

# Talent Unlimited

Don MacNaughton

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## FOREWORD

‘Talent Unlimited’ should be a compulsory read for every young person, teacher and family hoping to shape a fulfilling future for themselves. This simple, practical, highly inspirational and thought provoking book equips you with a toolkit of resilience skills, attitudes and behaviours to craft the job, career and life you deserve.

Don MacNaughton skilfully presents complex ideas in simple easy to use ways, and draws on powerful sporting performance stories to help us rethink and re-engineer the way we live our lives. He gives us the gift of thinking about the way we think; a clearer picture of where we’re heading and a step-by-step framework to take control and be the best we can be, however difficult or challenging our situation is. But the most important key to our success is the person holding this book- that’s you!

You are an amazing person with a unique portfolio of skills, passions, values, needs and talents, but are you realising your true potential? ‘Talent Unlimited’ helps you ignite the fire within you, keep it alive and spread it to other people who really matter to you.

There are ‘no limits’ to the possibilities each page opens up for you. Please not only commit to reading each section, but also think and act on them.

Remember, you only have one life- make the most of it. It’s up to you now. So challenge yourself, enjoy every moment, be true to what matters and use ‘Talent Unlimited’ as a coach, guide and mentor to living your dreams.

Good luck

Dr Peter Hawkins



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# INSPIRATION

## IT'S YOUR LIFE

### **Your Life, Your Dreams, Your Success ... But No One Makes It on Their Own**

*“Dreams are extremely important. You can’t do it unless you  
imagine it”*

– George Lucas

Way back in 1996, the Spice Girls were hot property when they burst onto the pop scene singing;

♪ “Yo, I’ll tell you what I want, what I really, really want ...  
I wanna really, really, really wanna zigzag ah!”

They inspired a generation of young girls (and probably quite a few boys too) who loved to emulate their favourite Spice Girl by being Sporty, Scary, Baby, Ginger, or Posh! At the closing ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics, the Spice Girls reunited to inspire an enthusiastic audience once again ... and who knows, perhaps their “girl power” message of over 15 years ago inspired the unprecedented success of Team GB’s female athletes at the Games.

Success is a journey, not a destination, and the key message within the chapters of this book is that your journey

towards achieving your true potential in life begins with your decision to succeed. Continuing on your journey then takes commitment and dedicated effort, both of which require motivation. Success may have costs attached and you may have to make sacrifices, but it's always going to be easier to do something you *want* to do, rather than something you *have* to do.



A Texan oil billionaire once said ...

... First, individuals have to decide exactly what it is they want from a certain situation – not roughly or vaguely, but specifically. Then they have to work out what costs or sacrifices would be needed to get these things. Finally, they have to be prepared to pay those costs and make those sacrifices.”

Of course, you don't have to be a billionaire to be a success, and you don't have to be motivated by money, but, you *do* have to know what success means to *you* in *your* life and you do have to be motivated to achieve it. So, in other words;

**Can you tell me what you want, what you really, really want?**

**... And what is *your* zigzag ah?**

*I want to be rich*

*I want to be famous*

*I want to be self-sufficient*

*I want to be happy*

*I want to own my own business*

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*I want to speak fluent Mandarin*  
*I want to get my pilot's licence*  
*I want to end world poverty*  
*I want to own my own house*  
*I want to beat my brother at chess*  
*I want to get married*  
*I want to learn how to make a soufflé*  
*I want to travel around the world*

Just saying the word “want” adds power to the statement you make. “Want” is a word that means business. When you know what you *want*, you’re already taking a mental step towards getting what you want: you’re moving. Whether or not you actually achieve that particular want is immaterial, things change, but the fact remains that you’re moving. To get anywhere in life, you have to move.

The following chapters will help you to discover what it is *you* really want from life, but for now, the essence of the message in this chapter is that it’s your life to live and your success to achieve. However, no one makes it to the top of their “game” on their own. As human beings we are all connected: we live in a world where everything is connected to everything else, including us. Everything we do, say, think, and believe affects others and we’re all just a small part of something much, much bigger. In other words, we all have the capacity to both **inspire** others and **be inspired** by others. Okay, this may all be beginning to sound a bit too deep and intense but think about it another way; how many times did the athletes at the 2012 London Olympics praise the crowds for their inspirational support? Or, how many times did the medal-winning athletes make reference to inspirational athletes who had gone before them or other people from all areas of life who in some way had inspired them to get involved in sport, and not only that, to reach for the stars and realise their true potential? Behind every successful athlete there’s a whole

team of successful individuals all doing what they're inspired to do to the best of their ability to provide "winning" support for others. This is true in all areas of life, not just in sport, and the ripple of influence created by the people we admire, look up to, and aspire to be like is far reaching.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 1**

Take a moment to think about inspirational people in your life. They can be people you know or people you only know of; they can be people who are in the world today or people who lived long ago; they can be people who inspire you in your daily life now or people who inspired you in your younger years ... heck, they can even be fictional characters! Write down their name(s) and a brief explanation of why/how they inspire you.

Inspirational People:

*“If you want to go fast, go alone;  
If you want to go far, go with others”*  
African proverb

**When I grow up I want to be ...**

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Many of us grow up wanting to be just like our parents or other family members we admire, and very often we'll dream of living the life of a storybook character, too. Little girls invariably go through a "When I grow up I want to be a princess" phase and little boys often aspire to be a footballer, a fire-fighter, or maybe a TV action hero. We then switch our attention to bigger things as we begin to discover a whole new world of possibilities beyond our childhood experiences. The great thing is, as young children we don't bog ourselves down with trivial thoughts of practicality or even reality, we just *imagine* ourselves being whoever we want and living whatever life we want ... nothing is impossible.

Think about it for a minute; are the things you believe to be impossible today actually impossible, or are they just not possible yet? Imagine yourself as a schoolchild back in 1965. Your teacher has just asked you what you'd like to do when you grow up and you have replied with, "I'd like to walk on the moon, miss." Can you imagine how fantastical that would have sounded then? You may as well have answered with, "I'd like to ride a unicorn and play chess with a dinosaur, miss." However, only four years later, Neil Armstrong took that "giant leap for mankind," and a whole generation grew up with dreams of one day visiting the moon. Walking on the moon wasn't *impossible*, it just hadn't been achieved – yet. Fast forward 50 years and you can now book yourself a ticket to travel as a space tourist. In 1969, Sir Richard Branson was 19 years old when the first moon landings were broadcast on TV. As he watched, he made the decision there and then that one day he was going to experience the wonders of space for himself ... and he is doing just that. With his Virgin Galactic project, he has become a pioneer in space travel and tourism, and wannabe astronauts like Branson can now pre-book themselves a ticket on SpaceShipTwo for

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around \$125 000. With the first commercial flights booking up fast, Branson's dream of experiencing the wonders of space has become a reality after 44 years of commitment. That's food for thought, isn't it?

When I was growing up, there was a little "hula doll" type ornament at home that my dad had acquired somewhere along the way. That doll represented a distant, far off, exotic land that "folk like us" could only dream of ever visiting. I still have that doll today, and one day as I looked at it, I realised that I'd grown up thinking of Honolulu as an "out of reach" dream location – even though I'd travelled far and wide – so I decided to look into the logistics of getting there. Needless to say, Honolulu is *not* a far off distant land, I could be there in a matter of hours, but by taking the time to look into how I'd get there if I wanted to go, I discovered that I had enough air miles to get there for free! My childhood view of the world and what it was possible for me to achieve had stayed with me without me realising it.

*In my case, I can sincerely say that nothing is impossible...When I was saying I want to be no.1 of the world, and I was seven or eight years old, most of the people were laughing at me because it seems like I have one per cent chances to do that, and I've done it.*

Novak Djokovic

The point is, the things that inspire you today don't have to be "real" or practical by today's standards, they just have to be *inspirational!* The word "inspire" actually originates from the Latin word *inspirare* which means *to breathe or blow into*, so in a literal sense, things that inspire you are things that blow air into your life That's quite an inspirational thought in itself, isn't it? The things that inspire you are effectively the things that make you feel like you're taking in a breath of fresh air; the things that give you a lift. For example, who would have believed even just

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a year or two ago that we'd be able to have 3-D printing machines in our own homes, or that surgeons would be able to print out 3-D prosthetic body parts to replace damaged skulls or limbs? Yes, they can. Or, who would have believed that the standard functions of the latest iPhone would be available to us all, not just James Bond? Well, the “thinkers” behind the technology believed it, making them both *inspired* thinkers and *inspirational* thinkers.

Each and every one of us has within us our own source of inspiration as we are all inspired by the things we feel passionate about. Whether it's sport, music, art, business, education, or anything else, it's being passionate about your involvement that leads to realising your full potential ... and thereby inspiring others to follow in your footsteps. There's a saying, “Success breeds success,” and whatever field it is you aspire to be successful in, it's the success of others that inspires further success. However, aspiring to be like someone does not mean trying to become a carbon copy of that someone. Much can be learned from following the training schedule of a successful athlete, for example, or from eating the same diet, but to learn the secret of their success, you need to understand how they connect with the world and the people around them on a daily basis. You need an understanding of their everyday successful habits: an understanding of how they view life and how they respond physically and emotionally to everyday challenges ... and then you need to apply what you learn to your own life and your own circumstances because it's not someone else's success you want, it's your own.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 2**

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Take a moment to jot down the names of anyone you know of who is already living their dream – or living a life that you see as a dream – and make a note of which elements of their lifestyle inspire you most.

People Living a Dream Life:

**When you connect with your passion and your true self, you find your inspiration ... and you're on your way to finding your zigzag ah!**

Everyone has the potential to excel in life and to achieve their full potential in whatever they put their mind to. What *you* put your mind to is what inspires *you*. Think about it for a moment; when you enjoy doing something, you do it as often as you can, right? And the more you do something, the better you get at it. Inspired sportspeople put their minds into their sport: sport is their passion. Inspired entrepreneurs put their minds into their business: business is their passion. It's not important *what* you put your mind to, it's only important that you feel passionate about it and that you love what you do.

Successful people do what they love and love what they do. When you connect with your passion, you discover your true self, and you find your inspiration. When you find your inspiration, you find your success ... *simples*, as Alexandr Meerkat would say! However, not every

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“success story” is a straightforward one of recognising a passion and going after a dream with all guns blazing. The story of “Billy Elliot” is a great example. Billy knew he loved dancing and his talent and potential were instantly recognised, but he was a young lad growing up in a coal mining community – mincing about in tights was *not* something his family wanted to encourage. Okay, he’s a fictional character, and after much drama and heartache everything turned out well in the end, but the story told through the film is one that resonates with many people in the real world. The something that you feel passionate about is not always something that your parents or teachers feel so passionate about.

**Ask yourself this very important question: are you pursuing *your* dreams and ambitions, or the ambitions someone else has for you?**

When your dream or ambition is something you feel you *should* be doing, you could be pursuing someone else’s dream for you. Remember, your dream or ambition must be something you **want** to do to be able to move towards it. “Want” is a powerful word, when you substitute it with the word “should” you instantly dilute that power.

Having inspirational role models in your life can open your mind to the potential for achieving more. Lord Sugar is a good example: if you aspire to be a successful businessperson, his “rags to riches” story is truly inspirational, demonstrating that mind-set and attitude are key elements of achieving your true potential in life. Lord Sugar didn’t settle for the hand that life dealt him, he changed the cards. Sir Richard Branson is another great example: as a teenager, he really wanted to be a magazine editor but no one would employ him as he had no experience. Did he give up his dream? No. He set up and published his own magazine instead, giving himself the

position of editor, of course.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 3**

Author and filmmaker Phil Cousineau tells many stories of the ancient Norse people and their belief in the power of the “fire within” each individual. To paraphrase, it was a Norse belief that those who could “carry their fire within themselves could travel the furthest.” In other words, those who held a burning passion and kept it alive within them were more likely to go places with it, so with this in mind, take a moment to think about the things you feel most passionate about in life. What gets you fired up? What do you *love* doing; what sparks your interest and makes you feel full of enthusiasm; what do you wish you could do more often ... if not *all* the time? When you identify these things, you find the fuel you need to keep that fire of enthusiasm burning bright within you.

Things That Light My Fire:

There are many examples of successful people in a whole world of different careers who recognise with hindsight that the something they are now doing with their lives is the very something that they have *always* loved to do. The road to success has very often not been a straight or

smooth one and there will very often have been all manner of detours taken along the way, but with the benefit of hindsight, they see the connection in everything they've done and everywhere they've been, and how it has led to getting to where they are now. That connection can be thought of as a golden thread running right through their lives, and it's a golden thread that begins with a passion.

It takes a clear understanding of who you are now and where you are now to be able to move forward and get to where you want to be, but business tycoon Donald Trump makes a great point when he says, *"I like thinking big. If you're going to be thinking anything, you might as well think big."* Why settle for an ordinary life when you have the potential to live an extraordinary life? Look at it this way, Donald Trump didn't dream of "earning a living" and David Beckham didn't dream of playing football as a hobby at the weekends.

### **If you're going to dream of your success, dream BIG.**

Football is something I've been passionate about all of my life and at one point in my career as a high performance coach, I dreamed of travelling to the US and working with the likes of David Beckham and LA Galaxy. That dream inspired me to take action and to take steps towards making that dream a reality. I didn't work with LA Galaxy, but I did travel to LA where I worked with the Chivas USA youth team ... and had many adventures in Hollywood as a result. It was my passion for football that inspired me to dream BIG but it was my commitment to taking action on that dream that allowed me to make it a reality – more on this later.

For now, it's time to find your zigzag ah!



# INSPIRATION

## WORKSHEET ONE

Ask yourself the following questions and make a note of what *truthfully* comes to your mind. This is not an exercise that requires you to find right or wrong answers, merely answers – *your* answers. Forget any thoughts concerning what someone else might want you to say and simply say what you know to be true for you. No one else needs to see what you write.

Putting all thoughts of practicality or feasibility to one side, describe your life once your dream has become a reality. Imagine yourself stepping into a time machine and setting the date dial to the point in your life that you're living your dream. This exercise is known as the **Big Me** exercise, and to get the most out of it, don't analyse the potential of your dream ever becoming a reality, just experience that reality in your mind's-eye and *live* that dream. Your mind is your time machine. Using the power of your mind you can transport yourself to anywhere you want to go. Remember, nothing is impossible.



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respond to your music that you love?

There can be times in anyone's life when they feel *un*-inspired or stuck in a rut, but don't let it be you drifting through life waiting for inspiration to strike – actively seek it instead. If you go through a “this-is-tougher-than-I-thought-I-wonder-if-it's-still-what-I-really-want” moment, you can use your Big Me inspiration board as a reminder of the things you love doing or feel passionate about. For example, a photograph of an inspirational place, person, or moment in time can spark a renewed connection but sometimes it takes a physical visit to an inspirational location or actually spending time in the company of inspirational people. This is where your inspiration board becomes invaluable. The clues to where you'll find your inspiration will all be there. Look for the common threads, the golden thread.

**Find your source of inspiration, find your source of energy, find your zigzag ah!**



# DIRECTION

## YOUR LIFE IS AS YOU THINK IT IS

**If Life Feels Good, It Probably Is Good ... Create the  
Life You Want**

*“Good, good, good, good vibrations ... I’m picking up good  
vibrations”*

– Beach Boys

It doesn’t matter how old you are, you will still be familiar with the sound of The Beach Boys and their 1966 hit Good Vibrations. It’s just one of those “feel good” songs that you can’t help tapping your feet to, and you probably find yourself joining in with the “oom bops” and “ah aaahs” every time, right? Music can make you feel good; music can energise you, an entire room full of listeners, or an entire stadium. A skilled DJ knows just what track to play to fill a dance floor, and an exercise instructor knows just what CD to play to get everyone in the class fired up and giving it their all. So what is it about “feel good” music that lifts us, and just what are those *good vibrations* we’re picking up on?

Well, I’m no science boffin but thanks to the arrival of super-cool physicists such as Professor Brian Cox on our

TV screens, and “trendy” science programmes such as Bang Goes the Theory, getting our heads around stuff that once upon a time only Einstein-types could handle without their heads exploding is so much easier.

*“E=MC<sup>2</sup>*

*Energy equals mass times the speed of light squared”*

Albert Einstein

The vibrations that the Beach Boys were singing about and the vibrations we’ve all felt in the atmosphere of a room – you know, that good or bad vibe you get when you walk into a place sometimes – are the effect of vibrating energy. We’re all familiar with the concept of generating physical vibrations, and you only need to be on a dance floor when the DJ cranks up the bass to experience the physical vibrations of the music going right through your body, right? But, something you may not be so familiar with is the concept of generating mental vibrations. Every thought, every emotion and every feeling you have also creates its own unique vibration. In fact, everything in the world as we know it is a form of energy, but I’ll leave it to Professor Cox to explain to you how we know that as a scientific fact.

*“The energy of the mind is the essence of life”*

Aristotle

*“Love the moment, and the energy of that moment will spread beyond all boundaries”*

Corita Kent

*“Passion is energy.*

*Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you”*

Oprah Winfrey

**Everything is energy and energy vibrates.**

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You can't always *see* something moving or vibrating but you can still recognise that it is. For example, when you're standing still, you're not physically moving but you're able to understand that there are a huge number of muscles contracting and relaxing to keep you standing still. Your body is in a constant state of motion. The constant activity of your heart can be traced through an electrocardiograph and the constant activity of your brain can be traced through an electroencephalograph; you can't *see* what's going on under normal circumstances but you know it's going on all the same.

Exactly the same principle can be applied to mental vibrations, and it helps to explain why you may have at some point in your life walked into a room and instantly felt an "atmosphere," even although no one in the room was outwardly saying or doing anything. You may also have experienced the opposite effect and walked into a room to feel a real "buzz" in the air, even although everyone in the room was sitting in silence. What you *feel* is in fact mental energy.



### **"Work It Out" Exercise 5**

Take a moment to think about some times when you've experienced an "atmosphere" in a room, whether good or bad, and write a few notes describing where it was, how you felt, and who else (if anyone) was in the room?

Places With “Atmosphere”:

Everything is energy and all energy vibrates. When you get a *good feeling* or *bad feeling* about a place, a person, or something you’re *thinking* about doing, it’s often referred to as a *gut feeling* but it’s actually a feeling that’s being generated by your thoughts. Let’s say you’re thinking about doing something that’s generating a bit of nervous energy – thinking about asking someone out on a date, for example, or anything else that represents a “big deal” in your life at that moment in time. The nervous energy you feel is your gut feeling and it’s a feeling that *instinctively* lets you know whether or not the thing you’re thinking about doing is the “right” thing to be doing ... you know the way it works, those thoughts of “I’ve got a good feeling about this” or “I’ve got a bad feeling about this.” But here’s the thing, the *feeling* is vibrating energy and it is energy that’s being generated by **you**.

Think about it for a moment, the nervous energy you experience is often known as a feeling of “butterflies in your stomach” isn’t it? Well, you can take control of that energy and put it to good use by getting those butterflies to fly in formation ... just imagine what you could achieve (cue Dam Busters theme!)

When you walk into a busy café or coffee shop and you sense a good or a bad atmosphere, you’re picking up on the energy being generated by everyone in the room. Think of all the common expressions we use in everyday

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language to describe the “energy” in any environment ...

*You could cut the atmosphere with a knife*

*The atmosphere was electric*

*The tension in the air was suffocating*

*The party was jumping*

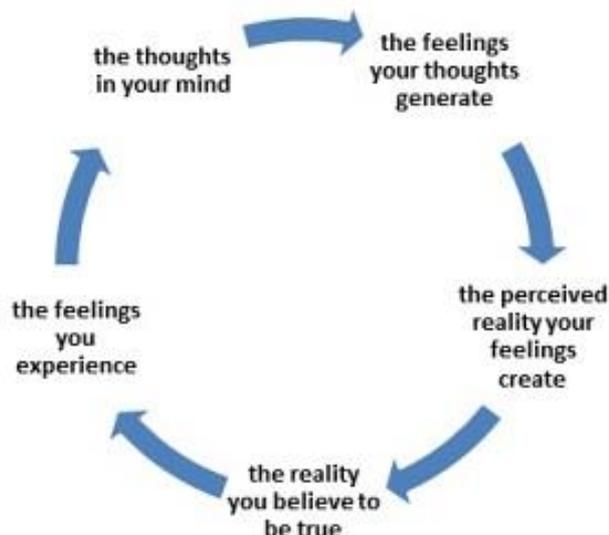
Or as the infamous Darius once said, “*You can feel the love in the room*”!

So what about those times when you get a good or bad feeling about something and you’re the only person in the room? Yes, it’s all down to you. *Your* thoughts generate the energy that creates the vibe you’re picking up on ... are you still with me? When you sense a good or a bad vibe, you’re sensing vibrating energy. All of your senses are being used to pick up on the energy in the atmosphere around you, but here’s the thing, when you’re alone, the energy around you is being generated by *you*. Remember, everything is energy, your thoughts and emotions included, so the thoughts you have in your head at any given time are responsible for the energy you feel around you at any given time.

***You create your own vibe.***

The inner environment you create inside your head with your thoughts is responsible for the outer environment you experience as your reality.

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For example, if your thoughts are focused on how bored you are and everything you're thinking is connected to your overwhelming sense of boredom, the inner environment of total boredom you have created will manifest into an outer environment of total boredom ... you *think* you're bored, therefore you *are* bored. You become unable to see beyond your boredom and you're effectively stuck there – bored. Your mobile phone could sprout wings and start flying around the room but you're so stuck in your “bored vibe” that you wouldn't notice!



Back in the 1980s, the popular TV sitcom *The Young Ones* demonstrated just how much thoughts can influence reality with an episode entitled “Boring.” The student housemates are so bored that they fail to notice roller-skating vegetables in the kitchen, a televised news report about a siege spilling out from their TV into the living-room, and a spaceship landing on their roof. It may have

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been a fairly whacky alternative comedy TV show, but many a true word has been spoken in jest and I think it's something that the majority of us can relate to, right?

There's an inextricable link between the energy you put out into the atmosphere through your thoughts and the energy that comes back to you in return. If you walk into a room feeling excited, enthusiastic, or just generally positive about being there, you generate a positive energy that is returned to you in the form of that "buzz" you sense in the air. Of course, if you walk into a room with thoughts of wanting to be anywhere other than where you are, the negative energy you are generating is all that can be returned to you. But, with that said, the positive energy of other people in the room can *change* your energy ... and vice versa.

In the last chapter, you learned that we're all connected. Everything we do, say, think, and believe affects and influences others around us. Now put that knowledge together with the knowledge that *everything* is energy and it may all begin to make more sense. When you spend time in the company of people who inspire you, you soak up the positive vibe they generate and you feel physically and mentally lifted by the energy in the environment. The same can be said of hanging out with positive, upbeat friends; the positive vibe generated by positive people lifts your mood when you're around them, right? Now compare that to the way that hanging out with negative, downbeat people can really flatten your mood and drain every last drop of positive energy you had out of your body. The energy of a room is the energy of the people in the room. If the energy of the people in the room changes, the "vibe" in the room changes accordingly ... still with me? So here's the BIG message in this chapter: a negative or positive vibe in your head is reflected in a positive or negative reality. You have the power to influence and

*change* your reality by changing the energy of your thoughts.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 6**

Take a moment to think about people or places that have influenced your mood. Who always seems to have a positive effect on you, helping to lift your mood whenever you’re around them; and who always seems to have a negative effect, somehow managing to flatten your mood whenever you spend time with them? What places make you feel “glad to be alive” and full of energy; what places make you wish you were anywhere but there, and dragging your feet at just the thought of having to go there ?

Mood boosters		and “bashers”		:

### **Going Places ... Or Going Nowhere?**

If two people are being interviewed for one job and they both have exactly the same qualifications and experience on paper, which one will get the job?

- The one who walks in with thoughts of, “I don’t know why I’m even here. They’re going to hate my ideas. What if they ask me questions I can’t answer? I’m going to look like such an idiot ...”

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- Or, the one who walks in with thoughts of, “I am really looking forward to this. What an opportunity. I’m really excited about getting their feedback on my ideas. I hope they ask me to tell them more about it so that I get a chance to shine ...”

You could argue that the one who gets the job is simply the one who is deemed to be the best match on the day but that’s just it – what if the thoughts in your head on *the day* that it really matters do *not* allow you to demonstrate the perfect match that you *really* are? It happens. World-class athletes who have been consistently putting in world-class performances in training can fail to put in anything like their best effort on *the day* that it really matters and therefore fail to achieve their true potential in major competition. Students who are consistent performers in everyday classwork can “flunk” every formal exam they sit. Learner drivers can flawlessly perform every mandatory manoeuvre in every lesson, and then totally stuff up every one of them on *the day* of the driving test. You see where I’m going with this? The thoughts in your head at any given moment have a direct impact on the actions you take at any given moment.

It takes positive thoughts to generate positive actions. When you *think* positively, you *act* positively, and when you take positive actions, you generate positive outcomes. When you have a good feeling about something, the positive energy generated by your thoughts is returned to you as the positive vibe you feel, and that in turn inspires you to give whatever it is you’re doing your best shot. Of course “thinking positively” doesn’t mean things will *always* go your way, but more on that later.

**If you’re sending out positive energy by thinking positively, you attract positive energy in return. Positive energy brings positive things into your life; it**

**manifests itself as the things you're focusing on achieving. But, if you're sending out negative energy by thinking negatively, you can only attract negative energy in return. If you're focusing only on the negative, only negative things can come into your life simply because that's all you're focused on.**

It's often said that if you want to be a big success, you have to think big, successful thoughts, but that's a slightly misleading statement in that it's the *want* to be a success that drives you towards that ambition, not the *size* of your thoughts. A great example of this can be found in the story of The Beatles. The "fab four" became a *huge* success but they got there by thinking and taking one small, successful step at a time. They wanted to produce a record that was the best it could be; they did that and it was a *huge* success. They wanted to produce a follow-up single that was the best it could be; they did that and it was another *huge* success. They wanted to produce an album that was the best it could be ... well, you know the rest! The Beatles didn't set out with thoughts of being "bigger than Jesus," they set out with thoughts of being the best they could be.

Success comes first from passion and then from commitment to being the best you can be at whatever it is you are passionate about. Another great musical example of this is the story of my friend Lorne Cousin. Lorne grew up in Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre and his passion for bagpipes began at the age of six years. His commitment to being the best he could be led to one of his childhood friends asking him to play his bagpipes at her wedding – that friend just happened to be Stella McCartney. The McCartney family have a property on the Mull of Kintyre so Lorne and Stella played together when they holidayed there. Some of you may even know of the McCartney's connection to the Mull of Kintyre through the hit single of the same name way back in 1977. The

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Campbeltown Pipe Band feature on the single and in the video and interestingly it was one of the members of that very band who taught Lorne to play. Lorne played at Stella McCartney's wedding and his dedication to being the best player he could be did not go unnoticed. A little while after the event, he received a phone call from one of the wedding guests – that guest just happened to be Madonna. The outcome of the phone call was that Lorne joined Madonna on her 2004 World Reinvention Tour and played bagpipes on stage to audiences of thousands in 56 shows around the globe. Lorne's passion for bagpipes and then his commitment to excellence as a player paved the way to his success and a whole world of opportunities.

The way you think of yourself affects the way others think of you. Think back to the job interview and being the person who is thinking, "I probably won't get it." Guess what? If you *think* you won't get it, you probably won't get it! If you walk into an interview room with negative, defeatist thoughts in your head, you present yourself as that negative, already defeated person, and that's not an attitude that's likely to get you hired, is it? Your inner thoughts about your world have a direct impact on your outer world, your reality, no matter how rational or irrational those inner thoughts are. If you think of yourself as a "loser," the people you come into contact with are also going to think of you as a loser. Think back to the nervous energy that accompanies thoughts of asking someone out on a date. If you're also thinking, "I'm going to get knocked back, I'm such a loser." Guess what?

If you're thinking negatively, you're generating a negative energy that everyone who comes into contact with you can feel. You're also generating a negative inner world that is going to be reflected in your outer world, your reality.



Let's say you're about to take your driving test;  
And you're sitting behind the wheel thinking ...  
Guess what?

But here's the thing, you *thought* you were going to stuff up, so you did: you focused your thoughts on stuffing up, so you stuffed up! Whatever you focus on, you give energy to. Only your *thoughts* about your potential to succeed can limit your *actual* potential to succeed. Your thoughts are effectively self-fulfilling prophecies. By creating an environment of success in your inner world, you make it possible to create the same successful environment in your outer world. So, if you want to get that job, you have to stop thinking of yourself as someone who won't get the job: if you want to get that date, you have to stop thinking of yourself as a loser: and if you want to pass your driving test, you have to stop thinking of yourself as someone who is destined to "stuff it up." If you want to change your outer world, you have to begin by changing your inner world. You have to change the focus of your thoughts from negative to positive.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 7**

Now it's time for total honesty. Take a moment to consider the times in your life when you may have effectively *talked yourself* out of doing something. Have you

ever thought of doing something, only to have the nagging voice of doubt in the back of your mind *talk* you out of it?

Things I Have Talked Myself Out Of Doing:

The negative inner voice you hear is the voice of self-doubt. It's the nagging voice that questions everything you're thinking of doing; it's the voice that says, "What if?"

*What if it all goes wrong?*

*What if I make an idiot of myself?*

*What if I can't do it?*

*What if I fail?*

*What if things don't go to plan?*

*What if I'm not ready yet?*

**By changing your thinking, you can change your reality.**

To understand the importance of the above statement, think back to the "you create your own vibe" cycle earlier. When you focus your energy on *thoughts* of being bored, you *are* bored, no matter what is going on around you. Now, relate that to the negative "what if?" thoughts above. If you are focusing your thoughts on things going wrong, you're only going to see the things that are going wrong. But, if you change to a *positive* thought process – *what if it goes right* – you instantly change the way you see things around you. If things never appear to "go your way," could it be that you *think* they're not going to go your way and therefore, no matter how things turn out, you only see the

things that didn't turn out the way you wanted? When you focus your thoughts on what's *going* to go wrong, you only see what goes wrong. Just the *thought* of things going wrong can be enough to put you off doing anything at all. Have you ever decided not to go for something in the past because you thought to yourself, "There's no point, it'll never work out"? Did *not* going for it make it work out? Of course it didn't. If you'd gone for it, would it have worked out? Who knows – you can't know something is not going to work out if you haven't given it a go, right?

**You are as you think you are and your circumstances  
are as you think they are.**

There's a great quote, attributed to several people, with a message in the words that helps to make sense of the statement above: "*I've been broke many times but I've never been poor.*" Until you're able to *think* of yourself as a success, it's impossible to *feel* like a success, even when others might see nothing but success in your circumstances. It's what *you* think that creates the way *you* feel about your circumstances. Muhammad Ali has long since retired from the boxing ring and from the public eye but he's still a household name all the same. Everyone knows his famous chant of, "I am the greatest." But here's something you might not know, he also said, "I am the greatest. I said that even before I knew I was." Ali *thought* of himself as a champion and he *became* a champion; he put his energy into thinking big and he became big. Donald Trump didn't get to where he is today by thinking small. Bill Gates didn't found Microsoft on the back of a small vision, and Oprah Winfrey didn't become a globally recognised chat show host by thinking she had nothing of any interest to say – you see where I'm going with this? Everyone's vision of success is different but if you want to *be* that success, you have to *think* of yourself as that success.

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Here's some food for thought ...

- Charles Darwin's father told him he would "...amount to nothing and be a disgrace to his family and himself."
- Thomas Edison was told by a teacher that he was "...too stupid to learn anything."
- Marilyn Monroe was told she couldn't act and was "...unattractive."
- Elvis Presley was told by the manager of the Grand Ole Opry, "...You ain't goin' nowhere, son. You ought to go back to drivin' a truck."
- Walt Disney was fired from his newspaper job on the grounds that he "...lacked imagination."
- Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team twice; firstly for not being tall enough, and secondly because he just didn't play well enough.
- J K Rowling's manuscript for the Harry Potter series of books was famously rejected by 12 publishing houses before being accepted, and she was previously fired from her secretarial job for "...daydreaming."

The above names are all "iconic" in one way or another in today's world, and we know them to be inspired individuals who went on to succeed despite initial failure or rejection. They all believed in themselves as a success, and that positive thought process kept them on track to achieving their dreams.

Okay, earlier on I said that *thinking positively doesn't mean things will always go your way*, so before you start thinking I'm contradicting myself, look at it this way: you can't pass

your driving test on positive thoughts alone if you haven't put in the physical practice, and you can't get your dream job if you haven't gained the necessary qualifications. However, the point I'm making is that you can put in as many hours of driving practice as you like but you won't pass your test until you *think* you can, or at least until you're able to empty your mind of doubts. You can be qualified up to the gills but you're not going to get the job you want until you *believe* you can get it. Positive thoughts don't have "magical" powers but they are powerful.

*"It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you're not"*

Hanoch McCarty

*"Whether you think you can or think you can't  
...you are right"*

Henry Ford

*"If you hear a voice within you say, "You cannot paint," then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced"*

Vincent Van Gogh

## **I Believe!**

So what about all those X-Factor and Apprentice contestants who really know a thing or two about thinking big? You know the ones – they really believe that they are the next big thing, yet they fail spectacularly. They would appear to have mastered the art of self-belief and thinking like a "winner" so why don't they achieve their dreams? Clearly, believing that you are the next big thing doesn't mean that you are, so what's the difference between thinking positively and just being arrogant ... or deluded? Well, for a start, thinking like a winner is not thinking that thinking is all you need to do! Successful people don't just think about becoming a success, they make plans and then

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they take action on those plans. You could argue that the contestants on the X-Factor or the Apprentice have taken action by auditioning in the first place but that's where the difference between "winners" and "also rans" begins to kick in. Winners in life do what they love and love what they do; winners have their heart in what they do. When your heart is in achieving a dream, you not only take action to achieve it, you *keep* taking action to achieve it: you *commit* to achieving it, but more on this later.

The journey to achieving your dream(s) is not guaranteed to be a straight or a smooth one. Thinking like a winner means keeping your eye on your goal and finding a way to get around, over, or through any obstacles that fall across your path along the way. If your heart is set on forging a career in the music industry, you're not going to let a "No" from Simon Cowell or Gary Barlow spell the end your journey. If your heart is set on becoming an entrepreneur, you're not going to let a "You're fired" from Lord Sugar prevent you from going ahead and realising your dream.

*"Life is not fair. The only fair you'll get from me is your bus fare home"*

Lord Sugar

There's much wisdom in the old saying, "Where there is a will there is a way." Thinking positively or thinking like a winner is not looking at life through rose-tinted glasses or ignoring the advice of informed others, it's having the will and the self-motivation to learn, to do what it takes, and to find another way. What you focus on, you give energy to. Winners in life don't waste energy focusing on what hasn't happened, they focus on what's yet to happen: the positive things that *could* still happen if they continue to take positive action today, tomorrow, and the next day ...

DON MACNAUGHTON

*“Things turn out best for the people who make the best out of the way things turn out”*

Art Linkletter

Now it's time to focus on the direction you want to take your life in: it's time to set yourself some clear goals.

## DIRECTION

### WORKSHEET TWO

Goals can be classified as **should** goals, **need** goals, and **want** goals. In this exercise, focus your attention on what you **want** ... what you really, really want!

Write down the goal or goals you currently have in life. For example, “I want to be an Olympic athlete” or “I want to travel the world” or “I want to be my own boss.”

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Take a look at the above list and think hard about which of your goals is your **gold medal goal**. Which goal is the

ultimate goal toward which you will direct your focus?

Refer back to the **Big Me** exercise in the last chapter. What is it about your **gold medal goal** that inspires you: what is it that you really want to achieve?

For example, if it's your goal to travel the world, what is it about world travel that inspires you – is it visiting architectural wonders of the world, or is it experiencing different cultures?

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Having goals gives you direction in life, helping you to identify what it is you ultimately want to achieve. Now it's time to get down to specifics. You know where you want to go, so let's get some detailed directions.

Make your **gold medal goal** a **SMART** goal.

**Specific Measurable Achievable Recorded Time-phased  
Specific**

Let's say it's your goal to become rich and famous. What does that mean, exactly? Be specific. Does rich mean having one million pounds in the bank and a garage full of sports cars in each one of your 25 mansion houses in 15 different countries, or something entirely different?

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**Measurable**

If it's your goal to have one million pounds in the bank, it's a goal that can be measured to the exact penny, but what about the goal of being famous? Unless "fame" can be quantified specifically, it's not possible to know if and when you've achieved it.

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**Achievable**

Okay, this one could also come under the heading of *realistic*. Setting yourself the goal of having one million pounds in your bank account by 3 o'clock this afternoon – if you're currently boracic and surviving on a student loan – would be a good example of an unrealistic goal. But hey, who says it's not achievable if you set yourself a more realistic target of being a millionaire in say seven years

from now?

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### **Recorded**

There's a saying, "Don't just think it. Ink it." Writing a goal down is one of the simplest, yet most effective ways of keeping a dream on track to becoming a reality. Without records, it's impossible to track progress – or lack of it.

Write down your **specific, measurable, and achievable** goal here.

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### **Time-phased**

Now it's time to get down to the specifics of *when* as well as *how* you're going to get from where you are now in life to where you want to be. It's only by setting a clear time frame that daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly targets can be

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met to ensure that you remain on target to achieving your **gold medal goal**. This is the subject of the next chapter but for now, take a moment to consider your goal and write down what you believe to be an achievable time frame in which to realise it.

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# ACTION

## YOUR LIFE GOES WHERE YOU TAKE IT

### Know Where You're Going ... Then Go

*“Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans”*  
– John Lennon

It's always easier to do what you want to do, rather than what you have to do. And, you have to know what it is you want to do in order to plan how you're going to get there, but, here's the big question; do you ever **do** any of the things you want to do or the things you plan to do?

Plans are good; plans give focus and direction in life but there is a snag with plans too. If you're someone who likes to make plans and you're good at putting highly detailed plans of action together, you might get so caught up in planning that you never actually take any action. In fact, if planning is what you like to do, you might not have any time left in your day to do anything else. For example, we're all familiar with the time management strategy of writing a daily “to do” list. This is a strategy that's most effective if you prioritise the items on your list at the start of each day and then work your way progressively from the top down. The idea is that prioritising your tasks and

not allowing yourself to move on until each one is completed in turn prevents you from becoming distracted by flitting around from one task to the next and never completing any of them. This makes good sense in theory, but if you're someone who likes planning, there's a danger that you'll get so involved in prioritising the tasks on your list and writing them down in the order you need to tackle them that your day will be over and you won't actually have tackled any of them ... all you will actually have achieved is a beautifully organised list.



Whether you're writing out a "to do" list for your day, your month, your year, or a "things to do before I die" list, the same danger exists. Action plans are good, yes, but they are of no value if you never **act** on any of your plans.

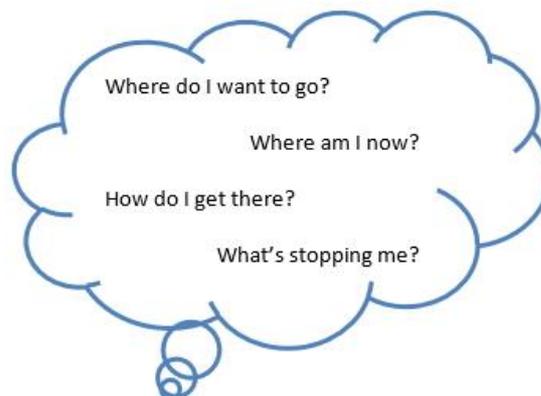
Several years back, a phenomenon known as "The Secret" was big news in the popular media. It is the title of a self-help book and the contents revolve around the power of positive thinking and the "law of attraction" – a principle for increasing wealth and happiness put forward by Wallace Wattles in his 1910 book, *The Science of Getting Rich*.

Thousands of people "bought" into the idea of using visualisation to attract the things they wanted into their lives but, unfortunately, it also led to a lot of disappointed people. You see, people are always looking for a "quick fix" in life, and there's no such thing. The "promise" of simply *thinking* about something leading to that something

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materialising in reality was understandably massively appealing, but, there's an obvious snag – it takes positive *actions* on positive thoughts to generate positive outcomes. This was demonstrated by a call I received from one “Secret” reader who told me that he was visualising the things he wanted in his life but nothing was happening – the things he wanted were not magically materialising! The reality is that nothing *is* going to happen unless you take action to *make* it happen.

People who turn dreams into realities are people who take action. But, here's the key, they take *planned* action. To get to where you want to go in life, you first of all need to know exactly where that place is, and that does require thought...



You then need to plan how you're going to get there, and you need to take action on your plan. So, let's say it's your dream to become successful; you have to know what “successful” means, exactly. If “success” is where you're going, what does it look like to you as a place; how will you know when you've arrived there? It's only by focusing your thoughts on achieving a *specific* goal that you can begin the process of making that goal your reality. Positive thoughts lead to positive actions and when you begin to act positively, you begin to achieve positive outcomes. To achieve the results you want in life, you *do* have to plan a “to do” list but, and it's a big but, you must then take

action and actually *do* the things on your list.

You have to think carefully about what it is you want to achieve; you have to identify what it is you are passionate about in life, and then you have to identify the steps you will need to take to get you from where you are now to where you want to be. To succeed, you need to have a clear **intention** and take focused **action**.

### **Your future intention determines your present action.**

We all have the potential to succeed in life but it takes planned action to be able to realise our dreams and to achieve our full potential. So, perhaps the real question to ponder over is, are you a thinker or a doer? Are you thinking about your success or are you taking action to become that success? The key to realising your full potential in life is to do both. *Think* big, dream big, make big plans and then *take action* on those plans. Set yourself a clear intention and then take focused action to turn your dreams into your realities.

### **Motivation and Commitment**

Motivation is essentially the *want* to do something. The things you *want* to do are the things you're motivated to do and without motivation it's difficult to do anything. This is why it's always going to be easier to do something you want to do, rather than something you have to do – or something someone else wants you to do. When you *want* to do something, you're motivated to do it; when you *have* to do something you don't really want to do, you're not motivated to do it at all. Sound familiar? How many times have you attempted to do something that you felt you *should* do but didn't feel inspired to do only to fail because your heart wasn't in it?

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That's a great expression, "Your heart is not in it." Back in 2005, Oasis sang a song entitled, "The Importance of Being Idle," in which there is a great line;

♪ "... I can't get a life if my heart's not in it."

You don't need to be an Oasis fan to "get" the meaning behind those words. If your heart is not in something, you're not motivated to be involved, and it's a hard fact of life that many people find themselves so demotivated by life that it's a struggle to even get out of bed in the morning.

*"Seventy per cent of success is showing up"*

Woody Allen

Clearly, nothing is going to happen without the motivation to make it happen, so where does motivation come from: and can a demotivated person become a motivated person?

To find your motivation, you need to find what your heart *is* in. Motivation comes from passion and passion goes hand-in-hand with inspiration. So, in effect, you're going to find your motivation in the same place that you find your zigzag ah! What is it that you really want to achieve in life; and who or what really inspires you to achieve those things? Finding your motivation comes down to finding something you can "set your heart" on achieving.

*"Success isn't a result of spontaneous combustion.*

*You must set yourself on fire"*

Arnold H Glasow

In more clinical terms, motivation can be categorised as being intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation comes from within. When you're intrinsically motivated to do

something, you're "setting your heart" on doing it. An intrinsically motivated sports player is motivated to stay involved in their sport for the love of it and for the buzz it provides, whether they are winning or losing. An intrinsically motivated artist is motivated to create more pieces by the sheer joy of being creative, irrespective of whether or not their work is deemed commercial or worthy of prizes. An extrinsically motivated individual, on the other hand, is motivated to do something because of the external rewards it might bring them. It's no longer just about the buzz of the sport or the joy of creativity, it's about trophies, prize money, and recognition.

**Understand your passion to understand your inspiration and your motivation.**

Intrinsic motivation could be described as motivation that comes from the inside out and extrinsic motivation as motivation that comes from the outside in. In the days of Naomi Campbell strutting her stuff on the catwalk, it was always joked that she wouldn't get out of bed for less than \$10 000. That's a good example of extrinsic motivation. Had she loved her job so much that she would have done it for nothing, that would have been a good example of intrinsic motivation – but I don't suppose there are very many intrinsically motivated supermodels out there!

**What's your motivation?**

Understanding what motivates you is rarely as cut-and-dry as being an "in-y" or an "out-y" and it's more than likely that you are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated in different areas of your life. However, taking the time to consider what your main sources of motivation are can go a long way towards helping you to *stay* motivated when your goals in life seem a long way off. *The journey to achieving your dream(s) is not guaranteed to be a straight or a smooth one.*

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Motivation is naturally going to be boosted by your successes along the way but your ability to stay motivated through the tough times and the inevitable lows depends largely on how you choose to deal with setbacks – in other words, your attitude. You only need to think about the reactions of the “failed” X-Factor contestants to get an insight into how *not* to deal with setbacks. To *stay* motivated to achieve your goals, you must be **committed** to achieving your goals.

*“Motivation is when your dreams put on work clothes”*

Anon

Remember Noel Gallagher’s lyrics, *“I can’t get a life if my heart’s not in it.”* Now ask yourself, if your vision of success is being a catwalk supermodel, what’s your motivation for achieving that success? It’s probably fair to say that you’re motivated by money and perhaps fame, so what happens if you become a model and you’re getting work as a model but you’re not earning very much money and you’re not famous? Do you keep on modelling, determined to find a way to supermodel status (and bank balances), or do you give up? The answer to that question is going to depend very much on how much your heart is in it, right? Or put another way, it’s going to depend on how committed you are to achieving your dream.

What is it that motivates successful people to achieve, even when the odds seem stacked against them? Well, motivation is a complex subject but something that all successful people have in common is that they love what they do and they do what they love.

**Successful people achieve because their heart is in it.**

**Successful people achieve because they believe in themselves as a success.**

**Successful people achieve because they have a clear intention and they take focused action.**

**And, successful people are committed to achieving the success they want.**

The best form of motivation is self-motivation. There are a great many inspirational “success stories” in the world. Here are just a few fine examples of individuals who combined self-motivation with commitment to achieve extraordinary success.

**Sir Chris Hoy:**

Inspired to take up BMX cycling by ET the movie at the age of six, Sir Chris Hoy is a six times Olympic gold medal winning track cyclist. However, his motivation to succeed is not fuelled by a desire to accumulate “bling” but by a continuing desire to master new challenges. After winning three gold medals in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Hoy commented in the build-up to the 2012 London Olympics, “I would not be doing this if I didn’t have questions I still want to answer. I’m not doing the same thing again, this is an entirely different challenge and I want to see if it’s possible.” Preparing for one Olympic Games takes years of dedicated effort, so achieving top form in two consecutive Games demonstrates Hoy’s commitment to his sport and to realising his full potential – potential which is no longer confined to just one sport as his retirement from competitive cycle racing leads to him seeing what it’s possible to achieve in the world of motor racing.

**Alex Zanardi:**

Staying with an Olympic theme, Alex Zanardi is a

Paralympic athlete who won gold in the H4 handcycling time trial in the 2012 London Olympics. It could be argued that all dedicated Olympians and Paralympians have an inspirational story to tell but Zanardi's story stands out because in 2001 he was an F1 racing driver when he lost his legs in a high-speed crash. His Paralympic race took place on the track at Brands Hatch, a track he had previously raced around in a car, and his handcycling skills only developed as a result of working hard to keep himself in shape in order to continue motor racing in a specially adapted car. His words after winning gold say it all. "When you choose the right horizon in life and you start to be pushed by your passion, every day is a great opportunity to meet happiness."

### **Bill Gates:**

Okay, you don't need me to tell you who Bill Gates is, right? As one of the world's most famous "drop outs," he told his university lecturers that he would be a millionaire by the time he was 30 years old. In fact, he was a billionaire by the time he was 31. Despite the fact that Microsoft's success appeared to be meteoric, it's Gates' belief that "patience is a key element of success." In his motivational speeches, he inspires young people to think big and to believe that nothing is impossible, but he also drives home the message that success won't come to you unless you're prepared to go to it. "Television is *not* real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs."

If you don't like your lot in life, *you* have the power to change it. You already know that *what you think about, you bring about* and what this means is that *you* have the power to change *your* circumstances by changing the way *you* think. Look at it this way, if the way you think about things and the way you do things now is not bringing you the

results you want in life, continuing to think and do things in the same way will continue to bring you more of the same. If you want a different outcome in life, you have to be prepared to think and **do** things differently – and that means embracing change.

*“Things do not change, we change”*

Henry David Thoreau

*“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often”*

Winston Churchill

Let’s face it, we don’t often like change. We’re all creatures of habit and it’s fair to say that for most us, change is something that makes us uncomfortable because it takes us away from what’s familiar. Clearly, change *can* be a good thing but recognising that you need to make changes in your life doesn’t necessarily make it any easier to actually make those changes: *knowing* doesn’t instantly lead to *doing*. Most of us fear change, or at best put off making changes, because moving away from familiarity means moving away from everything we know to be “safe” in life. Where you are now is your comfort zone and stepping out of there means leaving behind a predictable world and stepping out into a world of unknowns. But, here’s the thing, if you don’t like your current, predictable world, why do you fear the unknown one? The answer is that many of us, whether we’re conscious of it or not, slip almost automatically into thoughts of “better the devil you know than the devil you don’t.”



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 8**

Think back to the notes you made in the last exercise:

*things I've talked myself out of doing.*

Now take a moment to consider *why* you chose to believe the voice of self-doubt. What was it you feared?

I Feared:

### **Stepping Out or Sticking?**

Positive thinkers *embrace* change. Without the power of positive thought, you tend to think in negative terms of “what if?” You focus only on potential problems, thinking in terms of, “What if it all goes wrong; what if I can’t do it?” instead of looking ahead at the potential positives of making changes. When you focus only on negatives, you fear taking action. Fear keeps you right where you are – in your comfort zone. There *can* be times when your comfort zone is a positive place, a place where you can take time-out to pause and reflect on your achievements so far before taking the next step on your journey to success, but, and it’s an all too common occurrence, if it becomes a place where you STOP or a place where you hide, it’s no longer a positive place.

Changing your circumstances means changing your focus. When you change your focus away from what you *don't* want in life and begin to think about what you *do* want, you change your energy. When you begin to focus on the positives of making changes and to think in terms of what those changes will bring into your life, there’s no longer an

DON MACNAUGHTON

“unknown” to fear. When you *know* what good things are in store, your thoughts generate a positive energy that allows you to *bring about what you think about* by taking action on your thoughts.

So what’s stopping you?

*“Vision without action is a daydream.  
Action without vision is a nightmare”*

Japanese proverb

# ACTION

## WORKSHEET THREE

It's time to take action. What action steps can you take *now*, today, to begin your journey towards success? What stepping stones can you put in place to help you get from where you are now to where you want to be?

Take a moment to work out the major steps you will need to take. For example, if it's your goal to set up your own scuba diving business in an exotic location, what qualifications will you need?

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Now it's time to look for roadblocks. Write down any potential obstacles you see that could stand in the way of

getting to where you want to go?

For example, a lack of finances could block your progress, or a lack of time to practise the new skills you need to master.

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Take each one of the above roadblocks and analyse whether it's a *real* obstacle or a *perceived* obstacle. For each one, write down any *real* evidence to support its actual ability to stand in your way. If no such evidence exists, there's no *real* reason to allow it to block your path, right?

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For each of the above that you identify to be real, what action steps can you take to get around it? *Think positively* – the direct route to where you want to go is blocked, but what are your alternatives: what diversions can you put in place?

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For example, if you don't have the cash available to pay for a full-time, intensive training course, are there other training options available?

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It's now time to put your stepping stones into an achievable time frame. Focus on one step at a time. Break each major step down into manageable smaller steps, and give each one of those individual steps a realistic time frame.

For example, if you need to learn to drive, you need to break that step down into when and how you're going to pay for lessons; how many lessons you're going to need, and how long the course of lessons will take etc.

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However, the bottom-line on this chapter is that there's always a danger to be acknowledged when it comes to

making plans. If you get too hooked up on trying to create the “perfect” plan before taking any action on it, making plans becomes all that you do. If you don’t *do* what you plan to do, nothing actually changes.

*“The world needs dreamers and the world needs doers.*

*But above all, the world needs dreamers who do”*

Sarah Ban Breathnach

Perhaps one of world’s most well-known *dreamers who did* was Walt Disney. There’s a great Disney quote: *“If you can dream it, you can do it.”*

In his book *Strategies of Genius: Volume 1*, author Robert Dilts analyses Disney’s creative process and the three distinct roles he played to achieve his dreams. Those roles are:

**Dreamer** – dreaming up ideas for new business ventures as well as films.

**Realist** – taking those film ideas and turning them into films; taking action on ideas and making things happen.

**Critic** – evaluating everything the “dreamer” and the “realist” did, thereby ensuring everything he did was the best it could be.

Walt Disney didn’t just plan, he took action on those plans and he evaluated the outcome of each and every action he took to ensure the end result was the best it could. This is a strategy for success we can all learn from but to realise our dreams in the way Disney did, the most crucial lesson we must learn is how to strike a balance between all three roles.

**Dream: do: and be your best self in everything you do.**

# DEDICATION

YOU GET OUT OF LIFE WHAT YOU  
PUT INTO LIFE

**Know What You Want ... and Be Prepared to Put  
More In If You Want More Out**

*“Dedication is what you need ... if you wanna be a record breaker”*

– Roy Castle

Way back in the 1970s, there was a popular kids’ TV show called “Record Breakers” which was hosted by Roy Castle. In fact, the show ran until 2001 making it one of the longest-running TV shows in the UK. The programme revolved around the Guinness Book of World Records and featured people from all walks of life making record-breaking attempts at achieving all sorts of world records. Roy Castle himself broke nine world records while he was hosting the show. They include playing exactly the same tune on 43 different instruments in a record-breaking time of just four minutes and the record for the fastest tap-dance, a record which stands to this day. He achieved 24 taps per second, 1440 taps per minute, just in case you fancy having a go at breaking that one yourself!

There’s a guy called Mr Ashrita Furman who holds the record for setting the most official Guinness Records. In

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fact, he holds the record for “the most world records held at the same time by an individual.” Also known as Mr Versatility, he has successfully jumped a record-breaking 23.11 miles on a pogo stick to claim the long-distance pogo stick record (he has also jumped his way up the CNN Tower and Mount Fuji); cut 27 apples in mid-air in one minute with a Samurai sword to claim the “cutting apples in mid-air with a Samurai sword” record; balanced 81 pint glasses on his chin to claim “the most glasses balanced on the chin” record; and he also claimed “the fastest time to run a mile while balancing a milk bottle on the head” record. In fact, at the last count he’d set over 400 official Guinness Records with 151 of them remaining unbroken.

*‘I’m trying to show others that our human capacity is unlimited if we can truly believe in ourselves’*

Ashrita Furman

There are currently over 40 000 World Record categories and strict guidelines to adhere to if you want to qualify as a record holder. Guinness representatives explain it this way, “It must be measurable, you must be able to quantify the measurement, it must be a record that can be broken, and we at Guinness must think it’s interesting.” When you look at some of the listed entries in the “Amazing Feats” category, it makes you wonder what sort of record attempt the people at Guinness would find *uninteresting*.

For example, the “unusual skills” section covers everything from “the most sheep shorn in eight hours” to “the most Ferrero Rocher chocolates eaten in one minute.” The “courage and endurance” section includes feats such as “the greatest distance achieved on a static cycle” and “the most rattlesnakes sat in a bathtub with.” And if you fancy getting into the “marathon efforts” section, you could try breaking the record for “the longest duration balancing on

one leg”!

*“I want to inspire people.*

*If you have a dream, you can achieve your dream.*

*I’m living my dream”*

Ashrita Furman

Of course, there are some people who become record breakers without putting any particular effort or even any thought into it. There’s the record for being the oldest living person in the world, for instance, or the record for the longest head of hair. There’s even a record for the longest ear hair ... and you’d like to think that achieving such a record was not the driving ambition of the holder’s entire life.

### **Are You Looking for Overnight Success?**

To achieve a dream, you need to commit to achieving it, and that takes dedication. Successful people *know* what they want – what they really, really want – and they commit to *doing* whatever it takes to get what they want. The X-Factor contestants who cry all over Dermot O’Leary, claiming their lives to be over after a “No” from the judges, are clearly *not* dedicated to achieving their dream. It would appear that the majority of “failed” contestants enter the contest with the dream of achieving instant success and therefore they fall at the first hurdle.

**There’s no such thing as an overnight success.**

Ashrita Furman has chosen to dedicate his life to achieving world records, but although he may be making record-breaking attempts on everything imaginable on an almost weekly basis, he has in fact dedicated his life to training and preparing to break records. After all, you don’t just wake up one morning with the idea of pogo stick jumping

up Mount Fuji and then just go and do it, it takes dedicated training, and sticking to a training plan takes commitment, right? It actually took him a year of dedicated practise to master the art of cutting apples in mid-air with a Samurai sword, during which he reports stabbing himself often.

Another “record breaker” is author and entrepreneur Tim Ferriss. He holds the Guinness World Record for “the most consecutive tango-spins in one minute”. Ferriss published his first book, *The 4-Hour Workweek*, in 2007 and appeared to become an *overnight success* as a result, but, once again, there’s no such thing as an overnight success. The manuscript was actually rejected by 25 publishing houses, and prior to its release by the publishing house that did finally accept it, Ferriss set about heavily marketing and promoting the book through a network of bloggers *himself*. His success didn’t just magically happen overnight; he believed in himself, he believed in his book, and he focused all of his energy into doing whatever he could to *make* it a success.

### **Are You Waiting for Your Lucky Break?**

In the world of entertainment, getting a “lucky break” is a popular expression. Certain “stars” appear to become an overnight success as a result of a lucky break – a random or chance happening. Well, that may be the way it appears but the reality is that *nothing* happens by chance. There is a *reason* for everything and everything happens for a reason. The happenings in your life are *not* down to luck, and it’s not “good” or “bad” luck that decides the outcome of your life.

*“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity”*

Seneca

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Okay, “But what about that time I missed out on going on the ‘educational’ school trip of a lifetime because I had measles?” I hear you cry. Or, “What about the time I got locked in a toilet and missed an important meeting that could have led to a job offer?” You might be within your rights to say that those sorts of happenings are indeed “unlucky,” but in the grand scale of things such chance happenings are exceptions rather than rules.

Think of all those urban myths you hear about amazing lucky breaks. How about the budding actor who gets a lucky break when a film director spots him handing out sandwiches on set and gives him the opportunity to try out for a part: how about the wannabe model who gets a lucky break when an agency scout spots her serving skinny lattes in a coffee shop: how about the unknown musician who gets a lucky break when a known musician hears him play and asks him to join his up-and-coming band? There is an element of truth behind these success stories but when you take a moment to think about the chances of such things happening to *you*, you need to step back and consider whether it really was just “luck” that led to those people being in the right place at the right time.

- Was the budding actor working as a sandwich server on a film set purely by chance? No. There was a reason for him being there. If it was his ambition to be a sandwich server, it wouldn't matter where he was working, right? He was working there because he saw it as a positive step towards breaking into an acting career. He was in an environment where he could learn from the experience and discover for himself what it would take to break into an acting career. It wasn't luck that led to him being spotted by a film director, it was putting himself in a place where he could see and be seen by film directors that led to his “lucky break.”

- Was the wannabe model serving coffees in any old café? No. She was working in a café in an area frequented by models and model agency scouts. Once again, if it was her ambition to be a waitress, it wouldn't matter where she was working, right? There was a reason for working in that particular location because she knew it would give her access to the people she needed to help her realise her dreams.

- Was the unknown musician “lucky” to be heard by a known musician? No. If he'd been sitting at home by himself then yes, that would have been pretty miraculous, but he was out playing in public. He was intentionally playing music where it could be heard by others and by playing in venues where lots of other musicians play, he was increasing his chances of being heard by someone who could help him take the next step towards achieving his musical ambitions.

All of the above “lucky breaks” occurred because the people concerned knew what they wanted and they took action to move towards what they wanted. But here's the thing, **success is rarely the result of a one-off action**, it takes repeated action to *keep* moving closer to your dreams, and repeated action takes dedication. Success stories are the result of commitment to success and dedication to doing whatever it takes to achieve it.

*“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going”*

Beverly Sills

## **Are You Making Your Own Luck?**

Okay, we've talked a lot about doing whatever it takes and the message in this chapter is that you must be prepared to put more in if you want to get more out, so what does that mean? Well, the scenarios above demonstrate that you

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have the power to effectively make your own luck by knowing where it is you want to be and creating opportunities to get there. However, to create those opportunities you must believe that there *are* opportunities out there for you.

*“Opportunity is missed by most people  
because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like work”*

Thomas Edison

There’s an expression, “You reap what you sow,” meaning you get out of life exactly what you put in. Think about that for a moment: if you want more out of life, you need to put more in, right? But, here’s the thing, doing *more* of what you’re already doing will get you *more* of what you already have – is that what you want? If you’re not happy with the way your life is going, continuing to do more of the same will get you more of the same, but that’s not what you want!

Think about it this way: imagine you’ve decided you want to change the shape of your body, whether that’s losing fat or gaining muscle, so you join your local gym. At the start of your gym programme, you look in the mirror and you see all the things you don’t like about your body shape ... too flabby, too scrawny, too skinny ... the list goes on. A few weeks of dedicated effort later, you look in the mirror and you still don’t like what you see; still too flabby, too scrawny ... and so on. So you decide to do more. You up your gym visits from twice per week to three times per week. A few more weeks of dedicated effort later and you look in the mirror again. Sigh! You still see a body shape you’re not happy with. So what do you do now – more of the same? Before you do, there’s a more important question to be answered; why is doing more and putting in more effort not getting you what you want out of doing it? The answer is that getting what you want is not just about

*quantity* of effort, it's about *quality* of effort. Positive outcomes are the result of positive efforts and positive efforts are the result of positive thought processes. In the above scenario, your thought processes are negative. Your thoughts are focused only on what you *don't* want so you are effectively putting in a negative effort and in return getting out a negative outcome.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 9**

Take a moment to think about the times in your life when you have put in a negative effort, or continue to do so. For example, there may have been a particular subject at school that you dreaded, therefore you entered the classroom with negative thoughts focused on how much you were *not* going to enjoy the lesson.

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### **Are You Putting In Your Best Effort?**

When you put in your best effort, you give yourself the best opportunity to reap the maximum rewards for your efforts. When you switch your focus away from what you *don't* want onto what you *do* want, you instantly change your thought processes from negative to positive.

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Remember, you have to know where it is you want to go before you can take steps to get there: you have to know exactly what it is you're aiming to achieve before you can take steps to achieve it. Knowing exactly what you want – what you really, really want – means having a clear and positive image in your mind's-eye of what it's going to look like when you've got it.

In the body image scenario above, you saw only a negative image of yourself in the mirror each time – the person you *don't* want to be. When you switch your focus, you see an image of yourself as the person you want to become and in so doing, you see yourself taking positive action to get from where you are now to where you want to be. Your best effort must be your best mental effort as well as your best physical effort. Remember, until you believe you can succeed, success will not be yours.

### **Life Is Not Like the Movies**

Now this is the bit in the movies where the main character gets a determined look on their face and they get down to business. The upbeat music comes in and we see images of hard work and rapid progress, and by the end of the song the goal has been achieved. Wow! If only it was so easy in real life ... but it's not. However, this doesn't mean your goals can never be achieved in reality, it simply means you need to be prepared to put in a little more than three minutes worth of effort, and you won't always have a high-energy backing track to keep you going either.

Visualisation is a technique that has been used by top-level athletes for many years and it's now used in business, in education, and by anyone interested in achieving their true potential in area of life. In effect, it's a technique that allows you to play the starring role in a movie all about your success. You can see the movie any time you like as it

is shown on the big screen inside your mind's-eye, and you can fast-forward or rewind whenever you like to see the scenes that are of most interest to you at any given time. The opening scene focuses on you and your current circumstances and the closing scene focuses on you and your life when you have successfully achieved your dream. The rest of the movie tells the story of how you got there; how you turned a dream into a goal; how you created an action plan of realistic stepping stone goals; how you created a clear picture of exactly what you wanted to achieve, and how you remained committed to achieving it – even though in the true spirit of all Hollywood scripts, things did not always go to plan.

Think back to the time machine you stepped into earlier in the “Big Me” exercise. By using the power of your mind, you can virtually fast-forward yourself to any point in your future and *see* yourself living your dream. You have access to your time machine any time you want to use it, and you can use it to not only transport yourself to where you want to be but also to reverse your journey and to visualise every successful step you took to get there from where you are now.

Of course, you know already that positive thoughts do not have magical powers and positive thinking on its own is not enough to change your circumstances, but by being able to visualise your success, you are on your way to achieving success. You have to believe that something is possible before it can become a real possibility. Think back to the driving test example in the *Direction* chapter. You can take as many driving lessons as you like but until you believe you're ready to take your test, you're not going to be ready. If the thoughts in your head revolve around “stuffing up” and the associated images in your mind focus on how things are going to look when you stuff up, you're attracting that very outcome into your reality – is that what

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you want? No. But, turn your thoughts around and play “My Driving Test Success: The Movie” on your internal big screen, and now you’re talking! In fact, why not give it the full surround sound treatment and add “touchy-feely-smelly-vision” to it: what does it sound like when you’re driving well, what does it feel like it, what positive smells are around you? Add as many layers of detail as you can to make your movie worthy of an Oscar nomination. Make it *feel* real and it can become real.

*“You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them”*

Michael Jordan

*“If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves”*

Thomas Alva Edison

Generating a positive outcome is not a case of never having a negative thought, it’s about learning how to see the positives in any given situation and learning how to *believe* in the positives as real possibilities. Focusing on the negatives of a situation can become a habit so now it’s time to form a new habit of focusing on the positives.



## DEDICATION

### WORKSHEET 4

If you're a Monty Python fan, you'll be familiar with these song lyrics: *Always look on the bright side of life, doo-doo, doo-doo...!* Looking on the bright side doesn't mean wearing rose-tinted glasses and keeping your head in the clouds, it means looking at the big picture and *allowing* yourself to see the positives in every situation by not allowing yourself to slip into focusing only on the negatives.

Write down a list of people, places, or things that you know have a **negative** effect on you and the way you feel. For example, do you know someone who always moans and flattens your mood whenever you're around them? Is there a place you go where just the thought of being there is enough to make your shoulders slump with dread?

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Now write down a list of people, places, or things that you know have a **positive** effect on you and the way you feel. For example, do you know someone who always manages to cheer you up, no matter what? Is there a place you go that fills you with excitement every time, or a song that always makes you feel good, no matter how many times you hear it?

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There's a theory (not totally scientific) that it takes around 30 days to develop a new habit. Habits are essentially well-practised patterns of behaviour. Everything you think and do is governed by electrical impulses firing across the synapses in your brain. In simple terms, synapses are the spaces between your brain cells and the more you repeat a certain thought or action, the easier it becomes for the impulses to fire across the related synapses, creating what's termed a neural pathway. The more a pathway is used, the more you're able to use it without consciously thinking about using it ... you've formed a habit. Whether or not everyone can break an old habit or make a new one in 30 days is still up for debate in the scientific world but it's a scientific fact that we *can* create a new habit if we repeatedly practise the desired pattern of behaviour to form a well-worn neural pathway.

Commit to immersing yourself in all things positive and avoiding all things negative for 30 consecutive days to

develop a “positive thinking” habit. Okay, it’s not always going to be possible to avoid certain people or places completely but by being aware of the negative effect they are likely to have on you, you can make a conscious effort to limit your contact with them and *not* to let yourself be dragged down. When you make a conscious effort to switch your focus from negative to positive, it is possible to “always look on the bright side of life”!

**Take your positive thinking habit to the next level by producing, directing, and starring in your own movie – “My Success Story: The Movie”**

It takes time to learn how to visualise effectively. Visualisation is a mental skill and like all skills it takes dedicated time and practise to master. Commit to making the time you need to practise, beginning with as little as five minutes of uninterrupted “thinking” time each day in which you focus on creating mental images of exactly where your success story is taking you.

Write down an outline of the opening and closing scenes in your movie i.e. where are you now and where do you want to be?

Opening:

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Closing:

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Now begin to create a storyboard by filling in the major milestones you will need to reach to keep you on track to achieving your ultimate goal.

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Then finally, begin to add the all-important details to your storyboard. The details fill in the gaps of how you're going to get from one milestone to the next and, crucially, how you're going to deal with any setbacks that threaten to stand in your way. Day by day and one dedicated visualisation session at a time, you will develop a positive picture of how you're going to achieve the success you want. When you can see it, you can believe it.

# PERCEPTION

YOUR LIFE IS A REFLECTION OF  
WHAT YOU SEE

**Success and Failure ... The Difference is Merely Your  
Perception**



*“What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you  
are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are”*

– C S Lewis

So, how do you see life ... and what sort of person are you? People are popularly categorised as being “glass half full” or “glass half empty” types depending on whether they choose to see the world from an optimistic or a pessimistic viewpoint, so which category do you fall into?

The way you see yourself and the world around you can also be described as your “mindset.” Carol Dweck is a psychologist who spent decades researching the effect an

individual's mindset can have on their potential to succeed in life and it's her belief that the majority of us fall into one of two main categories – a **fixed** mindset or a **growth** mindset.

### **Fixed**

If this is you, you believe that you are who you are because you were born that way. For good or for bad, you see your skills in life or lack of skills in life as simply the way things are and you're essentially stuck with your lot! In a fixed mindset, you see a fixed world where you're a "born winner" or a "born loser" and nothing you do can actually influence or change that – it is what it is, end of!

### **Growth**

If this is you, you believe that no-one is born to be anything and who you are now is not fixed in any way. There are no "born winners" or "born losers" and everyone, including you, has the potential to achieve their own success in life through dedication and commitment to reaching goals, *growing* as an individual, and remaining open to change. In a growth mindset, it is what it is for *now*, but your actions today can influence and change your tomorrow.

*"Think about your intelligence, talents, and personality.  
Are they just fixed, or can you develop them?"*

Carol Dweck



### **"Work It Out" Exercise 10**

Take a moment to consider your current mindset. Are you

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a “glass half full” or “glass half empty” type ... or a bit of both depending on the circumstances?

My Mindset:

Clearly, having a growth mindset is the way to go in life and having a fixed mindset can only ever hold you back and keep you where you are. Even if where you are is somewhere you think you’re happy to be, the only way to fulfil your true potential in life is to keep your mind open to new opportunities, and that takes a growth mindset. The good news is that even though you may believe you’re stuck with your lot in life, it is possible to change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Of course, to be able to make any kind of change, you must first recognise that change is needed.

*“The optimist sees the donut, the pessimist sees the hole”*

Oscar Wilde

If you’re a “glass half empty” type of person and your natural tendency is to lean towards the “life is crap and then you die” philosophy, it’s quite possible that your everyday life is going to reflect that very line of thought! If you’re out there looking for crappy things to happen to you and *expecting* them to happen, they will. But here’s the thing, they’re not happening because you’re a “born loser” and you’re not stuck with your lot in life either. The only thing that’s keeping you where you are is your mindset. When you open your mind to a different way of thinking,

you gain a different view of life; a whole new perspective ... and changing your perspective can change everything.

*“I believe everyone should have a broad picture of how the universe operates and our place in it.*

*It is a basic human desire.*

*And it also puts our worries in perspective”*

Stephen Hawking

For example, if it takes you three attempts to pass your driving test, are you a success or a failure? Well, the guy who passed his test first time might choose to see you as a bit of a “loser” but the guy who is about to make his fourth attempt might see you as a total winner. It’s all about perspective. Another example; if you don’t achieve the grades you need to apply for a place at your first choice university, but you do achieve everything you need for both your second and third choices, are you a winner or a loser? Or, if you apply for six jobs and only get an interview for two of them, does that constitute success or failure? *It depends a great deal on where you are standing, right?*

**Remember, if you want more out of life you have to be prepared to put more in.**

It’s always going to be easier to do something you *want* to do, and with this in mind, changing your perspective only becomes possible when you want to see the world differently and when you’re prepared to accept that change *is* possible. Changing your mindset can be life-changing, making the difference between feeling stuck where you are and moving onwards and upwards to realise your full potential.

### **Are You Realising Your Full Potential?**

How do you know what your full potential is? In the last chapter, you were encouraged to produce, direct, and star

in your own movie through visualisation, creating a clear mental image of exactly where it is you want to go in life. So what happens when you get there ... and what happens if you don't get there? Does getting there make you a success? Does not getting there make you a failure? Once again, the answers are down to *your* perception.

Here's a mind-boggling thought for you; nothing in life has any meaning other than the meaning you choose to give it, and everything is relative to something else. Look at it this way; a fast car can only be described as fast in relation to a car that you see as slow. A big house can only be described as big in relation to a house that you see as small, and a person can only be described as a success in relation to a person you see as a failure, but your definition of fast, big, and success is purely *your* perception. Nothing can be fast or big until you compare it to something else, therefore you can only judge your own success or failure by comparing yourself to others. When you look at it that way, success and failure don't actually exist: there really is no such thing as success or failure, only our *perception* of success and failure and our perceptions are all relative to our own beliefs ... told you it was mind-boggling!

*"It all depends on how we look at things, and not on how they are themselves"*

Carl Jung



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 11**

Think of a time in your life when you adopted a fixed mindset to a certain negative happening. For example, you may have chosen to think that not getting the job you wanted is “just typical” of how things are for you in your

life. Take a moment now to *switch* your perspective and to look at the same happening with a growth mindset. You didn't get the job but what *did* you gain out of the experience?

If I Switched From A Fixed To A Growth Mindset, I see...

Unfortunately, it's all too easy to slip into comparing yourself negatively to others. When you think negatively, you begin to see only what you *don't* have or what you *can't* do compared to others, and your negative mental attitude generates a negative energy that surrounds every element of your life. You *believe* that you're a failure so you get stuck there, effectively blinkered to any opportunity to succeed. However, all it takes to move forwards is a change of energy, and that change can be made by simply changing your perspective. Failing to get to where you wanted to go in an allotted timeframe is not necessarily outright failure. Where *did* you get to; what *did* you achieve; and what can you achieve tomorrow, next week, next month ...? A shift of focus away from what you *didn't* achieve onto what you *did* achieve is a powerful way to keep things in perspective and to keep you moving forwards on your journey to discovering what else you can achieve.

*"If you are not enjoying the journey, you are unlikely to enjoy the destination"*

Anon

Getting to where you wanted to go is really only the beginning of your journey, unless it's your choice to stay there once you arrive. Success is a journey, not a destination. Where you go next and what you do next is ultimately your choice. The world around you is constantly changing and it's only by embracing change that you're able to move with it. How you view your circumstances at any given point on your journey is down to your perception, and how you choose to deal with the inevitable ups and downs you encounter along the way comes down to your mindset – **your perception and your mindset are *your* choice.**

### **Biggest is Best, Isn't It?**

It's a sad fact that in today's world it's getting harder and harder to merit a Blue Peter badge. What do I mean by that? Well, there was a time when taking part in a sponsored walk around the village green to raise money for good causes was deemed worthy of local news coverage, widespread support, and a much coveted Blue Peter badge but today, unless you're cartwheeling the same distance wearing a "beard of bees" and juggling hand grenades at the same time, you're not likely to raise much interest, let alone funds. By the same token, there was a time (not so long ago) when becoming a millionaire was deemed the ultimate dream in terms of achieving financial success but in today's world, what's a mere million? Lottery ticket buyers wonder if it's worth splashing out on an extra ticket when the prize is only a couple of million pounds as by today's standards it takes multi-millionaire status to be deemed a financial success.



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 12**

Time for some honest answering once more. Putting aside the knowledge that there's more to life than money, if your numbers were to come up on the lottery, what sum of money would you like to win ... £1000; £10 000; £10 million?

Write down the figure and then take some time to jot down *why* you came up with that figure. What is it you want to buy with that money?

If I Win The Lottery...

Of course, all of this has led to a “bigger is better” attitude and an atmosphere of extreme competitiveness in every area of life. This, in turn, has added to the pressure on each and every one of us to do more, achieve more, and generally *be* more in order to experience the sense of satisfaction the advertising world tells us we're all chasing in life, right?

But, is bigger *really* better?

Okay, before you start thinking I'm contradicting myself again – having devoted many pages of this book to conveying the “dream BIG” message – let me explain my reasons for questioning whether bigger is better. When I was growing up, I was encouraged by well-meaning adults to study hard at school and to go out and “make something” of myself in life. Back then, making something

## TALENT UNLIMITED

of yourself generally meant getting a well-paid job and becoming a respected pillar of society – becoming a doctor or a bank manager, for example. Well, let's be honest, a career in medicine might still be up there in terms of making something of yourself but attitudes have changed and there's really no such thing as "a job for life" anymore. The world has changed at an alarming rate over the past couple of decades and making something of yourself appears to have become inextricably linked to making money. But here's the thing, does having a bigger bank balance make you a bigger success in life?

*"Worry about being better;  
bigger will take care of itself"*  
Gary Comer

Let's go back to the lottery. From your point of view, is winning the lottery making something of yourself? Mmmm ... probably given you something to think about there, haven't I? So, while I've got you thinking, does winning Big Brother make you a success; does winning the X-Factor, Britain's Got Talent or The Apprentice equate to making something of yourself; does having more friends on Facebook than anyone else you know make you more successful? And here's one to ponder over for a while (or all of five seconds!) – Jedward: success or failure?

"Success" by today's standards appears to be measured mainly in terms of fame, fortune, material possessions and bling, and to make matters worse, the success a lot of people want is **instant success**. The advertising world promises us "instant happiness" if we buy certain products; "instant weight loss" if we subscribe to a certain diet plan; "instant wealth" if we buy into a certain "get rich quick" scheme, and "instant love" if we wear a certain deodorant! It's no wonder we've become brainwashed into believing that we can have *everything* and we can have it *now*.

## DON MACNAUGHTON

Of course, this also leads to the belief that if you *don't* have it all now, you're a loser.

Life scientists believe we are all naturally competitive. Competitiveness is part of human nature and stems from the basic need of our ancient hunter gatherer ancestors to compete for resources and therefore their very survival. Our built-in ability to co-operate with other people is also a "survival instinct" as co-operation with the "tribe" provided essential protection. But, wanting to be your best self and to realise your true potential is nothing to do with competing against others and everything to do with competing against yourself. The point I want to make is that true success can only ever be measured in terms of your own personal sense of satisfaction in life and your own personal sense of fulfilment through realising your own dreams. Success and failure ... the difference is merely *your* perception.

Now it's time to look at how you can change your "lot in life" by changing your perception.

*"Who aims at excellence will be above mediocrity;  
who aims at mediocrity will be far short of it"*

Burmese saying

# PERCEPTION

## WORKSHEET FIVE

This exercise is all about seeing the **bigger picture**. Disappointments can leave you feeling flat and it can be tempting to slip into wallowing in self-pity ... and get stuck there. However, dwelling on negatives in your mind keeps you blinkered to any positives, resulting in an even more disappointing reality. Of course, this can all be changed by changing your perspective on what you see as “disappointments” in your life.

Write down a few examples of things that stand out as “big disappointments” in your life. Make a note of everything you experienced at the time: how did the disappointment *feel* and what thoughts were in your head?

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DON MACNAUGHTON

Next, make a note of how you reacted or responded at the time. Did you get emotional; did you lash out; did you storm off; or did you sulk, quietly?

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Now, with the benefit of hindsight, has your perspective changed? Do you see a molehill where you once saw a mountain? Or, perhaps more importantly, can you see a way to change your perspective *now* if you haven't done so already?

Can you see a way to put a positive spin on your "disappointment"?

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Look back over your notes and use them to help you recognise the responses to "disappointment" that allowed you to "build a bridge and get over it" and the responses that kept you stuck, wallowing in self-pity, and unable to

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move on.

What *thoughts* allowed you to pick up the pieces, learn from the experience, and move forwards?

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# RESOLUTION

YOUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE CAN  
ONLY BE DETERMINED BY YOU

**We Have Equal Opportunity to Succeed ... Therefore  
We Have Equal Opportunity to Fail**

*“Desire is the key to motivation, but it’s determination and  
commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to  
excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek”*

– Mario Andretti

Okay, you’ve hopefully got your head around the idea that there’s really no such thing as success or failure, only *your* perception of what constitutes either state, so now try this thought on for size – if it was impossible to fail, it would also be impossible to succeed. Confused? Think of it another way; if you had never experienced a bad day, how would you know you were having a good day? Yet again, everything in life is relative to something else and you could say that everything in life has an opposite. For example, you can only feel sad if you know what it feels like to be happy, right? Without bad there could be no good, if there were no downs there could be no ups, and if there was no rich there would be no poor ... making sense?

So, with this thought in mind, it might seem that the only

way to succeed is to fail. However, while it's true that without failure there can be no success, this doesn't mean that you *must* fail in order to succeed. But, and it's a big but...

**... To succeed, you must accept that the potential to succeed only exists because the potential to fail also exists.**

Accepting the potential to fail is quite different to *expecting* to fail. Focusing on failure can only ever keep you blinkered to anything other than failure; in other words, when you look for failure, you'll find it. However, as you already know, focusing on success is *not* a guarantee that success will be yours, *successful people achieve because they have a clear intention and they take focused action.*

*"The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's determination"*

Tommy Lasorda

There can be no guarantee that every plan you make is going to work out just the way you want it to. You might not achieve exactly what you were aiming for but that doesn't mean you're all out of options. Things don't always go to plan, that's life! You don't stop, you make a new plan and you keep moving towards it. Okay, this might mean taking a detour, but you *can* still get to where you want to go.

*"The truest wisdom is a resolute determination"*

Napoleon Bonaparte

The word "resolution" is commonly associated with New Year and the most popular resolutions generally revolve around diet, health and fitness. *New Year, New You* becomes the headline on every newspaper supplement and

glossy magazine the world over, but how many New Year resolutions stay in place beyond by mid-February? Let's be honest, not that many, right? So what does the word actually mean?

Here's a dictionary definition for you:

**Resolution** > *noun* the quality of being resolute

**Resolute** > *adjective* determined; unwavering

So there you have it. To be resolute, you must be determined and unwavering. This means that a New Year's resolution is something you are *determined* to see through; something you have an unwavering commitment to achieving ... okay, this is important, so let's put it into context.



### “Work It Out” Exercise 13

Take a moment to write down some of the “resolutions” you have made in recent years.

For example, lose weight; save money; wash the dishes more often.

Resolutions I Have Made...

Now, here's the really important bit; how many of those resolutions were you *determined* to see through, and how many of them just seemed like a "nice idea" at the time?

Let's use "lose weight" to demonstrate the point I'm making here.

### **Determined Attitude**

If you are *determined* to lose weight, you will take immediate action by turning that resolution into a **smart goal**. With a clear goal in place, you have a clear intention, and with a *clear intention* you can take *focused action* to get to where you want to go, one manageable step at a time. Crucially, achieving your ultimate goal means accepting that not every stepping stone goal you set in place will necessarily go to plan: you might not achieve your target weight loss each week, however, you remain resolute in your intention and you take whatever detours are necessary along the way on to keep you on track to getting to where you want to go.

### **"Nice Idea" Attitude**

If you like the idea of losing some weight and you think in terms of, "I'm going to *try* to lose some weight this year," you're already *preparing* for failure. *Trying* to lose weight is not the same as making a *determined* effort to lose weight. When losing weight is a "nice idea," you like the thought of being thinner but you haven't made a resolute decision to *do* something about turning that thought into a reality. You might *try* to eat differently for a week or two but when you step on the scales and you haven't magically lost any weight, you give up.

*"Try not.*

*Do or do not.*

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*There is no try”*  
Yoda

Okay, now is a good time to reflect on everything you’ve taken on board so far ...

### **Inspiration**

Successful people achieve because their heart is in it.

### **Direction**

Successful people achieve because they believe in themselves as a success.

### **Action**

Successful people achieve because they have a clear intention and they take focused action.

### **Dedication**

Successful people achieve because they are committed to realising the success they want.

### **Perception**

Successful people achieve because they see infinite possibilities in a growth mindset.

### **Resolution**

Successful people achieve because they have an unwavering determination to realise their true potential.



### “Work It Out” Exercise 14

Keeping all of the above in mind, write down what you *really want* to achieve in your life. Write down what you feel inspired and motivated to achieve, and write it down as a **resolution** in the true sense of the word. What are you committed to and determined to achieve?

My Resolution Is...

Look at what you’ve written and then visualise a spectrum with “success” at one end and “failure” at the other. Now mark where you believe your current position to be between the two ends of the spectrum.



Are you close to the “success” end, or are you closer to the “failure” end? Remember, the difference between success and failure is merely *your* perception. Where you currently see yourself on the spectrum is your current perspective but your perspective is also *your* choice. Let’s say things have not been “going your way” lately. Chances are you currently see yourself positioned towards the “failure” end of the spectrum but don’t forget failure can only exist if success also exists, right? All it takes to change your positioning on the spectrum is a change of perspective.

***You are responsible for your positioning on that spectrum: you have the power to change that positioning at any time.***

*“If you wish your life were different ... do your life differently”*  
Terence Houlihan

*“Energy and persistence conquer all things”*  
Benjamin Franklin

### **Are You Swimming With or Against the Tide?**

There’s an expression, “What goes around comes around,” which describes very nicely the natural ebb and flow of life. Wherever you live in the world, there’s a natural cycle that marks the changing seasons and this serves to remind us that the world continues to turn and time continues to tick by ... whether you like it or not.

When you think about it, everything in life moves in cycles. Farmers plant their crops in cycles to gain the best yield from the soil; elite athletes train in progressive cycles of hard effort followed by rest to maximise their fitness; and the school year revolves around a cycle of terms that link together seasonal holidays. Accepting that where there

is the potential to succeed there is also the potential to fail is just another way of “fitting in” with the natural way of things, and it’s an attitude that goes hand-in-hand with another wise old saying;

“What goes up must come down.”

Knowing, understanding, and accepting that everything moves in cycles allows you to “ride out” the rough times, knowing that good times will come around again. Put this together with your understanding that everything has an opposite and you realise that where there are lows there must also be highs, but here’s the thing – wallowing in a low slows down the natural return of a high. As tempting as it may be to slip into an attitude of “*why does it always rain on me,*” dwelling on negative thoughts generates a negative energy that’s only going to prolong your stay in the low phase of the cycle. You can’t change what has already happened so focusing your thoughts on the “disappointment” won’t make things turn out any differently. But, you *can* change what happens next, right? Remember, *what you think about you bring about* so the key to achieving what you want is to focus on exactly that ... what you want.

The ups and downs of life are simply part of a continuous natural cycle and just as the tide will continue to turn and the seasons will continue to change, *you* have the power to change *your* energy and to change your lot in life. If what goes up must come down, then what goes down must also go up.

Now it’s time to make sure that you’re keeping yourself on track to realising your full potential by keeping your focus on where you’re going ... not where you *should* have been or *could* have been had things turned out differently.

# RESOLUTION

## WORKSHEET 6

This exercise is all about paying attention to your current thought and behaviour patterns. When things are going your way, what are you thinking; what thoughts are at the forefront of your mind?

When things are going your way, what are you doing; what actions are you taking?

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When things are *not* going your way, what are you thinking; what thoughts are at the forefront of your mind?

When things are *not* going your way, what are you doing; what actions are you taking?

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When you discover the thoughts and actions that accompany things going your way and those that accompany everything that can go wrong going wrong, you can begin to make some potentially life-changing connections! Learning to recognise the thought processes and actions that generate the outcomes you want brings with it the power to take control of, and *change*, the way things are going for you.

# REALISATION

YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED  
WITHIN YOU TO REALISE YOUR  
DREAMS

**“Champions” Are Made, Not Born ... the Power to  
Make a Champion is Within You**

*“Be yourself; no base imitator of another, but your best self. There is something which you can do better than another. Listen to the inward voice and bravely obey that. Do the things at which you are great, not what you were never made for”*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

We all have the power to be masters of our own destiny, and you already have within you everything you need to realise your dreams ... you just need to recognise the “inner champ.”

Whatever your personal ambition in life, your definition of success will always be unique to you, however, to be a success, you must first *believe* that you are a success in the making. You must recognise that no one is a *born winner* or a *born loser* and you have every bit as much potential to succeed as the next person. More importantly, you must recognise that with commitment and unwavering self-belief in your ability to learn what you need to learn to get

to where you want to go, you have everything you need to realise your *true potential*.

*“Be what you are.*

*This is the first step toward becoming better than you are”*

Julius Charles Hare

Successful people believe in themselves and they commit to becoming the best they can be in whatever it is they feel inspired to do. It's their commitment that pulls them through the tough times, the mistakes, the steep learning curves, and the failures, and it's commitment that picks them up when they fall. Successful people do what they love and love what they do: are you doing what *you* feel inspired to do, and are you committed to doing it to the best of your ability?

*“How many cares one loses when one decides not to be something but to be someone”*

Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel



### **“Work It Out” Exercise 15**

To be able to *truly* commit to giving everything you do your best shot, you must be absolutely sure that what you *think* you want to achieve is what you *really* want to achieve. So, can you tell me what you want, what you really, really want?

I'll Tell You What I Want, What I Really, Really  
Want, I Wanna...

Successful people realise that every thought and every action counts on their journey towards achieving their goals. The way *you* think on a daily basis and the way *you* do things on a daily basis will ultimately decide *your* level of success in life. Every thought and every action you take on a daily basis must represent another step towards achieving *your* ambitions and unless you believe that those ambitions are achievable, success may continue to remain a step away.

*“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life”*  
Steve Jobs

**Want to do is infinitely more powerful than *should* do  
or *have to* do.**

## **Decisions, Decisions**

It's all about choice. The message conveyed in the first chapter of this book is the one we come full circle to now ...

**Your journey towards achieving your true potential in  
life begins with your *decision* to succeed.**

Remember the wise words of the Texan billionaire: *There are three secrets to success.*

## DON MACNAUGHTON

1. You must *decide* exactly what it is you want
2. You must work out what costs or sacrifices are needed
3. You must be prepared to pay those costs and make those sacrifices

It all sounds so simple but, unfortunately, decisions are not always so easy to make. In fact, the bigger the decision you must make, the more difficult it becomes to make it, right? The more *important* a decision seems, the more likely it is that you'll hesitate over making it because you need to be sure you're making the *right* decision. But, think about it for a moment: you can't know the outcome of any decision until after you make it, so at the time of making it, it can't be a *right* or *wrong* decision – it's just a decision. Of course, when things don't work out the way you wanted them to, you naturally slip into thinking you made the *wrong* decision, but did you? What makes you think that things would have worked out just the way you wanted them to if you'd made a different decision at the time? A decision is just a decision; it's not a guarantee of anything.

*“There is no such uncertainty as a sure thing”*

Robert Burns

Okay, you could say that the outcome of the rest of your life rests on the decisions you make ... but if that's not enough to put you off making any kind of decision I don't know what is! Yes, we all face countless decisions on a daily basis but if you substitute the word “decision” with the word “choice” instead, you realise that decisions are no longer something to be feared. For example, what did you have for breakfast this morning? Did you have a choice of cereal boxes on the shelf; did you have to make a decision over which cereal you wanted? Your decision was simply a choice, wasn't it? The decision you made at breakfast this

morning is not one you must now stick with for the rest of your life, you can choose something different tomorrow. When you look at it that way, you realise that there's no one decision that's ever so *important* that it can't be made.

**Where there is a decision there is a choice ... and there is always another choice to be made.**

*Tea or coffee?*

*Stay in or go out?*

*Red or blue?*

*Take the car or walk?*

*Indian, Chinese, or pizza?*

So, with this in mind, deciding what it is you really want becomes less of a challenge than you may have allowed yourself to believe – or perhaps allowed other people to lead you into believing. Yes, it's "difficult" to make course choices in school or college when you're unsure of the career path you want to take; yes, it can be "difficult" to *decide* which career path is the *right* path for you, but by replacing "decision" with "choice," you instantly take the pressure off ... there is no *right* or *wrong* decision to be made, only a choice to be made.

The contents of this book are guiding principles designed to help you ***make choices***. Ultimately, the outcome of the rest of your life *does* rest on the choices you make, but here's the thing, **there's always another choice to be made and it's only by continuing to make those choices that you continue to move forwards towards realising your full potential.**

*"The future is always beginning now"*

Mark Strand

**Choose to do what you love and love what you do, not**

**what someone else wants you to do.**

**Choose to recognise your true self by recognising the things that inspire you and the things you feel passionate about in life, and make *inspired decisions* based on your findings.**

**Choose to accept that nothing happens unless you take action to make it happen.**

**Choose to accept that things don't always go to plan but there is always another choice to be made.**

**Choose to recognise your potential to succeed ... and choose to *believe* in your ability to realise your dreams.**

*"If I have the belief that I can do it,  
I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it  
at the beginning"*

Mahatma Ghandi

*"As simple as it sounds, we all must try to be the best person we  
can;  
by making the best choices,  
by making the most of the talents we've been given."*

Mary Lou Retton

Now it's time to reflect on everything you've discovered about yourself on your journey from the beginning to the end of this book: it's time to recognise your "inner champ"...

# REALISATION

## WORKSHEET 7

*“Champions aren’t made in gyms.  
They are made from something they have deep inside them ...  
a desire, a dream, a vision”*

Muhammad Ali

“Champions” know who they *really* are, not who someone else wants them to be. They realise that focusing their energy onto the things they feel most passionate about and truly inspired by in life is what generates their success. But, perhaps most importantly, they remain true to themselves and they pursue their goals with a resolute determination to realise *their* dreams ...

**When you recognise your true self and you believe in yourself, you recognise your “inner champ.”**

This exercise is all about **being yourself** in order to become your **best self**. You now know in your heart of hearts what **you really** want. Write it down.

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Revisit **why** you want to achieve the above: what is “driving” you to achieve it?

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*Be yourself; no base imitator of another, but your best self. **You** are the best version of you there is, and no one can do a better job of being you than you! Believe in yourself as the best version of you it's possible to be, and then get out there and make yourself happen.*

*“You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.  
You're on your own.  
And you know what you know.  
You are the guy who'll decide where to go.”*  
Dr Seuss

## TALENT UNLIMITED IN SUMMARY

There are NO LIMITS

- N** No one makes it on their own
- O** Opportunities are everywhere when you look for them
  
- L** Life goes the way *you* take it
- I** If you want more from life, put more in
- M** Mindset matters
- I** If it was impossible to fail, it would be impossible to succeed
- T** Trust in your *true* self
- S** See the potential in *you*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With grateful thanks to Linda Purves,  
Hugh MacDonald, Martin Greig for their  
advice, skill and helping me to finally  
get “Talent Unlimited” out to the world.

And to all those, too many to mention by name,  
who inspired this book by their actions and presence.

This book is dedicated to “Mousie” MacNaughton  
“May the bright light that shines from you never dim and  
you live the life of your dreams”



## PRAISE FOR “TALENT UNLIMITED”

“I wanted to be a ski racer for as long as I can remember, growing up it was what I was most passionate about. I met Donald early on in my career as a professional skier and his knowledge and wisdom has helped me to reach amazing places over the years. As I continue my career, he maintains to have a huge influence on my life and my mental strength to compete at my best.”

– *Pam Thorburn, British Ski Cross Team*

“This book identifies the need for young people to set their standards high and to always pursue their dreams. Donald has captured the essence of what is required to become successful in life mostly through keeping it simple and always remaining positive. Donald has helped me through my times of need and to keep my positive focus. I used to be a downhill alpine ski racer and after qualifying for the Winter Olympics in 2005, I had a big crash where my surgeon said I would always walk with a limp, never mind ski competitively again. I was crushed as it had been my dream since I started skiing at nine years old. However, it had always been my ambition so nothing in the world was going to at least stop me trying. They had taken my former Olympic qualification away due to the severity of my injury. I managed to get back on skis after six months

## DON MACNAUGHTON

of rehabilitation with nine titanium pins and a titanium plate in my leg. I had the best result of my life and re-qualified for the Olympics by four hundredths of a second. Donald helped me to believe in myself when many didn't. I now use these life skills in my job as a Royal Air Force Eurofighter Typhoon pilot where a positive focus is the only way to stay on top. I think it goes without saying that this book is a must have and will guide you through life by proving that you can always achieve your goals no matter what happens. You just have to believe!"

– *Flt Lt R A Cruickshank, GB Olympic Skier*

"Having known Donald for a number of years through my son's motorsport, I know he is committed to helping young people fulfil their potential. When asked for advice, I always say work hard, do something that you enjoy and inspires you and seize opportunities when they arise. This book reflects that ethos and as such should help ambitious young people on their journey to be the best that they can be."

– *Justin King OBE, Chief Executive Sainbury's*

"In his new book, Donald MacNaughton offers a vision of possibility and hope for a new generation of dreamers. If you're starting out on the road to a wonderful future, Donald will help you to champion your dreams and stay the course when life seems to get in the way!"

– *Michael Neill, international bestselling author of 'The Inside-Out Revolution'*

"Another gem from Donald MacNaughton. Talent unlimited is the perfect follow up to The 12 Hidden Laws of Performance. Donald is one of those writers who writes like he speaks, bringing the material to life and helping readers realise their own untapped potential in life. The exercises in the book help get your thoughts and ideas on page and the coaching style which Donald adopts

## TALENT UNLIMITED

throughout the book helps you get them off the page and into practice. This book is a must if you are looking for direction, inspiration and action”

– *Mark Brown, Head of Programmes Columba 1400*

“This is a very compelling book that if taken to heart, will help you to change your relationship in a good way not only with sport but with life as well. Donald is a thoughtful and caring teacher/coach and this book demonstrates those extraordinary traits clearly. I can feel the love that has gone into his work.”

– *Dr Jerry Lynch, Author of “The Way of the Champion”*

“Creating a successful business is about combining gut instinct with skill, commitment and hard work, in the end it comes down to people. This book is a must if you are looking for vision, inspiration and action”

– *Roy MacGregor OBE, Chairman Global Energy Group*

“I have known Donald for many years after we met during a World Cup ski race in Switzerland. Donald’s drive to help others achieve their dreams is amazing and was a key part of the GB skiers development. This book is a must for anyone who has dreams and desires to better themselves. With a clear and simple approach that can be implemented into your life as you work to those dreams. Work hard and grab every opportunity that comes your way.”

– *David Smith MBE, London 2012 Gold Medalist*