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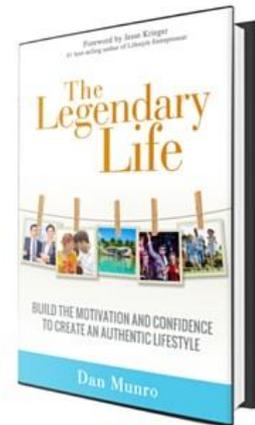
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Dan Munro

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The Legendary Life

Build the motivation and confidence to create an authentic lifestyle

SAMPLE CHAPTERS

By Dan Munro

To my family and friends I dedicate this book. Sincerely, without you all this would not have been possible.

The kind of people you are influences who I am today, more than anything else in my life... so you have only yourselves to blame.

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Disclaimer

The concepts, ideas and advice in this book are based on the experience and knowledge of the author. They are, therefore, opinions and recommendations only, and Daniel Munro and The Inspirational Lifestyle Ltd hold no responsibility for the correctness of the material or for any negative consequences resulting from the use of this book.

Published 2015 by Lifestyle Entrepreneur Press

Theinspirationallifestyle.com

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ISBN pending

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First published 2013 (under former title “Driven”)

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How To Use This Book

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.

~ Steve Jobs

Welcome to the rest of your life!

You are about to read a book that will take you through everything you need to know and do in order to achieve your dream life.

Imagine if you could push a magic button that would instantly transport you into the kind of lifestyle you have always secretly dreamed of—a life where you leap out of bed every day because your work is so interesting and fulfilling, where you love what you see in the mirror, where your relationships are exciting and joyous. Imagine having every day packed full of enjoyable activities that make you happy just to be alive. Imagine having a life that other people describe as *legendary*.

Do you ever look at the people who live these amazing, successful lifestyles and think to yourself, “What do they have that I don't?”

Well, let's start with the bad news—there is no magic button. Anyone who tells you success is easy and quick is probably delusional, or they are trying to scam you out of your hard-earned money. To create your legendary life, you are going to have to work for it. You will need to leave your comfort zone on a regular basis and test new ideas.

Now for the good news—the answer to the question “what do they have that I don't?” will surprise you. The answer is NOTHING. There is nothing anyone else has that you can't also have. Now, that will sound just a little unbelievable and far-fetched to you right now, but bear with me. The purpose of this book is to enable you to see the truth in that statement. You see, in a sense the people you consider successful certainly do possess skills, materials and resources you do not currently possess. But what's really important is that everything they needed to become successful is actually internal. It exists within their minds. It is their mind-set, knowledge and confidence that bought them success.

And this brings us to the biggest secret of all—you can learn these things. Instead of a magic button, you can learn self-motivation techniques, systematically overcome your fears, remove external obstacles from your path, take action based on effective goal setting, and use strategic planning to map out your future. These skills, once developed, will give you the most powerful tool for success—inner confidence. Do your research and you will find that self-confidence is the one common factor to success amongst those you admire the most. They believe in themselves, and that is how they overcome barriers and ensure their needs are met.

Even though I don't know you (yet), I am genuinely excited about the massive

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improvements you will achieve in your life using this book. I have absolutely no doubt that if you use this book correctly, you will start to see significant changes immediately. In fact, even if you only apply ten percent of the concepts, exercises and planning techniques in this book, you will still improve your life... especially if you use the Goal Setting chapter.

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.

~ Confucius

After using the concepts and exercises in this book to help hundreds of people, including myself, I am convinced you can make significant changes to better your lifestyle too. In the next chapter, I will tell you more about my history and experience with this kind of work. Hopefully that will help convince you. For now, just read on and judge for yourself.

Even if you are unsure of your ideal lifestyle, drafting a basic idea of it will lead you to fully uncover your true desires. This is because the activities involved in achieving your goals will bring new experiences into your life. Not everything in this book will apply to you—I understand that. I have written it to give you the best tools, strategies and knowledge I am aware of to create success and a legendary life. Take what works for you and combine it with knowledge from other sources. This book is essentially coaching on paper. It contains the practices I use with my coaching clients who pay thousands of dollars to work with me. These strategies simply work. They work for me, they work for my clients, and I have no hesitation in claiming they will also provide results for you.

Word of warning—this is not a “feel good” novel. This is *not* going to be some hyped-up diatribe that gives you a boost of inspiration but no real guidance or support. I abhor self-help material that is aimed at making you feel good temporarily in order to steal your money. This book is designed to be *practical*, and it demands you take action. I will show you how to create specific action-oriented goals aimed at achieving your dream lifestyle through targeting the areas of your life in need of the most attention. Before that, I will walk you through effective methods and strategies to ensure you are in the right mind-set to make improvements, leaving behind your doubt, fears and excuses. You will be able to take these actions with a sense of motivation and eagerness, so don't worry about your comfort zone being stretched beyond what you can handle.

The Exercises

For this book to be effective, it is *absolutely crucial* that you complete the exercises to apply the lessons on how to motivate yourself and strategize effectively. From this work, you will eventually complete your *Master Plan*, a document that may well become the blueprint for the rest of your life. I started using a Master Plan in [Click here to join The Legendary Life Launch Group to get your FREE copy of The Legendary Life](#)

2009 and still use it to this day. Following this blueprint will drive you to constantly improve your life—day after day, year after year. It will give structure to your life so you can ensure your daily routines directly contribute to lifestyle improvement. In doing this, you can improve the lives of those who are important to you as well. Sounds pretty good right? Imagine every year of your life being much better than the last. That’s what this plan is all about.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for you to complete the exercises as you go through the book. As you will soon learn, *taking action* is by far the most important part of self-improvement, which is what the exercises are all about. You will be tempted to just read without taking action, which is fine for your first run-through. But just understand this lack of action is the trap of the self-help industry...

Go and grab yourself a pen or pencil right now.

You can write in this book directly, print off the exercises, or just write on blank pieces of paper. I know from personal experience when using self-development products that it is very tempting to just read and hope it works for you, skipping over the practical parts. Don’t fall into this trap—seriously, grab something to write (or draw) with before reading another word. Anything you read for self-development is entirely useless if you do not take action. If anything, it only sets you back further because you get overwhelmed with information. I hope to end that curse for you with this book.

This is a fairly lengthy book because I wanted to make sure it contained everything you need to create your *Master Plan*, including real-life examples and practical advice. For this reason, there is a method to using it effectively. Read it through in full at least once, and then come back to the sections that apply to you at appropriate times in your life. More on this later...

At this point you may be thinking, “Wow, Dan is really obsessed with completing exercises, he’s going to give himself an ulcer if he doesn’t calm down,” or something to that effect. Allow me to share a couple of statistics with you to help you understand why completing the exercises will be emphasized throughout this book. In 2008 the self-development industry was assessed as being worth \$11 billion in the United States alone.¹ Eleven... billion... dollars. I don’t care who you are, that is a lot of cash.

Now let’s compare that with what I have observed in the many years I have been involved in the coaching and self-development field. About ninety percent of self-help consumers fail to make any significant positive changes from their purchases. I think I am making a conservative estimate here.

I don’t do statistics, but even I know if ninety percent of people are getting nothing from spending \$11 billion, that is a big waste of money and time. So what is the

¹ *What People Are Still Willing To Pay For*, Forbes Magazine, 15 January 2009.

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difference between the ninety percent who remain unchanged by the products and services they purchase and the ten percent who make real improvements in their lives? After many years of coaching people to make positive changes as well as being a loyal consumer of self-development products myself, I have analyzed this trend informally and narrowed it down to these most likely reasons:

- People have been tricked into believing the “quick-fix” mentality and don’t accept that success takes hard work—real progress requires the person to *take action*. Here’s one way you can test this: go ask *any* personal trainer if you can get rock-hard abs in three minutes a day, and watch them roll their eyes. Most people also don’t seem to realize that hard work can be hugely enjoyable and rewarding, as this book will show you.
- A flood of ineffective products and services are being sold by people who highly over-estimate their own skills, or who are charlatans trying to cash in on the self-development movement. These people lack real-life experience, training and ethics. Their products and services are often based on big-picture psychological theories, which are only effective if you truly understand those meta-concepts. Many of these people don’t.
- You alleviate feelings of guilt and self-loathing by reading self-help material. Reading self-development resources allows you to convince yourself that you are doing something about your problems in life. When you don’t see changes, you can blame the materials and relieve yourself of responsibility to make changes. You and I both know that part of you is sabotaging your efforts by doing this. Part of you knows you have to *take action*. It’s just your fear that makes you feel like you can get away with just reading. Don’t give in to this weakness. The time has come to take control of your fear and build courage through action.

Moving On

How should you use this book? I have designed it in the most logical order, so you can follow it through from start to finish. It’s the same basic linear process I follow with my clients (though I respond to their needs and change accordingly, and you should too). I have written it to give you the best possible chance to be one of the ten percent of people who improve their lives. Then, once you have gone all the way through, you can re-visit the chapters and exercises most relevant to your current situation as you make progress over time.

The contents page acts as a quick reference guide since you will probably want to jump around the chapters in response to the progress you make. If you follow this book correctly, you will find yourself going back to specific chapters and exercises over time to keep your motivation high and your goals on track.

Here is what you will experience as you go through this book:

1. You will challenge yourself to take risks and be able to make risk-based

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decisions. I will help you realize that risk is inherent in everything, and it is actually riskier to stay the same than it is to take chances and make positive changes. Your fear is trying to keep you “safe,” but in doing so is putting you at risk of having an unfulfilled life.

2. You will learn what motivation is made of. I will show you that motivation is not a personality trait as some people believe (i.e., the “you either have it or you don’t” mentality). Motivation is actually an emotional state that can be controlled by a set of skills anyone can learn. Most importantly, your level of motivation can be manipulated at your choosing. Never suffer from procrastination again.
3. You will learn how motivation combines with planning to create success. From getting your first job to becoming a multi-millionaire, planning is the key to efficient progress. The same applies to other areas of your life—like relationships and health. If you have a good plan and you’re motivated to stick to it, at least you’ll know for certain that you are doing your best to achieve. So much energy is wasted through unplanned actions.
4. Do you ever make plans or write goals and then just not follow through on them? In one of the most important chapters, *Barriers to Change*, we will uncover the barriers and fears preventing you from succeeding highly. You will learn how to overcome them. Most of these are currently *unknown* to you because they reside in your subconscious, or you believe they cannot be overcome. We will see about that.
5. You will learn how to visualize your dream lifestyle in specific detail. Discover what it is you want to achieve in your lifetime and what kind of life you want to live—what kind of person you wish to become. I will show you why “aiming high” is a requirement to success and help prevent you from becoming overwhelmed by the bigger picture (hint: it’s all about breaking it down into manageable steps).
6. You will learn how to increase your motivation and then maintain it at a high level. Once you have discovered the secret behind how motivation is a skill-set, I will show you how to build those skills over time. From there you can achieve an ambitious state of mind which will get you through the inevitable setbacks and mistakes that come with self-improvement. Nothing can stop you after that.
7. You will learn to write effective goals that will guide you in taking action toward achieving your ideal lifestyle. These goals will be carefully constructed to be achievable as well as ensuring they improve your life. Through this you will discover why taking the time to write goals out is crucial to achieving them, as opposed to having vague ideas floating around in your head (like most people do).
8. All of this work will lead you to create a *Master Plan* which will guide your day-to-day activities. This plan will be something you follow and update over time, pushing you to achieve further success and keeping you on track. It can be used as a calendar which provides structure to your days, weeks and months

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while also being flexible to change.

Below is a summary about each of the specific chapters in this book and how they relate to stages along the pathway of motivation, planning and action. This guide will help you when you have completed your *Master Plan* and need to update or maintain it.

Breakdown of the Book

Why Should You Listen to Me?

It's important that you make critical decisions about who you take advice and guidance from. I like to practice what I preach so in this chapter, I cover my qualifications and experience in this line of work as well as sharing how I have personally used these concepts and exercises to create my own *Master Plan* to succeed. I believe what sets me apart from many other coaches is that I really do live what I teach, and in this chapter I will describe what this looks like for me.

Phase One: Preparing Your Mind-Set

Erosion Theory: The True Secret to Success

The first few chapters of this book are designed to get you in the right frame of mind to achieve goals and chase success in a highly motivated way. Erosion Theory describes what I believe is the foundation to attaining success in any situation. You will begin to see how success is really no more complicated than simply never giving up.

Risk: What Are You *Really* Afraid Of?

You cannot make positive changes without being able to take chances and face your fears. Unfortunately, most of us have been trained to be afraid of taking risks, and this prevents us from realizing our true potential. In this chapter we unpack that fear and begin to address it, preparing your mind for the process of leaving your comfort zone. Risk is merely a factor to consider, not a *deciding* factor, when it comes to making changes.

The Myths of Willpower and Fate

People often blame their lack of success on the Universe or their genetics. There are far too many people out there who think that life *happens to* them and they have no power or control over their future. This couldn't be farther from the truth, so this chapter will help you start to challenge these primitive beliefs, so your mind can become open to change and success.

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Phase Two: Laying the Foundations

Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Motivators

In order to be able to control your inner motivation, you need to first understand where it comes from. Learn about the different types of motivators you are exposed to on a regular basis and how you can use these to your advantage. This chapter will plant the seed for you to really take control of your ambition. You are surrounded by sources to replenish your internal motivation levels. You just need to be able to see them and put them to use.

Inspiration Gets You Started; Ambition Brings You Success

I have described a linear path anyone can follow to develop *ambition*—an emotional state of being, experienced and utilized by successful people to go from strength to strength. By figuring out where you are on this path, you can take the most appropriate actions toward achieving ambition.

The Cycle of Change

Motivation fluctuates as you change. Different levels of motivation require different actions to increase and maintain it. This all lines up with the process you will go through in this book to design your *Master Plan*. Just as learning about risk is important in order to understand how to take chances, learning about the Cycle of Change is important to understanding motivation.

The Importance of Mentoring and Expert Advice

Before you start paying for self-development products and services, including coaching and training, you need to be sure they will be effective. There is a lot of unhelpful stuff out there. I have experimented with a lot of it, and through this process have designed a near-foolproof method you can use to screen these products and services for quality before buying. I worked as a Senior Quality Advisor for the New Zealand Department of Corrections for over two years, and I apply Total Quality Management principles to my work and the strategies in this book.²

Phase Three: Planning

Dreams—Your Ideal Lifestyle

Now that the foundation is set, the dreaming and planning can begin. We start here by determining what you want out of life. If you could push that magic button and have the life of your dreams, what would it look like? The exercises and discussion in this chapter will help you figure out the answer to that question.

Barriers to Change

Before you can achieve goals, you need to clear the path of obstacles. The reason a majority of people do not reach their potential or achieve their goals is because of barriers in their circumstances, and most significantly, in their minds. Fortunately, there are practical methods you can use to remove or reduce both types of barriers. Have you ever wanted to just stop being anxious and afraid of trying new positive things? Do you wish you didn't care what other people think? This is the chapter for you.

Costs vs. Benefits Decision-Making

Good decision-making becomes more important as you start to achieve goals and improve your life. One of the biggest gaps in the modern education system is the lack of guidance for logical decision-making. Introducing the costs vs. benefits model! When you are struggling to make a decision because of confusion, fear and other negative emotions, you can use the concepts and exercise in this chapter to turn this struggle into a logical process.

Phase Four: Taking Action

Goal Setting

Everything has been leading up to this—possibly the most important chapter in the book. Most people do not achieve goals because they have never been taught how to set them properly. I will walk you through writing goals in a way that will take you toward your ideal lifestyle. These goals will guide your daily activities, so everything you do each day is clearly linked to your future success. This is the secret to giving real purpose to your life.

Your Master Plan

You can write this directly in the book as we go along. It will become the blueprint for your daily activities as you follow your goals toward achieving your ideal lifestyle. Wait until each chapter prompts you to complete parts of this plan or else you may find it confusing.

How to Build Motivation: Desire, Courage and Resources

By this stage, you will have a plan and a basic understanding about how motivation can be controlled. You will be engaging in action—new behaviors designed to improve your life. Now we will look at how you do this in more detail. I will take you through an exercise you can use for the rest of your life to keep yourself motivated without needing anyone else's assistance. Become your own mentor and coach with this handy strategy, and learn how to overcome obstacles before they have

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a chance to derail your plans.

Completing the Master Plan: Keeping a Journal and the Importance of Tracking Progress

You can only understand where you are when you know where you have come from. Some people who are achieving well don't recognize their success because they haven't kept track of their progress. By doing this properly, you will keep motivating yourself further by seeing what works well and ensuring you learn from your mistakes. Enjoy creating a long list of achievements!

Additional Extras

Why You Need to Learn How to Motivate Yourself before You Can Motivate Others

Some of you will have bought this book with the intention of using the techniques and strategies to help others improve their lives. If you are dedicated to success in this line of work, you need to understand what you are talking about. In this chapter, I explain why it is crucial to develop yourself before you help others.

One Last Word: Manic Motivation

Sometimes you get too motivated and burn yourself out. Or you set too many unrealistic goals or expectations for yourself and end up achieving nothing of value. I've been through this, and I share my learning from that experience here.

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Why Should You Listen to Me?

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

~ Wayne Gretzky

Using Your Judgment

You are often subjected to advice on how you should live your life, and it can be difficult to know who to listen to. Later in this book, we will explore where to get advice and how to be critical about choosing which advice to take. For now, we will have an open look at what I bring to the table.

I expect you to do two things before you trust the advice and guidance in this book:

1. Get a clear sense of my knowledge regarding motivation, goal setting, confidence building and lifestyle design.
2. Test the strategies and exercises in this book to determine how effective they are.

If the information, tools and strategies in this book do not help you, I expect you to take advantage of the one hundred percent money-back guarantee. I am not trying to con you into buying a product; I am trying to guide you toward living a better life. A *legendary* life. Having a positive impact on as many people as possible is *my* dream, and I have no interest in tricking people out of their hard-earned money.

Now, you have this book in your hands for a number of possible reasons, such as:

1. You want to find the perfect job and have a career that is emotionally rewarding.
2. You want to gain control over your hesitation and self-doubt and put an end to fear getting in the way of your success.
3. You need guidance on how to effectively create and achieve goals.
4. You want to develop the skills needed to help someone else change their behavior.
5. You are a friend or relative of mine who has bought the book out of a guilty sense of obligation... thanks guys!

As I'll cover later, it is important that you can trust any teacher, coach, mentor, boss, trainer etc. if you are to benefit from their assistance. Simply put—you are more likely to take someone's advice, or at least listen to them with an open mind, if you feel sure they know what they are talking about.

It is important that I cover my experience and knowledge so you can first understand why I have written this book, and second why you should read this with an open mind (and a willingness to learn). You should be able to verify most of this

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information through the wonders of Internet snooping. Check out my website³ for more information. Feel free to stalk me—you have my written permission.

My Career

When I attended the Auckland University of Technology (AUT), I first signed up for Communications Studies, mainly because of all the pretty girls aspiring to become news anchors. I was very young and *very* single. Through the Communication Studies course, I was exposed to my first psychology paper, and my whole world shifted. Never before had I seen the inner workings of the human mind and behavior from this perspective. I immediately knew something special had just happened. I had changed course down a path that would affect the rest of my life.

After I successfully completed my degree (BA Psychology), the first professional job which appealed to me was probation officer. So after a couple of years procrastinating, I applied for the job with the New Zealand Department of Corrections. I haven't always been highly motivated, so it took me a while to take action toward realizing this particular dream. For those who don't know, probation officers manage and monitor offenders serving sentences in the community. While many other agencies specialize in treatment and rehabilitation, such as alcohol/drug rehab centers, the probation officer has a unique role. Amidst trying to put out the fires that come with a life of crime, the probation officer's primary role is to *motivate people to change their behavior*. Make no mistake—this is a monumental task.

I excelled in the world of rehabilitation and reintegration and became a senior probation officer within two years. I moved up quickly because I often voluntarily completed training courses designed by top psychologists around the world in motivational interviewing techniques, managing manipulation, mindfulness, coaching, and cognitive-behavioral modification. I combined this training with a trial-and-error development of my own techniques.

Over time, I narrowed down the huge range of different theories and practices to those that were the most simple and effective. I discarded those that did not produce consistent results, and retained only those that worked with all different types of clients. This is what will make parts of this book stand out from other coaching and self-development products out there. I have tested and refined the theoretical models into practical exercises and techniques that actually work. Through this process, I was able to guide some of the most entrenched and resistant offenders in the country toward making positive changes in their behavior. Some of them are people you will have heard of in the media. I often “field-tested” models and tools on many different clients until I was able to determine what worked with whom. I learned how to assess each individual to devise the most effective individualized action plan for them.

After a year in the senior probation officer role, I started applying to become a service manager. Each time I was rejected, I requested feedback on how I could improve and then took action to make myself more suited to the role. After two failed

³ <http://www.theinspirationallifestyle.com>

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attempts, I succeeded (when it comes to self-development, having persistence and adapting from rejection are crucial factors to success). I was in this position for two years, managing probation officers and other staff.

I adapted the same techniques and tools I had used to motivate offenders to assist many staff to either become high performing practitioners or rise on the career ladder themselves. I also took a number of training courses on developing staff and careers. Many of the staff I coached are now managers or in other higher positions. As a result of following this path of learning and improving (sticking to my *Master Plan*), I was then promoted to senior quality advisor, responsible for instructing and coaching staff in quality practice for the entire Northern region of the country. My salary had doubled in less than five years, and my influence had extended from an average of fifty people to more than five hundred.

The reason you are reading this book is because I went on to start my own company in mid-2013, The Inspirational Lifestyle Ltd., and became a full time career and confidence coach. I now spend my time doing what I enjoy for work (more on this later). I work with clients on three and six-month programs to design a lifestyle full of satisfaction, authenticity and unbreakable self-confidence. Essentially, it took me about seven years to get to my true calling, starting as a probation officer and ending up as a coach and author. However, I only really started using the Master Plan concept in about 2009, so it took me approximately three and a half years to create my dream lifestyle. This gives you an idea of the effect that planning your career, removing mental barriers, and managing your finances can have on the speed of your progress.

Health

After high school, I stopped playing sports and my slim physique soon started to pay the price, particularly as my lifestyle became increasingly sedentary. Too much snacking in front of the television was taking its toll. It wasn't long before people were commenting on my weight, and I wasn't too happy with the mirror. When I hit the age of twenty-five, things really started to go downhill. Suddenly just being alive was not enough to maintain my health.

I started to increase my physical activity by getting involved with Muay Thai kickboxing, Wing Chun kung fu, and going to the gym. I tried a number of different body transformation programs, such as "Body 4 Life," and started to learn a lot about healthy eating and effective exercise techniques. My dedication to this fluctuated... until I discovered the secrets to motivation.

Nowadays, as I'll share in more detail later in this book, I have firm goals that I follow around my eating and physical activity. My weight has come back under my control, and I am fitter and stronger than I have ever been before. I follow a strict gym regime and have taken on hobbies that increase my fitness, such as bushwalking and salsa. While I'm not a qualified personal trainer or dietician, I have received so much advice from experts in these fields over the years that I have learned how to test exercises and dietary plans to find what suits my physiological make-up. You can figure this out as well using the tools in this book. It's not about the fad diets or

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specific training techniques; it's about testing these objectively to see which suits your body type and metabolism. There is no one-size-fits-all.

Relationships

In school I was shy, but I was also lucky to have a great group of friends who ended up going to the same high school as me. We formed a tight bond and so I was never short on peers. However, this was also a trap because I was never really motivated to make new friends and approach new people. My confidence was not up to such a task anyway as I had been severely hampered by the “just be yourself” advice, which I mistook to mean “just be super-nice to everyone.”

My confidence issues also had a negative effect on a specific area of my social life—romantic relationships. It wasn't obvious to me in high school that I was not making progress in learning how to interact and form relationships with the opposite sex. I was lucky in that one girl managed to break through this, and I had a long-term relationship with her. When this ended, I was about nineteen years old, and I had missed the crucial post-high-school learning period where most people figure out how to approach and begin relationships with complete strangers. Well... actually, a lot of people don't end up learning this, but instead are lucky (or desperate) enough to find relationships in the workplace or through friends.

After a long time of being unsuccessful in the social arts, I sought guidance. Through the wonders of the Internet, I found books and coaches that specialized in helping people learn how to overcome confidence problems in order to approach and start conversations with complete strangers. I devoured a number of resources (too many of which turned out to be ineffective, dishonest or manipulative) and even undertook some coaching. Then I read *No more Mr. Nice Guy* by Robert A. Glover, Ph.D. This book changed my perspective on confidence and started a journey I now share with my clients.

I can now approach a stranger in any situation and start a conversation with only traces of anxiety, including women I might have a romantic interest in. I have also learned how to make a great first impression, having learned how to be comfortable within a strange situation and how to be my “best self.” I can speak publicly with confidence in front of huge audiences and perform on stage. I can confront and manage conflict with people without hesitation. These are all *skills* I have learned, not natural talents, and this book will cover the strategies I used to learn these skills.

I am constantly increasing my social network (with real people, not just Facebook friends), because developing a habit of talking to strangers means that new people are constantly coming in to my life, bring their interesting views, experiences and personalities with them. I recently traveled to Australia alone, the first time I have ever gone overseas by myself, and I gained a group of new international friends out of it. All of this has come from following specific goals around increasing my social network and skills, as detailed in my Master Plan.

Through this journey, I have learned that socializing is a skill-set that can be learned. Combined with my coaching and training skills, I can teach you how to do [Click here to join The Legendary Life Launch Group to get your FREE copy of The Legendary Life](#)

these things. Through this book, I will guide you toward figuring out how to learn such skills yourself.

Hobbies

I am notorious for picking up and discarding hobbies. The word “hobby” is unfortunate because it sounds silly and insignificant. I view hobbies as “secondary passions,” the activities in addition to your career that should give you the most joy and participation in life. I have come to understand that going from hobby to hobby is actually a good thing, as I have experienced a huge range of interesting activities—carpentry, salsa dancing, snowboarding, guitar and bass, various martial arts, hiking, website design, body-building, writing, scuba diving, fishing, and more.

My most longstanding hobby has become more than that—a lifelong passion, my band Seasons.⁴ Ten years ago, we were playing terrible songs to tiny crowds. We have since released our debut EP and music video, and at the time of writing this book have just released our first full-length album, with the obligatory national tour. We have opened for and toured with famous progressive metal bands from USA and Australia, and we bring a decent crowd of loyal followers to each gig. Our songs have been played on every local rock radio station that we know of, and we have fans from USA to Great Britain and from France to Bahrain.

My second most important passion is Latin dance. Until mid-2013 I thought of dance as something only females engaged in, and my fears about how I was perceived by others held me back from ever attempting it (beyond drunken grinding in nightclubs). When I was going through a phase of saying Yes to every opportunity as part of a confidence-building strategy, I ended up being dragged to a salsa class. Six months later, I had won the national improver’s level competition and performed at numerous events. I used my Master Plan to strategically improve my skills over time at an accelerated rate. At the time of writing this I have just returned from winning the New Zealand national amateur division for zouk with my fantastic dance-partner Heidi.

Most importantly, after coaching there is nothing I enjoy more than playing on stage and dancing, and my lifestyle allows me to do these activities as often as I please (and afford them). Through this book, you will be able to plan and develop a lifestyle that brings the things *you* enjoy most into the forefront so that you spend a majority of your time involved in enjoyable activities. No more waiting for the weekend to do what you love.

Wrapping Up...

Why am I going on and on about myself? It’s because I want to show you how using the planning, exercises and knowledge in this book can improve your life. My life used to be bland and unsatisfying. Everything I have achieved to in the last five

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/thebandseasons>

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years (at the time of writing this book) has been because I followed my *Master Plan* and the strategies I'm about to share with you. Even more importantly, the potential for the future is endless, as success leads to further success. I spent many hours testing and applying the concepts and exercises in this book to eventually create the *Master Plan* idea, and through this, I was able to effectively achieve goals that had originally been nothing more than dreams.

With experience and careful testing, I have finally formulated a clear strategy that could take anyone from being totally unmotivated to never-ending achievement. This path can be traveled by anyone with a high likelihood of success. That path has become this book. My clients follow these strategies, each in different ways with different results, all successfully (I offer a 100% refund and no one has claimed it to date).

While skills, mentoring and planning make up the vehicle that got me here, the force that pushed down the accelerator was made of motivation. I truly believe that if you develop the ability to increase and maintain strong inner motivation, you can achieve anything. Fears and anxieties embedded into you by your upbringing and societal pressures have you believing there are limits to your ability to achieve. In fact, *there are none...* at all. It's hard to believe, I know. It took me a few years of conscious self-development before I could see the reality of that statement.

The only real barriers to success lie within your own mind. The good news is that you can identify these barriers and overcome them without drugs, therapy, or crime. Motivation, goal setting, confidence and lifestyle design are *skills* that you can learn.

Allow me to show you...

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Phase One: Preparing Your Mind-Set

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Erosion Theory: The True Secrets to Success

Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it.

~ John Maxwell

The Idea Just out of Reach

For many years, I had this vague unformed idea swirling around inside my head. I could not put my finger on it and it frustrated me, like having a fortune just out of reach. I *knew* there was a secret to success and that it was both obvious and simple. While I was certain this secret existed, it wasn't until I read *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill⁵ that it finally became clear. I had already developed the idea before I read that fantastic book (which I highly recommend)... I just hadn't realized it was true.

Erosion, in a geological sense, takes many forms. But most simply put, it describes two forces working against each other over time until one submits. I remember one of the few times I actually paid attention in high school was in Geography class. I was riveted as I learned how saltwater could reduce a robust rock cliff face to rubble over thousands of years. The salt is forced into tiny crevices within the rock by the pressure of the waves, where it builds up and in turn starts to place pressure on the rock from within. The weakening rock eventually gives in and small chunks fall away from the surface, opening up new crevices... new *opportunities* you could say. The constant pounding of salt into these crevices is too much for the rock to resist and it eventually gives in.

No matter how strong the rock is, it cannot withstand a *relentless* assault.

Let's get a bit spiritual for a second and take a moment to visualize something. I want you to picture yourself standing on a deserted beach. In front of you is the sea, with pounding white-capped waves crashing down and gliding toward your feet. You turn around and see that behind you is a tall, flat cliff face, made of rugged rock. It is as tall as the sky and impossible to climb.

Now imagine you are gifted with a supernatural talent—you have the ability to control the sea. As you lift your arms, the sea rises behind you, creating a tall and dark tsunami. You then thrust your arms forward and the sea obeys, surging powerfully over your head and smashing into the cliff face. As the water recedes back past you, you now notice that small holes have appeared in the cliff face that were not there before. While the cliff face still stands strong, the weaknesses that have appeared give you hope that you might be able to bring the whole thing down.

When we get to the chapter Barriers to Change, I will go through the step-by-step strategy to overcoming the fears and other obstacles holding you back from achieving your ideal lifestyle. One of the key concepts in that chapter is the act of *repeatedly*

⁵ The twenty-first-century edition: Revised and Updated, *High Roads Media*, 2004

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proving new positive beliefs through taking action, over and over, until your mind gives in and replaces the old negative ones. This is Erosion Theory in practice.

Erosion Theory first started to form in my mind when I started learning how to play guitar. Anyone who has learned an instrument knows that for the first six months or so you feel as if your progress is *painfully* slow. With guitar in particular, most people give up before the six-month mark. They get bored with repeating the same chords over and over again or having to think hard while they play. Because they aren't aligned with what they expected (becoming Jimi Hendrix overnight), they become disillusioned and move on, assuming they simply lack "natural talent."

Critical Mass

I want to be clear—I do *not* have a natural talent for music. For the first six months of playing guitar, it seemed like I was not making progress at all. Some weeks I would be *worse* than the week prior. But I was a driven eleven-year-old boy with a crush on a girl named Melissa who once told me she thought guitar players were cool. That was all the inspiration I needed. I played every day, begging my mother to help me and devouring books full of methods on how to teach myself. My fingers were sore at the tips from the steel strings, my shoulders ached from holding the guitar up (I probably should have bought a strap), and I felt that if I heard "Michael Row the Boat Ashore" one more time I might commit a felony.

But I didn't give up.

Essentially, it was me versus my lack of ability to play. I was the saltwater, and my complete absence of talent was the rocky wall. It was simply a matter of time before one of us gave up. What was happening over time, unbeknown to me, was that I was building up what my former coach Phil Drolet would call "critical mass." Every day I was adding just a tiny bit of information to my knowledge base and muscle memory. I was planting small grains of salt into the crevices, pressuring my mind to develop new skills.

In the geology context, this process takes thousands if not millions of years. However, there is always a point where critical mass becomes apparent. At some point in time, *massive* chunks of rock fall away from the cliff faces around the world. Significant weaknesses in the rock are basically exploited and a mass movement occurs. The same concept applies to learning. I was struggling every day for six months to learn to play the guitar, and this was particularly symbolized by my attempts to learn "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin. For some reason I just couldn't get it. But then one day it all just "clicked." Somewhere in my mind a breakthrough occurred, and not only was I able to play this song, I also started learning much more complicated pieces of music surprisingly quickly. I had reached a new level and the momentum of this critical mass had finally carried me through the first and most difficult phase of learning the guitar.

Hard work beats talent 100% of the time.

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~ Will Smith

Talent may seem like a gift, but it's only a slight advantage. Erosion Theory is about coming to understand that *anything* new or challenging can be accomplished, simply through having the stamina to keep going and *never* giving up. Later on, we will talk about how to build motivation to get you through the hard weeks, but for now I just want you to think back to a time when you learned a complex new skill, like driving a car or playing an instrument. Try to remember how much time and effort it took, and more importantly, how *terrible* you were to begin with. Look at your skill level in this task now. How much of a difference is there?

The first big secret to success is understanding the concept of erosion. When it comes to building up the skills you need to succeed in all walks of life, it's you versus yourself. No one else is involved. Inside your mind is a barrier that seems to be invincible, but it's not. You may not be able to smash it down with your first try, but if you constantly chip away at it without giving up, it has no choice but to eventually concede victory. This method of overcoming your barriers is also a skill-set in itself. The more you hack away at your barriers, the better you become at doing it. Eventually, building critical mass becomes easier and quicker, and before you know it you are destroying all obstacles in your mind through massive self-confidence.

However, sometimes you're not the issue. There are people and circumstances in your life that stand between you and your dream lifestyle. While the Erosion Theory technique also applies here, these external barriers often do a couple of things that your internal barriers don't—they initiate conflict *and* they fight back. This brings us to my favorite form of combat...

Holding the Line

This concept came to me while I was learning to use advanced motivational techniques with high-risk, violent and psychopathic offenders. These highly manipulative and resistant people were by far the most challenging I have ever worked with. What I came to realize over time was that the likelihood of successfully changing their behavior came down to one simple concept—who had more *stamina*. While all the motivational interviewing techniques, tools, and exercises were helpful, it ultimately boiled down to that single factor. The offenders I successfully guided toward change were those who *gave in*.

When I am in a situation where someone is getting emotional and confrontational, I have found the most effective strategy to de-escalate them is to *maintain* a calm emotional level. The human brain gets uncomfortable with emotional social disharmony, that feeling of being emotionally out of balance with the people around you. If you are calm and the person you are with is agitated, they will start to feel a nagging internal pressure to calm down. Of course, you will also start to feel a pressure to become agitated and to escalate your emotional level. The one with the most determination and inner-strength will always eventually influence the other (caveat: except in some cases of severe mental illness). In neuro-linguistic

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programming (NLP) this concept is sometimes referred to as “frame control.”

For example, if your partner is yelling at you or being abusive, one of two things are likely to happen—you will either submit or you will fight back. Submission may reduce your partner’s emotional turmoil, while fighting back will match them and probably escalate them. However, there is another option that sadly only a few people demonstrate the ability to perform—*maintaining* your emotional level through neither submitting nor escalating. This is not about being cold; it is about remaining *calm* and *unaffected*. You are setting an unspoken expectation, which they must abide by if they want to stop feeling uncomfortable.

I am prompted to remember the first time I met one of the most violent and feared gang hit men in the city; let’s call him “Dave.” The first time he walked in to my office, he refused to sit down. Dave then started berating me about the injustices he had suffered at the hands of “the system.” The more he spoke, the more his anger started to escalate. Spittle was flying from his mouth and his bloodshot eyes bulged as he stared directly into mine and screamed abuse. This carried on for a good five minutes, during which I did not flinch or show any reaction whatsoever.

Then, as Dave took a breath to prepare for another onslaught, I said to him, “It sounds like you are quite frustrated with how you have been treated by the system in the past.” My voice was firm but kind as I maintained eye contact. I had done nothing more complicated than reflect back to him the main point he was trying to get across to me. I had shown that I had heard him, without either agreeing or disagreeing with what he has said. I was unaffected yet compassionate. There was no lingering “but...” at the end of my sentence. He felt acknowledged without restriction.

The effect was immediate, like releasing the valve on an inflatable ball. Dave sank down into his chair, still grumbling a bit about various issues, but the fight had gone out of him. After another five minutes of “reflective listening,” during which he fluctuated between calm and agitated, we moved on to planning how he was going to complete his rehabilitative programs. In total it took only ten minutes to break Dave’s resolve, to *outlast* him, and after that he was willing to listen my guidance. All I had really done was maintain my own emotional level.

The point I’m trying to make here is it seems everything in the world, from physical objects and internal philosophies to interactions between people, can be predicted and determined using the concept of erosion and holding the line. If two things are conflicting, the one that has more stamina and does not submit will *always* conquer. This is true even in cases where one has less physical strength, such as saltwater in comparison to rock. The rock is harder, but it does not have the *stamina* to compete with the salt and water combination.

Take your mind back to the image of controlling the sea, hurling the water into the cliff face to erode it. Every excuse and obstacle in your mind has created a solid wall between you and achieving success. Behind that wall is the lifestyle of your dreams. Right now it may seem that the wall is too much to handle, given your current abilities and knowledge. You may be just splashing the cliff face with cups of rainwater. Or perhaps the wall is so overwhelming or intimidating that you have turned your back

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on it, resigning yourself to live forever in its shadow while you stare out to sea.

In this book, I am going to show you how to control the water. Not the actual sea of course (I'm still working on that one), but the huge and powerful ocean lying dormant in your mind. I will show you the *actions* you need to take to realize your control over this powerful ocean, showing you how to transform it from a small trickle of unmotivated discontent into a roaring tsunami of confidence, motivation and ambition. Most importantly, I will help you to *see the wall*—the barriers that are holding you back without you even knowing they exist.

Your brain is one of the most powerful forces on the planet. Even the most powerful supercomputers pale in comparison to the human brain. It has the ability to start and end wars, it can figure out how to escape prison and slavery, and it can create and destroy on a scale that no other animal in the history of the planet can claim to match.

Or it can just keep you alive and provide you with the bare basics for survival and comfort.

The choice is yours. There are two factors I cannot control here—I cannot force you to read this book all the way through, and I cannot make you complete the exercises which are designed to harness this brainpower. So barring that in mind, there is really only one question remaining before we go on:

Have you got the salt?

Risk: What Are You *Really* Afraid Of?

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now.

~ Chinese Proverb

Why do we need to take risks?

Do you realize that throughout your entire life you have been taught to be afraid of taking risks?

For some reason many of us are taught to *avoid* risk. Not to mitigate risk or plan for it, just straight out avoid it. I would like you to think back over your childhood and teenage years. How many times were you advised not to even attempt something? How many times were you instructed not to try something new? How often were you reprimanded for getting something wrong on your first try? When I was a child, it seemed to make sense—the adults were passing on their wisdom, helping me learn from their mistakes and trying to keep me physically safe.

However, when I look back at many of the times that I was encouraged not to try something new, to this day I cannot see what the harm would have been. In fact it seems that often when an adult scared me off trying something risky it was because the adult had failed at it themselves or had never found the courage to take the risk. So they assumed I would have a similar reaction. But even if I did fail, what would be the harm in learning from that experience?

If you want to make positive changes in your life, you will have to take some chances. There's an old saying about how nothing worthwhile is easy. I'm not sure I agree with that, but I do believe nothing worthwhile is risk-free. Every positive gain I have made in my life required me to do something that had a risk of failure and negative consequences, which is the essence of leaving your comfort zone. In fact the bigger the risk, the bigger the reward. I now know that when I am feeling most uncomfortable about a situation, I am probably learning more and adapting to something in a way that will improve my life significantly. I have learned to at least appreciate discomfort if not enjoy it.

I debated with myself about whether I should make such blunt statements in this book about risk because I knew those statements would cause some people to close the book and possibly never open it again. Why? Because at some point in your life you have been taught to fear taking risks. Just seeing the word “risk” or the term “take a chance” will cause some of you to feel anxious. I also know many people buy self-help products hoping for a “magic pill” that will cure all of their problems and remove all pain forever. When they realize that getting results actually requires courage and effort, they tend to move on to the next product. I feel the need to take a stand against this practice of sugarcoating reality just so people feel safer.

Earlier in the book, I emphasized that if you do not get what you want out of it, I fully expect you to make use of the one hundred percent money-back guarantee.

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That's because as much as I want to help those who are aimlessly searching for the non-existent "quick fix," if you *are* firmly stuck in that mind-set, this book is *not* going to help you. This book will guide you through *taking action* yourself as well as minimizing the potential consequences of taking risks, but in the end, you are still going to have to take chances through action. If you're OK with that, you probably have the right attitude to get the most out of this book, and you will do very well indeed. If you're open to changing your quick-fix mind-set, this book will help you do that too in the Barriers to Change chapter.

Before we go on, I want you to think about this:

Every single thing you will ever experience will contain an element of risk.

Let that sit in your mind while we go into more detail throughout this chapter. The reason we need to deeply consider this is because positive changes *require* you to take risks. What I want to help you realize is—it is just as "risky" to do nothing to change yourself, so you might as well take some chances with self-development.

What is "risk," really? More importantly, what about the idea of *taking risks*? Well with all humility, I consider myself an expert in risk assessment and mitigation. I have been extensively trained to predict people's behavior with regard to committing offences. I can analyze a person's history, attitude, life circumstances and support systems and make a pretty reasonable prediction of how they will behave in most situations. I have also been trained to look at a company from a senior management perspective and predict the risks the company faces—to its reputation, operations, resources and more. I have spent literally hundreds of hours assessing and predicting risk.

But here's the thing. I can't really brag about these skills because almost every functioning person alive has these same abilities, including you. Do you know why? Because you have spent your entire life assessing risk. It's in your DNA. You are an *expert* in assessing risk, whether you know it or not... because you are still alive. This means you have successfully navigated all of the threats to your life, of which there have been hundreds if not thousands, and you are still here today. The skills around assessing, predicting and mitigating risks are no more amazing than the ability to perform physical exercise—pretty much everyone can do it even if they don't realize it right now. For example, one of the most dangerous things you can do is get inside a motor vehicle, and yet most people do so without any fear whatsoever.⁶

At this point you may still be thinking, "But I don't think I have been *taught* to be afraid of taking risks." If that's the case, have a look at this list and see if any of these things have ever applied to you:

- A schoolteacher made you feel bad for incorrectly guessing what the answer was.

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_motor_vehicle_deaths_in_U.S._by_year

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- You felt crushed after asking someone out and getting rejected.
- Some friends mocked you for suggesting an activity they thought was stupid.
- Your bank refused to grant you a loan because you could not provide strong enough evidence that you would be able to pay it back.
- Your boss didn't let you try that more challenging task because he or she thought you weren't up to it.

See, if you think about it, all throughout your life you are constantly being taught by other people that taking a chance has painful consequences, so you should predict risky situations and then *avoid* them. Sometimes these lessons are helpful—kids are much less likely to get hurt on roads if they are taught to take care when crossing the road, or your bank may have saved you financially by not allowing you to get in debt, and so on.

However, what's really concerning is there are many people who have taught you to avoid risks by *projecting their fears onto you*. When your friend talked you out of approaching the stranger that you wanted to talk to, why did they do that? There's no inherent physical danger in approaching a stranger, despite what you might believe. When I was focusing on developing my social skills, in one year alone I cold-approached literally hundreds of women, about half of whom flat-out rejected me within ten seconds of my approach. Not one of them was physically violent to me. The worst thing that happened was they'd frown and walk away. It was completely pain free (physically). So why on Earth did so many people try to discourage me from doing it?

Well, I've realized a few things over the last few years that have been complete revelations to me:

- 1. The people most likely to try and persuade you to avoid taking risks are those who are afraid of taking risks themselves.** Think back. Remember those who have tried to stop you from making a positive change. Are they the kind of people who regularly improve their lives, or are they people who generally stay in their comfort zones? The person most likely to speak out against you taking a chance is usually the person who wouldn't have the courage to face that risk themselves, so what are they even talking about anyway?
- 2. When someone tells you not to take a risk, they usually do not have valid personal experience.** Most often, they may have tentatively attempted to try it themselves before—usually no more than once—and failed. They probably failed because they approached it with fear and a lack of enthusiasm (more on this later). They then exaggerate the huge failure they thought it to be. A lot of the time, most confusingly, the person who tells you not to take the risk has absolutely *zero* experience on the subject! Like your friend telling you not to bother approaching that stranger—are they the kind of person who regularly meets new people, or are they the kind of person who *never* approaches strangers whilst sober?

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- 3. People can be misguided by their tendency to think of risk in terms of percentages and ratios.** For example, you may have heard the cliché statistic “nine out of ten business fail within the first few years.” Does that mean starting a business is inherently very high risk? Actually, I don’t think so. I would venture that even if the statistic is true, the real reason most of those businesses failed is because the people running them simply *gave up*. Starting a business with a risk-mitigating plan and utilizing support makes the venture quite safe. We see evidence of this through serial entrepreneurs like Mark Cuban, Eben Pagen and Marcia Kilgore. What’s interesting about risk is that likelihood and percentages are just theory. In real life, *every* possibility is actually a fifty percent chance—it will either happen or it won’t, simple as that. Until scientists perfect the art of predicting the future, you can never tell which one it will be. In that context, the risk of starting a new business and failing is basically the same as the risk of eating a sandwich and getting food poisoning. In fact, if you start a new business with the mind-set of “I will make this work no matter what happens” and truly believe it, the odds will be in your favor.
- 4. The people most likely to encourage you to take a chance are those who have done so themselves.** Just test this out yourself. Find someone who regularly takes chances (and seems to be successful most of the time) and tell them you want to try something new, like going on an international adventure. The most likely reaction you will get is that they will start giving you advice on the best way to do it. They won’t even consider *not* doing it; to them it will simply be a matter of planning. The people in your life who actually have experimented with risk-taking in a consistent way are also the most likely to support you doing it. What does that say about taking chances?

Remember before when I asked you to consider how everything you do has an element of risk? The reason I emphasized this is because you need to understand fully that it is not risk that holds you back. It is your *expectation of negative consequences*. For example, if you think you have a forty percent chance of failure when you start your business *and* the consequence of that will be something terrifying like bankruptcy, your mind will do a calculation and tell you it is not worth the risk.

Let’s try to look at risk in a new way. Let’s make risk a consideration for your plan, but *not a factor that can change your decision*.

No matter what you think the risks are, they should not influence whether you will do it. Instead, think of the risks as a *guide* for your goals and actions. For example, at first, jumping off a cliff seems like a high-risk thing to do, but when you work with a base-jumping expert and use a parachute, all of a sudden it’s less risky and quite fun.

Let’s look at an example—you are thinking about starting your own business. It is very important to consider the risks you face. But rather than assessing the risks to see whether you will go through with it, you write them down as part of your private business plan. You may come up with a list like this:

- If I don’t make enough sales, I will not be able to pay back my investors.

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- If the business is not successful, my partner will think I'm a failure.
- If I make too many mistakes at the start, my business will develop a bad reputation.

These are not reasons to give up on the idea. They are simply risks that you need to *mitigate*. Through analyzing these risks, you may end up with a set of goals like this:

- I will work with a business mentor to develop website copy that follows best-practice techniques for high conversions (visitors becoming customers).
- I will ask my partner's opinion on the business idea and discuss my plan in detail so we can share the responsibility and strengthen our relationship.
- I will start by taking *small* steps as per my business plan, learning slowly and carefully at first, making sure I fully understand the consequences of all business decisions, and focusing first and foremost on customer service.

This example is brief and does not follow best-practice rules for goal setting (more on this later). I'm just using this to give you the sense of what I mean by turning risks into actions rather than allowing them to discourage you. Later in this book, we will cover how to mentally prepare to accept risks (and be excited by them) when we look at exercises on positively influencing your core beliefs. We will also go into *much* more detail about goal setting and planning. For now, I just wanted to make a very clear point:

Everything in life is risky.

You think starting a business is risky? I can guarantee you that driving a car is far more likely to cause harm than starting a business, and yet you probably have no fear about getting into a vehicle. This is because you are familiar with the risk and have experience in mitigating it. The great thing is that you can use these same risk mitigation skills with everything else in your life and learn to become familiar with risky undertakings. The more new things I try, including those many failed attempts, the more skilled I become in mitigating risk. My success rate in all endeavors increases every year as I get more skilled in taking chances. You can have this ability too. In fact, you already have it. Stop letting risk hold you back.

The Biggest Risk Is Not Taking a Risk at All

Some people live in a comfort zone their entire lives. At some point as they get older, they realize the negative consequences that have come from doing this, but by then they think that it's too late to change. So they resign themselves to their fate. I want to you to consider something here—evolution. As time moves forward, everything on the planet always evolves. From plants to animals to technology—everything is always getting faster, smarter and stronger. *Everything* around you is always evolving—changing and adapting over time. What does this mean for you if

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you are someone who refuses to change and instead remain in your comfort zone?

You will get left behind.

In talking with friends and clients, I have found that the *tipping point*, where life overtakes someone who does not adapt, usually occurs somewhere between the age of twenty-five and thirty. It can also occur when someone who was adapting at a normal pace suddenly freezes because of a traumatic life event, like divorce or bereavement. As people grow up and go through puberty etc., they are constantly learning, growing and changing. Then as they reach adulthood, this stops happening automatically and starts to require a conscious effort.

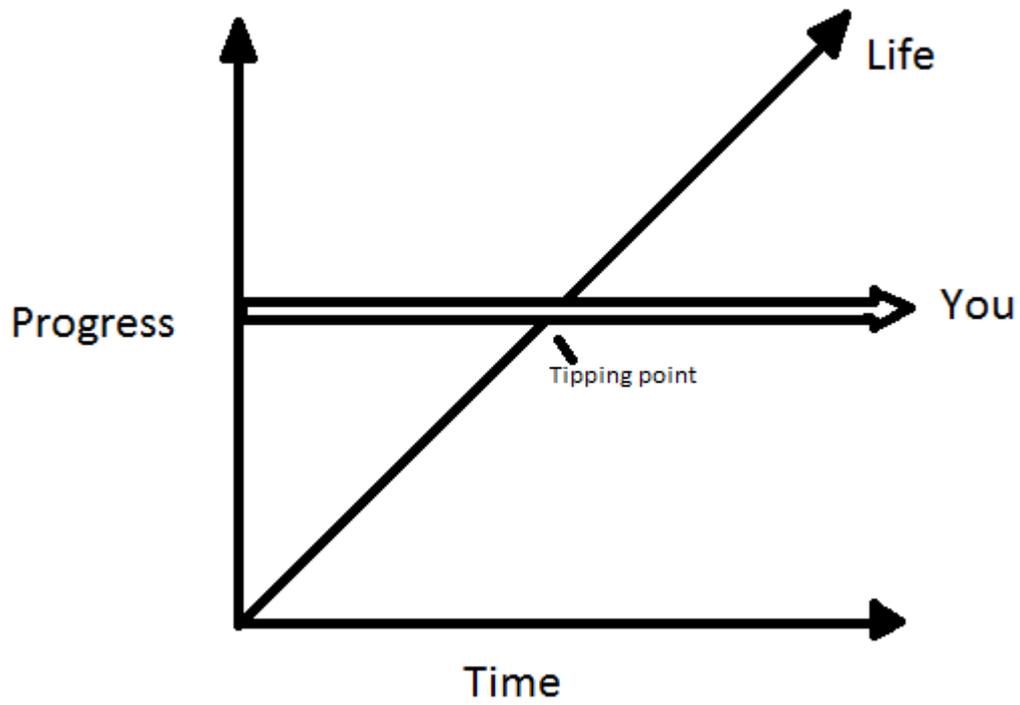
Those who do not take action may still seem to be on top of life in their early twenties because certain important survival and success factors do not seem significant, such as:

- Not earning much money
- Not being able to find a partner or enjoy a satisfying love life
- Lack of interest in traveling the world or learning about other cultures
- Not having their own place to live
- Having a small, stale social circle

The trouble is, as you get older and the list above does not change, it starts to feel abnormal. You will notice that other people who were once the same as you are now earning more money, getting married, going on overseas trips, starting businesses, and so forth. This is the tipping point—the feeling that you are being left behind.

To wrap this up in brief, you may start off ahead in life and you could stay ahead if you keep adapting and improving. You could start off disadvantaged but overcome obstacles, catch up, and then exceed life's evolutionary pace.

If you stay the same however, eventually life evolves past you. You will struggle to enjoy your life. That is why refusing to improve your life is far more dangerous than taking a chance to try something new or risky. Look at the visual below and ask yourself—am I ahead of the game, or am I being left behind?



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The Myths of Willpower and Fate

The best revenge is massive success.

~ Frank Sinatra

Free Your Mind

This is a warm-up to the chapter Barriers to Change. I believe these particularly harmful belief systems need their own chapter due to the sheer prevalence of them in the community. I am not going to be judgmental about any spiritual or moral beliefs as long as they do not lead to harming people. However, I do want to share my perspective on how particular beliefs can be misunderstood as excuses not to set and achieve goals. I have never heard of any belief system in the world that states you should *not* try to be a better person and lead a more fulfilling life.

Fate and the Fear of Death

Fate is the belief that your future is in some way preordained, that your destiny is already written and you are basically a powerless spectator watching it unfold. The belief in fate comes from, in my opinion, the fear of death. We are the only animals that seem to have the questionable gift of knowing that we are definitely going to die. For nearly everyone I have ever met, this knowledge fills them with dread. It was only when I started on my journey of systematically identifying and reducing my various fears that the fear of death became apparent to me.

I remember being about eighteen years old and smoking marijuana with Brad, one of my closest friends. We started talking about the wider universe and meaning of life, as young stoned teenagers tend to do. The more we talked, the more we started to panic. We began hysterically laughing at the idea that we were one day going to die—the absurdity of how *unfair* it was. The very idea of it was unavoidable once we started to explore it, and behind the laughter, I know for sure we were afraid. Yet it was not clear what we were afraid of, exactly. I have never believed in an afterlife. To me death is not something you actually ever have to experience because science tells us you have to be alive to consciously have any experience. That should be comforting because then I never actually have to face my own mortality. One day it will just happen and I won't be aware that it took place. Just lights out.

But knowing that did not remove the fear, so over the last few years I stopped running away from this fear and started to allow myself to consider my own mortality. Over time I came to realize that this fear of death is the Leading Fear, *the one to rule them all* you might say. When I work with clients, I can theoretically trace any “surface fears” they have, such as fear of abandonment or public speaking, back to the fear of death. For example, a fear of getting rejected can relate to the desire to be accepted as part of a tribe for survival, something we evolved to favor because being kicked out of the tribe thousands of years ago meant almost certain death.

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I believe we humans are so reluctant to accept inevitable death that our entire global society is shaped by this fear. Religion thrives on selling the “afterlife.” Life after death is the key principle behind every single organized religion I have ever heard of.

I have come to the conclusion that the reason we are afraid of death is because of the implications it has on *life*. The fact that we will all die, *no matter how we live*, can lead us to think there is no purpose in living. We misinterpret death as a punishment that we must face regardless of how “good” we are. It’s like when your sibling starts a fight with you and your parents send both of you to time-out. You sit there fuming over the injustice of it all, being punished without adequate reason. For most people, a punishment is acceptable as long as we feel we deserved it.

Later this book will take you through a process of facing and challenging your own fears. Don’t worry! This will be done in a safe and manageable way, so please don’t throw this book away just yet. I just want to plant a seed in your mind about the possibility that any fears you have are actually about a fear of dying *without purpose*. I truly believe that my fear of death has transformed, from something that I actively avoided with busyness into a driving motivational force. Death no longer frightens me. It reminds me to live with every kilojoule of energy that I can muster. I want you to start pondering the solution to this fear: a sense of PURPOSE. If you feel like you have a purpose, death becomes a deadline rather than a punishment, driving you to get *your work* done before the clock runs out.

Let us now explore how not facing this fear can lead to a life not lived. Within the concept of fate are two similar limitations that lead to a lot of people being unmotivated to improve their lives.

Fatalism

The first and most powerful is *fatalism*. Simply put, you are *fatalistic* when you believe that everything in the future has already been decided and you must simply wait it out. It implies that you have absolutely no control over your destiny. This is an escape from the responsibility of living, and it’s a failure to acknowledge the beauty of death. You don’t know when you’re going to go. That’s what gives life a rich flavor. Any day could be the last, so you should feel grateful to be alive each morning and motivated to do something with that gift. If you believe in a predetermined fate, you may automatically give yourself the excuse to do *nothing*. You may see yourself having a written destiny and think, “Why should I bother doing anything? It’s already been decided.”

For those of you with this success-limiting belief, let me ask you something:

Why does the concept of fate mean that you shouldn’t try to improve your life?

Have you considered that maybe your destiny is to put in a conscious effort to live the best life you possibly could? Think of all of the most worshiped figures in the history of fate-based beliefs. Did they sit around and do nothing? If fate is real, it does not give you the excuse to do nothing. Only you can give yourself that excuse... or

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more accurately, only *your fears* can give you that excuse. Like with determinism below, I'm not actually arguing as to whether these beliefs are true—I think that's unanswerable. All I'm saying is how you view the belief will affect your behavior and happiness significantly.

Determinism

This second concept I'm referring to is a more scientific version of fate, and it's known as *determinism*. My understanding of this paradigm is determinism dictates that all human decision-making is a result of this complex equation:

Genetics + Environmental factors + Life experiences = All of your beliefs = All of your decisions

The implication being there is no such thing as “free will.” From a psychological point of view, the concept is that you make all of your decisions *subconsciously*, and your conscious awareness is “tricked” into thinking it has control. Again, having this belief could allow you to excuse yourself from making decisions and taking action. You might assume that your subconscious mind knows best and you should just react to life as it happens, or maybe you should just do nothing and let the chips fall where they may. Where *determinism* differs from *fatalism* is the implication that the future is actually not yet decided, as there is no way to predict how you and your environment will interact over time.

I say even if you believe you have no free will, this should not prevent you planning for a better life and taking action to achieve it. The future is still under your control. Whether you are consciously making the decisions or not, it's still *you* making the decisions. There's only your brain inside your head, so ultimately all decisions are completely yours to own. Take responsibility. Think of your conscious awareness as the CEO of your brain. You may not be consciously aware of what parts of your brain are doing, but they are under your conscious control, so be a leader. Tell yourself how to think, feel and act—you're doing that anyway, so you may as well make an effort to get something out of it. Why not go for it?

Willpower

The term willpower is often misunderstood, with people thinking someone who has strong willpower must have been born with some sort of genetic motivational advantage. How often have you heard people trying to quit smoking claim that they lack the willpower? It's as if they are saying that they were simply born with a lower level of overall motivation. Again, that CEO in their brain is basically ordering the rest of the brain to stop trying. This effectively shuts off the problem-solving, survival and creativity sections. Why on Earth would you want to do that? You're simply guaranteeing failure.

The limiting self-belief here is there is nothing you can do about it. You're either someone born with strong willpower or you're not. It's the same as when you see someone who is really wealthy, in great physical shape, or in a satisfying relationship, [Click here to join The Legendary Life Launch Group to get your FREE copy of The Legendary Life](#)

and you think they are just “lucky”. Of course, this implies that you are not lucky and must therefore accept less. The next time you think someone is lucky, ask yourself, “If it’s *not* luck, then what is it? What are they doing that I’m not? What are they thinking that’s different to what I think? What changes would I need to make to create luck like they have?”

If this is a really strong belief for you, I recommend that you take some time to talk to successful people. Read their books and memoirs, and ask them about their path to success. What you will inevitably find is that their motivation went up and down. They had good weeks and they had bad weeks. Sometimes they had *terrible* weeks. What they didn’t do, however, was shift the responsibility for those fluctuations of willpower onto things outside of their control. They accepted that the highs are balanced by lows, and that the most successful people are those who *take action to increase their motivation* to power through the difficult times. Willpower is therefore not a personality trait that you are born with; it is actually a set of skills that you can learn and apply, just like confidence.

Most importantly, successful people have to work for their success, and to do this they have to consciously work on keeping their motivation levels high. For more on this, a book I highly recommend you read is *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell.⁷ In his book, you will see evidence that suggests those who have achieved the highest levels of success have each put in an average of ten thousand hours of learning and practice to become experts in their respective fields. You need the ability to maintain a high level of motivation to get through that much work. Natural “willpower” alone won’t last for the equivalent of five years’ full time work.

“Willpower” therefore is actually about taking conscious action to increase and maintain your motivation. Later in this book, I will give you the tools to do this.

So what is death?

To me, death is simply a reason to *live*. Not just survive, but *thrive* as best as possible. When we avoid death and all it implies, we are really avoiding life. What’s magical is that it seems we are born with an internal fear of not living. This is not the same as a fear of dying, but that is how we commonly misinterpret it. Death cannot be experienced, but life can. You are not afraid of dying, but you may be afraid of not fully experiencing and making the most of the life you have been given.

Hundreds of thousands of sperm raced you to the egg, and you beat them all. Never again will you win a race of such magnitude and importance, where there is only one winner out of millions and the rest die. As the winner, you were able to claim the ultimate prize—the opportunity to experience a LIFE. Embrace your mortality because it is the only reason life has any sweetness at all. If you were to live forever, eventually everything would become predictable, bland and uninteresting. It’s only because our days are numbered that we can appreciate and enjoy life.

Imagine having lived so well that on your deathbed you feel as if you have missed

⁷ Little, Brown and Company, 2008

out on nothing. This book is going to take you through a process for figuring out how to get there. Essentially every single moment is your last moment alive because the past is just a memory and the future is uncertain. Let's figure out together how we can get you to a stage where every current moment feels like your entire life led up to it.

Let's find your PURPOSE....

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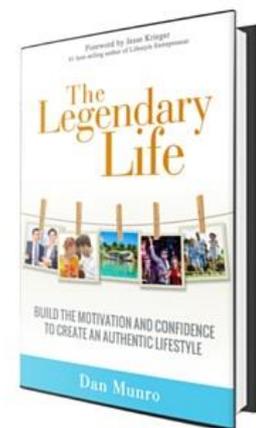
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