooner. And adjust accordingly. Practice flexing your adaptability muscle. The learned ability that can help you here is *mental flexibility*. This is the ability to hold two opposing views at the same time, which, by the way, has a way of bringing something new to the equation.

Application: Practice the learned adaptability skill of mental flexibility

Embrace work and life with the awareness that it is always changing.

Consciously shift your thinking to take on an adaptive mindset.

Acknowledge the part of you which resists change.

Anticipate and prepare for change whenever you can.

Prepare for your next career move.

Be proactive and anticipate what you want to happen in your stage of life – be intentional or other people will do it for you.

Secret Five: Slow down to speed up.

Strategy Five: Ignore your colleague who swears that multi-tasking is *the* answer to worklife dilemmas.

Application: There are better solutions to Worklife Dilemmas than multitasking

Multi-tasking only slows you down. Yes, you may get more stuff done. Just be aware that the research indicates that quality takes a hit because of doing all those tasks at the same time. Relaxed concentration when performing a task cannot be compared to the fractured thinking that goes with multitasking.

Decide which tasks are important rather than urgent. (Important -- having long-term results that align with your values and urgent -- those matters that get in your face but may not have lasting value.)

Replace multi-tasking with tackling matters one at a time with focus.

Decide that you have the grit to push through each task and move onto the next.

Start with the important ones and stick to a decided upon order of priorities.

Secret Six: Don't let anyone tell you what growth should look like for you, whether it is your learning, your job, when or what kind of relationship you should have, or when or whether to start a family.

Strategy Six: Practice a growth mindset, enlisting your gut, head, and heart for what you want to do in life.

Application:

Practice a growth mindset about what your education will look like

What you want your career to look like

What you want your relationships to look like

When you want to start a family

Remember that what you choose to do has consequences, some good and some less good.

Choose wisely, meaning with long range vision.

Secret Seven: Adaptability is a muscle you can flex, and with practice, it becomes stronger and capable. As you do, you will notice more agility, and like a toned athlete, you'll find yourself fluidly shifting positions and mental strategies. Consider yourself a world class worklife adaptability athlete.

Strategy Seven: As you flex your own adaptability muscle your circle of influence will expand. Not only will others notice and follow your model, but you will also activate those around you to help. Keep on practicing flexing that muscle to get better at adapting. Consider how you can get support to help you adapt.

Application: Practice for Thirty Days

1. Like any habit, it takes thirty days for a practice to take hold and become ingrained.

2. Consider how you can get support from people to help you adapt.

Epilogue

To Leaders: Millennials and Gen Z workers, the coming wave of leadership in the workforce want to live a fulfilling and adaptable worklife where living life is primary, and work is secondary. Progressive organizations will win the talent wars, so ante up.

Remember that half your workforce is comprised of women, so, level up your support for bringing women leaders in the middle to top positions.

To Employees:

Find a work culture that fits with your present stage in life. This can be more important than the salary offer. A salary can come or go, whereas time in your life you lose never returns.

Consider that your voice matters now more than ever. Help your company know that you value and support an adaptive worklife.

To those of you who struggle with worklife issues, know that I have been there, and that I care. I welcome your comments and coaching questions on worklife adaptability for yourself, your team or organization.

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Albino Sanchez



Entrepreneur, CEO and executive coach leading teams and executives through change while shaping organizational cultures and achieving big, hairy, and audacious goals.

Albino's purpose is to transform lives and organizations through leadership and culture within sports, education, and coaching & consulting.

Expert General Management and Operations executive, specializing in leadership from strategy development to excellence in execution. Known for delivering top and bottom-line results in several industries.

Recognized as a human-centric leader, creating, and developing high performing teams built on trust and growth. Passionate in driving cultures that promote enablement, ownership, and accountability.

Albino is a former athlete, having won national water-skiing tournaments in Mexico as well as paddle tournaments.

He co-founded www.thefutureacademy, an organization that owns elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools with an innovative nontraditional education model. Its mission is to develop in their students, skills for real life empowering them to build their own future based on their talents and passions regardless of their origins or environment.

He founded www.ahaimpact, a business consulting & executive coaching firm. Its mission is to develop leaders so they can thrive, lead high performance teams, and transform their organizations and lives. Its strong, transformational, and ROI focused approach includes: an AI based software for big data business analysis, neuroscience-based software for talent analysis, change

management best practices, mentorship platform, executive & purpose coaching, business consulting.

What's your entrepreneurial business purpose?

By: Albino Sanchez

There are several approaches to defining our purpose in life or in business. In this chapter, I'll take you through my career journey highlighting some of my biggest lessons learned and how all these experiences shaped my entrepreneurial business purpose leading me to start 3 companies. A key element of my life's purpose is improving and impacting others' lives. I sincerely hope this chapter achieves just that.

My father was a successful business owner when I was young. I looked up to him very much and sought to emulate his entrepreneurial mindset. He owned several businesses within the bakery and commerce industries. When I was in college back in year 1996, I worked as the manager at one of the convenience stores my father owned. He gave me freedom to really explore what it meant to run the store on my own. Although I was maybe too young to run a business and manage a team of 6 people, I had big dreams of turning that modest business into a big success. I started by benchmarking what successful franchised convenience stores like 7 eleven and Mexican OXXO were doing. I realized I needed to restructure almost everything in order to turn that business from an improvised operation into a professional, efficient, and customer centered operation. When I shared my idea with the current in store manager, what I got in return was a big grin and I interpreted this as "you have no idea what you are doing kid". I realized this person didn't have the skills, experience nor the right attitude to work with me on this business transformation. I had to trust my instincts and deal with my own fears and doubts. I decided to execute my plan and had to make a series of tough decisions that included letting go this person and hiring someone with the right skillset. I attended conferences and learned everything I could about retail, technology, and inventory management systems. I also studied Business Administration in college, with a specialization in Finance. I was confident in the tools I had acquired to run a successful business.

For a period of time the store was profitable, then, very unexpectedly, I began to notice a concerning trend. Though I

installed a state-of-the-art register, I noticed that revenue was decreasing. I implemented an advanced inventory management software, and yet stock disappeared from my shelves. Sadly, this new in-store manager had betrayed me. By the time I uncovered what was going on, enough damage had been done that my father and I decided to close the store permanently. As difficult as this failure was, it was a very shaping experience. I learned a lot about leadership and accountability. I did not allow this circumstance to cause me to shy away from business ownership. Embracing the personal and professional development this experience offered, I was very eager to evolve and use these lessons to propel my career forward.

In 2002, I was invited by my father-in-law to work at his company for a one-year project as a Strategic Manager and implement a new methodology called Balanced Scorecard. This position truly challenged and excited me. I was given the opportunity to work closely with an external consultant, which opened my eyes to the world of strategy management and business consulting services. After getting married, I lived a year in Madrid, Spain pursuing a master's degree. Upon returning, I started working as a business consultant at a boutique consulting firm specialized in strategy. We were representing in Mexico Dr. Robert Kaplan and Dr. David Norton, creators of the Balanced Scorecard framework for strategy execution. I had the opportunity to serve some of the largest private and government organizations as PEMEX (oil & gas) and Grupo Modelo (brewing) among many others. I interviewed, trained, and led strategy workshops with hundreds of executives at these companies. I remember telling them "The most important part of a strategy map was the company's intangible assets comprised of human talent, organizational culture, and business information". I could see that most of them would agree with that but actually, very few of them really managed their businesses and teams that way.

During this time, I began to notice important patterns in short-term versus long-term success within a company. A great deal of time and effort goes into defining a strategy and deploying it within a large organization through multiple objectives, KPIs, targets, and projects. Having this framework in place was only the beginning, the real challenge was having people adopt it as a tool to make

decisions, measure performance, and communicate priorities. It was not easy to get all management team members sponsor these projects. Often times, if they didn't see a short-term benefit for them, they wouldn't encourage their teams to use it. They would just fill in the information on the formats the previous night to the meeting and all they wanted was to look good and say everything was OK. Imagine my disappointment when I checked in on past clients, six months-to-a-year after our work together had been executed, only to find out that the processes had been abandoned. Most of the projects had essentially died as soon as us, the consultants, weren't there anymore to continue driving them forward. That's when I had my first real 'aha' moment.

I realized that the few companies that embraced this strategy management framework had one thing in common: a people-centered and customer-centered CEO. Those leaders were different, they led by example by learning and using the new processes themselves, they actively listened to their team members, they were authentically interested in developing their teams, they trusted their teams and they clearly communicated the priorities and expectations, etc. Employees under that leadership usually were highly engaged, felt valued, trusted, and gave their best to the company. I could also see that the work environment they created was key for the team to thrive. At that moment, I deeply understood what Peter Drucker said, "Organizational culture eats strategy for breakfast." It was really noticeable how team's performance and collaboration was much better with that type of leader.

Later on, I worked as strategy planning manager for one of the largest bus transportation companies in Mexico. This company had more than 20,000 employees. My boss was the CEO, who originally hired me to help him with the follow-through and execution of strategic initiatives throughout the organization. Right from my onboarding training, I realized that the company didn't have a formal and professional process for strategic planning and execution. I presented to the CEO, the HR director and the Quality director, the framework I had implemented in previous years in many other organizations. They loved it and asked me to lead the new Strategy Management Office. I ended up building a team of 20 people that served the 5 divisions of the company and our main

functions were defining strategy, setting objectives, measures and goals at all levels, aligning employee's performance review to strategy, training, analyzing the competition, processes improvement, and project management. During this time, I had 2 big breakthroughs:

Every year, I led a company offsite strategy workshop with 40 directors that came in from all over the country. Once, I'd been so much into preparing the event, that I barely slept and ate during the previous weeks to the event. By the second day of this event, I was so burnt out that I had a panic attack and they had to take me to the hospital. The doctor said I had elevated cardiac enzymes meaning I was under heart attack risk. I had to abandon the event and asked my team to take over. I relaxed for a couple of days and decided to never again skip a meal or sleep less than 5 hours for more one night straight.

When we were defining the strategy map for the company, we needed the CEO to set a long-term goal that would lead everything we did in strategy and operations for the following years. I told him this goal should be aggressive but achievable and should bring focus to the company on the priorities of strategy. A few days later he came back to me and told me "We will double our revenue in 10 years". We aligned everything to that big hairy and audacious goal. Some divisions had to diversify their businesses in order to meet their contribution goal and new businesses were created. Our strategy framework plus strong leadership resulted in amazing results for the company. I was no longer there to see the goal being met but my former colleagues told me "We reached the goal at year 9!"

Books have been for me a great source of knowledge and inspiration. For many years, I used to commute for 1 hour between my house and my office. I used to listen to audiobooks while driving. This way, I listened to dozens of business books. Later in life, I'd been referring to many of those books while helping my clients in my consulting or executive coaching projects. A book that had a profound impact in me was "First break all the rules" from Marcus Buckingham. A quote from that book that really resonated with me was "Employees join the companies because of the companies and leave the companies because of bad bosses". If you

are a CEO, an entrepreneur, an HR director or a people-centered leader, I strongly recommend you read that book.

I also usually attend multiple business conferences where I seek great insights from the speakers and networking. The one that has had the biggest impact in me was a talk from Niels Pflaeging called “Beyond Budgeting”, now better known as “BetaCodex.” He says that the way corporations are managed today, hasn’t changed much since the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s. The organizational chart was originally conceived like a triangle under the assumption that the people on top were the ones in charge of thinking and the people at the bottom were in charge of executing, but not thinking. The different specialized departments were conceived for massive manufacturing production where it made sense to organize people according to a flow within a production process. We need to break up with these obsolete practices. We need to move from “people at the top are the thinkers and the rest should follow orders” (fostering control and lack of trust) into “all employees are capable of leadership and creativity” (fostering trust and enablement). We should move from centralizing (information, power, decisions) into decentralizing and bringing trust and more freedom to act and decide to people in the front line because they are the ones that create the customer experience. We need to move from departments that try to push their own agendas into multidisciplinary teams organized by projects with common goals, good communication, and great working culture.

Later on, I worked for a parcel service company as strategy planning director. The company was losing profitability and the CEO hired a consultant to find opportunities for improvement in all departments. I tried to convince management to invest in processes improvement and talent development, but they were focused only on sales and cutting budgets. The consultant taught me that the best way to convince management about something is to “speak their language,” and that is numbers, aka finances. He realized the company had a really high employee turnover. What he did was a breakdown and valuation of all processes involved in hiring, training, firing, and replacing talent. He actually calculated the cost of the high employee turnover. The number was surprisingly big; it was an eye opener. That was the moment when management decided to invest in

processes and talent. I learned from that experience that investments in intangible assets should be linked to a financial return on investment.

Later on, I worked for a software development company as COO initially and then as CEO. I had the opportunity to lead a team applying most of the lessons I learned throughout my career. I built a people centered and client centered organizational culture. I learned that a company reflects its CEO's mindset, strengths, and weaknesses. We were able to develop new solutions, develop user friendlier software, open new markets, and implement robust solutions for complex operations. As a team, I empowered them so they could do their jobs without me, we had great follow-up meetings on each project, good communication and collaboration, we even had a weekly book club meeting. The problem was that all those improvements didn't translate into new revenue in the short term. The company was bootstrapping, and we started to have a negative cashflow. The idea of a layoff was present, but I decided to talk to all the team members and asked for their support. We agreed that the company would retain a percentage of all salaries while we generated the revenue needed. The plan worked temporarily. Unfortunately, the pandemic affected some of our clients and they asked us to reduce our pricing or cancel services. My big lesson learned was that no matter how great the improvements on your service and on your team, you can never oversee your cashflow, profitability, and revenue growth since they always should remain as an absolute priority for the CEO.

During and after the pandemic, I decided to undergo a profound self-discovery process, personal strategy planning, and a life purpose definition. I joined the Robin Sharma's 5 am club, hired several executive and life coaches, enrolled in several transformational courses, practiced meditation, built new habits, etc. I analyzed what my passions were, my strengths, what moves me, and what motivates me. I've always known I wanted to start and build a successful and innovative company that had an impact in people's lives. I decided that now, at 45 years of age, after so many lessons learned throughout my career, it was time. From this analysis, I concluded that my life purpose related to business is: Transform lives and organizations through leadership and culture within sports,

education, and coaching & consulting. I'm convinced that if you follow your passions, innovate, create big value for your target market, and build a great team that can deliver it with excellence, your success is guaranteed. I also believe that each one of us has a mission in life but it's our responsibility to discover what it is and fulfill it. I'll breakdown the main components of my purpose so you can better understand where they came from.

Sports: When I was a kid, I used to do all kinds of tricks on my bike, my roller skates, and skateboard. I was really skillful. I became a great basketball player at school, a break dance dancer, a great snow skier and an even better water skier. My parents owned a cottage by a lake and every weekend I spent hours and hours waterskiing. My dad hired a coach, and I started competing. I won 2 national tournaments. Later on, we discovered a new racket sport called padel which is like a combination between squash and tennis. A neighbor had a padel court and we played for many years. I got coaching, and I also won a few padel tournaments. I recently moved with my family to California. I realized that even though padel was created only 50 years ago, it has become highly popular in countries like Spain, Argentina, and Mexico. There's few padel courts in the U.S. and none in California. I partnered with two businessmen, and we decided to bring padel to California. We are currently building our strategy plan. Being a former athlete myself, it made sense to build a business around my passion for sports.

Education: I studied from kindergarten to high school at a highly traditional, strict, and academic school. I remember I didn't engage with the education system. It seemed like the goal was to receive a lot of information and prove I could understand it or remember it at least for the exam. Once in college, I decided to become a lifelong learner. It took me more than 20 years to rebuild myself (with help from my wife, my mother-in-law, coaches, and therapists), discover my passions, gain clarity, define my purpose, and to live my life accordingly. I would like to change this for kids and help them discover this at a young age. I want to empower them and help them realize that they can build their own future regardless of their origins or environment. I want to create a school system that develops skills for real life in a way that's engaging, creative, and fun. I partnered with three businesspeople experts in education, and we recently

started our company www.thefutureacademy.org. Having experienced myself the weaknesses of traditional education, it made sense to build a business that could give kids what I would have loved to receive when I was a kid to jumpstart my career earlier in life.

Consulting & executive coaching: I learned through my experience that the best performing teams and organizations have great organizational cultures led by people-centered and customer-centered leaders. I really like Richard Branson's quote: "If you take care of your employees, they will take care of your clients". I've been a business consultant for more than 15 years and I became a certified executive coach 9 years ago. I can proudly say that I've changed lives and I've helped bosses become better leaders through my executive coaching practice (see testimonials in my LinkedIn profile). I discovered that I have a natural and strong talent for coaching, so I decided to start my coaching and consulting firm www.ahaimpact.com. I've built selected alliances in order to offer a strong transformational approach with a ROI focus that includes: an AI based software for big data business analysis, neuroscience-based software for talent analysis, change management best practices, mentorship platform, executive & purpose coaching, business consulting. Having such plentiful experience as a consultant, executive, business manager, executive coach, and CEO, it made sense to build a business focused on developing leaders so they can thrive, lead great teams, and transform their organizations and lives.

Now it's your turn. What's your purpose in life or business?

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John Verrico



An under-sized youth often victimized by bullies, John Verrico gained hope and strength from classic monster movies, where he learned that even the little guy could be the hero with a little confidence, self-awareness, communication, and a well-lit torch.

An internationally recognized expert in effective communication, leadership, and employee engagement, John has more than four decades of experience and his multi-faceted background includes

extensive work in the military, government, non-profit, corporate, small business, and entertainment industries.

John is former President of the National Association of Government Communicators and served in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserve for 25 years, gaining extensive experience as a public, community, and internal communication professional before retiring as a Master Chief Journalist in 2005. He continued to hone his skills in senior communication and public affairs positions in federal and state government agencies.

Combining this with experience gained sampling multiple other occupations earlier in his career, John began helping small-businesses, non-profits, and entertainers tell their stories.

As the founder of Share Your Fire, LLC, John now aids aspiring and established leaders fire up their own torches – illuminating organizational climate, culture and relationships – and create healthier and more productive work environments and motivated teams. John earned a master's degree in organizational leadership from Norwich University and a Bachelor's in communication from the University of the State of New York.

Richness is Freedom from What Holds You Back

Are you enjoying the journey toward your goals?

by John Verrico

All the best business leaders tell us we need to have goals, we need to have a vision of the future, we need to be constantly reaching for the next thing.

There is much truth in this.

But what they don't tell us is that if we live our lives striving to leap from goal to goal, objective to objective, we wind up missing the experience along the way. And that's where all the richness in life comes from – in the journey to reach those goals.

For example, take skydiving. The goal is to land on the ground, safely, alive and uninjured. If you are only focused on that goal, you miss the whole experience. The beautiful views, the sensation of weightlessness, the exhilaration of the air rushing by, the thrilling fear of death rapidly approaching.

Okay. So maybe this is a bad example because, as a person with a fear of heights, skydiving is not something I ever sought to do myself. To me, jumping out of a perfectly operational airplane seems an unnecessarily dangerous way to achieve the objective of landing safely on the ground. Especially since we were safely on the ground to start with, so we already technically achieved that goal before we started. But that's maybe just my perspective.

So, let's look at another example.

It's like driving across country and not looking at the beautiful scenery as you pass through mountains or drive by lakes -- not noticing the moose, or the pelicans, the alligators or the heads on Mount Rushmore. Completely missing the waterfalls or Bigfoot, the flocks of flamingoes or the engineering marvel of the bridges and skyscrapers.

Or it's like skipping to the last chapter to only read the ending of a great novel.

Just think. What feeling would be evoked and what benefit could possibly come from the story if all you read is about how Ebenezer Scrooge became like a second father to Tiny Tim and learned to love Christmas, without knowing the whole story of how Scrooge started out and what he went through to transform?

Did you notice I mentioned Bigfoot earlier? Or were you too intent on getting to the next paragraph?

And that is exactly the point. When we focus too much on our goals, we miss out on all the wonderful things that are part of the journey.

There Are Hazards

Many years ago, I had the marvelous experience to work with birds of prey. We rehabilitated and released injured hawks, owls, falcons, ospreys, and kestrels. Those that had permanent injuries and could not survive on their own if re-released into the wild were used in education programs in schools and public events.

The most common injuries we encountered were caused by being hit by cars, especially owls which seemed to be hit more often. You would think that a bird with some of the most powerful senses of sight and hearing in nature – that can see a rabbit in a field miles away, and can hear a mouse in the grass hundreds of yards distant – would be able to avoid an oncoming vehicle.

But owls rely on their senses to find food, and when they locate prey, they laser-focus those senses on the target, ignoring everything else around them. So, when a rat is munching on a discarded pack of fries on the side of the road that someone threw out of their car window, the owl focuses on the rat – aligning all its senses to reaching its goal.

Unlike hawks and other raptors that drop on their prey from high altitudes, owls fly low, swooping across the roadway at, unfortunately, bumper height. The result is usually tragic.

In being so focused on its goal, the owl does not notice the dangers along its path.

Goal-Centric Happiness

Sometimes we are so focused on our goals, we base our happiness on the achievement of those goals.

How often have we heard – or even said ourselves – “I’ll be happy when...”

...when I get that new job.

...when I get a raise.

...when I have a million dollars.

...when I get married.

...when we get that new house.

... when we have kids.

...when the kids are finally out of the house.

...when I retire.

Why do we always seem to be postponing happiness? Why not be happy in the moment and enjoy the journey?

For example, one of the greatest pleasures in life is the joy of falling in love and the development of a romantic relationship, including all the angst that goes with it. But if your happiness objective is simply to get married, your experience will be clouded by the need to reach that goal. You won’t enjoy the courtship, perhaps not take the time needed to truly get to know each other, maybe make some wrong decisions and cause yourself even greater unhappiness.

Or let’s say you are focused on the goal of achieving your first million dollars. You may be so focused on financial success that you may not recognize your perfect partner when he or she comes along.

While it is important to intentionally seek the experiences we want, being open to experiencing life as it happens allows us to see those opportunities and enjoy the richness they bring.

Sometimes there are things outside our control that impact our ability to achieve our goals within our envisioned timelines and thus could also impact that goal-reliant happiness.

But nothing should be allowed to get in the way of our ability to enjoy life.

What Holds Us Back?

There are four principal, self-inflicted barriers that keep us from fully enjoying the richness of life: Guilt, Regret, Judgement, and Blame.

The wealthiest people in the world – and the happiest people in the world – have learned how to free themselves from these barriers.

Note that these are not always the same people as wealth does not always equal happiness. You could have vast amounts of money and still be miserable. And you can be amazingly happy without financial plentitude.

It's all reliant on the limits we place on ourselves, and freeing ourselves from what holds us back.

Freedom from *GUILT*

How often have we bought something and then felt guilty about spending the money? Maybe what we spent it on wasn't as wonderful as we thought it would be. Or maybe we fear we spent too much or realized that we really didn't need it.

This is one I have a problem with myself. I collect stuff: books, classic monster movie memorabilia, vintage toys and model kits. Over several decades I've amassed an enormous collection of stuff, most of it I don't have sufficient room to display or enjoy. I keep telling myself – and my wife helps to remind me – I really don't need another Frankenstein action figure or a model of King Kong. But then we go to a convention, an antique shop or a yard sale, and ... ooh! Look at this! An early Perry Mason novel, a battery-operated dinosaur, a *Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery* comic book, an autographed photo of a woman who played a minor role as a victim in a 1970s British vampire flick. Gotta have them!

And even though I don't have a laserdisc player, I just had to buy that laserdisc of *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*.

I usually end up asking myself "why did I waste my money on this?"

But it's not just trivial things like this. I could be a new car, an entertainment system, a vacation, or just going out to dinner when we have a perfectly full refrigerator at home. Or we got sucked into that infomercial that we caught while flipping through the channels.

Maybe we stretched our limits a bit, and now feel guilty about spending the money on something we really didn't need. Or perhaps we gave someone money – a friend, a family member, a homeless guy on the street.

The thing is, in the moment, it's what we wanted to do with our money.

Sure, spending doesn't necessarily help you amass wealth. But what is money good for if not spent and put to good use – even if that good use is just to satisfy a momentary whim or desire?

Ebenezer Scrooge, the main protagonist in Charles Dickens' classic tale "A Christmas Carol" was exceptionally wealthy in terms of financial means. But Scrooge's life is miserable, despite his financial success and perhaps even because of it. He grew his wealth by not spending any of it and thus denied himself anything pleasurable at all. In the novella, Scrooge's nephew Fred points out "*His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking that he is ever going to benefit us with it.*"

Consider this: Every penny we have ever spent was well-spent, even if we would not spend it that way again.

Freedom from *REGRET*

Every day, every moment, we make a choice of what we do, what actions we'll take, where we'll go, who we will spend time with.

We all know what a valuable commodity our time is. Our time is probably the most valuable of all of our assets, and sometimes it seems that time is also the most *wasted* of our assets. We never seem

to have enough time to do all the things we want or need to do, and, invariably, we find ourselves analyzing how we spent our time and trying to figure out where the time went. We're afraid we wasted our time or made the wrong decision about what to do.

Time management is a huge issue – in business as well as in our personal lives. Books on the subject are among some of the most popular of all business books. And time management consultants are in such demand, they rarely have enough time for themselves.

Many businesses are deadline driven, and people are constantly criticized about how they spend their time. Parents criticize their kids for being “lazy” and bosses criticize their employees for being irresponsible. And everyone wants to tell us how we *should* spend our time.

I admit, I do this myself in my own work-life balance programs. One of the main things I discuss is how to be more intentional about how we spend our time: reprioritizing to focus on the things that are most important; taking care of the essential things first; addressing tasks that are less important but still necessary; and spending less time on the small stuff.

But who am I to tell someone else how they should spend their time?

In the end, no time is truly wasted. Sure, maybe the time we spent deciphering Wordle puzzles didn't help us finish our chapter for the new book. (did I just admit that here?) Or maybe our time could have been put to more productive use if we didn't binge-watch several episodes of that new Netflix series.

But the truth of the matter is, what we did in that moment was exactly what we needed to do. It satisfied some internal void that needed to be filled, provided some essential distraction that allowed our minds and emotions to reset. In retrospect, maybe giggling over TikTok cat videos didn't pay the bills, but it lifted some internal gloom.

So even if we would choose to never go to that event again, do that activity, or make eye contact with that chatty clerk at the grocery store who always wants to engage in endless conversation – we must

acknowledge that there was some benefit to how we chose to spend those moments.

We rested, we experienced, we helped someone, we learned – even if only what not to do again – but no matter what, we should never regret how we have lived our life.

The happiest people do not regret – they learn, they grow, and they treasure every moment.

Consider this: Every moment we have ever lived was well-lived, even if we would not want to live that way again.

Freedom from *JUDGEMENT*

Probably nothing has been so impactful to society, especially in recent years, as the tendency to pass judgement.

We judge people by how they differ from us and by how their opinions go against what we believe. We judge what we hear or read and deem it unacceptable based upon preconceived notions, other knowledge that we may already have, or our values.

In no way is it being suggested that we should violate our own values to accept something we disagree with. But we have become such a strongly opinionated society we are finding ourselves limiting our own success and our abilities to enjoy life.

Judgement means rejecting opposing views. But opposition is essential to growth. Innovation and advancements in technology, science, and society are brought about by disagreements with the norm. The most successful people are the ones who challenged accepted standards and were open to alternative ways of looking at things.

Keeping an open mind and having the ability to acknowledge different perspectives and making use of that information removes a significant barrier to our happiness and our success in life.

There are many wonderful people in the world who have so much to share that we can learn but are judged because of one factor or another and thus are prevented from either reaching their full potential or are limited in the benefits they can bring to others.

There are many great books with lessons to teach that are ignored or banned because the use of a word or the portrayal of a character was judged as inappropriate or offensive and we fear the impact those books may have. Yet there may be nuggets of value buried in those offending words.

Judgement that is based upon hearsay or the opinions of others can be even more problematic. Many people take a stance on things that they have no first-hand experience with.

Chick-Fil-A, a restaurant chain known for its Christian values, posted its policy on diversity, equity and inclusion. If you've ever been to one of these fast-food establishments, you know how popular they are, usually with long lines of people waiting to get chicken sandwiches or nuggets. The company's popularity may be favored even more for its ethics than for its food quality. But when the company posted its 'Better at Together' policy, vowing to serve and hire people of diverse backgrounds, including the LGBTIQ+ community, some people in their biggest customer base rebelled.

Posts like "RIP Chick-Fil-A" and "You will be missed" began flooding social media as people swore never to go back to one of their once-favorite restaurant chains.

But who really lost out here? Certainly not Chick-Fil-A, who still has plenty of customers who aren't so judgmental. They may have even gained a few new customers because of their open, inclusive policy.

As nephew Fred said of his uncle Ebenezer Scrooge, "*the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts.*"

By passing judgement and adopting ideologies based on discrimination, hate, fear, or intolerance, we ultimately limit our choices in life.

Consider this: Every word that was ever written or said was useful, even if we disagree with it.

Freedom from *BLAME*

How many of us are fortunate to have had some truly wonderful people in our lives? Maybe we have a couple or really good friends who were always there when we needed someone, a terrific great aunt who sang to us when we were a child, a marvelous teacher in school that inspired us, a supportive boss who gave us a chance to try new skills and grow.

We are thankful for these people who enrich our lives in many different ways.

But I would wager that there are just as many people we have encountered who were not quite as wonderful. Maybe a needy colleague who always needs help to complete his own assignments, a supervisor who took credit for all of our work, the bozo who cut us off in traffic and nearly forced us off the road, the rude receptionist at the doctor's office, the nasty restaurant maitre'd, the bully in school or the school principal that turned her back on what was going on.

In the blame-happy society we live in now, it is easy to put the responsibility for what happens to us on someone else. The ubiquitous "they" are responsible for the bad luck cloud that hovers over our heads.

They aren't fair. *They* made me lose my money. *They* broke it. *They* miscounted the votes. *They* made me behave this way.

But no matter what others may have done to us or affected us, we still have a choice of how we let it impact us.

As Maya Angelou said, "You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

In fact, we can choose to be greater *because* of them. We can learn from every person and every experience. And that enriches our lives.

Consider this: Every person we have ever met enriched our life in some way.

Set Yourself Free

If you dig down into the roots of all four of these barriers – Guilt, Regret, Judgement and Blame – you will notice that they are all based on fear. Fear of making the wrong decisions, fear of things we don't understand, fear of being responsible for our own actions.

Eliminate these fears from your life and you will find yourself free of the most powerful of all fears – the fear of Failure.

It's time to free yourself and start enjoying the richness of experiencing every moment of your life.

This powerful poem by an anonymous author has been illuminating for me and I hope it is for you as well.

First, I was dying to finish high school and start college

And then I was dying to finish college and start working

Then I was dying to marry and have children

Then I was dying for my children to grow old enough for me to be able to return to work

And then I was dying to retire

And now, I am dying...

... and suddenly realize that I forgot to live.

If you take nothing else away from this book, remember this:

Don't postpone happiness waiting to achieve specific objectives.

In your pursuit of happiness, do not disregard everyday occurrences and be just as happy about them as you are for reaching a goal. Enjoy the richness of the journey.

Before it's too late...

Do things that make you happy.

Surround yourself with people you love and bring you joy.

Find something you like about people you don't like.

Are you enjoying the journey toward your goals?

Forgive those who may have hurt you and let go of grudges and hate.

Enjoy every moment.

As you are setting your goals and agenda for each day...

...remember to live.

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Afterword

Life and business are always a series of transitions... people, places, and things that shape who we are as individuals. Often, you never know that the next catalyst for improving your business and life is around the corner, in the next person you meet, next mentor you hire or the next book you read.

Jim Britt and Kevin Harrington have spent decades influencing individuals and entrepreneurs with strategies to grow their business, developing the right mindset and mental toughness to thrive in today's business environment and to live a better life.

Allow all you have read in this book to create a new you, to reinvent yourself and your business model if required, because every business and life level requires a different you. It is your journey to craft.

Cracking the Rich Code is a series that offers much more than a book. It is a community of like-minded influencers from around the world. A global movement. Each chapter is like opening a surprise gift, that just may contain the one idea that changes everything for you. Watch for future releases and add them to your collection.

The individual and combined works of Jim Britt and Kevin Harrington have filled seminar rooms to maximum capacity and created a worldwide demand. If you get the opportunity to attend one of their live events, jump at the chance. You'll be glad you did.

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