



MIND, SET & MATCH

LIVE YOUR DNA,
CREATE A WONDERFUL LIFE

Sunil Bali





MIND, SET & MATCH

Mind, Set & Match

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Foreword

I am often asked to write testimonials or forewords for books, especially business books. Usually I decline because most of them rely on a formula of half-baked amateur psychology and re-hashed corporate garble.

I am very pleased, however, to make an exception in the case of *Mind, Set & Match*, because this is an exceptional book. It is not just the simple philosophy and practical advice that it contains – that is true of many books, though not all authors express themselves as well as Sunil.

Nor is it the unmistakable energy which fizzes from its pages; there is an electric charge which is almost palpable and the reader cannot help but respond. It leaves you feeling good and ready for action.

Credible content and lively expression are great qualities in a book. But what I think makes *Mind, Set & Match* exceptional is that it really does have the power to change your life and create a lasting impact.

As Sunil says at the very outset, there is a huge difference between self development and shelf development. This is not just a book to be read and enjoyed, though there is no harm in doing that. At a deeper level, it is a book to be put into practice and lived out day by day.

Sunil writes from the heart. Clearly and concisely, he shows the way to realise your dreams in all their thrilling potential.





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He has drawn from his personal and business experience to show how even the smallest changes in our lives can make huge differences. If you are seeking inspiration, guidance or just more clarity in your personal and business life, then this is surely a book for you.

I consider it an honour to be part of Sunil's inner circle and to see at first hand how he continues to transform the lives of individuals and organisations. He is a truly inspirational speaker, coach and leader; I am delighted, though not surprised, that he has now added 'author' to his list of achievements.

I am sure that anyone who reads this book will benefit from doing so. I know that you will enjoy reading Sunil's words and with his help can move towards living your best life.

Nigel Risner

European Speaker of the Year

Best selling author of *The Impact Code*





About Sunil Bali

Sunil is an expert in human behaviour, and how you can increase both your happiness and income by consistently living your DNA and expressing your authentic self. In short, the more you do who you are, the better you do.

For the last decade Sunil has been at the forefront in the field of human achievement and well-being. He has empowered individuals and organisations to maximise their potential and well-being through his inspirational speaking and coaching.

Sunil has given several hundred talks to a wide variety of companies and organisations and has transformed the lives of thousands of people from children to leaders of global organisations. Having successfully run talent management and executive coaching programmes for leading global organisations, which have delivered results, Sunil speaks with genuine authority.

He inspires individuals to reappraise their belief systems and their actions and moreover provides them with practical tools to facilitate the delivery of their desires.

Sunil's goal is to show individuals and companies how to achieve success on an ongoing basis. His unbridled energy and enthusiasm is infectious and his messages are highly thought-provoking.





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Sunil ‘walks his talk’ and has held Board level positions with FTSE-100 and NASDAQ-listed companies. Roles include Director of Talent & Resourcing on behalf of Vodafone Group, Santander (Abbey) and Cable & Wireless Europe.

Sunil has also managed an MBO with subsequent trade sale, run a highly profitable multi-million pound recruitment business, and is a Non-Executive Director.

Sunil’s first degree in Sports Science and Psychology fuelled his passion for the psychology of human achievement and well-being. As well as being a qualified Psychotherapist he possesses an MBA. He is also a Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), a qualified trainer of hypnosis, and a fully licensed psychometric assessor.

When he isn’t speaking, Sunil lives in Buckinghamshire with his wife and two children.

To find out more information about the complete range of services available from Sunil Bali visit our website. If you would like to receive Sunil’s FREE weekly e-zine, visit our website and register today.

www.sunilbali.com





ABOUT SUNIL BALI

Feedback from Sunil's talks consistently shows that he creates an impact which lasts and inspires individuals to take incredible action and enjoy phenomenal success:

“The feedback that I had from your talk has been absolutely outstanding. Your blend of humour, passion and thought-provoking content was the perfect climax to our European conference.”

Adrian Derx, CEO, Elan Computing

“I know I wrote to you straight after your speech, but three months later people are still talking about it. You created a huge shift in peoples thinking in a short space of time. I was delighted with the results.”

Dr. Sam Tyson, MD, Vedicare

“You had us all mesmerised from start to finish. I know I speak on behalf of every single person in the room when I say that we all left motivated to change at least one thing to improve our lives.”

Daniel Osmer, MD, Spectrum







Dedication

Sudesh P. Bali

Your star shines brightly

xx







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My father – the most wonderful father, brother and best friend a boy could ever hope for. You will always inspire me.

My mother, whose courage and enormous passion for life I've been fortunate enough to inherit.

Asha, my wife, who has supported and loved me from the day we first met, regardless of my faults.

My wonderful children, Yasmin and Aran, who bring me a joy and happiness beyond words. I'm so proud of you, for who you are and what you will become.

Tia and Raul, the next generation. The future is in good hands.

My extended family, aka The Harrar's:

Sunny – the brother I never had. I'm humbled by the selfless contribution you make to the lives of my family and everyone you meet.

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Nick Williams, for your invaluable wisdom and care.





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Tom Boyle, for editing and laying out the book with such care and expertise.

Luton Town Football Club, for giving me two of the happiest days of my life – the 1988 Littlewoods Cup Final, Wembley:

Luton Town 3 Arsenal 2;

and 14th May 1983:

Manchester City 0 Luton Town 1.

All my teachers, colleagues and clients, both past and present: your contributions to my life, and this book, have been immense. Thank you.





...it got to come out

Well my mama didn't 'low me
Just to stay out all night long
I didn't care what she didn't 'low
I would boogie-woogie anyhow

One night I was layin' down
I heard mama 'n papa talkin'
I heard papa tell mama, let that boy
boogie-woogie
It's in him, and it got to come out
And I felt so good

John Lee Hooker







CHAPTER 1

CHASE YOUR PASSION NOT YOUR PENSION







CHASE YOUR PASSION NOT YOUR PENSION

Chase Your Passion Not Your Pension

I don't know why you've picked up this book, but I suspect it may be because you're looking to achieve more in certain areas of your life.

It might be that you're looking for more success, more money, better relationships, or more happiness.

If that's the case, then you've come to the right place.

However, a word of caution before you continue to read this book:

Self Development vs Shelf Development

Think for a moment about why you haven't got everything that you want in your life.

Whatever your answer, I can tell you one thing – what you have been doing so far has not given you the results that you want.

You need to do something different.

If, after having read this book, you're going to do the same things you've always done then there's not much point in reading it. Sure, it's a very enjoyable and inspirational book with some great stories, but nothing will change unless you decide to take some action in the direction of your dreams.

Given that there's a multi-billion dollar industry in popular

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Albert Einstein





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psychology and self help products, you would expect to see a lot more happy and successful people out there, but the vast majority of people would rather grow their libraries at home, than grow themselves.

This book doesn't contain table-thumping rhetoric from a self-styled motivational guru, which pumps you full of adrenalin, but a few days later leaves you empty because you don't know what to do next.

It's intentionally not a weighty tome that over-intellectualises. On the contrary, it's a careful distillation that will tell you what you need to know clearly and concisely, while inspiring and motivating you to live the life that you deserve.

The numerous headings and quotes mean that it's easy to dip in and out of once you've read it. I suggest that you write your inspirations and ideas in the book as you read it.

**People don't care how much you know,
until they know how much you care.**

John C. Maxwell





CHASE YOUR PASSION NOT YOUR PENSION

The Greatest Software Ever

We're taught many things as we grow up, not all of them conducive to our well-being, by people who project their own insecurities and inadequacies onto us.

When we buy a piece of electrical equipment it always comes with a manual on how to use it. Yet it's amazing that we're never taught how to use the greatest piece of software known to mankind – our brain, because it's our thinking that creates our reality. We really can learn how to be successful by changing our beliefs and the quality of our thinking.

The aim of the book is to show you how you really can have it all, without the need to struggle and suppress your innate passion for life.

This book will challenge your current thinking in all areas of your life and show you how to transform your thinking to achieve results that you never dreamed were possible.

It doesn't matter where you are in your life at the moment. If you're heading in the right direction that's great, but this book will help you get there a little quicker and perhaps dream a little bigger. If you're heading in the wrong direction, or perhaps you don't know what you want to do with your life, this book will help you to create the life of your dreams.

By the end of this book, you'll know how to get from where you are to where you really want to be.

**Man is not the creature of circumstances.
Circumstances are the creatures of men.**

Benjamin Disraeli





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Get Out of Your Own Way

I remember the biology class at college when I studied one of the most basic living organisms on the planet – a single celled animal called an amoeba. Even the largest ones are less than 0.5mm in size and need to be examined under a microscope.

If you prod or poke an amoeba you'll see it move in the opposite direction. If you shine a light on an amoeba, it will move away from the light source. So despite being such a primitive life form, without a brain or nerves, the amoeba will change its behaviour when it doesn't get what it wants.

It's remarkable then that as human beings, at the very top of the evolutionary tree, we keep doing the same thing when we don't get the results that we want. And if this keeps happening, we then go and find someone else to blame!

The only thing that can stop you from living the life of your dreams is you. If you can learn to get out of your own way, flow with the universe and not swim against the tide, then everything that the universe has to offer is yours for the taking.

Ask yourself how badly you want to change. Do you want to carry on living the way you are or would you prefer to do things a little bit differently and have some fun along the way?

I'm not talking about huge changes. At 99 degrees Celsius, water doesn't boil. However, an extra 1% increase in temperature

Life is not to be measured by the number of breaths we take, but the moments that take our breath away.

George Carlin





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creates steam – and steam can power trains weighing over 500 tonnes.

You have now within you, and have always had, everything you need to create the life that you've dreamed of. What you might not have had is the awareness, motivation, focus, or clarity to manifest your dreams.

By the end of this book you will.

**We define ourselves by the best that is in us,
not the worst that has been done to us.**

Edward Lewis





Live to Work, or Work to Live?

“Even if you win the rat race, you’re still a rat.”

Lily Tomlin

We are at the dawn of a new era. Our current models of the world simply aren’t working. So many of us seem to live to work, rather than work to live. We continually suppress our true self, because we think we have to hold on to a steady job to pay the mortgage and the bills. Many people hold off living today and intend to start living tomorrow, when they’ve got a much smaller mortgage and less debt. But tomorrow never seems to happen.

The psychological contract between employer and employee is increasingly breaking down, because the values and aspirations of the individual often don’t reconcile with those of the organisation. Product and business life cycles are getting shorter and shorter and the only constant is change.

So many ambitious, well intentioned people go through life rushing around at a hundred miles an hour, with never enough time in the day. In terms of their career they sometimes get what they want, but the results in other areas of their lives are often poor.

Authentic success is where you take consistent action in the direction of your dreams but you don’t have to spill blood, sweat or tears. It’s success that leaves you feeling happy, fulfilled and bursting with energy. There are many Type A achievers,

Anyone can conquer fear by doing those things that he fears to do.

Eleanor Roosevelt





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often well-known people, who achieve career success but at a terrible cost to their health or personal relationships. There's no doubt that stressful action can deliver your desires, but in the long term it's self-defeating because it destroys you. When you pursue instant gratification what you achieve is outer success, but it's quite often at the cost of inner success, which is the quality of your experience and the quality of your life.

My wife is a GP and her surgery is frequented by a growing number of patients whose 'dis-ease' is attributable to key areas of unhappiness and discontent rather than any physical illness.

I've coached numerous senior business executives who have been earning very large sums of money working twelve hour days and most weekends under huge pressure. They seem to have it all, but it doesn't take long before they tell me how unhappy they are. Many of them are in a job that they don't want to do, their health is suffering and a real strain is being placed on their family relationships. They expend enormous amounts of energy to get themselves to somewhere that they don't actually want to be.

But there is an alternative. You do have a choice. You can stop running on the hamster wheel of life, get off and create the reality that you desire.

How do you do this? By quitting trying to be something that you're not, and becoming who you really are. When you

**We don't stop playing because we grow old,
we grow old because we stop playing.**

George Bernard Shaw





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change, so does the world around you. It's as if you and the world are locked in an intimate dance, and when you lead in a different direction, it follows step. It cannot help but follow.

**The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon,
but that we wait so long to begin it.**

W.M. Lewis





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Psychological Handbrake

In recent years I've helped countless individuals to get out of their own way and, in so doing, turn their desires into reality. I get a huge sense of achievement and fulfilment when they throw their baggage of harmful conditioning and limiting beliefs out of the window, and learn to drive down the highway of life with the psychological handbrake off, headed straight for their dreams.

This is why I decided to dedicate myself to helping individuals who are genuinely seeking to make a change and live happy, fulfilled and meaningful lives.

It's my experience that people who lead wonderful lives have a hugely positive impact on those around them. They radiate energy and abundance and inspire others to do the same.

The Secret

The facts are that 96% of the money in the world is owned by 1% of the population, and one in four of us will suffer some form of mental illness at some point in our lives. Why does such a small proportion of the planet achieve success whilst the vast majority seem to wallow in mediocrity? What is the secret to success?

Well, the great secret is that there are no secrets to success.

Over 2,300 years ago, Aristotle concluded that more than anything, men and women seek happiness in all areas of their

**Normal is not something to aspire to,
it's something to get away from.**

Jodie Foster





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lives. The things that we value most like health, relationships and money are only valued because we think that they will make us happy. While the world has changed a lot since the time of Aristotle, our deep-rooted desire for success and happiness remains undiminished.

Research by an army of psychologists from all over the world clearly shows that life's true achievers, from Buddha to Bill Gates and Lance Armstrong to Leonardo da Vinci, have all had one thing in common – the quality of their thinking. True achievers have beliefs which empower them. These beliefs lead them to think the right thoughts, which result in the right actions which, in turn, produce the right results.

If you want to achieve more, then you need to challenge your current beliefs and thinking. Unfortunately, millions of people don't fulfil their desires because they believe that there's nothing they can do to change their lot. This simply isn't true. As Napoleon Hill said in his book *Think and Grow Rich*, "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

As long as I have to die my own death, I have decided to live my own life and not let others live it for me.

Hanoch McCarthy





CHASE YOUR PASSION NOT YOUR PENSION

Reconnect to Your Passion

"If you can't do it with feeling, don't."

Patsy Cline

Success doesn't happen by accident. It's a process which starts by listening to your heart, then using your head. It doesn't work the other way around, because the head is conditioned to "do the right thing" and conform to the conventions of society. This makes your ego feel good.

The heart on the other hand, will always reconnect you to your passion. If you follow your heart and take action, then you have to be successful. It's a universal law, just like the law of gravity.

When you throw a ball up in the air, it has to come down. It doesn't matter who threw the ball, how intelligent they are, how old they are, whether they are a good or a bad person, the ball will always come back down.

It's only by expressing your true nature, your authentic self, that you can be both happy and successful.

By successful, I mean being free to do what you want and leading a happy and fulfilled life. Notice that there is no mention of money in my definition of success. This is because happiness is the key to success. Success is not the key to happiness. When you're happy and doing what you love, the money will flow to you.

**It's never too late to be the person you
could have been.**

George Eliot





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In short, the more you do who you are, the better you'll do.

When you're passionate about what you do, your overwhelming energy will break through any barriers and obstacles that appear in your way, and you'll attract everything you need to be successful.

When you're happy and bursting with energy, you'll leverage the world around you by resonating with everyone and everything in it. By spending time "in the zone", as sportsmen call it, you'll be in flow with everyone and everything around you and so deliver results in all areas of your life without struggle.

It's when you're able to control your energy that you can control where your life is heading.

We are all born originals - why is it so many of us die copies?

Edward Young





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Zero to Hero

I do a lot of public speaking on the subject of success, because it's a subject that's very close to my heart and one that I'm passionate about.

I'm the son of first generation Indian migrants who came over to England in the early Sixties. In a foreign land with very few friends, the most important thing for them was to have security for the family: a roof over their heads with a steady job to put food on the table.

As many of my Indian contemporaries will acknowledge, the children of these migrants were under enormous pressure to increase the status of their family in the community by becoming the ultimate professional ... a doctor.

The problem was that, come my A-levels, the fairer sex and sport captured far more of my attention than the periodic table ever could. Even though English was by far my best subject at school, I was instructed by 'she who must be obeyed' (my mother) to take three sciences at A-level as this was the best way to become a doctor.

It came as no great surprise, therefore, that I never managed to comprehend the intricacies of quantum physics and my grades were just about good enough to secure a university place studying Sports Science and Psychology.

My mother was very disappointed, but relieved as I had at least got into university and not a polytechnic. Otherwise she

**We make a living by what we get, but
we make a life by what we give.**

Winston Churchill





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would have had to hide away for three years until I left such a second rate establishment. If truth be told, it was one of the very few courses that would accept me and I was not too displeased as the syllabus actually seemed quite interesting. But what does one do when one leaves university armed with such a degree?

Well, my mother wanted me to become an accountant. So off I went to work at our local County Council with a place on their graduate finance scheme, leading to qualification as an accountant.

Eighteen months into the scheme, having barely scraped through two sets of exams, it became clear that for me accountancy was as about as interesting as watching paint dry. I would have left much earlier, but I had already let my mother down by not becoming a doctor. Now I couldn't even accomplish the next best thing and become an accountant.

However, my employer was very reasonable and quite understanding, given that I'd wasted 18 months of their time and money, and let me transfer onto the graduate IT scheme. But 18 months later, guess what – structured systems analysis and design methodologies had a hypnotic effect on me. My employer and I parted company by mutual consent.

So in the space of three years I had managed to drop out of two graduate trainee schemes. I was now unemployed at a time when the graduate job market was at its worst for many

**Life is either a daring adventure
or nothing.**

Helen Keller





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years. My confidence and self-esteem were at an all-time low and my situation seemed hopeless. I felt that I was on the scrapheap at the tender age of 25.

I managed to get a job selling advertising space for a magazine, but after four weeks I hadn't sold a single ad. I left before they asked me to. To compound matters, I was being compared by my mother and relatives to three of my cousins of similar age who had become a dentist, accountant and solicitor.

After a few weeks of being unemployed I secured a job in recruitment. There was no great career plan at this stage. I was just thankful to be in a job.

It wasn't a particularly stimulating job, but at least this was something I could do. I was completely driven by the need to be recognised as a success by my mother and relatives and I worked incredibly hard.

I had only been in the job for two months when my father died suddenly at the age of 54. I had an exceptionally good relationship with my father, who had always told me to do whatever I wanted to do, but be the very best that I could be in my chosen vocation. However, his wise words were drowned out by mother who maintained a vice-like grip on all the decisions that were made in our house.

At this point I thought to myself, what's the point in worrying? What more can go wrong? I'm just going to enjoy what I do and if I don't, then I'm not going to do it. The result was that

**A wise man knows that he has only one
enemy - himself.**

Ben Hecht





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within the space of just over three years I went from being unemployed to becoming the Director of Talent & Resourcing for Cable & Wireless, a \$10 billion turnover company, managing a spend of over \$100m. I had also completed an MBA which the company paid for.

This was immediately followed by a multi-million dollar management buy-out and my earnings had gone from zero to over \$500k per year. At last I was getting the approval that I craved from my mother.

My last two roles were as Director of Talent & Resourcing of two of Europe's largest and most successful companies, Vodafone Group and Abbey, part of the Santander group.

I don't tell this to impress you, but rather to impress upon you that once you actively follow your passion, the success looks after itself.

But then suddenly one day I gave it all up and phoned all the head-hunters telling them that I was leaving mainstream work and wouldn't be coming back. At the time I was managing a team of nearly 100 people, earning a six figure salary and responsible for hiring over 5,000 people a year.

So what made me do this? Had I gone mad?

Well, let me tell you about the week prior to my resignation.

At the beginning of the week, on Sunday evening, my wife checked my blood pressure as I had been feeling very tired

We teach people how to treat us.

Philip McGraw





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for several weeks. I put it down to working very long hours and pressure at work. Being a couple of stones overweight didn't help, but I didn't have time to exercise and meal-time usually meant a sandwich on the run or a take-away on the late train just before I went to bed.

I was shocked to learn that my blood pressure was sky high and my resting heart rate was considerably higher than it should be. "You're suffering from stress," my wife announced. "But I don't do stress," I retorted in my best Neanderthal voice.

That week, as part of the overall talent management programme, I had arranged to see several of the directors, in complete confidence, to canvass their opinions on how the introduction of an executive coaching programme might help them.

By the middle of the week there was a distinct pattern emerging in their feedback. Despite being very well paid, over 80% of them were complaining of working very long hours, feeling exhausted and stressed, all of which was having a negative impact on their family life.

I went home that night and told my wife. "Why are you surprised?" she said. "They're just the same as you. Nearly half of my patients come to me with symptoms that are related to workplace stress."

The following day I noticed that one of the Finance Directors had cancelled our meeting. I phoned his PA, rather annoyed

It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

Howard Ruff





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at this late cancellation, to be told: “Graham has had a massive heart attack and is in intensive care, critically ill.”

That day’s meetings revealed more severely stressed directors. At the end of the day I met with the HR team to compare notes as they were conducting a similar exercise with a view to providing coaching at middle management level. The results were no different – over two thirds of the managers were stressed out, would rather be doing something they were really passionate about and felt that the only reason for coming to work was to pay the bills.

So much doom and gloom. Anyway, the following day was Friday and in the evening I went to Wembley to watch England vs. Brazil with three of my mates. What should have been a wonderful evening turned very sour 20 minutes into the first half.

I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my knee and at first thought that someone was attacking me. What had actually happened was that a man had fallen into my aisle seat and then hit his head on the concrete floor. It became clear very quickly that this man had either suffered a heart attack or a brain haemorrhage as his pupils were fixed and dilated and his breathing, at first shallow, had actually stopped.

The medics managed to get a very weak pulse with the use of a defibrillator before he was stretchered away, barely breathing and unconscious. As this happened I overheard one of the

If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.

Milton Berle





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group he had been with utter, “He’s got such a stressful job – his wife’s been telling him for ages to take things easy.”

To make the whole experience even more traumatic, the man bore an uncanny resemblance to my father and his teenage son was not dissimilar in appearance to me when I was younger.

I suddenly realised that this scene could easily have been me and my son, and that the events of the week were clearly trying to tell me something.

There were 88,000 people in the stadium that day, so there was a 1 in 88,000 chance that the man would collapse into my lap. And then what were the chances that the father and son would bear such a striking resemblance to me and my father?

The incident reduced me to tears and as I wandered behind the stand trying to compose myself, I suddenly realised that I had got my priorities all wrong. My whole identity and self-worth were wrapped up in trying to maintain a job that was actually killing me.

There was no time for fun in my life. My wife and kids were lucky to see me at all during the week, and only a pale, exhausted imitation of the real me at the weekend.

I thought back to that last time that I had been both happy and successful a few years earlier when I had managed a multi-million pound management buy-out. The difference was clear: I had stopped doing what I loved. While my pride

Never mistake motion for action.

Ernest Hemingway





MIND, SET & MATCH

and sense of service drove me to do a good job and add value wherever possible, every day was like swimming uphill in treacle with one hand tied behind my back. I had absolutely no passion for my work.

Within six months of leaving my job I had lost over 25 lbs in weight and my blood pressure returned to normal. I spent quality time with my family, started learning to play blues guitar – something I had always wanted to do – played football every week and saw much more of my friends, who told me that I was looking much younger and happier.

I'm now completely passionate about my work, and continue to do those things that make me happy, like playing blues guitar, sport and spending quality time with friends and family. I've rediscovered how great it feels to be fit and healthy and have not only managed to keep the weight off, but have a six pack – not bad for a 46 year old!

Dreams don't die until we let them.

James Ojala





CHAPTER 2

BORN FREE







BORN FREE

It's Natural

We start out as champions. Our innate ability leads us to master complicated things like language and locomotion. Imagine if we were to give up learning to walk the first few times we fell down? The human species would never have evolved beyond a species of bottom shufflers!

We're born with the mindset to achieve whatever our heart desires.

Every year I speak in schools to groups of 10-year-olds who are about to go to secondary school, and to groups of 16-year-olds who are about to choose subjects for their A-level exams. I love doing this as it's hugely rewarding to work with young people and to be able to inspire and motivate them. Before I explain why and how they can be, do or have anything they want, I like to gauge the mindset of my audience. One of the ways I do this is by putting up the following words:

opportunityisnowhere

It's revealing that in the 10-year-old group, typically over 80% of the students say they see:

opportunity is now here

However, in what is a sad indictment of our society today, in the group of 16-year-old students, typically over 60% say that they see:

opportunity is nowhere

Every child is born a genius.

Albert Einstein





MIND, SET & MATCH

A 300% increase in negative mindsets in only six years!

I should also point out that there are always a few children in both groups who see:

opportunity i snow here !

Research tells us that children up to pre-school age laugh about 300 times a day. 300 times! It's because to them life is one big happy event. They have what they need and aren't concerned in the least about what they don't have. Children are experts in the art of happiness. They're happy to see mum and dad, so they smile and laugh. They're happy to see their lunch, so they smile and laugh. They're happy to play with a ball, so they smile and laugh. They're happy!

As adults, we laugh about 15 times a day.

So where does it go wrong?

It has been estimated that by the time we are 18 years old we will have been praised, supported and encouraged about 2,500 times – and 50% of these occasions will have been before the age of three! By the time we reach 18 we will also have been criticised, scolded, belittled, or told we're stupid around 22,500 times – a ratio of 9:1. No wonder we grow up with a negative mindset and low self-esteem that hampers us for the rest of our lives.

From the very earliest days of man, philosophers, mystics and prophets have unequivocally said that a blissful state of

Life expands or diminishes in proportion to one's courage.

Anais Nin





being is our natural birthright. We don't actually need to do anything to rediscover our true joyous nature – except to become aware of how we're blocking it.

When we were babies and very young children we knew what we wanted. We may have smiled, chuckled or waved our arms and legs to show this, or cried, bawled and stamped our feet. As we grow older we forget what we want and start to fulfil the expectations of others. It could be parents who want us to become a professional, maybe a doctor, accountant or lawyer as these tend to be secure, well paid and well regarded individuals.

We respond to our conditioning and adopt a persona to please others. We try to win the approval of those above us. At work we try not to upset the boss and feel driven to conform to company ideals. We are, however, not our conditioning. If we are to be whole and happy we need to reconnect.

We waste so much time and energy trying to be someone else just to please others. These behaviours are at odds with our true self and how we really want to be. As a result we start to feel frustration, anger and resentment. The longer we repress our true nature, the more discontented we become and the more susceptible we are to ill health.

The ancient people of Hawaii had a philosophy of living called Huna. Within this system of teaching is the concept that we keep 'black bags' in our bodies. In the black bag are

**It is wisdom to know others, it is
enlightenment to know oneself.**

Tao Te Ching





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the unresolved emotions from previous unhappy experiences. Occasionally, our subconscious mind will bring the black bag to the surface and try and to open it, so that we can resolve this unhappiness at the conscious level.

If we don't address the issues that cause our unhappiness, if we repress the innate urge to seek happiness, then Huna teaches that disease will manifest itself.

Research into the effects of stress shows that prolonged stress has a severely debilitating effect on the body and is the root cause of much of the prevailing illnesses in the 21st century.

Genuine success is the kind of success where you get what you want, without damage to your health or emotional well-being. When you get really clear and honest about what you want, it's quite amazing how everything in the world conspires to help you get it.

Remember that you are unique, and if that is not fulfilled, then something has been lost.

Martha Graham





Krisis

More people die before 9am on a Monday morning than at any other time of the week. Researchers at Columbia University have shown that the number one risk factor for a fatal heart attack is not being overweight, smoking, having high cholesterol or high blood pressure, but being unhappy in your job.

As humans we need to work. We need a channel to expend our energy, to express our creative nature, to give value and meaning to our lives. If this channel is blocked, there is a build-up of stress which manifests over time in poor mental and physical health. We may reach a crisis point, but often we return to bad habits once the crisis has passed.

The word *crisis* comes from the Greek verb *krinein* which means to separate, judge or make a decision. We reach crisis because we haven't listened to our innate guidance system. Instead we have played it safe by joining the rat race and setting our own rat trap.

We feel that it's easier to conform, to do what is expected of us. That way we avoid disapproval, whether from parents, bosses, friends, relatives or the public at large. The truth is that it's massively more dangerous to abandon our desires than follow our dreams and immerse ourselves in work that we love.

Whatever traumas and injustices life may have heaped upon

It is the characteristic of the ego that it takes all that is unimportant as important, and all that is important as unimportant.

Meher Baba





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us, the past should be nothing more than a reference point. It is not a place where we should reside. History is full of examples of people who have overcome great hardship and adversity to create the life that they want.

A musician must make his music, an artist must paint, a poet must write if he is to ultimately be at peace with himself.

Abraham Maslow





“It’s Not What Happens to You, It’s What You Do About It”

Take the story of one of my fellow professional speakers, the great American, W. Mitchell.

Mitchell was 28, just an ordinary guy who loved his newly acquired 750cc motorcycle, when something terrible happened to him. One day while out riding he was struck by a laundry truck whose driver had failed to see him at a junction. The impact not only broke several bones, it also dislodged the motorbike’s fuel cap. Mitchell was drenched in petrol. The fuel ignited, transforming him into a human bonfire.

Mitchell’s life was saved by a witness who managed to put out the flames with an extinguisher. He woke up in the burns unit of San Francisco General Hospital with second, third and fourth degree burns to 65% of his body. Fourth degree burns are so severe that muscles, ligaments and bones have been damaged. His face was unrecognisable, his hands irreparably damaged. Doctors doubted that he would survive.

We can only imagine the excruciating, incessant pain he experienced. Doctors agree that the pain associated with this kind of burn is the most intense that humans can experience. Yet Mitchell was unusually motivated. The first thing he said on learning that his hands were useless was, “This is gonna really screw up my pool game.” His courage and determination were evident from the moment he regained consciousness.

**It’s better to do your own work imperfectly,
than do the work of another perfectly.**

Bhagavad Gita





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Four months later he left the hospital. Disfigured, his return to city life was far from pleasant. Unsettled by the constant stares and thoughtless comments, he decided to move. He relocated to a town in Colorado where his upbeat spirits quickly led him to make many new friends. It didn't take much longer for Mitchell to co-found a multi-million dollar business, buy a beautiful house, obtain a pilot's licence and even own an airplane.

Despite huge challenges, his courage and can-do attitude led to a successful, fulfilling life. That isn't the end of the story, though.

One winter's day he set off for a flight in his airplane with some friends. Ice on the wings caused the plane to crash shortly after take-off. Miraculously no-one was killed and everyone managed to get out quickly – except for Mitchell. At first he thought his feet were stuck. Then he couldn't feel his legs. His back suddenly started to hurt sharply. An ambulance rushed him to hospital, where he would later learn that his spine was broken and he would never walk again.

W. Mitchell had experienced his second life-altering accident. Not only disfigured and missing most of his hands, he was now paralysed from the waist down and confined to a wheelchair for life.

Try to imagine his emotional state. Such unbelievable adversity – how much can one person take? Yet once again

Men are not disturbed by things that happen, but by their opinions of things that happen.

Epictetus





Mitchell fought back, his spirit unquenched. His attitude is summed up by a comment he made during his time in the hospital: “Before I was paralysed there were 10,000 things I could do; now there are 9,000. I can either dwell on the 1,000 I’ve lost or focus on the 9,000 I have left.”

While in hospital he learned that a mining company wanted to dig a huge, ugly hole in the beautiful mountain that overlooks his town. The news seemed to spur his recovery. To stop the mining work he decided to run for mayor, and eventually served for two consecutive terms. He was also successful in convincing the company that drilling the mountain wasn’t such a great idea after all.

Mitchell is fond of saying “it’s not what happens to you, it’s what you do about it.” He is a living example of what will-power, courage and determination can achieve against all odds. His body may be in a wheelchair, but his spirit is free. I find his story inspirational. It reminds me that circumstances alone do not determine the quality of your life. What truly matters is your attitude.

At the time of writing, W. Mitchell owns several successful businesses and is an exceptional motivational speaker who has won worldwide acclaim. He even enjoys adventure activities such as water rafting and skydiving.

After all there are still 9,000 things left to do.

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson





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The Questions

At some point in their life, everyone is confronted by the following two questions:

“Who am I?”

“Why am I here?”

Most of us never pause for long enough to answer these important questions. In so doing we resign ourselves to a life of routine, punctuated by brief periods where we numb the pain - the annual holiday, binge drinking or just countless hours in front of the television.

So many of us just seem to live for the weekend, even though this represents such a small part of our time on Earth.

By taking jobs which don't make us happy but simply pay the bills, we turn ourselves into slaves.

**Nothing has a stronger influence on children than
the un-lived lives of their parents.**

Carl Jung





Does the Shoe Fit?

The important thing to realise is that you have a choice. Your life doesn't have to unfold in this way. A more creative and imaginative path is waiting for you. All you need to do is take a deep breath and step forward.

The more you rely on yourself, the more confidence you will have. The more you take responsibility for where you are and you are going, the better you will become in achieving the results you want.

Over the years I've been responsible for hiring thousands of people for a variety of companies, from board level executives to receptionists. The one thing that never ceases to amaze me is that people work so hard and try so hard to get a job which really doesn't suit them, and which isn't something that they really want to do.

It reminds me of going to a shoe sale. You find a pair of shoes at an absolute bargain price, but they're half a size too small. No matter what you do, these shoes aren't ever going to fit properly. If you wear shoes that don't fit you, they are going to cause you discomfort and pain. They might stretch a bit, but ultimately they're never really going to be right for you.

It's similar with your work. It has to be right for you, because when it's right for you it will fit you like a glove – and you'll love it.

To be independent of public opinion is the first formal condition of achieving anything great.

Georg Hegel





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I used to be responsible for the graduate recruitment programme for Cable & Wireless, a very large global blue-chip company, and usually attended the last stage of the process, a candidate's final interview.

One of the entry streams was for the Finance Management scheme, where the company sponsored graduates to train as accountants while gaining valuable work experience. Within five or six years of joining the scheme, the entrants would have qualified and be well on their way to running their own business unit. Essentially, we were hiring the leaders of tomorrow.

The scheme also involved an overseas posting to destinations such as the Caribbean, Seychelles and Maldives, where Cable & Wireless was the primary provider of telecommunications. Add to this a very generous salary, bonus, car, study leave and holiday entitlement and you won't be surprised to know that we typically had over fifty applicants for each place on the scheme.

Most applicants did not get through the initial screening, where the selection criteria included outstanding academic qualifications and evidence of a well-rounded individual, typically identified by non-academic extracurricular activity such as sports, music, drama or membership of clubs and societies. If they were selected for assessment they then faced a full day of interviews, psychometric testing, role plays and presentations.

**Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good
we oft might win by fearing to attempt.**

William Shakespeare





The evening before the final interviews, I took home a folder with the CVs and assessment results of the candidates I would be meeting the next day.

While all the finalists had very strong profiles and assessment scores, one candidate, a physics undergraduate, seemed quite exceptional. Not only had he always scored straight 'A' grades, but he had won prizes throughout his academic career for outstanding achievement, including his first two years at university. His Professor at Oxford had written a glowing recommendation, stating that he was probably the best student that he had ever come across in nearly twenty years of teaching. As if this wasn't enough, he also played tennis at county level, was a member of the National Youth Theatre and edited a student newsletter.

I was looking forward to meeting this rising star. It seemed a formality that we would offer him a place. I thought my primary concern at the interview would be selling the opportunity to him, as there were sure to be other companies keen to secure his services.

As it turned out, his was the last interview of the day. We've saved the best till last, I thought.

After the usual formalities, about a quarter of an hour into the interview, I noticed that his mood was a little flat and didn't seem completely enthused by the prospect of joining us. I asked if he had offers from other companies and he told

**Look within. Within is the fountain of good and it
will ever bubble up, if you will ever dig.**

Marcus Aurelius





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me in a lazy drawl that he had seen three other companies and they had all offered him contracts to train as an accountant.

When I asked why he was interested in accountancy, he gave the stereotypically correct answers. But I was concerned that while he said all the right things, the body language betrayed a lack of enthusiasm.

“I notice that your father’s an accountant,” I said. “What does he feel about you following in his footsteps?”

“He’s always been keen for me to become an accountant because it’s a well respected, secure, well paid job”, he replied.

This didn’t seem like the same chap who a week earlier at the assessment day had given an electrifying presentation about the universe entitled “The First 15 Billion Years in 15 Minutes.”

“Would you mind if I digress for a few moments?” I said to him. “I’m very interested in the universe and missed your presentation.”

It was as if his chair had been plugged into the mains. His posture went from slumped to bolt upright, like a meerkat on heat. His eyes were now wide open, his movements became very animated and his voice went up an octave.

What ensued was a quite fascinating half hour, where he proceeded to identify and then fill in the considerable gaps in my knowledge. He was like a master storyteller holding court. I was spellbound.

The way to be happy is to make others so.

Robert Ingersoll





At the end of our conversation I leaned forward and said, “OK, cards on the table. If you want a job here, the job’s yours. You probably know that anyway. But let me ask you just one final thing: if your father was happy for you to follow any career, what would you do?”

“I’ve always been fascinated by outer space since my dad bought me a book on astronomy when I was seven,” he said. “My dream job would be to work at the forefront of space exploration and research, so it would have to be as a scientist for NASA.

“My father had a very hard childhood and came from a very poor family. He dragged himself out of the gutter by working all hours and then going to night school to become an accountant. He has worked so hard to look after me and my family and put me through private school. My father cried with happiness when I won a place at Oxford. I just want to make him happy. He deserves it.”

As he finished his sentence he looked towards the floor, his voice breaking with emotion.

When he looked up I replied, “I suspect what your father wants more than anything else is for you to be happy. It’s just that he’s not aware that there’s another route to happiness for you which doesn’t require you to become an accountant.

“How about we do a deal? I’ll send you a letter offering you a place on our Finance Scheme and you talk to your father

**You can have everything in life if you can
just help others to get what they want.**

Zig Ziglar





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about how you felt when you read the book he bought you when you were seven, and why you love astronomy.”

“It’s a deal”, he said with a smile on his face.

Later that month I looked at the list of people who had accepted a place on the scheme and saw that the name of our number one candidate was absent. I thought that he had probably succumbed to the advances of a high-paying merchant bank and promptly forgot about him.

Well, nearly three years later I was just about to leave my office for a meeting when my PA arrived with my post. Anything deemed important I asked her to thrust under my nose. “You should read this before you go,” she said.

I noticed that it was half a page of very neat copperplate handwriting which would only take a few seconds to read.

The next few seconds were among the most rewarding that I ever experienced in my corporate career:

**There’s always one moment in life when
the door opens and lets the future in.**

Graham Greene





BORN FREE

Dear Mr. Bali

It's been many moons since we met and you may not remember our conversation about the very same, when you interviewed me for a place on your Graduate Finance Scheme over two years ago.

As a result of our conversation that day and the agreement that I made with you, I had a wonderful heart to heart with my father.

I thought you would be interested to know that I will receive my PhD this summer and have been awarded a post-doctoral fellowship in astrophysics by NASA. My father is very proud of me and so am I!

I'm looking forward to heading off to Washington DC, to see more of the world...quite literally.

Thank you so very much for your 'advice'. It changed my life.

Kindest regards

**Be faithful to that which exists
nowhere but in yourself.**

André Gide





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Unlearning

The 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act was supposed to end slavery. But I guarantee that if you walk into any large company building in the UK, you'll see that slavery not only still exists but is very much alive and flourishing.

Having been responsible for managing talent in some very large companies, there is a picture that I'm unfortunately all too familiar with. It's the sight of countless people sitting in their cubicles wishing the clock would go faster and work its way round to the magic hour when it's time to go home.

A friend of mine who owns a multi-million dollar property company once said to me that JOB stands for "Just Over Broke." Given that after 40 years in employment, it's been estimated that less than 1% of people have enough money to enjoy an adequate retirement, what is the point of flogging yourself to death in a job that you don't want to do, and which doesn't pay you enough?!

So is it the fault of the employers? No, not at all.

In fact, there are more and more employers who are trying to create a business culture where individuals can be creative, express themselves and meet personal objectives while fulfilling those of the organisation.

We are our own jailers and have completely forgotten that we locked the door. But we still have the keys to freedom. We

That which does not kill us makes us stronger.

Nietzsche





can't blame anyone else. We have to take responsibility for our own situation, whether this be a heaven or a hell.

Interestingly, the word 'hell' is derived from an Old English word that means a fence or a pen to keep animals in. Our hell is created by the limiting beliefs with which we resolutely ensnare ourselves.

When I was in India a few years ago I was taken to an elephant sanctuary. Here, orphaned or ill elephants were nurtured back to health and in return for their keep they helped with the logging. I couldn't help noticing a large circular piece of grassland where some of the elephants seemed to be corralled, but with no barrier to contain them and no keeper to stop them straying. The circle was marked out with white paint, but there was nothing actually stopping the elephants from crossing the white line and making a break for freedom. Rather bizarrely, this white circle had a wooden gate at one end fixed to two wooden stakes, but there was not a fence in sight!

I noticed that one of the younger elephants had one foot cuffed to a long chain, which was attached to a large wooden post at the centre of the circle.

I asked one of the elephant keepers why the elephants never crossed the white line, and only ever left the circle with a keeper through the pointless wooden gate.

"It's really quite simple," he replied. "When an elephant first

Put your future in good hands – your own.

Mark Victor Hansen





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arrives it's chained to the centre post and can go no further than the edge of the circle, as this is as far as the chain will go. After a few weeks we remove the chain but the elephant is conditioned to think that the white line is as far as it can ever go, so it never attempts to cross it.

This story is true of so many of us. It is our beliefs that limit where we go and what we think we can achieve.

Harry Houdini used to have a small cage from which he used to escape with seemingly effortless ease, time and time again.

There was only one occasion when Houdini couldn't escape from the cage. He tried for hours and hours but eventually, completely exhausted, he gave up. And the reason that he couldn't escape? The door was open all the time and had never been locked. So the only time that Houdini failed to escape was when the cage was actually open. His mindset was so attuned to being trapped that he was trapped even when he was free!

What a great metaphor this is for our lives. We can walk out of our self-made prisons at any time. All we need is the awareness to change our mindsets.

Michelangelo was once asked: "How do you create such beautiful statues and models?"

His replied: "I simply start with a block of stone and chip away all that isn't the beauty that I want."

**Everyone thinks of changing the world, but
no one thinks of changing himself.**

Leo Tolstoy





This is how it is with our conditioning. Our job is to chip away at the beliefs which lead us to think negative, unproductive thoughts which obscure our true nature.

We don't have to re-create ourselves, but simply unlearn that which isn't true. We're born as champions, but become conditioned by those around us to fail in our quest for happy and fulfilled lives.

By taking on board the values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions of others, we repress our true spirit. If we are to live the life of our dreams, then we have to undo our conditioning and discard the values and beliefs that hinder our quest.

This negative conditioning restricts the amount of energy that we have available to us to focus on those actions that will manifest that which we desire.

It is futile to blame others for the excess baggage that we carry, whether they are parents or teachers. In most cases they were doing the best they could with the resources available to them.

Or, as one of the fundamental tenets of NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) says, "there is no such thing as unresourceful people, only unresourceful states."

**When heart and skill work together,
expect a masterpiece.**

C. Reade





MIND, SET & MATCH

Whose Dream Are You Chasing?

Most people spend their lives chasing someone else's dreams, then wind up disappointed that they never achieve them – or even more disappointed when they do.

It's a strange phenomenon of life that the majority of people give up on their dreams. They devote their time, energy and talents towards fulfilling someone else's dream, while their own slowly dies inside them.

If you leave your dreams in someone else's hands, guess what they have planned for you? Not as much as you have.

Think about your work. Whose dreams are you chasing?

Gift to the World

Settling for too little, rather than wanting too much, is at the root of many people's problems. When we lead a life where we don't fulfil our potential, we send a clear message to our children that it's OK to settle for second best.

If you've got kids, it's so important to break the chain. One of the greatest gifts that you can give to the world is children who are bursting with energy and passion to fulfil their dreams.

So keep it real for your kids and leave the world a priceless legacy: children who are alive.

You don't get harmony when everyone sings the same note.

Doug Floyd





BORN FREE

A Winning Hand

Both in my corporate career and also in my coaching practice, I often ask people if they think that life is fair. I rarely get a straight “yes” or “no” answer, but it quickly becomes clear that many of them feel that life has dealt them a losing hand, so life is unfair to them.

I then surprise them by agreeing that life isn’t fair, and demonstrating that the cards are stacked heavily in their favour. Life has dealt you a winning hand. The reason that most people are unsuccessful is that they simply don’t play their hand. They keep it to themselves and still expect to win.

If you express who you really are and do the work that you were born to do, there can only be one result: you will be successful and happy.

**Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll
get run over if you just sit there.**

Will Rogers

