

**Monkey See**  
**MONKEY**  
**Don't**

**What you need to know  
in today's world that your  
parents didn't know to  
teach you.**

**PAUL BLACKBURN & JASON URBANOWICZ**

# Dedication

My journey through the past 40 years has been facilitated, encouraged and insisted upon by the woman I'm lucky enough to know as both my wife and the mother of our children. Without Mary Louise (Moore) Blackburn, I know I'd still be stuck back where I was at 20 - afraid, silly and without a clue. Thank you - from the bottom of a heart you have filled to overflowing with love. You are an angel. It's my fervent wish that our daughters turn out more like you than me.

*Paul Blackburn*

Special thanks to my inspirational wife, Narelle Urbanowicz, who saw the full potential in me and played a massive part in helping me discover it in my own time.

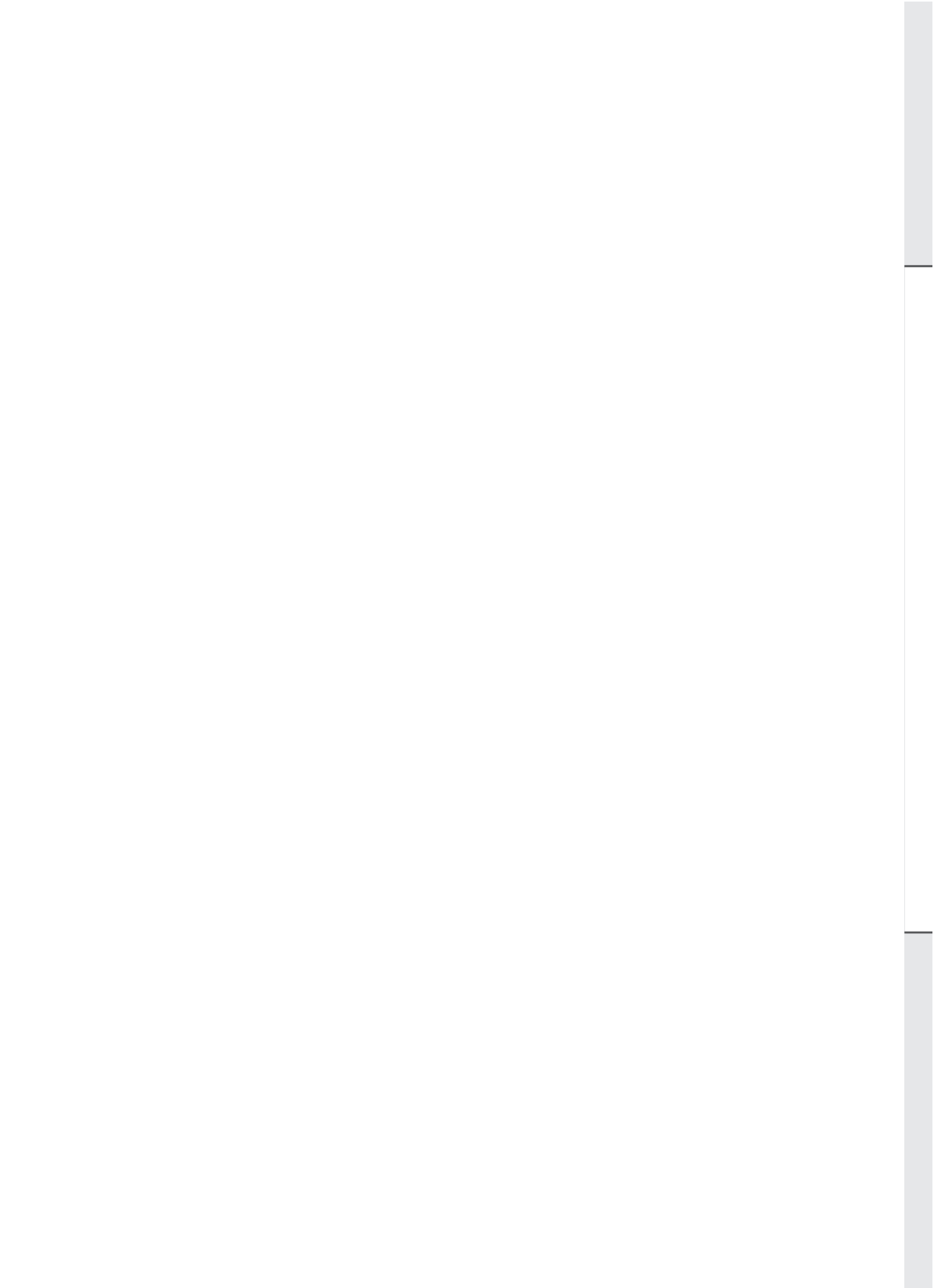
A big thank you to Emma Thomas for turning my message into pure magic.

*Jason Urbanowicz*



# Contents

Introduction.....	1
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
Life Management .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
Emotions.....	41
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
Money.....	71
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
Communication.....	97
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
Relationships.....	121
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
Health.....	151
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
Self-image .....	181
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
Career .....	203
<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	
Leadership.....	225
Conclusion.....	253





# INTRODUCTION

## **What is coaching?**

In its most basic form, coaching is a method of improving a skill. When you are having difficulty with something, you call in an expert to offer some advice. Athletes, performers, high profile businessmen and politicians all have coaches.

While there are many different types of coaching, we are concerned with life coaching – a method of learning about yourself and how to achieve your goals. Put simply, coaching is a tool that allows people to maximise their personal and professional potential.

In our experience, many people mistakenly believe that working hard will lead to success. As a result, they sign up for the ‘hard slog’, thinking they have no other option. Unfortunately, this usually causes a slew of side effects: poor health, stress, strained relationships, and a life devoid of any fun because there simply isn’t enough time.

If you are tired or sick, if your relationships are suffering, you have no time for fun or you are emotionally unstable because you are so stressed, ask yourself this question: how can you possibly live a joyful and fulfilling life?

What if you know you need to make some changes but you can’t even imagine where to begin? Or you know what you need to change but you don’t know how?

This is where a coach becomes essential. A coach is partly an advisor, partly a sounding board. A coach takes the role of cheerleader, manager and strategist. A life coach will help you to be the best you can possibly be by giving you the tools you need to create the life you always dreamed was possible. Coaching is about helping you to learn, not teaching you. A personal coach will do for your life what a personal trainer can do for your body.

While you may find coaching challenging, it will undoubtedly reignite your passion for life. A coach is there to hold you accountable, help you find solutions to problems and ensure you achieve your potential. Life coaching is all about helping you create the future of your wildest dreams.

## **Coaching yourself**

The single most important tool in a coach's arsenal is the ability to unemotionally observe. If you are going to coach yourself, it is imperative that you understand emotional intelligence and learn to emotionally remove yourself from a situation so that you can simply observe.

This talent for emotional observation has been cultivated by human beings for millennia. More than two thousand years ago, Aristotle exclaimed the virtues of emotional intelligence in *The Nichomachean Ethics*, when he wrote: "Anyone can be angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – this is not easy."<sup>1</sup>

Emotional intelligence includes knowing your feelings and using them to your advantage, motivating yourself consistently, maintaining your cool in frustrating situations, showing empathy and compassion, interacting effectively and successfully managing relationships. These skills are extremely important – in relationships, family, career, health and happiness.

The concept of emotional intelligence was also a focal point of Charles Darwin's early work – he studied the importance of emotional expression for both survival and adaptation. By the 1900s, several researchers had begun to realise how important non-cognitive aspects of intelligence are, despite the traditional definition of intelligence emphasising cognitive abilities like memory and

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<sup>1</sup> "Tips," *Excellence*, viewed 30 Sep. 2009, <<http://www.excellence.com.eg/Tips.html>>.



problem solving. For example, in 1920 E.L. Thorndike coined the term “social intelligence” to describe a person’s ability to understand and manage others.

In 1940 David Wechsler detailed the effect of non-cognitive factors on the behaviour of intelligent individuals. He further proposed that models of intelligence would not be complete until these factors could be adequately described.

By the time the 1980s rolled around, the concept of emotional intelligence had significantly broadened. Howard Gardner presented the idea of different types of intelligence. The first type was interpersonal intelligence – the ability to understand the intentions and desires of other people. The second was intrapersonal intelligence – the capacity to comprehend one’s own fears, feelings and motivations.

When Daniel Goleman released his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* in 1996 the theory of emotional intelligence rocketed into the limelight.<sup>2</sup>

Goleman identified the five “domains” of EQ as:

1. Self-awareness – knowing your emotions
2. Self-regulation – managing your own emotions
3. Motivation – yourself and others
4. Empathy – recognising and understanding other people’s emotions
5. Social skills – relationships (i.e. managing the emotions of others).

There is now a substantial body of research indicating that our ability to perceive, identify and manage emotion provides the basis for all kinds of social and emotional skills essential for success in any arena.

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 1997).

Despite the varied definitions, it is abundantly clear that our ability to succeed in life is directly affected by our emotional intelligence - the intellect cannot work effectively without it. We must harmonise the head and heart in order to understand what it means to use our emotions intelligently.

Emotional intelligence is all about balance – not suppression. Every feeling we experience has value. The goal is to feel an appropriate level of emotion – that is, our feeling should be proportionate to that particular circumstance. For example, it would not be emotionally intelligent to scream at someone who accidentally stepped on your foot. Emotional wellbeing relies on our ability to keep our negative feelings (fear, anger and sadness) under control – it is extremes that will undermine our stability.

In order to be emotionally intelligent, we must first learn to recognise our feelings and process them. The most important principle to remember is that the healing is in the expression of the feeling. Once we have mastered the methods for handling our emotions, we can begin to dictate when we want to feel them. We will talk more about how to do this later in the book.

Part of the process of becoming emotionally intelligent is learning to observe. This may sound like a strange concept, but stick with us; it could be the most powerful skill you will ever learn.

Many of us are aware that there are two voices in our heads. One is experiencing the rollercoaster of life, and the other is simply watching. The one who is experiencing the rollercoaster is the physical, mental and emotional aspect of us. The other voice can only be described as our spirit since it has no basis in the physical, mental or emotional world, even though it can voice itself through them.

This spiritual part of us (what we may consider our soul or essence) has no emotions and is therefore capable of simply observing what is going on around us without judgement (mental) or reaction (physical and emotional). This is the voice in our head that calmly says “why did you do that?” or “watch her stuff up this next bit”.

If we look very carefully, we will notice that there is a part of us that is so calm and still that we barely notice it, despite the fact that it is always there. Part of truly gaining mastery of ourselves is therefore the practice of bringing the “observer” to our awareness. When we first do this, it will take a deliberate act of will, but like anything new, it will become much easier with time and patience.

So, how do we get to know this observer?

Choose four different times a day when something predictable happens, for example, getting in the car to go to work. Take the time to observe what you do. Do you put your seatbelt on or your keys in the ignition first? Do you let the handbrake off or put the car in gear first? Simply watch what you do – there should be no right or wrong.

Learning to observe is step one. Step two is acting on your observations. If you observe yourself doing something that is not in your best interest, can you change your course of action?

If we master observation we have knowledge of what we do. This alone is not enough; nothing has changed except that now we know we eat chocolate when we are sad. If we can recognise our sadness, be with it, and choose not to remove the pain by eating chocolate, then we have acted to change the pattern. When we can take action to eradicate a harmful pattern, we have found wisdom.

Once we become accustomed to observing we are able to choose how we feel about the circumstances around us, rather than becoming victim to them. This choice will create an extremely profound change in our lives as we gain the ability to live it on our terms. Coaches are fond of saying “you are either impacting on the world around you or it’s impacting on you”.

So, ask yourself now: are you impacting on the world? Or is the world impacting on you?





# CHAPTER 1

Life management

*“There are never enough hours in day to achieve everything on my to-do list.”*

*“Whenever I have one area of my life working perfectly, something else falls in a heap.”*

*“I often feel pulled in all directions. I’m spread so thin I feel like I’m not doing my best for anyone – at work, at home, or for myself. When something has to give, it’s always time for myself.”*

*“Sometimes I wonder what life is all about.”*

If any of these comments describe how you sometimes feel, you’re not alone. Australians have never felt busier – and it’s not in our heads. While one in 18 men worked more than 11 hours a day in 1974, by 1997 this had risen to one in eight men. Similarly, while one in six women reported feeling rushed in 1974, seven out of eight women felt life had become more frantic by 1997.<sup>3</sup>

When former US president Franklin D Roosevelt said “never before have we had so little time in which to do so much”, he didn’t have a mobile phone. He didn’t have access to email, BlackBerries or Facebook. There were no 24-hour news channels, RSS feeds or Twitter. Fast food was only in its infancy!

The pace of life has certainly quickened in the last fifty years, and the pattern of life in Australia has changed with it. A quarter of all households are now occupied by a single person; and while the majority of Australian households are families, an increasing number have two adults working outside the home.

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3 “Facts on Work Life Balance in Australia, 2009,” *Office of the Status of Women*, viewed 23 June 2009, <[http://www.eowa.gov.au/Australian\\_Women\\_In\\_Leadership\\_Census/About\\_Equal\\_Opportunity/key\\_agenda\\_items/Work\\_Life\\_Balance/Facts\\_on\\_Work\\_Life\\_Balance\\_in\\_Australia.asp](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Australian_Women_In_Leadership_Census/About_Equal_Opportunity/key_agenda_items/Work_Life_Balance/Facts_on_Work_Life_Balance_in_Australia.asp)>.

Changes in the workplace have reduced the number of hours we have to spend on our homes, communities and care. Activities that were once primarily the province of women at home – such as cooking, cleaning and care of small children – are increasingly provided by the market.

**“Australians  
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had so many  
opportunities  
in life.”**

Accompanying these shifts has been a steady decline in men’s participation in the workforce, as women’s participation has steadily risen. This has generated a dramatic social shift, and our cultural attitudes to domestic and care work are still catching up.

At the same time, Australians have never had so many opportunities in life. More people – particularly women – achieve university-level educations than ever before; international travel is cheap and accessible; and people increasingly find personal satisfaction from their careers. Work was once somewhere you went each day – now it’s something you do.

This means our expectations of life have never been higher. We all want to have it all.

But can we really?

Sure, but probably not all at the same time.

Having your life in balance doesn’t mean doing everything equally. Having a balanced life means you’ve learned to prioritise the most important things in your life.



So, how do you do this? The first step is to put yourself at the top of your list of priorities.

This doesn't mean being selfish or self-centred. It means simply acknowledging that you are the main resource in your life. If you accept that you are your most precious resource, then you'll also acknowledge the importance of looking after that resource. As success coaches, we are fond of asking our clients if they'd treat a prized racehorse the way they treat themselves. The answer is usually a fast and firm "no" – because very few of us would be foolish enough to run a racehorse until it's ragged, feed it on junk food and expect it to perform at its peak without providing it with vital rest periods. And yet, that is exactly how many of us treat ourselves.

**“If you accept that you are your most precious resource, then you'll also acknowledge the importance of looking after that resource.”**

How can you possibly do well in your job, participate in a relationship, be a loving parent, or enjoy your hobbies if you are overtired, grumpy and ineffective?

Many people feel that putting their own needs before others is selfish, but if you place your own health and wellbeing above everything else, you will invariably find that you can deliver much more in the other areas of life that are important to you.

Let's look at an example. If you've ever flown in an aeroplane, you'll remember the safety instructions recited prior to take off. The instructions include how to fit an oxygen mask if the air cabin pressure drops – and specifically that you must fit your own mask before you can help others.

This seems reasonable – except if you are a parent, in which case your natural instinct is to make sure your child is safe first. However, you have about ten seconds to fit your own mask before oxygen deprivation will cause you to pass out, rendering you completely useless to yourself and others. So, by taking care of yourself first, you are able to take care of those around you. Without your oxygen mask on, you're not going to be useful to anyone.

Anyone serious about self-coaching understands they must take an “inside-out” approach to their lives. Rather than focusing on the possessions, successes and approvals that may make us happy (but most probably won't), we must look within and find what deeply motivates us.

Is it your family? Is it a challenge? Adventure? Love? A desire to help others? Only you know the answer, but whatever it is, it means moving beyond hoping things will improve (once you get the new job, new house or new partner) and taking action yourself. Just like any journey into unfamiliar territory, you need to chart a course before you can begin moving forward.

Life management involves living according to your deepest values. To do this, you must start by examining your belief systems, the person you are and your motives. Many people are only prepared to reflect deeply on what truly matters to them when they experience a life-threatening event. Don't wait until that bus almost hits you – you can create your own set of life principles that reflect your values and start living up to them now.

**“We must look within and find what deeply motivates us.”**

Why this kind of approach?

**“Life management involves living according to your deepest values.”**

Because a lifetime of cars, boats, houses, holidays, promotions, achievements and other trinkets will fail miserably when it comes to delivering happiness.

Genuine fulfilment, satisfaction, inner peace and contentment will only be the result of determining what your highest values are – and then living up to them.

It is imperative that you strive to achieve your personal vision – a result of knowing your highest values. This is a very powerful concept, which is perhaps best illustrated by Viktor Frankl’s story.

Viktor Frankl was a psychiatrist in Vienna who happened to be Jewish. When the Second World War broke out, he was one of the hundreds of thousands of people rounded up by the Nazis and transported to a place that later became known as “hell on earth” – Auschwitz. Frankl endured extreme hunger, cold and brutality, first in Auschwitz and then in Dachau. He lost every physical belonging on his first day in the camp, and was forced to surrender a scientific manuscript he considered his life’s work. Frankl’s wife, mother, father and brother all died at the hands of the Nazis.

In his book, *Man’s Search For Meaning*, Frankl acknowledged that the majority of prisoners were executed soon after they arrived. Millions of people died, but this was not the focus of his writing. He observed that there were those who, like himself, were put to work under the most horrific conditions, and discovered something amazing. Frankl found a common thread in the survival stories that came out of the concentration camps – a character trait essential to endurance. Everyone who outlasted the death camps had something significant yet to do with their lives:

*We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances.<sup>4</sup>*

**“Genuine fulfilment, satisfaction, inner peace and contentment will only be the result of determining what your highest values are – and then living up to them.”**

For Frankl, the quality of our questions determines the quality of our lives. Many people who suffer horrible atrocities spend years wondering “why me?” But, if you knew the answer to this question, would it really make any difference? For the prisoners of concentration camps, a better question to ask was “how do I escape?” The answer to this, for them, was a matter of life or death.

Frankl’s message is abundantly clear – it is essential for each of us to have a positive vision of our future. Frankel’s goal was to learn something from his experience and go on to help others. And he did.

Each of us must find our values, use them to create a vision of how our life could be, and then spend the rest of our lives striving to achieve this vision.

For most people, unhappiness comes from a conflict of values.

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<sup>4</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

### Case study

Claire deeply values her family and time spent with them is important to her. But to pay the bills, she must spend a significant amount of her time away from them – at work. Claire’s dedication to her family means she becomes a reliable and highly valued employee. In fact, she receives a number of promotions, which help her to pay the bills and make life more comfortable – but at a price. While Claire achieves her career goals, they seem empty and her success feels hollow because her highest goal has always been to have high quality relationships with her family.

This is why learning to manage our lives effectively is so important. We must work from the inside out, and, as Stephen Covey says in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, “begin with the end in mind”.<sup>5</sup> When we are able to remain true to our life’s vision, we are more likely to experience the lasting happiness that can only be achieved by living up to our highest values.

With that in mind, below is the first exercise for you to complete as your own coach. Remember to take a step back and observe.

### Self-coaching exercise one

Imagine a testimonial dinner is being held in your honour. There are several speeches made about you by people who know you well. What would you like them to say about you (and have it be the truth)?

Pick five people from any stage in your life, such as a workmate, friend, relative, lover or associate. What qualities would like them to share as the meaningful parts of their experience of knowing you?

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Fireside, 2004).

These qualities are very close to your highest values. They are among the things you would least like to lose.

Consider these values now and how they may be connected to form your personal vision for your life and the inner guidance mechanism to direct you through both happy and difficult times. With a clear understanding of your highest values, you can ensure that you always act with personal integrity. Some people call this being true to yourself, but it is imperative that you know *what* you are being true to.

Once you have established your values, it is essential that you create a plan that will allow you to live up to all of the areas that are important to you – not just one or two.

Our experience is that people often find that success in one area comes at the expense of another. You might have a great relationship but a boring, unrewarding job, or an amazing career but no time to spend with your family. The exercise below is designed to help you create balance by prioritising the things you need to do to live up to your values.

### **Self-coaching exercise two**

1. Grab a piece of paper and a pen.
2. Write the list of your values from the exercise above.
3. Give yourself a score out of ten for how you are currently performing in each area. It is important to be honest with yourself.

4. Look at the areas where you have not scored well – and choose the most important one first. You may be able to work on two at a time, but if you can only do one, pick the one that means the most to you.
5. Once you have an idea of which areas you need to work on most, you can begin to plan how you will go about improving them.

With your action plan in front of you, schedule time in your diary to get to work!

### Case study

After completing exercise two Anna knows she needs to spend some time improving the quality of her relationship with her husband. She decides to do this by allocating fifteen minutes per day to be with him – free from the distractions of television, books, work, kids or chores. Anna talks to her husband about the time of day that suits him, and they allocate time each day to improve their relationship.

### Self-coaching exercise three

Rank yourself between 1 and 10 in the following areas of life first for how important that area is to you and second for your effectiveness in that area.

#### For example:

Relationships are important to me...

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

I am happy with the state of my relationships...

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10



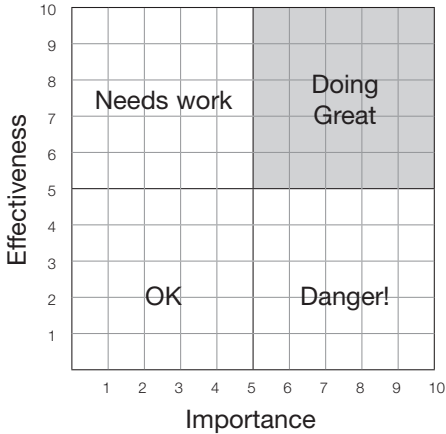


Fitness is important to me...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I am happy with the state of my fitness...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

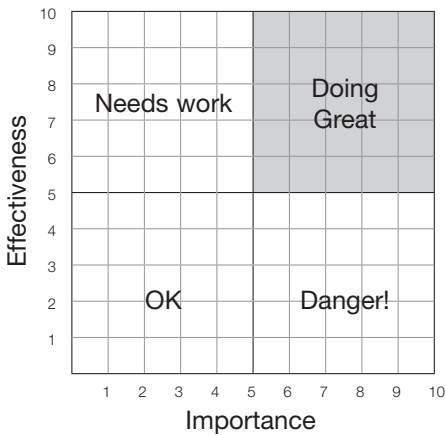


Wealth is important to me...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I am happy with the state of my wealth...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10



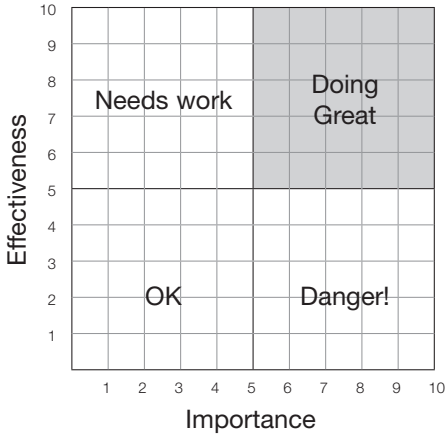


Leadership is important to me...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I am happy with the state of my leadership skills...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

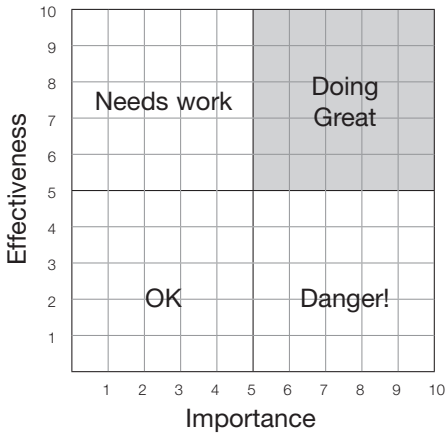


Emotional mastery is important to me...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I am happy with the state of my emotions...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10



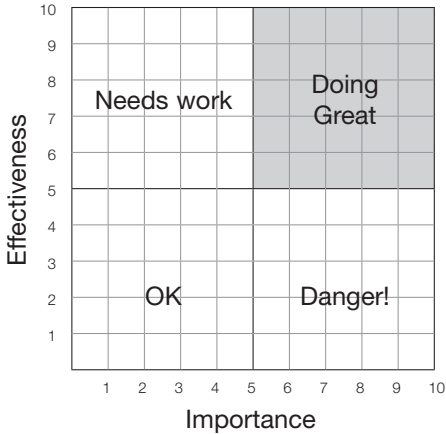


Making a contribution is important to me...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I am happy with how much I donate or 'put back'...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

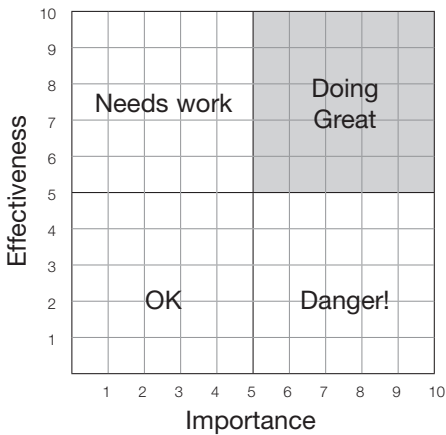


Friendship is important to me...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

I am happy with the state of my friendships...

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

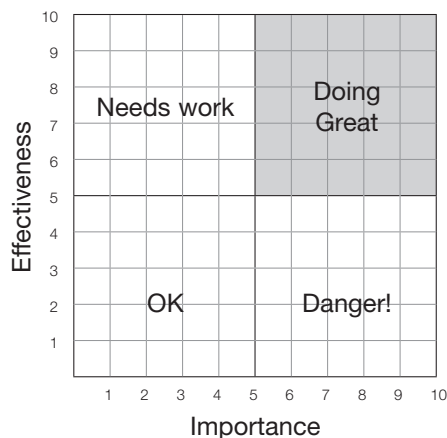


Family is important to me...

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

I am happy with the state of my family life...

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10



So, the key to getting the most out of life is learning to manage your life the way you would every other project – “put first things first”.

We must all accept that we have control over only one person in our lives: ourselves. If we want to make changes in our lives, if we want more, it’s up to us and us alone. We must become very clear about what we want in our lives – what are the things that have real meaning for us.

Ask yourself: what are my passions? What gets me up in the morning? Who do I want to become? What will I do now, today, to get what I want out of life?

Remember that envisioning the life that you want may sometimes seem unrealistic. Forget about whether it seems possible. Work in the arena of, “If it was totally possible, I would...” What would the first steps be to achieving that vision of life?

**“What would  
the first steps be  
to achieving that  
vision of life?”**

Each and every one of us deserves a life that we can look back on with a deep sense of satisfaction; to have personal lives that are enriching and nurturing; to do work that we love and which gives us a sense of accomplishment. We deserve love in our lives as well as good friends and family. It is our personal responsibility to create a life worth living. The time for change is now.

## Paul's thoughts on life management



Few people realise the significance of managing themselves. They can manage a business, a dog or a car park but continually run into strife in their own life, until the following realisation dawns:

You are the only resource you have.

Flogging that resource into the ground is miss-managing it. You might be able to relate to the following example.

Mary and I own a thoroughbred racehorse that cost us about \$2.3M. If I asked you to look after it for us while we were on holidays would you give it the best food, exercise it, rest it and train it? Or would you keep it up late at night, feed it cigarettes and alcohol, make it sit down all day and give it no fresh air and exercise whatsoever?

The truth is we don't have such a horse. But if the scenario above played out would you be taking better care of the horse than yourself?

Managing the resource that is you requires a basic understanding that you must do more of that which is in your best interests and less of the 'want to's' in life. It doesn't need to be an exclusive thing – just enough to get your life into the shape needed for you to reach your potential.



Look at the achievement of personal goals. They are an excellent guiding force in life if managed correctly and a fearful force for the negative if miss-managed. Many people come to us super qualified yet desperately unhappy because they pursued goals that didn't line up with their core values.

It's hard to appreciate your doctor's degree when you want to be a teacher, yet many people just go for the highest level of achievement because that is what they have been taught to do.

They end up stuck in a career that is very rewarding for those who chose it and a deadly trap for those who drifted into it. Extricating ourselves from the mortgages, cars, holidays and general lifestyle made possible by that higher income is achieved only by those who recognise the trap early on in life and are willing to handle the pain of dislocation in exchange for the reward of a better life. You may ask, better than what?

Better than spending your life force (your most rare and precious component) achieving something that doesn't really float your boat but ticks a lot of boxes lined up by someone else.

Therefore, the most relevant question you can ask yourself right now is are you living your truth?

We have a Master Coach working with us who asked himself that question shortly after crashing a small plane containing himself, his wife, his son and his mother. As he puts it, the three most important people in his life. The near death experience caused him to look very carefully at how he spent his day. The resulting conclusion was that despite earning ten times the average annual income in Australia working only 24 hours a week, he was happy but not really fulfilled.

The decision to work in a field that uplifted his soul meant selling a business and the property housing it and re-training in what turns out to be his third career. His income initially went down and his hours went up. So did his heart.

He now earns megabucks doing what he'd do for free because he loves it.

That's a story of managing the resource that is him – well.

You'll need to look carefully at what truly matters to you if happiness is on your agenda. We called our business Beyond Success because we realised genuine fulfilment is a long way past the standard of 'success' in our culture. It will take more than a house, a boat, a car and a plane to bring you to a sense of gratitude for who and what you are.

Jason and I both suggest you take time out to replicate the near death experience (without having to go there) as a method for determining what matters most to you. We'd also suggest you act on your discoveries.

My personal version turned up in 2003 with a terminal cancer diagnosis. The specialist had a way with words. I quote, "Mr Blackburn, get your affairs in order because you'll be dead in three years."

He got my attention. I reconciled the emotional issues underlying the cancer, learnt my lesson and moved on. We do things differently now. As Anthony Robbins says, "The recipe for happiness is simple. Find your highest values and spend your life living up to them".

Should you decide to chuck it all in and meditate on a mountain for the rest of your life – we wish you well. It's much more likely that you'll be better at keeping in contact with friends, turning up at your folks house for no reason and learning to play that musical instrument you've been thinking about for years. Maybe you won't bother graduating to a newer, bigger, more resort like house along the way.

We live in extraordinary times. Our grandparents had hobbies whose major function was to fill in the hours with enjoyable activity. We generally don't have them (hobbies that is) because we are too busy achieving. We have more opportunity than time to fit it all into. In fact, we have to decide what we won't do during our lifetime because the time taken up doing everything worthwhile will add up to a hundred and fifty years.

Examining what matters to you most will guide you towards the fulfilling and enriching activities in life and (perhaps) away from the 'achievements' most likely to leave you feeling empty. Don't get us wrong - reaching goals and targets is an excellent thing to do. Especially compared to grasping at nothing and succeeding. What Jason and I are getting at is that a full heart, self-esteem worth having and a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to live your life is the result of walking your talk – not paying the house off.

If it's true that few people on their deathbed wish they had spent more time at the office, then perhaps it's time to imagine what will happen at the end of your life. If you lived as you are now until the end of your days, would you be happy and fulfilled?

What is it that you want inscribed on your tombstone?

“He/she lived an ordinary life and ticked a lot of boxes.” I doubt it.

Once you know what matters to you at the deepest level you can use it everyday in your decision making. As a man with a reputation for volatility and reactive outbursts I don't find it difficult to stand up about injustice – especially if it's perpetrated on my loved ones or me. Some years ago, after considering my core values, I came to the conclusion that how I did something was more important to me than the thing itself. Before reacting I became (more) used to counting to ten so that I could ask myself a personal question, “How will I have to behave today, to be proud of that action next year when I look back on it?”

Since I would rather ‘compassionate’ on my gravestone than ‘aggressive’, I now tend to respond rather than react. I'll think about the most appropriate, effective and powerful way to get my message across and then get on with it. That simple series of thoughts allows me to act according to my long-term preferences rather than short-term triggers. The consequence is deep inner peacefulness in exchange for a temporary ‘win’, which probably would have been at someone else's expense anyway.

Mary and I live in a beautiful house we built to bring up our kids in. It took 18 months of serious effort while living in a caravan with no water and electricity. It could easily have been hard labour causing much angst and aggravation – like any other building site. Instead, it was a joyful experience permeated with fun, laughter, hard work and pleasure, mostly because we turned it into an adventure. Now it's just another house, which doesn't do much more than keep the rain off our heads.

How come?

Because how we did it was more important to us than what we were doing. We had two small children we knew would be watching and learning from their environment and we didn't want them to learn struggle. We wanted them to learn adventure. In fact, we are thinking of building another house in order to create another enjoyable escapade. We'll probably sell it when its finished because it will have served its purpose.

Perhaps one of the least understood concepts within the self-management field is the one we call 'me first'. If you are the only resource you have it makes sense to keep yourself in good condition.

We see so many people who put their family first and end up tired. Great in theory, not so much in practice. When that same person cannot deliver due to being knackered, they have let themselves down because they are now no longer able to support their loved ones in the way they have previously. All the individual described above needs to do is devote an hour a day to whatever uplifts them personally. This gives them the energy to support others almost endlessly. Forget selfish – we are talking sensible.

The same concept applies with devastating accuracy to almost any subject.

Take 10% out of every dollar you earn (first) and watch while you become a millionaire.

Get to the gym five days out of seven and develop serious physical fitness.

Put the first ten minutes of your day into your relationship (take time out not just to tell them that you love them but that you appreciate them being in your life – do it eye to eye) and watch the relationship of your dreams develop right in front of you.

Express gratitude for the simple things in your life (shelter, food, showers, soap, clothes, bullet free environment) and watch them multiply.

‘Me first’ requires long-term thinking and resolute decisions based on those thoughts. Will you take the time out to strategise about your life? In our experience most people are too busy maintaining a mediocre existence to bother with these kind of big questions. In our workshops we repeatedly witness life-changing moments created simply by standing still long enough (3 short days) to look at our lives from the perspective of the coach instead of that of the player.

Getting up in the grandstand and examining your results compared to your talent, effort and techniques and having a quiet but serious conversation with yourself may be the single most impactful hour of your life. Of course, that’s what Jason and I do professionally, but only give us a call after you’ve had a look for yourself.

And before you think this has all got a bit serious...

Rule number one in my life is, “I’m only doing it if it’s fun.” Before the death threat I’d do whatever I thought was right. Now it has to be right and fun.

I’m not going to visit my Mum if it isn’t fun. I’m not giving a speech if it isn’t fun. I’m not riding a Harley without very loud (fun) exhaust

pipes. I'm not going to build a business that isn't full of people laughing all day.

In short, I didn't stay alive (beat cancer) to be bored, tired and frustrated. I am having the time of my life. You can too.

## Jason's thoughts on life management



Ultimately, it's up to you to take control of your life. It is the one thing that you actually have control over, but you will need to work at it. This requires you to invest regular time in making sure that you have clear direction. The best part is that you get to start fresh every morning.

Starting right now, make sure you complete the exercises in this book. Every morning, check in with yourself and make sure you are clear on what you want to achieve today and in the future. I believe that it is all the little steps you take daily that add up to put your life in balance. Most people wait until their life is a mess before acting on what is most important. Saying no to the things that are less important will improve your life management skills and send your self-esteem into uncharted heights.

Once you have established your values using the exercises in the chapter, set goals and targets in accordance with them. Every Sunday I spend 30 minutes planning out the week ahead. I start by making time for my health, because that is very important to me. I put in my diary when I will be exercising, meditating and resting. If you are new to this, it's a good idea to take a few minutes at the end of each week to assess where you spent your time. This will help you stay on track and in balance, because it is very easy to convince ourselves we are doing what we need to when in fact, we aren't. It's easier not



to take an honest look at what we are doing, because if we do we might have to take responsibility for where we are. This exercise is more than just keeping track of where you spend your time; it will bring to the surface all the reasons you don't do the things on your highest values list. I get my clients to write down how they felt when doing certain activities. Bear in mind, this will only work if you are serious about changing your life. Let me assure you, the insights you gain into yourself and your behaviours will be out of this world. If you can get a bit uncomfortable for short periods in order to receive massive breakthroughs in your life, then this activity is for you.

It then becomes obvious that having your priorities in order is really important. Here's an example of why...

Several years ago, I noticed that people around me were buying property and investing in the share market. I felt like I was getting left behind financially, so I started reading different books on investing in property and shares. I was ready to buy an investment property, but it was going to be for all the wrong reasons because I was acting out of fear. My wife had no interest in investing at that stage, in part because she didn't know anything about it. When she said so I started to behave poorly and got really frustrated. I got so annoyed that I actually said I would do it with or without her. I still feel embarrassed when I remember that day. As soon as I spoke those words, I realised that I had just told her investing was more important to me than our relationship. In hindsight I see that I allowed my old programming and fear of missing out to control my thoughts and actions. I learnt that my relationship with my wife comes first, and that I would be happy living in a tent as long as she was with me. It also taught me how to communicate more effectively with my wife. After that, we set some financial goals as a team. The first goal was one that Narelle

felt comfortable with - paying off our first home. This actually turned out to be great for both of us; Narelle felt comfortable and I got to learn some much needed patience and maturity. We now have our first home paid off and exploring other investment opportunities now excites Narelle.

Once you do have your priorities sorted, you will need to ensure you keep it that way. In terms of remaining accountable to your highest values, I have found one fail proof method – but you will have to get serious. Here’s how it works: tell the key people in your life what your highest values are and give them permission to call you on it when they see you failing to act in accordance with them. This is one of the most powerful ways to keep yourself accountable. Involve as many people as you want, but make sure you choose them wisely. They will need to care enough about you to say something when it may mean upsetting you.

In the last few years there has been much discussion about “having it all”, particularly in the personal development industry. I believe we first need to decide for ourselves what that really means. In some parts of the world having clean water to drink (and not having to walk a whole day to get it) would equate to having it all. Through my own experiences, I have come to believe that attempting to have it all (and giving it a red-hot go) is far more important than actually getting it. In simpler terms, I feel that I have it all simply because I am going for it. For me, it’s all about the personal growth – it keeps my spirit alive and brings out the best in me. I think the same would happen for you too.

Of course, with the belief that we can have it all often comes the desire to have it all right now. Many clients have asked me how to

deal with this. Personally, I ask myself what is driving the need to have it all right now. Is it a fear of missing out? It's worth sitting still to get a clear understanding of what is driving your desire to have it now. If you are driven to want it all now out of fear or greed, chances are it will never work out for you. Your thinking will be hi-jacked by these two powerful emotions, which will affect the decisions you make. If it's that important to you to have the things you want, it would make sense that working towards them (even if it takes you 5 -10 years) would be worth it. Start with the end result in mind and work backwards towards the daily tasks you will have to perform to get there. That will make it easier to resist the temptation to "have it all right now." Ultimately, we want things because of what we think they will give us. Once you do have it all you will inevitably discover that the thing you value most is the person you became in the process.

Part of creating a balanced life is learning to put yourself first. This can be difficult if you are used to putting everyone else first. How do you work past this? The solution will vary from person to person, but here are a couple of general things to look at...

1. Work on releasing the emotion that comes up when you put yourself first. (Use the methods in the emotions section). For a lot of people what surfaces is guilt. This is usually the result of a belief from childhood that says you are selfish if you do something for yourself. You will need to put yourself in a situation where this feeling comes up, process it and let it go.
2. Talk to your loved ones about what you are trying to do and ask them for help. Explain exactly what you would like them to do.
3. As with everything, start small and build up. If you decided to get into mountain climbing, you wouldn't start with Mt Everest would you?

Ultimately, everything comes down to learning to manage your thoughts, emotions and patterns rather than letting them control you. This requires practice, just like anything else. Be gentle with yourself in the process, but don't let yourself off the hook.

Live life on your terms – no one else's.



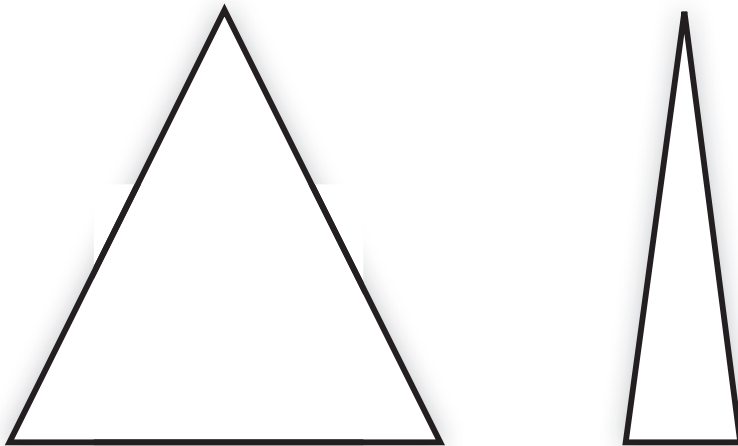


# CHAPTER 2

Emotions.

Emotional mastery is such a vast subject that we could write several books on it alone. Our aim in this chapter is to cover the basics so that you have some idea of how your emotions work and what to do with them.

We believe that the human experience is made up of three different planes of existence. We are physical, mental and emotional beings. Imagine an equilateral triangle. Each point represents one of the three planes. At the centre of the triangle is the spirit – which can only be experienced fully when the three planes are in balance.



**“You only have two options when dealing with emotions: express or suppress.”**

If our physical, mental or emotional aspect is out of balance, the triangle narrows and the spirit becomes blocked. It is important to understand that you are not your emotions, your body or your mind. These are simply your experiences. Your spirit is your true self.

Our job is to work on balancing the triangle so that we can be our unencumbered selves. The first step in this process is to master our emotions.

Emotion can be defined by examining the word itself. It is a contraction of the phrase “energy in motion”. Thus, an emotion is simply energy moving through your body. We can all feel this energy if we allow ourselves to. For example, clenched fists, shaking or a tight jaw often accompany anger as it moves through us.

There are hundreds of different emotions, but they essentially boil down to what we call the six basics:

- Joy
- Peace
- Love
- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear

The emotions that are not on this list are almost always a different version of one of the six basics. For example, happiness is a version of joy, and guilt is most likely anger turned against the self.



The six basic emotions fit easily into two groups – so called positive and negative. Society teaches us to feel as much of the positive emotions as we can, and avoid the “so-called” negative emotions at all costs.

However, the negative emotions are not bad – even though they are often labelled “wrong” because they are uncomfortable to express. Since we have felt the pain of these emotions before, we tend to avoid feeling them again. The problem is that this results in the emotion being suppressed, which only makes it stronger.

You only have two options when dealing with emotions: express or suppress. Emotional expression involves actively exploring your emotions and releasing their energy. This is the emotionally intelligent option. Fresh emotions are healthy if fully felt and properly expressed. Numerous studies have demonstrated both mental and physical health benefits associated with emotional expression, and as a widely-respected paper published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* posits: “on the basis of research over the past decade, psychologists now have a strong sense that talking or even writing about emotions or personal upheavals can boost autonomic nervous system activity, immune function, and physical health.”<sup>6</sup>

**“Suppressed emotions are like physical wounds – without proper first aid, they never heal.”**

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6 R. Glaser, J.K. Kiecolt-Glaser, and J.W. Pennebaker, “Disclosure of Traumas and Immune Function: Health Implications for Psychotherapy,” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 1988.

**Example**

Two ducks float peacefully along in their pond; suddenly one crosses too far into the other duck's territory. A fight starts – fast and furious. It lasts for only for a few seconds before, just as suddenly, they float off in their respective directions. As they do so they flap their wings furiously, and then return to their peaceful floating as if the fight never happened.

How do they return to a peaceful life immediately after the fight? Why don't they suffer afterwards, like most humans do? Why don't they have any wounds to lick?

It's simple. When they flap their wings, they work off the energy and emotions they've built up in the fight – they purge it fully.

While expressing your emotions is not always easy or comfortable, it will allow you to experience total emotional mastery, where no external event can knock you into a negative emotional state. We will talk more about how to do this later.

Suppression is essentially avoidance. When an emotion is painful or uncomfortable, our natural reaction is to push it away. Painful emotions are pushed deep within ourselves to be dealt with later when it hurts less. This is unrealistic (it will always be uncomfortable) and extremely unhealthy. Suppressed emotions are like physical wounds – without proper first aid, they never heal. They get infected

and begin to rot. The longer they are left, the nastier they get, and what began as a cut on your toe might cost you your whole leg.

As Keith Petrie observed when assessing the effect of written emotional expression on immune function in patients with human immunodeficiency virus infection, there is “considerable data to suggest that when individuals actively inhibit emotional expression, they show measurable immunological changes consistent with poorer health outcomes.”<sup>7</sup>

Current research on emotions states that suppressing emotions can lead to physical and psychological health problems. The leading researcher in this field, James W Pennebaker, suggests that suppressing emotions requires a tremendous amount of effort. Pennebaker speculates that the very act of avoiding feeling creates physical stress. Holding our emotions in prevents our bodies from functioning properly because of the stress it creates.

Imagine that you have a bucket inside you for each feeling you suppress. Each time you avoid an emotion it is pushed down into this container. As you go through life, your bucket starts to fill up. To prevent the emotions welling up, you push them down further and put a lid on the bucket, creating pressure. Now the buckets are silently quivering away inside you – one more drop and they will burst open like floodgates.

**“Men and women often misunderstand each other because they are taught differently, especially when it comes to negative emotions.”**

7 K.J. Petrie, et al., “Effect of Written Emotional Expression on Immune Functions in Patients with Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection: A Randomized Trial,” *Psychosomatic Medicine: Journal of Biobehavioral Medicine*, 17 November 2002, viewed 23 June 2009, <<http://www.psychosomaticmedicine.org/cgi/content/full/66/2/272>>.

### **Example**

John is a 49-year-old man who is suicidal. His family is so concerned about him that he is on suicide watch to ensure he does not take his own life. John has spent his entire life suppressing his emotions – never dealing with feeling abandoned by both of his parents. He is essentially a hurt little boy – and he admits that he has never really grown up. John's father was very strict, worked extremely hard and never told his sons that he loved them. John's mother was an undemonstrative woman who coped with her own feelings of abandonment by withdrawing.

From the outside, John's upbringing was not unpleasant. His parents provided well for him and worked hard to create a nice life for their family. They were never abusive. It is important to understand that what actually happened is irrelevant – what matters is how John feels.

John's pain is the result of all three negative emotions overflowing from their buckets simultaneously. What John needs to do is explore and express his emotions and he will recover, but he continues to state that he can't. The truth is that he won't. He has spent his entire life choosing not to express his emotions.

If John could find the courage to explore his emotions, he would be well be on his way to being a healthy, balanced person in just a few days.

Strong emotions often come up when we least expect it. A shocking number of couples come to us for help when their marriage nearly dissolves over the toothpaste tube being squeezed in the middle. As you might guess, the real

problem has nothing to do with toothpaste.

Men and women often misunderstand each other because they are taught differently, especially when it comes to negative emotions. For men, the only negative emotion that is safe to express is anger. If you're a man, you don't get scared, and you certainly don't cry. If you do, you're simply labelled "weak" or a "sissy". Conversely, women aren't allowed to be angry because it's not nice. Angry women are often referred to as "bitches". These conflicting teachings often mean that dealing with the opposite sex is like walking through a minefield – be very careful or you'll get blown up. When we express our emotions enough to keep the buckets empty, these misunderstandings fizzle quickly because we are able to be patient with each other.

Let's have a closer look at emotional intelligence.

Many people mistakenly believe that external events exert control over their emotions. Abandoning this belief and realising that we have the ability to decide how we feel at any given moment is the first step to emotional mastery. From this point of view, perspective is essential. Nothing is good or bad. Events are neutral. What causes us to feel a certain way is how we interpret the situation – how we think about it. The event itself has no meaning other than that which

we assign it. The act of assigning meaning, whether conscious or not, is what causes us to feel a certain way. Different people will always interpret the same situation differently.

**“Between stimulus and response lies the opportunity to make a conscious choice.”**

When diagnosed with terminal illness, some people interpret it as terrible and become depressed, while others interpret it as a challenge and find a way to overcome the illness. Still others view the sickness as a wake-up call and re-evaluate their priorities to

make the best possible use of the time left. To some it's an end, to others a new beginning.

More often than not, these interpretations are subconscious, but they don't have to be. We can choose to find and assign a different interpretation to any situation we come across. In this way, we can become empowered by our own choices. Instead of failure, we can create a learning experience. Instead of loss, we can feel gratitude for what we have. In place of rejection, we can see a mismatch and a renewed opportunity to find a perfect fit.

**“The key to successful emotional expression is ensuring that no one else gets hurt in the process.”**

Between stimulus and response lies the opportunity to make a conscious choice. We can go bankrupt and move on to even greater wealth – Donald Trump did. We can be disfigured and still inspire others – W. Mitchell did. A loved one can leave us feeling depressed and suicidal and we can still bounce back – Billy Joel did. On the other hand, we can enjoy outstanding success and still abuse ourselves to the point of death – John Belushi did.

For any negative event, you can find someone who turned it into an empowering experience, and for any positive event, you can find someone who interpreted it badly enough to hurt themselves. Once we grasp this, we can begin to master our emotions.

When we avoid the trap of letting external situations control us we can use our consciousness to direct our interpretation toward the greatest possible outcome. When we are independent of external events, we can truly be free. No matter what happens to us, we can choose to be at peace.

Emotions are not thoughts; however being emotionally intelligent challenges us to use our thoughts to affect our emotions. We must understand that we have the innate ability to consciously direct our thoughts to create any feeling we want, whenever we want. This prevents external circumstances from hijacking our emotions and creates a sense of inner peace.

### **Practices for emotional stability**

We cannot master our emotions and practice emotional intelligence without first becoming aware of what we are feeling. The simplest way to do this is to constantly “check in” with yourself. Just pausing to reflect on how you feel throughout the day can prevent many of the minor mishaps that result in you being hijacked by your emotions. Another simple but effective strategy is to start listening to what you say to others – both the words you use and the tone of your voice.

The key to successful emotional expression is ensuring that no one else gets hurt in the process. This is what we call expressing cleanly. Yelling at the person you are angry with will not help – it will only make you angry with yourself for hurting them, and ultimately provide you with more proof that suppression is a better method.

Remember – this can be uncomfortable. Feeling your emotions takes courage, but it is nothing that you cannot handle. Ensure that you have the time to complete the exercises properly; stopping in the middle will leave you feeling a lot worse. Have faith that if you allow yourself to feel, you will come out the other side better off.

Remind yourself that your emotions are not wrong, they simply *are*. Feel them fully when they are fresh and you will truly experience freedom. Remember that we rarely feel one emotion at a time. Don't be startled if you are working with anger and suddenly find you feel very sad.

These exercises may seem too simple and easy to make a difference. The difficult part is finding the time to continue using them. If you want to alter the way you experience life, you will have to commit to consistently repeating these exercises.

Create a safe place where you can say or do whatever you need, and jump in head-first!

### **Self-coaching exercise one – Anger**

We have found that the most effective method for dealing with anger is using a punching bag. Lay the bag on the floor in front of you and position yourself on your knees. The idea is that you yell and punch the bag at the same time, but there are a few things you need to make sure you do.

1. Raise your arm backwards and up behind your head – this opens the chest. Move your whole body up off the floor as you do this. Drop your arm down to the punching bag as your body moves closer to the floor again, making contact with the side of your fist. This will prevent you from hurting your knuckles.
2. Inhale as you draw back and exhale as you hit the bag. This makes it easier to yell at the same time you punch. Being vocal is essential – this will not work if you don't yell and scream. Start by exhaling very loudly with a "huh" as you hit the bag. You can then build up to yelling.
3. Start slowly. Spend five minutes alternating arms, working at about 60 per cent of capacity (both physically and emotionally). Then step it up – another five minutes at about 80 per cent – this should be louder and harder. The next step is to really let go – let the bag have it. Go at 100 per cent until you are exhausted. Yell as loud as you can, hit as hard as you can, and allow the anger to surge through you.
4. When you feel like you have nothing left, get vertical again. Stay on your knees, but straighten up. Close your eyes and spend five minutes breathing deeply.



If you don't like using a punching bag, you can make a pile of pillows in front of you – just make sure there are enough that you don't end up punching the floor and hurting yourself.

### **Self-coaching exercise two – Sadness**

If you do the punching bag exercise, you may find you get sad once you have expressed enough anger. This is normal and natural. The best thing to do with sadness is let yourself feel it. Cry – for as long as you need to. Many people don't allow themselves to express sadness because they feel that if they start crying they will never stop. This is not true. Like all buckets, this one has a bottom, and if you just let yourself, you will find it.

Find a trigger for your sadness – sad movies do it for most people. The best thing to do is take the time to do the punching bag exercise first and let the sadness surface after the anger.

Once you trigger yourself, get on the floor. Position yourself on all fours – elbows and knees supporting you. Hang your head, and let the tears come. Move a little as you cry; a simple rocking motion is enough. It is very important that you don't freeze up. You may like to have someone be with you during this exercise, but it is imperative that you choose someone who will allow you to cry without trying to stop you or make you feel better. They can place their hand on your back, or get on the floor next to you, and rock with you.

Cry until the tears run out. It may take a while, but you will eventually get the same sense of completion you felt with the anger exercise. Spend five minutes breathing deeply when you finish.

### **Self-coaching exercise three – Written expression**

We have discussed the importance of expressing your emotions. Most people talk about how they feel with trusted friends or partners, but what do you do when they aren't available? Or when it's too hard to say it out loud? What do you do when it's not safe for you to open yourself to someone else?

Write. Writing as a method of expression is certainly nothing new. People have been writing their experiences in journals for centuries.

Scientific research now links written expression with good physical and psychological health. Several studies have found that writing about emotional experiences has a direct relationship with well-being. Interestingly, the more emotion-laden the writing, the more health benefits were observed.

When we feel stressed, it usually indicates that several different emotions are jumbled together and trying to get out. Emotional writing involves an effort to sort through these feelings, name them, and express how they are affecting us.

1. Sift through your feelings – you might need to close your eyes and remember the situation. Pick them out one at a time until there is none left.
2. Identify the emotions – name them.
3. Write about how you are experiencing these emotions – what thoughts are connected to them?
4. Focus only on how you feel – the facts are meaningless in this context.

Don't think too much, just let the words flow. Bring to mind a stressful or troubling time in your life. It could be a situation at work, or at home, maybe even in the grocery shop – something that bothered you. Current research recommends twenty minutes of writing emotion-laden words.

**Here is an example of written emotional expression.**

*Every time I think about it I get a burning sensation in my stomach. It's like a story that never ends...huh, story. What an interesting word – this is not a story. Stories start with 'once upon a time' and have happy endings. This is more like a nightmare. A scary, terrifying nightmare I can't wake up from. When I was young I would jump into bed with my parents if I had a nightmare. I found comfort lying with them in their big cosy bed. There is no one here to comfort me now. I feel so alone. And scared. What if I can't do it? What if it gets worse? Could it be worse? I don't know. That scares me even more.*

*My head pounds. Thoughts are racing through my mind. I want to yell and scream and stomp my feet. But I can't, all I can do is cry. I feel like that's all I ever do now – just cry. Even as I write this I have tears streaming down my face. Hot and salty, they make familiar tracks down my face. My eyes are tired and sore. Burning. I wish I could sleep. Wow, sleep would be so nice. Maybe if I could sleep then I could wake up and realise it was all just a dream. But this is not a dream. It is my reality, so I will have to find a way to live with it.*

*A small part of me knows I can. The rest of me is scared to death. Terrified. There are so many questions, so much uncertainty. Sometimes I want to hide – it seems like it would be easy and safe. But I will find a way. I have no idea how, but I will. I have to focus. I don't know what I need to do. I feel lost.*

## Self-coaching exercise four – Drawing

Many people say they are not good with words and therefore find the writing exercise difficult. This exercise applies the same principles through a different medium.

1. Get yourself some paper and coloured crayons. You can use pencils, but crayons tend to work best.
2. Bring to mind a situation you feel emotional about.
3. Draw your feelings. You don't need to draw an actual picture; in fact abstract drawings tend to be far more common in emotional expression. Don't think; just let your hands create whatever you feel.

If you aren't sure what to draw, explore your emotion. What does it feel like? Anger often feels heavy or dark. Joy tends to evoke brighter colours and more flowing lines. Remember - there is no right or wrong.

If you find yourself resistant to exploring your emotions, consider this: most societies encourage the suppression of difficult or hurt feelings. Choking back tears and looking cool in spite of our anger or fear is often judged as courageous, and a symbol of strength and good breeding. These cultural attitudes are often reinforced by experiences in early childhood, which teach us that suppressing our hurt feelings is sensible. At an early age, you may have learned that by expressing them you were putting yourself in danger of being shouted at, laughed at, hit or rejected, and you were likely to hurt other people, emotionally or physically, whom you needed or loved. You may have also witnessed (and indeed felt) plenty of evidence that when other people expressed their hurt, the results could be painful and dangerous.

So, like many other people, you may have reached adulthood thinking that even the safest and most natural forms of expression such as crying, trembling or foot-stamping are bad-mannered, uncivilised, childish, unmanly, unfeminine, unprofessional, hurtful, dangerous, and may even be sinful.

If you have not had enough practice in discharging hurt feelings, expression may at first seem unnatural and may provoke anxiety in you, because it will feel awkward as well as wrong.

But stay with it! Remember, the healing is in the expression of the feeling.

## Paul's thoughts on emotions



For all our education and wisdom, most of us are mental midgets when it comes to emotions. Anyone can see that not expressing them is a disaster of epic proportions waiting to happen. We even call it bottling them up! If you work for a soft drink company, bottled things create income – if not, fizzy stuff under pressure always makes a mess.

Given that it's not rocket science to deduce that repressed emotion is the cause of 90% of all illness, what boggles the mind is why we resist expressing how we feel so strongly. In fact, it's one of the quirks of our clinical work. People can sit around all day discussing how they need to get old emotions out of their system, but one minute of actually doing some emoting (expression) usually creates a stampede for the toilets.

Why? Because we are so uncomfortable with strong emotions, especially the so-called negative ones. We have been taught absolutely nothing about the function of emotions. We just know that we need to make them go away. And we want them to go away, *now*.

We become so inexperienced with the “big three” (anger, sadness and fear) that they genuinely scare us. I've lost count of the number of men who have told me that they are afraid of what might happen if they were to really let go. Even greater numbers of clients tell me

that they don't want to sink into a pool of sadness because they are sure that they will drown in it. Anyone who has genuinely been scared knows it isn't fun. A simple fear of heights, once triggered, is a paralysing, heart pounding, blood-pumping affair. And I haven't even touched on shame or guilt – a couple of uninvited gatecrashers who've locked themselves inside the booze fridge.

These negative emotions are not bad per se. We are just oblivious to any benefit that might come from them because we are so busy trying to get rid of them. We have learned only how to make them go away. The best thing we can do is to turn towards these feelings and explore them. This is most practically done when they arise but may have to be tackled at another (more private or convenient) time.

Therefore, we need to actually recall these feelings and let them return to our senses – deliberately. When I say this, most people think I sound like I am stark raving mad. But, as we say in our clinical work, “If what you've been doing has delivered what you want out of life, what are you doing here?”

You'll need help to get started so here are a few tips in the “how to” category:

You will be pre-programmed to make the feelings go away so be prepared to feel stuck. “*I just don't seem to be able to get angry right now*” is pretty normal. This is one of the few areas where “fake it til you make it” is a great idea!

Set aside time when you can be safe from disturbances.

Get support if you need it. A close friend who understands what you are working on and who knows that they are not there to “fix” you is ideal.

Bring the emotion up deliberately by thinking about the person, the situation or the event that created the drama in the first place.

You will need to have a bit of a yell, scream, cry or moan to get going. As you do so, turn towards the feeling with a view to exploring it. This means discovering where it is, what it wants to do, where it wants to go, how it sits, what colour it is, whether its is moving or still, how much water it would hold, whether it has a name, is it shiny or dull, blunt or sharp, round or square.

Persist with this ‘observation’ knowing that you don’t need to understand the feeling, rationalise it or make it go away. After all, if it went away you wouldn’t be able to explore it any more!

Observe yourself observing. You’ll notice that the feeling will naturally dissipate and lose its grip on you. We call this ‘getting un-hijacked’. It is the difference between being a victim of the sensations and observing/exploring them.

Notice that underneath all the drama and petrol fed fire, is the real you. Calm, enquiring, inquisitive, peaceful and powerful.

For most people this transformation happens in minutes. In our clinical work we see people heal themselves in an hour, even when the trauma is decades old. It might now be easier to understand why I said, “We are mental midgets when it comes to emotions”.



Would you trade an hour of discomfort for twenty years of agony, guilt, shame and fear? Or would you do what most Aussies do and pray that time heals all wounds? Obviously it doesn't.

Our experience is that people who swallow some brave pills and tackle the task described above, on more than one occasion, learn to pull off the technique on the fly as they go through life. Imagine what it would be like to know that nothing could upset you. That you can maintain an inner core of peacefulness and tranquillity that allows you to impact on the circumstances around you rather than be disturbed by the events of the day.

A quick note regarding getting stuck:

Remind yourself that decades of habitual emotional repression can convince us that we don't know how we feel. This is not the truth! We 'know' but we have blocked access to knowledge of that information as a way of protecting ourselves.

I'm reminded of a client who came to one of our workshops and got right into some anger work on a punching bag. He went away relieved, grateful and uplifted. Twenty years later a heart attack brought him back. He was keen to know if there was some 'lack of love' in his life. I suggested that he was still angry and he gasped, *"But I got rid of all that last time I was here!"* Perhaps he did – but what are the chances that some events in the intervening twenty years needed clearing?

Just describe the sensations in your body as a beginning point. You'll be stunned at how quickly these sensations begin to be described (by you) in emotional terms.

What most people won't do is set aside a time in their diary to do the work described above. We labour under the misapprehension that if we expressed an emotion some time ago – we are 'fixed' with regard to it. If you are keen to make the most of your potential, you'll need to make emotional 'work' a regular fixture in your life. After all, if it's been the most neglected aspect of your triangle, doesn't it make sense that it will need extra effort – not less? Set aside time to heal yourself before you need the help of the medical profession to do it for you.

Once you have done enough emotional 'work' you will arrive at the conclusion that you can choose how you feel at any time, any place and under any circumstances. Extraordinary as it may seem, most of us get this concept at some level – we just need the method for avoiding falling into the trap of being hijacked by strong emotions. You have one such method described above and several others in the chapter.

Combine this ability to choose how you want to feel with the concept of detachment (as described in the introduction) and what you get is complete emotional mastery. You will come to understand one of life's great truisms as demonstrated by people like Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa. You can be in gaol for 29 years or own nothing but the clothes on your back and still be full of gratitude and awe at the beauty of life as it presents itself moment by magical moment.

This is the fastest method for creating what you want. That is, to not 'need' it.

As we say in our financial world, "The guy who gets the deal is the one who doesn't need it."

Once you free yourself of your needs (because you can supply them all to yourself, by yourself) you are master of everything around you. It will all respond to your intentions and you will truly understand the law of attraction. At this point in your life you'll be able to 'think it' and it will appear.

## Jason's thoughts on emotions



If you were bought up in a family that struggled to express their feelings to one another, then you probably don't know how to do so. As a result, your ability to handle stress or be in deep, meaningful relationships may be limited as an adult. In fact, you will behave the same way you did as a child when dealing with difficult events as an adult. The problem is, you have a five-year-old trying to deal with a relationship that has just ended or is in trouble. Have you ever seen a five-year-old that did not get their way? Have you ever seen an adult that didn't

get his or her own way behaving like a five-year-old?

If you want break free of unwanted family patterns that don't serve you, you need to bring your awareness up when these situations arise. Once we identify a pattern that is from our upbringing, we can choose if we would like to continue to use that pattern or not. It's a bit like coming to a T- intersection - you can either turn left (which is the way you normally turn) or right, which is a new way to go. Every time you turn left, you reinforce your old family pattern, but every time you turn right, you start to reinforce a new pattern that empowers your new behaviour.

Perhaps you have a high IQ, yet you are unable to deal with the rollercoaster of emotions you experience during the course of life. You will struggle in different ways. When I was around 22-years-old, I experienced high levels of fear when I was faced with an assault charge during my security days. Not skilled in how to deal with my emotions, I turned to experimenting with drugs and overeating to deal with them. To put it another way, I was suppressing the emotions

that were surfacing instead of dealing with them.

The main thing we need to understand about our emotions is that they can hijack our rational thinking and make us think and behave in totally irrational ways. It leaves us feeling frustrated and we fall short of making the best decisions for ourselves. Have you ever said to yourself, why do I always yell at the kids when I know it is not what I need to do? Why don't I get myself to the gym when I know I need to go? Have you ever been asked to give a speech on a topic that you know really well, only to go blank during your presentation?

Because our emotions live in the subconscious, they will always overpower the conscious part of our brain, even though it knows (logically) what we need to do. Why is this so? Simply put, our conscious brain uses 10% of total brain capacity, while our subconscious uses 50 – 60%. So, learning how to stay relaxed when you are under pressure is the most important self-management tool you can develop if you want to master your emotions. It will also prevent you from getting hijacked by your emotions and reacting irrationally. Instead, you will be able to act in proactive ways that best serve you.

Another thing we need to understand about emotions is that we must express them fully. You can't think your way through a feeling. If a sad event occurs, then you are going to need to cry to express that sadness. Trying to explain your emotions via thinking will not help you master them - you will only suppress them even deeper. In my opinion, most health issues are directly related to this kind of suppression. If there is an event that you decide to be angry about, then you need an avenue to express that emotion safely so that no one loses.

I usually grab my punching bag, lay it on the floor and punch it to get my anger out. Of course, this needs to be done in a way that doesn't result in injury, so instead of punching down with your knuckles first and risking hurting your wrist, you need to hit the bag with the outside

of the hand. I call it the hammer-fist punch, which means you hit the bag like you would hit a nail with a hammer. Learning how to express my anger in this fashion freed me from taking built-up emotion out on the people I care about.

Healthy emotional expression also stops me feeling guilty after I have 'gone off' for no reason. This is directly related to my self-image going through the roof, feeling in control of my life and realising that I can choose to respond to any situation in a way that is in line with my values. For more years than I care to remember, I came home from work in a foul mood and I knew that my wife could say one word and we would have lift off. The frustrating thing was, even though I knew I was in a bad mood, I didn't know how to snap out of it. That all changed once I learnt about my emotions and how to express them.

These days, this is what I do: when I arrive home, I ask myself one simple question: how do I feel right now on a scale of one to ten? If I am a six or above, I know that it is okay to go inside. If I am a five or below I ask myself another question: what emotion am I feeling right now, and what do I need to do about it? For example, if I identify that I was holding onto some anger, then I may need to grab my punching bag and do an anger session in order to release it. In that situation, what I do is this: as soon as I walk in the door, I greet my wife with a kiss and tell her that I am okay, but I need to grab my bag and do an anger session. I proceed to the room in my house in which I do my self-development work and get into it until I have nothing left. Then I lie on the floor curled-up and give myself the self-love and support I need. After that, I walk out of the room feeling refreshed and enjoy the rest of the evening with my beautiful wife.

So the key thing I would like to point out is this: you can come home in a bad mood and take it out on the people that don't deserve it, and it will leave you feeling terrible. Not to mention, you get to beat yourself up for as many days as it takes to get over it. Or, you can check in with yourself and your emotions regularly and take action

in the moment to release them. Don't expect to be an expert in this area the first few times you have a go at it. Like getting into shape, you don't just do a couple of workouts and say, well that's it for me. You need to do it on a regular basis.

When I first started presenting at our three-day Mental Toolbox events ([www.thementaltoolbox.com](http://www.thementaltoolbox.com)) I was really excited about getting to the point at which I could teach the whole three days by myself, without Paul. In the past I have often overestimated my abilities. When I told Paul a week before our Sydney event that I could do at least all of the first day by myself, I heard a little voice in my head say, "bullshit, mate." Before the Sydney event, Paul got sick and I had to do the first day all by myself.

At that point I realised that you do get what you wish for. It was Friday night, and I had just completed my first session. In that session, there was a guy in the front row that had fallen asleep, and it felt like everybody else in the room didn't have a pulse. During the break, I remember walking up to Mary Blackburn and saying, "What an awful crowd." Mary could tell that I was feeling defeated and has started to sink into an old emotional pattern. She said something that changed my life: "What are you going to do about it?" I hadn't realised that I had a choice in how I wanted to respond to how I was feeling. I went for a walk downstairs and asked myself that very question. What am I going to do?

I decided that I would go back, do the next session, raise my energy even higher and go for it 100%. And that is exactly what I did. When I thought about it, my energy was the only thing that I could control anyway. Most of us have never learnt that we actually have a choice in how we wish to respond emotionally to the situations in which we find ourselves. In that particular situation, I took the crowd's boredom personally, and then started to fall into my old defeated, give-up pattern. If Mary had not pointed it out to me and I didn't decide to choose a different way to respond, the rest of the workshop could have been a total flop. Instead, the next two sessions I did went

really well, based on my decision to change how I felt about them.

This leads me to some thoughts about balancing the triangle, as mentioned in the chapter. Give yourself a scale of one to ten, ten being excellent on all three planes. Now, where do you place yourself on that scale on the mental, physical and emotional planes? Once you have identified where you are right now, you can check back in with yourself every month and work toward balancing them. Let's explore the ways in which you can work on getting a high score in all three planes.

Be highly aware of the language you use daily. Is it pro-active, positive self-talk? Or is it defeated and reactive language? You could start the day by looking over your goals and what you want out of your life. Fill your mind with positive information, like audio books or books on subjects that enhance your life. Never ever start the day reading the newspaper or watching the news because it is full of doom and gloom. You need to feed your mind with the best possible nutrition when you start the day. Challenge your mind and take control of your thoughts if negative ones occur. Don't fight them or make them right or wrong - simply let them pass without getting involved in the process. When this occurs for me, I simply laugh and say, "That was a funny thought," and let it go. Or I will say, "There is nothing here for you," and let it go.

Getting into physical shape will greatly affect the way you feel about yourself. More energy, better sleep, greater wellbeing, increased confidence, clearer thoughts - the list goes on. You also send a message to your subconscious, saying that you value your health. My suggestion here is that before each week starts, make sure you have put in your diary when you are going to do some sort of physical activity. It is up to you to determine what it will be, but making a start is the key here. There is more information out there in this field than in any other area. If you need assistance or want to



fast track this process, hire a personal trainer or join a group fitness class. Remember, you only get one body; respect it and look after it if you want it to last. No point complaining later on in life because you didn't take care of yourself when it actually counted.

You should also have some really clear methods about how to get yourself in emotional balance after reading this chapter in the book. Regularly expressing your emotions is the key to keeping yourself emotionally in balance. Make sure you practice the methods explained in this section to enhance this area of your life. One of the key areas I continue to work on is expressing how I am feeling to others. For example, my wife and I had been trying to start a family for about 8 months. In that time we had a few of our close friends fall pregnant. I can remember the day when my mate and his wife told me their great news. Straight away I felt a combination of emotions—jealousy, sadness and anger all hit me within a matter of seconds. Instead of expressing those feelings, I put on a brave face and pretended to be happy for them. Even though I was happy for them, it was not how I was feeling at the time. I felt even worse later on for not actually saying how I felt. It occurred because my old belief is that it is rude to speak up and say how I actually feel. The next day, I spoke with my mate and told him that, while I was extremely happy for them, I actually felt jealous, sad and angry when I heard the news. I also told him that he didn't need to respond to what I was telling him; it was more important for me to get it off my chest. As soon as I told him, I felt totally different. I also mentioned to him that, because I value our relationship so much, I wanted to be honest about how I felt and not feel the need to pretend that I am happy when I am not.

The more you work on these three areas, the more you will experience your true spirit, and the more others will see the real you.

Instead of allowing events outside you to dictate how you are going

to feel, you can take control and run your life. If you allow people or events to dictate the way you feel and behave, then the hard truth is you are powerless. Being emotionally powerful means acknowledging that you are in control of how you feel and responding to any situation in life. You could find yourself in a situation in which you feel hard-done by, or you could see it as an opportunity to grow from the experience. One will move you forward and one will keep you stuck. You can be a victim, but you can only be a victim once. After that, you are a participant.

Personally, I always ask myself what is it I need to do right now to express my emotions. I love the bag for expressing anger, and I also love screaming underwater. Writing is a way I express sadness, as well as playing certain songs to promote crying. For fear, I simply like to explore it and speak it out. Sometimes I write it out, and other times, I really get into my fear by going over the top with my irrational thoughts, so I see the humor in it.

If you want a safe place in which to express your emotions, here are a few things to remember: join others that are well experienced in this area because you will learn a lot from just being around them; undertake workshops that specialize in this field - Beyond Success specialized in this field by running emotional-release workshops ([www.beyondbeyondsuccess.com.au](http://www.beyondbeyondsuccess.com.au)). I read all the books on this topic, and practiced what I learnt in the workshops via Beyond Success. I surrounded myself with people who were highly skilled in this area, and got myself a coach that is an expert in it.

If you feel blocked, start practicing and using the methods explained in this book. To fast track your results, get yourself a coach and attend workshops. If you remain blocked it will be difficult for you to deal with your emotions, particularly after traumatic events.

When I was 19, I worked at a nightclub with one other security person.

After three a.m. we refused entry to everyone, even though we were open until five a.m. The other nightclub in the area shut at three a.m., which meant people turning up to us. One Friday night we had about 40 people out the front of the club that were getting quite aggressive about being denied entry. We had to shut the doors, only to have them start kicking them in and smashing one of the windows. The next thing I remember was waking up the next day very sore from head to toe. After that, I was literally on my toes whenever I went out where there were crowds, to the point that I started having panic attacks in public.

What I did was work through my fears by exploring and expressing them, instead of suppressing them. I did plenty of anger work on the bag. During that process, I realized that I was angry at the nightclub for not listening to our request to (A) have more security on, (B) shut at three a.m. as well, and (C) at myself for putting up with it and continuing to work there. It was a big lesson.

I have experienced many a profound emotional lesson, but I must say that learning that I have a choice in how I wish to feel and respond to any situation has been the most important one for me. It has literally changed my life and the results I achieve. More often than not, I am in control of my emotions and what I do with them.

I will finish by saying this: make sure you dedicate regular time and energy to mastering this area of your life. You will not recognize yourself in months and years to come. You will be in the driver's seat, instead of hoping things will turn out ok. As I am fond of saying: live life on your terms.



# CHAPTER 3

Money.

According to the Reserve Bank of Australia, Australians spent more than \$17 billion on credit cards in March 2009. The total credit and charge card balances outstanding for that month was just over \$44 billion.<sup>8</sup>

Our combined national debt was \$3.4 trillion as of September 2008 – and it's growing.<sup>9</sup> This means that every Australian, including each baby, has more than \$100,000 of debt.

With the economy struggling, banks flailing and governments stretched to help everyone, now more than ever it is up to us to create our own financially secure future.

Success in the financial arena relies on our ability to realise that money in itself is just an idea. We don't have to look at a 50-dollar note for too long to realise it's just printed plastic with an intrinsic value of a few cents. The value of a currency is the result of an agreement between us all – we use it as a medium of exchange for goods and services.

**“Money can never be more than an idea.”**

If that agreement fails, the currency collapses because it reverts to its intrinsic value – printed paper or plastic. When this happens the population almost automatically switches to using a medium of exchange that has more stability. When the Zimbabwean currency collapsed the government started printing 100-billion-dollar notes (which would only purchase a few groceries), but by the time they were in circulation people had started using gold and US dollars.

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8 “Credit and Charge Card Transactions Down in April,” *Herald Sun*, 18 June 2009, viewed 24 June 2009, <<http://news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,25654572-5005961,00.html>>.

9 Michael West, “Don't Mention the Debt,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 Feb. 2009, viewed 24 June 2009, <<http://www.smh.com.au/business/dont-mention-the-debt-20090219-8c6e.html>>.

**“What worked in the past rarely works in the present because the economy is constantly changing.”**

What does this mean for us?

The bottom line is that if we are to succeed financially, money can never be more than an idea. The idea of money is fantastic in theory, but it does have a few practical downsides we need to be aware of if we are to master it. And let's face it – money is either a master or a slave.

Our culture teaches us that if we work hard and be honest, we will be rich and happy. This is the formula we are taught for success. It has been

perpetuated by a generation who followed it and became rich – simply because they waited long enough.

The average working couple in the 1950s bought a block of land on the outskirts of a city and built a house on it themselves. Fifty years later, they sold it for several million dollars and got rich. This is not self-created wealth – they stood by and watched while the land price escalated as a result of the greatest economic boom in history. If they tried this in the late 1910-1930s they would have seen their hard work transform into massive debt – one from which they would have been lucky to recover.

We must consistently come up with new and current ways to use money in creating wealth. What worked in the past rarely works in the present because the economy is constantly changing.

The new understanding we need to adopt about money (harsh as it may sound) is that hard work and honesty simply won't be enough. The unfortunate truth is that we don't have to look far to find hard working, honest people who are broke. They are a dime a dozen.

This creates one of our culture's biggest problems – we assume the wealthy must not be hard working or honest. In fact they are often accused of being lazy and taking advantage of the less fortunate. Of course, this is rarely the truth. Invariably, wealthy people have come to understand the following, either because they learnt the hard way or they were lucky enough to have someone teach them.

1. To be wealthy we will have to serve others.
2. We need to find a way to make other people's lives better or easier – even if it is as simple as making fence posts so farmers can build fences.
3. If we fail to create value that others are willing to pay for, we will end up working for someone who is successfully creating value.
4. If we create enough value, our buyer is likely to think they got it cheap from us, and will therefore tell their friends.
5. Value is personal – a Porsche is only valuable to those who want one.
6. Wealth creation can be a spiritual journey full of growth.
7. Hard working, honest and broke is not noble – it is nothing more than an attempt to legitimise taking the easy way out.

Before we can achieve financial success, we need to understand the functions of money.

First, we must know that money serves as a medium of exchange. We have covered this already.

Second, money is a great way to store wealth. We can simply heap it into a pile – although these days it's far more common to put it into a bank account.

Third, in a capitalist system money can be used to make more money. All we have to do is place it somewhere and watch it grow by itself. This is quite odd if we consider the natural laws of the universe. In days gone by farmers would plant corn, water it, fertilise it and nurture it until it was time to harvest. In this way the crop would grow as a result of the farmer's efforts.

**“We need to develop a sense of self-worth independent of our bank balance.”**

However, the capitalist system does not require us to work – we simply have to place the money in the bank and watch it grow. Therefore, in order for capitalism to be sustainable, we have to be comfortable with debt. When we place money in a bank account, the bank earns extra money by lending our principal sum to someone else and charging them interest. A portion of this is then given back to us as a reward for investing the original sum. If we are not comfortable with debt, then our money never earns any interest because the whole system falls apart. The result is that anyone who wants to create wealth must invest, which works as long as the wealth we create outweighs the debt.

Fourth – money is a symbol of reality. We can insulate ourselves from the dangers of life as long as we have enough money. Health and life insurance, investments, trust funds, real estate holdings, ounces of gold, shares, stocks and bonds can all make us feel as though we have worth. When we are unsure about our worth as a person, money becomes the answer. The result of this is often emptiness. If our worth is equal to our wealth, we have big problems. We end up rolling our eyes as we tell the clichéd story about the man who built himself a fortune and found himself feeling empty and lonely without someone to share it with.

We need to develop a sense of self-worth independent of our bank balance. Success in the financial world will not occur until we truly understand that we are the same person with or without the money. Therefore, we must pursue wealth and passion separately.



**“The journey within that once produced true, lasting happiness is a relic of the past.”**

In times gone by, we worked (when we had a choice) in the field we found most rewarding. Many tribes sent their pubescent boys on a quest as a part of attaining adulthood. During their time alone they would decide which type of work they would undertake for the rest of their adult lives. The choices were far more limited than they are now, but the decision itself was far purer. The choice was made based on what each individual thought would give him the best chance of

discovering his inner self.

The work or profession was merely what one did while undertaking a life-long journey within. This would almost universally lead to self-acceptance, self-love and happiness. Therefore, the type of work we undertook was irrelevant – it was all considered to be vital to the survival of the group. Hunters shared the food they caught and the medicine man or woman did their best to keep everyone in the tribe healthy. Work itself had little value beyond what must be done to ensure the group’s survival.

When the industrial revolution occurred, peasants in the feudal system were encouraged to leave the fields and work in factories. They moved from the country into the city, and money began to change hands quickly. Labour was no longer paid in food or shelter, but in cold hard cash. On the surface, this was great – people were earning more money than ever before.

The problem is that now most of us are working for money, rather than pursuing self-awareness. The journey within that once produced true, lasting happiness is a relic of the past. Below the surface discontent festers.

What happens when we are forced to invest our blood, sweat and tears in working for printed paper?

Discontent. Restlessness. Lack of joy and self-awareness. Less opportunity for gaining wisdom.

For most people, this is absolutely soul-destroying.

When we cannot fulfil our soul's needs through our daily pursuits, we buy pain relief with our hard-earned money, leaving nothing to invest. This ultimately prevents us from creating wealth.

So how do we create a wealthy future?

It's simple really. Money is no more than an idea, and as such responds beautifully to a change in mindset. The biggest issue we have with money is our relationship with it; most people have an emotional relationship with money when they need to have an *intellectual* relationship with money.

**“Most people have an emotional relationship with money when they need to have an *intellectual* relationship with money.”**

There are several steps we must complete in order to succeed in the financial arena.

First, we must find a rewarding job.

Second, we must examine our emotional relationship with money.

Next, we must work towards eradicating the links between our wealth and our worth.

Finally, we must replace the old financial programming with new patterns based on our personal preference. We can complete these steps cheaply and easily early on, or spend a great deal of time and money later. Let's take a closer look at each of these steps.

### **Find a rewarding job**

No matter what your current financial position is, commit yourself now to finding work that is uplifting. When you work because you love it, you won't find yourself watching the clock or wishing you were somewhere else. You can also quickly become an expert in your field simply because you are passionate about what you do – and experts get paid very well.

### **Examine your relationship with money**

Ask yourself the following questions and spend some time exploring the answers. Write your conclusions down.

What was my father's attitude to money?

What was my mother's attitude to money?

What was I taught at school about money?

What conclusions have I drawn about money as a result of the above?

What does my God feel about me creating huge wealth?

What would my friends' reaction be to me becoming wildly wealthy?

What do I feel deep down about becoming truly wealthy?

What will I use my newfound wealth for?

Why do I want to be wealthy?

What does money mean to me?

How will I be different when I am wealthy?

What will I do all day and why would I do that?

What is my financial vocabulary like?

This last question may seem odd, but your language determines which concepts are available to you. If you don't understand the terms of the stock market or the language of real estate how can you make educated investments?

Increasing your financial vocabulary will expand your thinking and therefore open you up to new possibilities and money-making opportunities. You can increase your financial vocabulary by reading financial magazines, newspapers and annual reports.

### **Eradicate the link between wealth and worth**

1. Take a clean sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle of the page.
2. On the left side write a financial goal that is important to you, for example, "The return from my investments per month is higher than my living expenses."
3. Change the hand you are writing with (so you are now using your non-dominant hand) and write your truthful emotional response to the goal on the right side, for example, "That's not going to happen."

4. Repeat this process writing the same goal exactly as before and noting your response on the other side of the page.

Keep changing hands until your response to the goal begins to repeat. This may take several pages.

What did you notice during this exercise?

In our experience, clients who complete this exercise begin to unravel the original emotional knot. Generally, the response progresses from total self-doubt to something far more positive. The next step is to ask yourself what you will need to do to achieve your goal. Break the tasks down into manageable chunks and get on with it.

Why?

When we take action based on a goal we have set, we will find the next emotional barrier to success. We need to overcome a series of personal hurdles to get where we want to be. The exercise (on the piece of paper) is merely a tool that helps us to understand what is holding us back and then assists us in formulating an action plan.

Once we start taking action we will invariably be faced with more barriers to success. This is why we comment that wealth creation can be a spiritual pursuit – it is the fastest path to self-exploration, development and awareness, and therefore self-respect and love. Wealth creation in itself is pointless without the spiritual journey.

## **Replace old programming with new patterns**

The environment we spend the majority of our time in will help create our financial patterns. In our experience, our net worth is roughly the average of the five people we are closest to. Without ditching your friends, draw wealthy people into your life. Spend as much time as you can with people who are creating wealth.

What's inside us is just as important as what is around us. More often than not, our self-talk (the voice in our heads) is negative. This has to change if we want to create wealth. Take the time to correct your language when you speak or think in terms of lack or negativity.

As you change the way you think and speak, change your actions as well. Do what the wealthy do – seek to understand your thinking, actions and ideas. Within your means, act wealthily.

Accept that the only 100 per cent reliable way to get ahead financially is to save at least 10 per cent of your income, wait until it builds up and then invest it wisely – even if that only means placing it in a high interest bank account. We recommend that you save as much of your income as you can and always seek expert advice before investing in anything.

Above all, embrace the idea that all wealth is created – not stolen, moved or distributed based on worthiness. Opportunities for creating wealth are everywhere – so get out there and get on with it!

## Paul's thoughts on money



My middle class childhood was unusual only in that my parents' views on money were formed as a consequence of enduring the great depression - where any job was better than no job. The almost unfettered prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s allowed my folks to create wealth simply by owning a house. What cost them \$400 to buy and build was sold 40 years later for hundreds of thousands, but the journey along the way was a strange one.

My Mum came from a strict religious background and was taught not to even talk about money. Dad was from the wrong side of the tracks to such a degree that the wedding went unacknowledged until I was born and Dad had proven himself 'worthy'. That was pretty much their journey – superhuman effort directed towards something that couldn't be achieved.

Mum was unable to give me 50 cents without a stern lecture that somehow implied I was likely to spend the family into ruin, and Dad had to both spend and save his way to acceptance. It turned him into a tight arse who constantly acted like he could have anything he wanted and the resulting confusion became part of my financial DNA.

As a young man I recall being full of fear about business because my folks had me convinced that:

1. I was a reckless spendthrift who couldn't be trusted with money
2. Going into business was akin to slitting your wrists, and
3. Money only came to those who practiced monumental self-denial over massive time frames.

All of the above left me feeling like I'd have an easier time selling vasectomies door to door than getting rich. The problem was I wanted to have it all.

Money, fame, wisdom, good looks, sporting talent, the pretty girl and happiness – but take note of the first word in the sentence...

My Dad had convinced me that anything was possible. Despite his fears around money and his personal inadequacies, he was a genuine optimist as long as conversations about making money didn't progress past '*work hard, be honest, save, save, save*'.

In hindsight I can see that it wasn't going to be long before I had a lash at the world of business. Seven years as a schoolteacher was enough to convince me that the 'get rich slow' mentality was for someone else. I wanted it now.

Mary and I tested the waters with part time business activities that did little more than whet our appetite for the real deal and we began looking for an opportunity with little initial success. A chance encounter with a personal development guru showed me what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I had not recognised that I was a natural teacher and didn't even know I was looking for a way to become a master at it.



Within what seemed like moments we started a business that 25 years later is the foundation for a seven figure property and share portfolio.

I've been asked (on too many occasions to name) what the secret to creating serious wealth is. Few people have bothered to listen to my explanations once we move away from opportunity selection and into mindset. I can talk to rapturous audiences all day long but only if I'm comparing the stock market to property, the Internet or plumbing. As soon as I mention that mindset is the greatest determiner of success the crowd starts yawning.

And that's the issue for most people. They just want me to tell them what the next hot opportunity will be. They'd be much better off if they sought answers to what might have to change between their ears.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of wealth creation, from my perspective, is that you'll either spend a bit of time on mindset now or a huge pile of money on it later. As an illustration, answer the following question before reading on.

"If you earned \$25,000,000 over a period of 12 years whilst having enough money coming in from an alternative source to pay your bills during the whole 12 years – would you be set for life now?"

If you answered yes – I guess your name isn't Mark Philippoussis, whose career earnings (not counting appearance money) exceeded \$25M. In May 2009 Mark was evicted from his home after having been unable to make his mortgage payments for over a year.

While Mark's circumstances are tragic, you could easily make a long list of Aussies who have 'made it' and been unable to keep it. Just start the list with Alan Bond & Christopher Skase and keep going. You'll run out of paper.

If you are not convinced that mindset is the foundation for wealth creation, the rest of my segment here will be painful so feel free to move further into the book. If you can see what I'm getting at and you'd like the benefit of 25 years worth of hard won advice, read on.

There are only two possible strategies for changing your financial situation.

### **ONE – Reduce your cost of living**

If I could show you how to be debt free in 5 to 7 years counting your credit cards, the car and the house and you don't have to change your job – would you want to know about it?

Or would you think there has to be a catch?

The answer to that question will be quite revealing.

If you think there's a catch it's time to put this book down, call Jason my illustrious co-author and book a personal appointment to get your money beliefs sorted out.

Here is a typical example for demonstration purposes:

	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Min Pay</b>	<b>Debt Killer Amt</b>	<b>Min Pay + Debt K</b>	<b>Months</b>
Amex	5800	360	200	560	10.4
Visa	650	70	560	630	1.0
Master- card	2400	160	630	790	3.0
St George	1300	95	790	885	1.5
Credit Union	2000	190	885	1075	1.9
Ford Credit	22000	1095	1075	2170	10.1
Westpac Mtg	200000	2500	2170	4670	42.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>234150</b>	<b>4470</b>			<b>70.7</b>
					<b>5.9</b>

It's simple really but we just don't get shown during our normal education.

1. Find a way to get your hands on \$400/mth. You can do this by cutting down waste, chopping into lifestyle (Foxtel, beer, chocolate, cigarettes) or just plain pulling beers in a pub on Friday and Saturday night.
2. Put this extra money onto debt #1 and pay it out quickly.
3. Once the initial debt is removed, take the regular payments on #2; add the payments you were making on #1 and the \$400. This will also pay down the second debt quickly. Check the spreadsheet for exactly how many months.
4. Now that there are two of your initial debts out of the way, make the normal repayments on # 3, along with the payments that you were previously making on #1 & #2 AND the \$400. You'll see this third amount eradicated with amazing speed compared to the way it was going to go under normal circumstances.

5. Rinse and repeat all the way down your list. You'll be debt free in 5 – 7 years.

The bank will lend you whatever you want (up to 80% of the value of your house – probably) for a share or property portfolio and you can quit pulling beers forever.

Be warned, your mates will call you lucky or proclaim that you lost out on a heap of 'lifestyle' pulling those beers.

You'll notice that pretty much any Aussie with an ounce of go in them could use this system but 95% of the population will retire and be dependent on a pension – something governments have been saying for 20 years that they can't afford. So the price differential is this.

Work a bit smarter for 5 – 7 years and be set for life or just keep plugging away in the standard fashion buying big screens and new cars and retire to life of pulling beers until you die – just to feed yourself.

## **TWO – Make more money**

If reducing your costs is just too ugly to deal with you can always turn in the direction of making more money than you do now.

How?

Start a business.

Of course – done badly a business is a great way to turn a large fortune into a small one. Below is the formula we have used to build four separate multi million dollar businesses. Don't start if the opportunity doesn't fit the following criteria.

### FIRST - It must be scale-able

That means you must be able to add turnover (customers) without adding more of your own hours. This is necessary because building the business is only a good thing if there is more profit. You won't have to go far to find a businessperson lamenting the growth of the business as it has cost lots of lifestyle for no discernable benefit on the bottom line. Traditional methods for making a business scale-able are pretty straightforward. The brickie takes on an apprentice who initially slows things down but eventually adds productivity. If the brickie learns along the way that his job is to become a salesman and get more jobs – he can add as many bricklayers as he likes. In fact we have clients who run a team of over 250 brickies.

### SECOND - It must be automate-able

If the brickie in the paragraph above can't get bricks laid with a phone call (that would be to the supervisor) the business is not on automatic. The problem is that the brickie is too much of a key man in the operation and if he is taken out of the picture (like on a holiday!) the whole business grinds to a halt. Most McDonald's stores run on automatic - they have a highly motivated 19 year old following a set of written instructions. Don't get involved in a business that can't be automated. You'll end up working your arse off, making heaps if you count the cash but a pittance if you count the hours required to make it work.

### THIRD - It must be sale-able

You probably wouldn't want to sell a business that was scaled up and running on automatic but if you can't sell it that's proof you are still too involved. Any likely buyer will look from the outside and see what you can't because you are too close to it and if they see 'work' for themselves – they will look elsewhere.

To make money in business you'll need to understand that if...

- You fail to provide outstanding value to your customers
- You don't make them feel glad they found you
- They don't like you
- They don't feel a little bit like they ripped you off because the deal you offered was so good
- You are not someone they talk to their friends about
- You fail to remain relevant to them
- Your customer service level is 1% below excellent, or
- You don't constantly look at ways to improve your offer so your customer gets a better deal

..then sooner or later you'll go broke.

Your business has to make money or it's not a viable concern. But if you chase only the money...then sooner or later you'll go broke.

Business is in my view a golden opportunity to learn about yourself at light-speed. If you fail to grasp those lessons...then sooner or later you'll go broke.

When you 'get it' you'll be overwhelmed with opportunity and your ability to produce cash on demand will astonish you. Mary and I have watched our income change as we learned these lessons - sometimes painfully slowly. What used to take a year to earn suddenly only needed a month, then a week followed by an hour and incredibly even, just a few minutes.

Our schoolteacher mates think we are selling drugs because they cannot comprehend that such wealth creation can take place in those kinds of time frames.

## Jason's thoughts on money



The main attitude I formed around money growing up was that we were better off than some families and there were also people better off than us. In a nutshell, I knew we were middle class, although I didn't really understand that at the time. I felt wealthy as a kid because we always went on holidays, played sports and had toys. As an adult, my goals around money are about breaking out of getting by and taking myself to another level. While I love the toys, my desire to improve has come out of wanting to see

what I am truly capable of achieving in life. The money and material things are just a good way of measuring how I am going. For me, it is more about giving it a red-hot go than the actual result.

The results of family patterns will depend heavily on how your parents were with money. If you were lead to believe that money is hard to make, then you may find yourself working harder than necessary to make money. On the other hand, you may have made a decision that you never want to struggle, in which case the opposite is true for you. Completing the exercises in this book will really help you to identify your family patterns. One of my favourite methods for unlocking my old money patterns is to simply practice awareness when I make any decision based around money. For example, my wife and I are getting ready to buy our second house. I have been practicing just sitting with the emotions that arise when I think about that. Sometime I feel fear. In that case, I ask myself what the fear is

about. I stay open and allow the answer to come without thinking too much. When I get an answer, I ask myself if that is based on my beliefs or someone else's. The main point I want to get across to you is this: always question your limiting beliefs around money - it's up to you to decide if you want them or not.

The best piece advice I was ever given about money was this: save first. Unfortunately, most people spend first and by the time the bills are paid there is nothing left. If you don't have a financial goal to aim for, it will be very tempting for you to make your money disappear. This means you may need to go without in the short-term to benefit in the long-term, i.e. not buying a new car that you don't need or a big television that you don't have the money for. Using this method, my wife and I were able to pay off our house in just 5 years. At age 34, we are totally debt free - by choice. Ironically enough, the same method has also allowed us to live the life of our dreams. We go on amazing overseas holidays and I own the Harley I have been dreaming about for years. This has nothing to do with how much money we make - it's all about being emotionally intelligent with money.

Developing the discipline to go without will set you free if you can just stick with it. Find whatever it is that motivates you enough to stop you buying things you don't need - the things that will keep you financially stuck. Before I developed this habit and set higher financial goals for myself, I was the type of person who would spend whatever was in my wallet. When my wife and I decided to start a family, I noticed a change in my thinking. I can remember being at the shops and finding five dollars in my wallet. Just as I decided to get myself some nice yoghurt, something odd happened. I thought, "Why not put the money into a savings account for the kids?" I



remember wondering where on earth that thought had come from. From that day on, I every time I found small cash left in my wallet, I put it aside. I already have over one thousand dollars in a savings account, and my wife is still pregnant with our first child. By the time our kids are teenagers, there will be enough in their account for a deposit on an investment property.

As I mentioned above, my wife and I are debt free. Our strategy prior to that was to invest every spare penny into saving and paying off our house – a goal we had set together. We saved my wife’s income and used mine to pay our bills and our home loan. Basically, we always save first and over the years the amount we would put aside or invest has changed due to increases in income. If you employ this strategy, which I recommend you do, there will be times when you will need to find a way to pay unexpected expenses. If you trust the universe and put your savings first, everything will work out. This way, once you build up your savings you can invest it in ways that make your money work for you.

The thing that people most need to know about money is this: you must invest regularly in your financial future, and you need to start doing it right now. It’s like anything in life – you can get away with not doing it now, but you will pay for it in years to come. When I was 19 I was playing rugby league at the top level in Brisbane. My coaches advised me to buy a better pair of running shoes to train in, instead of the \$40 pair of basketball shoes I was wearing. I declined, not wanting to spend the \$180 on a better pair of shoes. Two months later, I got stress fractures in my shins and missed the rest of the season. I was on a contact to get \$300 per win, and our team won almost every game that season. Not taking action on what I knew I needed to do cost me more than money - I did serious

damage to my body. Allow me to be your coach at this point and pass on a piece of advice I never took when it was first given to me: invest in your future now.

The next key to financial freedom, as we talked about in the chapter, is to ensure your net worth has absolutely nothing to do with your self-worth. Here's how I learnt that lesson...

After running a successful personal training business for many years, I decided I would put together a program that could help other personal trainers achieve financial freedom by building wildly successful businesses. At the time I was working with a client who wanted to get out of his 9 – 5 job and become a personal trainer. He became a qualified personal trainer and told me he would love the opportunity to purchase my system – which hadn't been finished yet. I was charging \$10,000 to enter the program. Despite being excited about the possibilities, I doubted if anybody would spend that kind of money on something I put together. Thus, my self-worth entered into the equation. I had also made the mistake of deciding what other people value. I told my client to look around before undertaking my program (talk about self-sabotage) even though he was ready to go at the time. Two weeks later, there was a knock on my door. There stood my client, holding an envelope containing \$10,000. I had to work around the clock for the next three days to finish writing the program! I learnt a lot from that experience. I now know that money comes into my life easily and all I need to do is allow that to be ok. More importantly, I learnt that my self-worth has no place in the financial arena.

We also talk in the chapter about finding work that is rewarding. There are a couple of things that I have learnt going through this

process. For many years, I went from job to job looking for the one that would make me fulfilled and happy. The problem? I took the same attitude and beliefs about work with me to each job. Instead of looking for fulfillment myself, I was expecting a job to provide it. In hindsight, I see that I could have made any number of those jobs rewarding, but I chose not to. Of course, I would not be doing those jobs today, but the lesson remains. Even if you end up in your ideal work situation, you can still discount it unless you make it rewarding. Once you understand that you have a part to play in feeling rewarded from what you do, you can design your dream job. Most people fall into the trap of trying to figure out what career they want. Instead, try thinking about what the work needs to provide you with. Write down what the work needs to provide you with. Include how you want to feel when finishing a day's work, what hours you want to work, possible opportunities to move forward or up, how much money you want to earn, what type of people you want to work with and anything else you can think of. You may need to redo this several times. Many people sit around complaining about their work and do very little about it. At least this way, you are putting an order in to the universe for what you want. Staying stuck mentally is a great way to get more of the same.

Here are some other things you can do to move forward financially...

1. Educate yourself about how to make money work for you. Study those who have mastered money or are at least in a position that you would like to be in.
2. Set financial goals to give yourself something to strive towards.
3. Understand that it's not about the money – it's about your ability to grow and develop as a person. You will learn a lot about

yourself during this process and you are going to need to become different in all aspects of your life to succeed.

4. Start making changes today to move towards your financial future – it doesn't matter how small you need to make the steps, just start.

Finally, I would like to point out that it is not about the money – it's about your relationship with it. I hear a lot of people saying things like, "I can't afford xyz". While that may be true, the real problem is how many times we repeat a statement like that. The more we say something, the more we create that as truth for ourselves. Be more positive. For example, "I don't have the money right now, but I will find a way to get it" or "the money is on the way, the universe is simply working on the delivery system right now."

The biggest problem is that people say they can't afford it and leave it there. Say that out loud and pay attention to how it feels. Not so great huh? Change your programming by developing new habits. Grab a pen and paper and write down when you would like to have the money by. Make a list of all the possible ways you could make it happen by the due date. You will notice a change in the way you feel after you have done this too, because you are focusing not on the problem but on a solution. Every time you allow yourself to stay stuck when it comes to money, it reinforces a defeated attitude. Look at these roadblocks and search for a way to get around them.

Ultimately, you are in control of your financial destiny. Take charge now.





# CHAPTER 4

Communication.

To be a great communicator, we don't need to master the art of public speaking. We don't need a superb vocabulary. In fact, we don't even need to be particularly articulate.

Being a good communicator comes down to mastering two underrated but very powerful skills – learning to listen and conveying empathy.

Listening is not just “hearing”. The average person talks at a rate of about 125-175 words per minute, while we can listen at a rate of up to 450 words per minute.<sup>10</sup> This means our capacity to listen is nearly four times greater than our capacity to speak. Or, in the words of the ancients, “we should listen twice as much we speak. That's why we have two ears and only one mouth”.

While around 85 percent of our knowledge is gleaned from listening, the International Listening Association suggests that we are distracted, preoccupied or forgetful 75 percent of the time. We can usually only recall half of what a person has told us immediately after hearing it. After time passes, it reduces to 20 percent.<sup>11</sup>

We can all listen, so why don't we do it effectively?

When we converse with another person, we tend to think that we are having a dialogue – one to another. But in reality, we are often having “two parallel

**“Listening is  
not just  
hearing.”**

10 “Listening Facts,” *International Listening Association*, viewed 19 June 2009, <[http://www.listen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=43&Itemid=74](http://www.listen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=43&Itemid=74)>.

11 “Listening Facts,” *International Listening Association*, viewed 19 June 2009, <[http://www.listen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=43&Itemid=74](http://www.listen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=43&Itemid=74)>.

monologues” in opposite directions. Most people don’t listen with the intention of understanding the other person; we usually listen with the intent of reply. Our minds are always rushing ahead to our response.

This is partly because we think of listening as a passive activity and talking as an active activity. We find prolonged listening hard to maintain. When we should be listening to understand the other person, it is likely that we are:

- Already speaking before the other person has finished
- Preparing our argument, story or response in our minds
- Trying to read the other person’s mind
- Not clearing our minds beforehand, so that our own thoughts overwhelm or distort what is being said
- Daydreaming
- Filtering what we hear through our own picture of our world
- Reading our own experience into the other person’s life. We hear it often... “I know exactly what you mean. When I did that...”, “That reminds me of when I...” or “Let me tell you what happened when I did that...”
- Comparing ourselves to the speaker (“Who is smarter? Who’s had it rougher?”)
- Busily drafting our advice long before the talker has finished telling his or her woes
- Considering every conversation an intellectual debate with the goal of putting down the opponent
- Believing we are always right, so there is no need to listen
- Wondering what to have for dinner, or reminding ourselves to do something

**“Most people don’t listen with the intention of understanding the other person; we usually listen with the intent of reply.”**



- Placating the other person by automatically agreeing with everything they say (“You’re right... Of course... I agree...”)
- Quickly changing the topic or laughing it off if the topic gets serious
- Becoming overwhelmed with emotion so that our ability to listen is seriously impaired
- Judging a statement to be “crazy” or “boring” or “stupid” before it is completed, and
- Becoming distracted or bored because our listening style doesn’t match the speaker.

Sound familiar?

One of the first things any successful communicator learns is to truly listen to what other people are saying.

In fact, in our roles as success coaches, we spend much more time listening than we do speaking. We often find that, if we simply listen with care and compassion, our clients discover solutions to their own problems. The opportunity to talk things over is all many people need to see the issue in its proper perspective.

Why else should we listen? When people notice how well we listen to them, they usually reciprocate and try to understand us better. Relationships improve. Friendships develop and deepen. Interacting with other people becomes rewarding.

**“People cannot always serve their spoken messages to us in neat, organised packages.”**

What’s more, we receive more accurate information. When we’re listening carefully, we’ll find people are inclined to give us the whole story. And we can discover not only what people are saying, but also why they are saying it. We learn more about what is really going on between the lines.

It's important to remember that people cannot always serve their spoken messages to us in neat, organised packages. We need to learn to extract the main ideas from among the other points. To do this, listen for key themes. Watch body language and facial expressions. Think about the meaning behind words. Facts, data and examples are sometimes added only to support the main topic, which might be non-factual (for instance, how others feel about a controversial issue).

In *Heart Work: Emotional Intelligence - Improving personal and organisational effectiveness*, Claus Moller identifies five levels of listening. Most people, he says, operate only in the first four levels:

1. **Ignoring – not really listening at all.** We often find ourselves in this level when we realise that we haven't heard anything our partner or colleague has said. We then have to back-peddle and try to glean a hint of what was said, or sheepishly admit that we weren't listening at all.
2. **Pretend we are listening.** We behave like the “party listener”, when we are politely talking to a person, but all the while scanning the room for another business or social contact opportunity.
3. **Selective listening.** Filtered by our own paradigms and blind spots, we hear what we want to hear and take messages that reaffirm our current beliefs.
4. **Attentive listening.** Offering undivided attention (and taking on board what the person is saying), but concentrating on the words rather than listening to the underlying messages that may be conveyed non-verbally.
5. **Empathetic listening** – listening to understand. Empathetic listening means that we are truly seeking to understand the other person's motives, wishes and situation. It is as much about listening to the non-verbal communication as to the words. It allows us to get inside the other person's frame of reference.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Claus Moller, *Heart Work: Emotional Intelligence – Improving Personal and Organisational Effectiveness* (TMI: Australia, 2000).

**“Good listeners check what they hear against their knowledge of the situation and human nature.”**

Of course, it is not easy to listen actively all the time. Our concentration only lasts approximately 20 minutes; and we typically retain for a few minutes only 50 per cent of what is said to us (recall two months later is around 20 per cent).

All of us get distracted at times. But a good listener gets back on track and asks questions when things aren't clear.

A good listener guards against the prejudices, closed-minded opinions, defences and fears of being wrong which prevent us from hearing what is said.

Good listeners check what they hear against their knowledge of the situation and human nature. Consider asking: “How is the talker feeling and thinking about himself?” Or “how does she see the world?”

So, how can you coach yourself to better listening skills? The answer is not rocket science - just some good common sense and a great deal of discipline. Here's what you need to do:

- **Know why you are listening.** If you don't know why you are listening, you won't gain as much from communicating as you will if you have a definite purpose in mind.
- **Listen with your whole body.** Active listening involves you physically and mentally. Read the sender's body movements, and exchange non-verbal feedback. Look directly at the sender, express interest with your face, eyes and hands.
- **Give feedback; respond to the person.** The best listening also involves talking, as you respond verbally to what you hear. If you agree, say so; don't leave the other person guessing. Seek further information by asking questions

like: “what happened next?” or “what do you think your options are?”

- **Show empathy.** Make it clear that you understand the other person’s point of view, even if you do not agree with it. Active listening requires sensitive judgement about when people want to talk and when they don’t. Use one ear to listen to meaning and the other to listen to feelings (like reading between the lines). Remember, words often mask real feelings.

**“Most of us spend 70 per cent of every day communicating, but only 45 per cent of that time listening.”**

Active listening is an essential skill when relating to others. Most of us spend 70 per cent of every day communicating, but only 45 per cent of that time listening.<sup>13</sup> *Truly listening* is more than hearing the speaker’s words - it is understanding and accepting the other person’s message and his or her situation and feelings. The Sioux Indians have an expression for this. They call it “walking a mile in another person’s moccasins.”

Walking a mile in another person’s shoes is the key to empathy. The Oxford Dictionary defines empathy as “understanding so intimate that feelings, thoughts and motives of one person are readily comprehended by the other.” In other words, empathy means listening so intently and identifying so closely that you experience the other person’s situation, thoughts and emotions. It’s the ability to sense how others are feeling without them saying so.

Empathy means being aware of, understanding and accepting the feelings and needs of others. The empathetic person has a sensitive and accurate understanding of (without having to agree) how another person may be feeling while maintaining a certain separateness and distance from them. Empathy

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas E. Harris, *Applied Organizational Communication* (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, 2002).

allows us to understand what has contributed to or triggered those feelings. The empathetic person will also communicate with others in an accepting and understanding manner.

Tuning in to people adds to our ability to understand them and their messages. It helps us to:

- Understand what another person is really trying to say
- Forecast when and why misunderstandings arise
- Avoid using a communication style that might cause disagreement
- Develop co-operation and agreement
- Reduce our prejudice, irritation or negative assumptions about others
- Work out in advance what will attract a receiver's interest, and
- Foster more meaningful, helpful, closer friendships.

Empathy is a fundamental social competence vital to work and social life. Empathetic individuals understand when it is time to say more, or when it is time to pull back. They can read signals well and therefore their timing is usually accurate. People who lack empathy, on the other hand, may not read these signals and inappropriately jump in, often resulting in disharmony and aggravation.

If we are to see things from another's viewpoint, we need to put aside our own

**“Empathy is a fundamental social competence vital to work and social life.”**

prejudices and preconceptions. The receiver maybe of a different race, creed, educational background, from a different section of the country, or have a different speciality or rank within the organisation. Under these circumstances, the task of empathising with the other member of the communication link can be difficult. The task is further complicated if we believe that understanding another's viewpoint may pose a threat to our own.

To better communicate, we must try to see ourselves through the eyes of others in the communication link. By developing some empathy with the people to whom we will be directing our message, we might recognise the need to modify our message from time to time before sending it.

Individuals who successfully practice empathy have learned which strategies and tactics to use with various types of people, knowing that no two are alike. They can modify their approach to suit anyone. They are good at reading signals – clues about when the boss is not happy or clues to encourage others to tell more. This ability means that they can work effectively with others, seeking out the most advantageous route for success.

### **Case study**

A young mother feels trapped at home in her house all day long. Feeling depressed and isolated, she confides in an older friend how she feels – explaining that she resents her children and finds herself yelling at them all the time. “I think about death every day,” the woman says.

The older woman thinks the young woman is being melodramatic. “This is nonsense,” she says. “These are the best years of your life! You should be grateful to have three healthy children.” The young woman runs home in tears.

### Case study

A woman's child is undergoing treatment for cancer. Visitors come and go from the hospital, bringing flowers and messages of goodwill. As they leave, many say to the woman, "don't worry, your child will be just fine."

Later, the woman confides in a friend that the optimism of her family and friends hurts her very deeply. "Don't they realise that the words 'don't worry' dismiss all my feelings? By saying 'don't worry', they aren't letting me talk about what's most on my mind - that he may not get better. Each time someone says it, I feel suffocated. I have to smile and pretend that everything is OK, which only makes me feel worse. Why can't these people drop the optimism for five minutes and just listen?"

When we respond to a friend's outburst of anxiety or sorrow with: "You'll feel better tomorrow," or: "Don't worry, time heals!" we may be giving them the message: "There's something very wrong with you for complaining when there's nothing to complain about."

The well-meaning advice: "Just take a hot bath and you'll perk up!" could be interpreted to mean: "You should have been able to figure out the solution for yourself," or: "Other people seem to manage in these situations." If we can empathise with our struggling friend, advice like this won't even enter our minds.

The opposite of empathy – in communication terms – is invalidation. This is what happens when we express a feeling or idea and the person we are speaking to contradicts or rejects it.

**“Interestingly, the pain of rejection can be even more profound when the other party bears no ill will towards us.”**

And when the emotion happens to be anxiety, sorrow or fear, the rejection can be very painful.

Interestingly, the pain of rejection can be even more profound when the other party bears no ill will towards us. Indeed, the person we have confided in may sincerely believe they are offering us encouragement. But they fail miserably because they lack empathy.

So, how can you improve your empathy?

Like most things, empathy can be learned. But to do this, it must be understood and then practiced. Here are some ways you can start to develop your empathy skills.

- **Learn to look for signals.** Read body language and listen to tone of voice. Learn to read between the lines when someone is talking. Try to detect incongruence between what people are saying (words) and how they are expressing themselves (body language).
- **Listen to understand** – not with the intent to reply. Use all of your senses, not just your ears. After listening, ask questions of others to ensure that you understand exactly what they are saying.
- **Wait before you give advice.** Avoid giving solutions before you fully understand the person’s situation, motives and expectations.
- **Walk a mile in someone else’s shoes.** Step out of your shoes and try to consider the situation from the other person’s perspective. Before jumping in with your opinions, reflect on why this person may be feeling the way they do.



- **Show you care.** Actively demonstrate concern for those around you, see how this affects them, how they react to your concern and how it makes you feel in return.
- **Become a student of empathy.** Watch for how others demonstrate empathy and consider how you feel when others show empathy towards you.

Learning to be more empathetic requires a conscious decision to listen and learn from others. We intuitively know what empathy is, but we often fail to show it because we are too busy trying to ensure our views get heard.

By consciously focusing on other people we improve our ability to understand others, and in turn they are more willing to understand us. Our communication skills will improve in leaps and bounds if we simply make an effort to listen and empathise!

Remember, people will most likely forget what we say, but they will never forget how we make them feel.

## Paul's thoughts on communication



If you've read what I had to say in the self-esteem section you already know that I was trained to be an average guy in an average world. It is therefore probably a greater shock to me than you to discover that my current occupation (has been for 35 years) is 'professional communicator'. I've been hired to speak to groups as big as 10,000 and earned six figure sums for doing it. I have had to learn how to be persuasive and influential. It's been an extraordinary journey, but not the one I had planned.

I wanted to be a jet fighter pilot. My grades were never going to support any such adventure so I took the next most popular and possible option at the time and became a schoolteacher – along with what seemed like half my graduating class. This transported me straight from school to school. At twenty-one years of age I found myself on the other side of the desk telling eighteen year olds how life worked.

Three years at Teachers College taught me that communication was an art form. I learnt that any piece of communication worth the effort deserves a plan. What I observe now is that most people are willing to open their mouths and just let words fall out randomly. Rarely do I see the brain engaged before lips start moving. This usually means that the speaker is misunderstood, meaning they have to try again. If I had a dollar for every time I've seen exactly the same words used

a second time as a means of explaining what was said the first time, we'd be printing this book in gold leaf and handing it out for free.

As a professional communicator I find it frustrating to hear someone say, "That's not what I meant", when I know that person simply didn't think about how to deliver their message before they started talking. They were clear on the message – just not how to articulate it. More often than not, it's the sending that is the problem in communication, rather than the receiving.

If you understand that how you say something is as important as what you say, you have one of the secrets of communicating effectively mastered already.

Back to what I think most people miss - the science of communication remains exactly that until you want to take it to the next level. Then it becomes an art form. One you must study if you want the joy of getting a message across successfully.

My 'average' background equipped me with enough self doubt to sink a good sized ship, so I learned to listen defensively. By that I mean that I felt safer when I knew what the territory looked like, so I developed a habit of hanging back in conversation until I knew the lay of the land. This over compensating turned me into a great listener. I needed to know the language, attitudes, beliefs, persuasions and ideals of any new group I found myself in so that I wouldn't embarrass myself by putting both my feet in my mouth.

Over the years I have worked on developing a series of clues that have consistently informed me about the person I was listening to. Try them in the next conversation and you'll be impressed with

what you come away knowing. You'll find an added depth to the communication you have been involved in if you use the principles below.

- **What are they saying - literally, not figuratively?** I use this technique to maintain my interest and focus. Because it only takes a small percentage of our brain capacity to recognise and interpret words, our minds easily wander off. Additionally, profound insights can be gained when examining the person's choice of words. I ask myself – what are they literally saying? Quite often the literal interpretation has very little to do with the meaning that they are trying to communicate – but it's very interesting.
- **Are they using some words repetitively?** Most of us have favourite words or phrases that creep into our vocabulary. They are what I call 'lazy words'. We use them when we haven't thought of another more appropriate or effective word. What role does this word play in this person's life? Swear words are the most common version because they have so many possible meanings, but there are many others.
- **What language are they speaking?** Rather than the obvious French or German, listen for the words (language) of a person used to winning. Or losing. Perhaps they are using the words of a bully. Or they don't take responsibility for themselves. Martyrs have an almost instantly recognisable set of words. I cannot give you a list here because it seems to me that everyone I've ever met has their own language. The trick is to keep asking yourself, "what language is this?" while listening.

- **Are they using absolutes?** In my experience people who use words like never, always, absolutely true, completely or totally are trying to be more convincing than they need to be. This gets me asking myself if they want to convince themselves or me. I look for how often the absolute is used and in what context.
- **What are they not saying?** This usually shows up in the form of who doesn't get a mention in the story. While I'm listening I'm asking myself if there should/could be other people relevant to the story. I usually just ask and get it cleared up. Alternatively, they might be telling you one thing, but if you read between the lines you find another (un-articulated) meaning.
- **What's the story?** Much to my amazement I have discovered that there are really only six types of people and the 'story' is pretty much the same. Obviously the details differ but they will drop the story on you as soon as possible. It's their one big truism about life and they usually won't pass up the opportunity to see if they can recruit you as a disciple. If you are careful you can ensure that this agenda does not cloud your communication with one another.

My overall attitude to communication is that while I'm talking I'm not learning, so I have cultivated the ability to get people talking about themselves rather than about me. If you ever need to make that kind of change in a conversation, just finish your point and then ask a question. It will work in most cases, but if it doesn't just ask another one.

Being understood comes after understanding others. My tips for communicating in a powerful, persuasive and influential manner mean very little if the previous few pages fell on deaf ears.

If you are interested in making your communications an art form, here's what I work on:

1. **Why should they listen?** I search for the answer to “What’s in it for me?” with everyone I speak to, from my wife to the biggest of my audiences. If a person (or an audience) grants you the permission to speak you must be relevant. If you don’t know what counts in their lives and you aren’t making an improvement in their ability to get it – you aren’t worth listening to.
2. **Can you deliver?** If you do have something for them – get on with giving it to them. Spare everyone the drum rolls and hoopla. Give it a decent intro, explain succinctly and finish with the shortest summary you can manage.
3. **Talk from real life experience.** Relate how this worked for other ordinary people – not the inventor or yourself.
4. **Stories?** The juice in our lives is not in the facts but the stories that delivered them. A well-placed, short illustrative story can actually carry the whole message if you think about it carefully. The reality shows on TV are popular because human emotion in its rawest form is displayed – and often exaggerated or played out for as long as possible. Why? At heart we want to know the ‘story’ because it allows us to get the message more fully. Be extremely careful when telling the story - most people tell boring stories that go on for way too long.

For a story to work it has to be relevant to the listeners. Below are some guidelines for using stories.

### Story Rules:

- **People love stories that they can put themselves into.** Therefore if you are going to tell one – understand that the things that happen to all of us are your best bet. For example, “Have you ever walked into a room in your house and asked yourself why you went there?”
- **Are they funny?** They don’t have to be, but you’d be stunned by how easy it is to keep the attention of a group who are waiting for the next amusing bit.
- **Make fun of yourself if possible.** The most acceptable kind of humour in our culture is the form

Several years ago, I had a PhD researcher ask me to help him with a presentation. He needed to communicate the results of his two years researching reproduction in dolphins. His purpose was to impress upon the audience the need for them to re-grant his research funds for another two years. As you can imagine, he was pretty tense as a lifetime’s work would be either supported or dropped due to lack of funding.

His talk was called “*Reproductive Cycles Of Dolphins In The Southern Ocean.*” I realised he wouldn’t even get people to attend the talk with that title – let alone vote positively on the funding issue. Despite his fears we changed the title to “*Sex & Songs Under The Sea*”.

I advised him to make the presentation 90 percent stories. Against his scientific instincts (which wanted him to talk about water temperatures and technicalities) he instead related what it was like leaving his new born son for three months at a time, recognising dolphins by their scars and behaviours, near drowning when he went overboard, no showers for 90 days and working in a place where laptops freeze. He handed his technical information out as people left the room.

The funding was unanimously extended by the panel for another five years. Stories work.

that takes the mickey out of you. It protects everyone else, hurts no minorities and shows you don't take yourself too seriously – a delightful character trait.

- **Keep them short.** You'll hear it said that comedy is all about timing. Funnily enough I've never heard a comedian say that. In my view it's about sneaking up on the audience and dropping the bomb on them before they can work it out themselves. Most great speakers get straight to the point. Model yourself on someone who is brief.



## Jason's thoughts on Communication



Most of the time we let our thoughts get in the way of effective communication. Sometimes we are nervous, sometimes we are quietly paying attention to something else and sometimes we are just focused on our own self-indulgent fantasies. There is nothing wrong with any of those things – they just have no place in a genuine, effective interaction between two people. For those of you who are nervous, remember to take the focus off you and onto the person

you are talking to. Find out what the person is interested in and get them talking about that. People love to chat about the things they are passionate about. Then you must take genuine interest in what they have to say on the topic, even if you don't feel the same way. That way people will feel a positive connection to you even though you may have only said two sentences. Practice – even if only on the people you love. The result? You will be known as a fantastic communicator and you will leave people feeling refreshed and cared about.

One of the keys to great communication is paying attention to the person with whom we are communicating and getting a sense if they understand or are looking lost. Next, I simply ask if what I have said is making sense to them, if not, I explain it another way. Just because you understand something does not mean you have communicated

it well, so check in with your audience.

Stephen Covey was the first person that opened my eyes to being a more effective communicator. His method of first seeking to understand the other person and then be understood really changed the results I get in this area. This is one of the best ways to build rapport and trust with people. My communication skills skyrocketed when I met Paul and Mary Blackburn. While reading books is a must for increasing your skill set, there is nothing like being around people who are excellent communicators. One of the main things I learnt from Paul and Mary is to communicate how I am feeling to others in a way that is empowering. I discovered how to have tough conversations without finger pointing or losing my cool. This skill has enabled me to build my relationships with people instead of damaging them. I always put myself in the other person's shoes and make sure they know I want to work towards a win/win conclusion.

Jumping to conclusions is probably the thing that has caused me the most anguish in the field of communication. This informs the person you are talking to that you have not listened to them fully or don't care enough to hear them out. Learning to be patient and really listen to the whole story, even if I believe I know what's going on, has been a very important skill for me to develop. The more the person feels heard and understood, the more receptive they will be to hearing me out.

I have become somewhat of an expert in dealing with conflict. From my point of view, this is because I have seen first hand what happens when we fail to deal with important issues as they occur.

For example, I was working with a client that was very reactive and resisted when it came to having to make changes in their personal and professional life. I was becoming frustrated with them as I felt it was a waste of both my time and theirs. The trouble was, I hadn't been able to find the right way to communicate this to them. I was fearful that if I expressed what I was feeling they would cease to be a client. I was starting to resent them and what they actually wanted was someone to call them on their behaviour in a compassionate but firm way. Shortly after I had decided whole thing was hopeless, I tried another angle. I had just made a suggestion and it was met with a hint of aggressive resistance. I said, "Look, I am on your side and I really want to help you get some breakthroughs in these areas. In order for me to help you, I need you to work with me on this as a team. Are you prepared to do this?" This completely changed our working arrangement and this person went on to be one of my best clients. My lesson was to always try a different form of communicating and to leave my emotions to one side. It would have been easy to get into an argument with this person and end the relationship.

If you are looking to improve your communication skills, you must let go of the need to be right. If you need to be right you will struggle to connect with others. Become a better listener and stay present to what others are saying to you. You will be amazed at what you can pick up on (without them actually saying it) when you truly focus on another human being. Find and study great communicators. Don't be afraid to mess up. Too many people avoid speaking up and having the difficult conversations for fear of messing it up or offending someone. You simply will not learn how to communicate better if you never get it wrong. The most important thing is that you

review afterwards and ask yourself how you could do it better next time.

My last tip is this: always seek a win/win situation when communicating and make sure you help the other person win first. Communication is not about the words you use, but rather the response you get from the words you use. Remember that the secret to getting your message across is to keep on finding new ways to say the same thing.





# CHAPTER 5

Relationships.

If you're having trouble in your relationship, you're not alone. The battle for marriage is on: half of American marriages, 40 percent of Australian unions and a third of Canadian and New Zealand nuptials end in divorce.

Australia has one of the highest divorce rates in the world. Each year, around 50,000 people get divorced – and just under half of those divorces involved children.<sup>14</sup> Marriage breakdown costs the nation up to \$6 billion each year.<sup>15</sup>

Marital breakdown is not confined to western countries. In Japan, the divorce rate has risen by 26.5 per cent in 10 years.<sup>16</sup> In China, the number of divorces has been steadily rising since 1980 when the figure was just 341,000; in 2007 that figure was about 1.4 million.<sup>17</sup>

All over the world, the figures tell a bleak tale – modern relationships just aren't working.

Why?

What was good enough for our parents doesn't seem to be good enough for us. We are no longer willing to make the enormous personal sacrifices that our parents and grandparents made. We demand (and deserve) lasting happiness, intimacy and passion with a single partner and if we don't get it we are prepared to sacrifice the relationship – personal fulfilment is now more important than the family unit.

14 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue 3307.0.55.001 - Divorces, Australia, 2007, viewed 24 June 2009, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3307.0.55.001>>.

15 Ann Harding and Simon Kelly, "Love Can Hurt, Divorce Will Cost," *AMP.NATSEM Income and Wealth Report*, Issue 10, April 2005, viewed 24 June 2009, <[http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/Biblio/ophd/AMP.NATSEM\\_love\\_can\\_hurt.pdf](http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/Biblio/ophd/AMP.NATSEM_love_can_hurt.pdf)>.

16 "Japan Retired Divorce Rate Soars," *BBC*, 22 Feb. 2006, viewed 24 June 2009, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4741018.stm>>.

17 Rosalind Ryan, "Chinese Divorce Rate Rockets as Little Emperors Grow Up," *BBC*, 25 January 2008, viewed 24 June 2009, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jan/25/china>>.

**“More is now expected of women than at any other time in history.”**

What’s the solution?

It’s not divorce, separation or self-sacrifice. The answer lies in learning to create relationships that support our personal fulfilment. There is nothing wrong with wanting more than our parents did. The truth is, times have changed, and our values have changed with them. The new problems we are facing are not symptoms of failure, but the result of the evolution of our society.

Our changing values have served us well, but they do pose some new problems. When both partners are unhappy, the relationship they have cannot be fulfilling. Let’s take a look at what’s going on.

Today’s “superwomen” are overworked, overstressed and often feel unsupported and overwhelmed – and with good reason. More is now expected of women than at any other time in history. At least five days a week, they put on a uniform and march into an 8-12-hour battle. When they come home, they need to clean the house, make dinner, do laundry, help with homework, love and nurture the kids and then be romantically receptive to their mates. It’s just too much to ask of most women, and it’s making many of them feel split inside.

Men are also experiencing difficulty adjusting to our new values. Modern men often feel underpaid, defeated and unappreciated. Like women, they are experiencing the toll that a two-career relationship takes. Years ago, when a man returned to a stay-at-home wife, she had taken care of the day’s domestic duties; the house

**“Like women, men are experiencing the toll that a two-career relationship takes.”**



was warm, dinner was ready and the children were calm. Men used to return from work to a safe haven of security and order. Now, abruptly, the home as a male comfort base is under siege. Many men work just as hard, if not harder, than their forefathers but still can't manage to be their family's sole support. Deprived of the strong sense of self that being a sole provider would bring them, on a deep emotional level many men feel defeated when their partners seem unhappy and unfulfilled.

The issues men and women are struggling with as individuals frequently destroy relationships. The statistics say it all: one in five marriages end in divorce within five years, and more than one in three end within 20 years.<sup>18</sup> More often than not, divorce (or break up) is the result of one or both partners panicking. When we do not have the skills, the support, or sometimes the maturity to push through a layer of difficulty (which could lead to considerable growth) we abandon ship.

This decision is often encouraged by the belief that "if I could just find the right partner everything would be wonderful". While this concept is certainly good to pursue as an ideal, it's often flawed because it's the same us that we take wherever we go.

The "panic and abandon" mentality often does more damage than sticking it out. If we are in a difficult relationship, it can seem like the "cut and run" approach will save us pain, but this is often not the case. Consider this...

What the divorce statistics don't tell us is that it usually takes two to three years for a couple whose relationship has broken up to begin to put their lives back together again. It sometimes takes five years for individuals and families to get

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18 Ann Harding and Simon Kelly, "Love Can Hurt, Divorce Will Cost."

over the emotional pain and trauma. Many people can have serious health and emotional problems during this time.

Many men, women and children sink into poverty after a separation and are forced to rely on welfare benefits to survive. Their standards of living drop dramatically. Many people wish they hadn't split up. A study conducted by Relationships Australia in 2001 found that 37 per cent of people regret their divorce five years later; while up to 40 per cent of divorced people believe their separation could have been avoided.<sup>19</sup>

But how do you know if your relationship is on an avoidable collision course?

There are some common early warning signs that we can all look for. If you identify any of the signs below in your relationship, it's time to put some serious effort into nurturing your partner and your union. The early warning signs of a troubled relationship are:

### **Your fire is no longer burning**

While a natural waxing and waning of passion occurs in every relationship, if sexual intimacy with your partner is as rare as a blue moon, your relationship might be in trouble. Psychologist and relationships specialist Dr Phil McGraw argues that when a couple has a good sexual relationship, it registers about ten percent on the importance scale, "But if you do not have a good sexual relationship, that registers about ninety per cent on the importance scale", says Dr McGraw.<sup>20</sup>

Stress, fatigue, parenting and other pressures can creep between the sheets, but when you find yourself shut down to your partner's advances, or they are shut

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19 Paul Goyen, *Live Well, Live Long: A Lifetime of Healthy Living* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2007).

20 Dr. Phil McGraw, *Relationship Rescue: Repair Your Relationship Today* (New York: Vermillion Books, 2007).

down to you, it's time to pay attention.

### **Bickering and nitpicking are the norm**

Have you noticed that either you or your partner seem overly critical of the other, focusing on one another's flaws or faults or perceiving faults where there really aren't any?

Are you constantly quarrelling about inane issues? Are there times when you can't even remember what you're fighting about? Little quarrels can lead to big problems. When bickering replaces conversation, nothing gets addressed or resolved. Instead, tension builds and a power struggle ensues. Anger, blame and resentment can become your bedfellows.

### **You're two ships passing in the night**

Do you rarely make eye contact or laugh together? Is dinner for eating and dancing for someone else to do? Do you end up in separate rooms each evening, or does one of you end up falling asleep on the couch?

A sense of space and freedom is essential to a relationship. Yet, too much separation and not enough shared activities can create a void. If you spend less and less time together, or the physical contact between you has diminished, you could be avoiding each other for a reason.

### **Avoidance is an everyday affair**

Do you seem to avoid deep and meaningful conversations? Are either or both of you absorbed in TV, books or other distractions? Is the table quiet during meals, and the mornings spent with noses stuck in newspapers?

**“Like it or not,  
straight talk is  
healthy.”**

Does one or both of you seem to be distant, distracted, or miles away in your

thoughts? Are you daydreaming more than usual?

Like it or not, straight talk is healthy. Without it, you will lose your boundaries and values. Avoiding difficult conversations simply delays the inevitable. Real differences in a partnership don't have to cause problems, especially when they are explored with respect. When you remain silent and stoic, repressed feelings become part of a toxic cocktail that kills relationships.

### **There's no tomorrow**

Is today the only day in your relationship? Are you or your partner unable to commit to a long-term future? People in happy relationships often dream and scheme about their joint futures together. It is natural to dream of what might be. If you or your partner isn't able to think beyond next year or even next week, you could have a problem.

### **Secrets and lies**

People who have nothing to hide - hide nothing. Is your partner suddenly secretive and suspicious? Are there whispered conversations on the phone? Is your partner evasive about where he or she is going? Does he or she give vague, indefinable answers? Or perhaps you are being secretive. Lying doesn't necessarily indicate infidelity, but it does signal a problem with communication and connection between two people.

### **Dependency**

Do you feel clingy or claustrophobic in your relationship? Does it feel like you're involved in a power struggle? When you're too dependent, or if your partner is, the fundamental basis for the relationship is out of balance. If there's too much dependency, a natural resentment starts to build. One person is likely to feel burdened, the other frightened by their neediness. It's a no-win situation. Equality is tossed out the window. The partner in power often feels unappreciated and undervalued. The needy one frequently feels disappointment.

Resentment grows and both partners feel judged.

### **Mad, miserable or morose – mood swings rule the roost**

Are either or both of you down and depressed? Are you edgy or angry? If your relationship has been hijacked by the emotions of one of you, it can signal a serious problem. Your partner may seem more sensitive, argumentative or hyper-vigilant. Or perhaps the little things – things you once loved about your partner – are sources of great irritation?

### **Your intuition rings alarm bells**

Do you just have an inexplicable feeling that there is something wrong with your partner, or your relationship? Do you sense or have a gut-feeling that something is amiss? Perhaps it's just a feeling that despite the physical proximity, it seems the connection between you is no longer there.

Have you ever heard thought: “I never know what my partner is thinking any more”? Despite the inner certainty that things are wrong, it is often difficult to explicitly describe the problem. Pointing to things like, “she forgot our anniversary” or “he never brings me flowers anymore” may appear petty, but they often are indications of an underlying attitude.

**“It all begins  
with an honest  
and open  
conversation.”**

### **You feel unloved**

Are you feeling insecure, alone or neglected? Do you feel unloved, unattractive or incompetent? The biggest sign of a deteriorating relationship is noticing that you have become insecure. Your intimate relationship should be a source of strength, not insecurity. If you're feeling belittled by your partner, it's time to reassess.

Relationships are enormously complex and there are no easy, quick-fix solutions. Sometimes you may feel that it is too late, but time and time again, as coaches, we see relationships which are doomed to the scrap-heap be resurrected and restored to life. It all begins with an honest and open conversation. Without talking, nothing can be resolved.

The seeds of why relationships fail should be apparent to both parties in the very earliest stages of difficulties. The seemingly insurmountable problems spouses experience in the last months of a failing relationship are just grown-up versions of the little problems they ignored at the beginning of their union.

So what do we do?

The first step towards a lasting, rewarding relationship is accepting that conflict is inevitable. Marriage (or living together) involves two people being with one another in a relationship for up to seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, year in, year out. This creates a great deal of physical closeness as we eat, drink, sleep and relax in the same house. To make things more complicated, we care for each other and often have high expectations of how we want to be treated by one another. Being human, we occasionally let each other down.

We all experience problems in one way or another – it's part of sharing our lives with another human being. The difference between relationships that work and those that don't is how well we deal with the challenges we face together.

Many of us get emotional when we see that our partner has different values, beliefs or expectations to us. We all need to accept that there will be differences in ideas and expectations between any two individuals in relationship, and, at times, conflict and strong emotions will be the result.

**“The difference between relationships that work and those that don't is how well we deal with the challenges we face together.”**

In fact, conflict is an essential element in any healthy relationship. In the context of a healthy, happy relationship, fighting is merely the expulsion of emotion and information about a difference of opinion. Thus, instead of asking, “how can we avoid conflict?” we should ask “how can we care for each other and our relationship while we are having an argument?” and “how can we learn from our conflict?” Relationships become stronger when we talk about our conflicts. During discussion, we often discover that our differences are okay and that we can find solutions when we talk openly with one another.

Here are some common mistakes many of us make. If we do our best to avoid these, our relationships are far less likely to be damaged by a fight.

### **Avoiding conflict altogether**

Rather than starting a discussion about building frustrations in a calm, respectful manner, we don't say anything to our partner until we are ready to explode, and then blurt it out in an angry, hurtful manner. While this may seem to be the less stressful route – avoiding an argument altogether – it usually causes more stress for both parties. Tensions rise, resentment festers and a much bigger argument eventually occurs.

Refusing to discuss an issue with our partner is sometimes called stonewalling. If we are feeling insecure, we sometimes deny our partner the conversation they need. This is disrespectful, and again, only results in a bigger argument later. Stonewalling creates hard feelings and damages relationships.

It's much healthier to address our concerns with our partners when they arise, and to allow our partners to do the same – even if we aren't ready to hear what they have to say.

### **Being defensive**

Acting defensively often causes arguments to escalate quickly. When we are angry, it's often a reflex action to defend ourselves. Rather than addressing complaints

objectively and being open to our partner's point of view, we steadfastly deny any wrongdoing and reject the possibility that we are contributing to a problem. This creates long-term problems when our partners feel we don't listen to and understand them.

### **Overgeneralising**

When something we don't like happens, some of us tend to blow it out of proportion by making vast generalisations. Avoid starting sentences with, "You always..." and "You never..." – for example, "You always come home late!" or "You never do what I want to do!" Stop talking, take a deep breath and think about whether this is really true. It's also important to avoid bringing up old conflicts – this only creates more bitterness and negativity.

### **Trying to be right**

We often decide that our point of view is the correct one, and therefore all others must be wrong. This can be very damaging to a relationship – avoid making your partner wrong. Always search for compromise, and if you can't find one, agree to disagree. Demanding that our partner sees a situation our way will only alienate them. Do not take it as a personalised attack if your partner has a different opinion, and remember that there is not always a right or wrong way to look at things – both points of view can be valid.

**“Always search for compromise, and if you can't find one, agree to disagree.”**

### **Psychoanalysing**

Despite our best efforts, we often misunderstand our partner's good intentions. Instead of asking about their thoughts or feelings, we decide we know what our



partner is thinking or feeling based on flawed interpretations of their actions – and we often assume the worst! For example, deciding a late partner does not care about us enough to be on time, when they might have left work early to be with us only to be caught in bad traffic. Our negative assumption is likely to make our partner (who was trying to be thoughtful) angry and wonder why they bothered. Do not make any assumptions about how your partner feels – just ask!

### **Forgetting to listen**

It's easy to forget to listen when we get angry. We often interrupt, roll our eyes and rehearse what we're going to say next instead of truly listening and attempting to understand our partner. This prevents us seeing their point of view, and keeps our partner from wanting to see ours. We cannot overstate the importance of really listening and empathising with our partners. For more tips on how to do this, read the chapter on communication.

### **Playing the blame game**

When we are in a difficult situation, we can often be found blaming it on someone else. We subconsciously decide that admitting any weakness or responsibility will diminish our credibility and avoid doing so no matter the cost. This often results in shaming our partner for being at fault. Obviously, this is unhealthy. Instead, try to view conflict as an opportunity to practice listening, empathising, accepting responsibility for your actions and compromising.

### **Trying to win the argument**

This is similar to trying to be right. Dr. Phil McGraw says that if people are focused on winning the argument, the relationship loses. The point of any discussion in a relationship should be mutual understanding and finding a solution that suits everyone's needs. If we are busy making a case for how wrong our partner is, brushing their feelings aside and remaining stuck in our own point of view, it's time to take a deep breath and adjust our attitude.

## Making character attacks

Some people make the mistake of taking any negative action from a partner and turning it into a personality flaw. For example, if a man leaves his socks lying around, it can be blown up into calling him lazy and inconsiderate, or if a woman wants to discuss a problem within a relationship, she might be labelled needy, controlling or demanding. This creates negative perceptions for both people in the relationship. Remember to respect your partner, even when you don't like their behaviour. Instead, consider using the phrase, "I love you, but I hate how you are acting at the moment." This distinction is very important.

**“It is important that we discuss with our partner what a ‘good relationship’ means to us.”**

The most effective strategies for caring for each other and our relationship during conflict are learning to listen, empathising and learning to compromise. These are discussed in detail in the communication chapter. Regular practice of these techniques unfailingly results in an open, honest relationship.

The definition of a good relationship varies from one person to another, but most people would probably agree that respect, companionship, mutual emotional support, intimacy, sexual expression, economic security and, often, childrearing, are all important parts of an adult relationship.

However, we don't all want the same things out of life. It is important that we discuss with our partner what a good relationship means to us. Ask yourself the following questions, and then talk to your partner about the answers.

- How well do you think your partner understands you – how you think, how you feel, what's important to you? Do you tell him/her?

- How well can the two of you discuss a difficult issue? How often do you argue? If you have many arguments that you don't resolve, there may be communication problems. Lots of arguments over trivial issues may be a sign of a power struggle. If you never have any arguments, is it because you are avoiding important issues out of a fear of arguments?
- What interests do you have in common? What do you do together for fun and relaxation? How often do you do something enjoyable as a couple?
- Do you have independent interests? Do you allow each other alone time or time with old friends?
- How do you feel about your sexual relationship? Does sex usually leave you both feeling physically and emotionally satisfied? Are you having any sexual problems?
- What is your vision for your relationship? Do you think about the future or focus on the day-to-day grind? Is your relationship vision the same as your partner's?

All good relationships are based on people respecting each other and being able to communicate clearly. A successful adult relationship means both people have equal rights, equal opportunities and equal responsibilities.

Once you have answered the questions above, you will be able to identify areas in which you could improve your relationship. Discuss possible problems and solutions with your partner and set about working towards a better relationship together.

One of the best ways to improve your relationship is to take ownership of it. While this may sound like an odd concept, it is actually a very powerful one.

**“One of the best ways to improve your relationship is to take ownership of it.”**

If you were to write down a list of your most important possessions, rated in order from most important to least important, what would you include? Perhaps houses, cars, furniture or shares? A prized stamp collection or first edition book? A vintage car?

Most of us overlook one of the most valuable commodities in our lives: our spousal relationships.

How can a relationship be a possession?

Dr Phil McGraw suggests: “You initially saw something that you wanted, took steps to obtain it, and then made a decision to keep it in your life. Sounds like a possession to me.”<sup>21</sup>

While there’s no point in time where we put a down-payment on our relationship and we never fully purchase it, we need to recognise that we “own” our relationship. It may be easier to see a relationship as “something that just happened”, but this takes away your power to direct and shape your relationship into the type of union you want it to be.

If we don’t own our relationships, we can’t accept responsibility when things go wrong. If we decide that we do own it (or at least half of it), we are responsible for writing our own “user’s manual” and looking after our product the way we would any other valuable purchase.

Accepting ownership for our contribution to problems allows us to release our blame and begin practicing new skills, which transform our relationships. As success coaches, time and again we have witnessed couples destined for

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21 Dr. Phil McGraw, *Relationship Rescue: Repair Your Relationship Today* (New York: Vermillion Books, 2007).

**“It’s important to consistently invest time in nurturing both your partner and your relationship.”**

divorce miraculously fall in love again. Through discovering and recognising their mistakes, they do not feel so powerless and hopeless. Their hearts open up again. They are able to see the person they fell in love with once more.

Falling in love is often easy, but remaining in love with your partner through all the trials and tribulations of life can sometimes be tricky. It’s important to consistently invest time both in nurturing your partner and your relationship.

Here are some more things you can do to improve your relationship:

### **Say I love you with feeling**

When you tell your partner you love them, don’t say it off-hand as you rush out the door. Take a minute, look into their eyes, and be sincere. The statement “I love you” needs to be treasured – some people don’t say it enough, and for others it can become something to say when they need to fill the silence. When you say “I love you”, mean it.

### **Surprise your partner with little gestures**

Leave a love note in their lunch, bring home their favourite flowers, organise babysitters and take them out for a night, or babysit so they can have a night out with their friends.

### **Have a date night**

This is time set aside for just the two of you. Work out how often you can manage this and do whatever you have to do so that you can be completely alone. Get dressed up for one another and do something romantic or fun.

### **Set aside time each day to catch up**

It's easy to get lost in the busy world we live in and forget to really talk. Allow yourself and your partner 10-15 minutes a day to be together, breathe and talk. This can be while you make dinner, after you put the kids to bed, or when you get home. If you have children (especially young ones) you will need to make it clear to them that this is mum and dad's time, and they need to somewhere else for a short while. Do not tolerate interruptions during this time.

**“Ask for what you want – be direct and honest.”**

### **Speak up**

If you want or need something from your partner, don't expect them to read your mind – it's unreasonable and you will only end up frustrated and disappointed. Ask for what you want – be direct and honest. If you feel like you need some extra nurturing today, simply tell your partner. If you have had a hard day and you need a compliment, just ask your partner to tell you some of the things they like about you.

### **Allow yourself some personal time each day**

If you don't take care of yourself, then you cannot care for your partner. Take at least ten minutes each day to be alone, breathe and centre yourself. Once you have taken care of you, you will be able to take care of others with much more love and sincerity.

### **Above all – have fun together**

Bring out your inner child. Shakespeare said, “A light heart lives long”, and the same goes for relationships. Joke around, make each other laugh and engage in activities that you both enjoy. Do crazy things and laugh about it. Have fun regularly – not just once in a while. Being silly takes your focus off the daily pressures of life and forces you to lighten up and enjoy yourself. Increasing the fun-factor in your relationship will keep it alive and exciting.

Ultimately, we must realise that a great relationship requires us to invest considerable time and effort. While we can enjoy relaxed time spent together, we must remember that maintaining a rewarding union takes work. The more time we spend working on our relationship, the better it will be. We often hear people talk about falling in or out of love, but we don't often hear of them "growing in love". When we work through our difficulties as a couple, we create for ourselves infinite opportunities to grow in love.

## Paul's thoughts on relationships



Given that life is a personal development journey, and God or the universe provides us with lessons along the way, then the question naturally arises, “What determines which lessons I get?”

The obvious answer after a moment's reflection is that our individual lessons are created by the goals we set. It stands to reason that if you have no desire to build a business, its unlikely that you'll be learning anything about it, deliberately or by accident.

It is from this point of view that I would like to explore relationships. The moment we entertain the idea that some people are special enough for us to want them present in our lives, we set in motion a whole range of events and experiences available only to those wanting to succeed in this field.

I recall a conversation with a client many years ago during which the idea was proposed that we are a spirit visiting earth for the purpose of having a physical, mental and emotional experience. He was aghast when we likened it to a holiday of 60 – 90 years duration. To quote him directly, “If this is a bloody holiday, I want to talk to the travel agent!”

What's not so obvious is that getting into a serious long-term relationship will bring up your unresolved childhood issues faster than you can imagine. For most of us that means our partner will inexplicably, inexorably and inevitably behave in such a way that we would rather strangle them than see what's really there – an opportunity for growth.



We struggle to change their behaviour to that which won't upset us. Therefore, most of our battles are vain attempts to stop our childhood wounds surfacing in response to the way our partner says or does something that the rest of the world doesn't care about. Arguments over toothpaste tubes, toilet seats and garden hoses become the norm, and we find ourselves thinking, "If he/she would just stop xyz and start abc!"

Our differences are usually easy to spot. He's an extrovert and she's an introvert. He's uneducated and she has more degrees than a thermometer. He wants to stay at home to make a nest and she wants to explore the suburb, the city, the state, the country, the world and probably the universe.

What few people realise is that underneath these superficial differences, most couples are disarmingly alike.

Take this real life example from our clinical work...

She's a gifted gardener, cook and homemaker. A genuine earth mother. Still, deep and unassuming. She's everyone's friend and has a calm, steady look that penetrates straight to the soul. Time with her is calming and inspirational. He's a talented tertiary teacher with a sharp, quick incisive wit, inspired to explore his potential. He is frighteningly intelligent, a lightning quick learner and doesn't know how to lose an argument.

Their friends pointed out that they are completely unsuitable for each other and that the relationship has as much chance of succeeding as brick does of swimming. They produce three lovely children in quick succession.

Ten years pass quickly with neither noticing that they are spending less and less time together and that the relationship is dying from starvation. They have forgotten their basic premise - God or the universe has placed them in orbit together so that they can learn from each other. In the beginning he so much wanted her inner peacefulness. She wanted his spirit of adventure.

Their 'higher' truth is that he needs to be more like her and she, more like him.

As time passes we all forget that an angel has come into our life in order to teach us what we most need to know. We start to get cranky with them and push for them to stop being the way they are. The more, or the longer, they resist the higher our levels of resentment build. Tragically, we get to the point where it's all too much and we push them away in order to relieve ourselves of the pain that we think they are creating in our lives. If we succeed in moving them out of our lives we have failed to learn what we so desperately need to know – and which they could have taught us just by being themselves.

This scenario plays out for two in three couples in the Western world. We are pretty sure nobody walks down the aisle with divorce as their major relationship strategy.

So, what could/should relationships be about?

In reality it's about meeting yourself.

If you spend some time looking within, you will inevitably discover that you are just love, looking for a place to happen. Contrary to popular belief, we don't need to be loved. We need to love.

We don't love someone because they love us. We see something inside (outside comes first – but it doesn't last long) that is beyond mere attraction, romance or lust. We see something special in our partner and we want to be around them and get as much of it as possible.

Ask any couple who have gone the distance and they'll talk about developing a love that is deeper than they ever conceived it could be when they first married. It's hard to imagine loving someone more than totally, yet long term couples talk about it constantly.

On the one hand we experience more of our partner's essence as we allow it to be possible. On the other we get to meet ourselves in a relative way. I am myself in relation to you and to a certain extent can only see more of myself in this way. Perhaps another way to articulate this profound and elusive concept is to say that I cannot recognise in another person anything that is not already within me. To admire their courage is also to recognise my own. Sure, I might compare myself and say I'm less courageous than you – but I must recognise it within myself first.

The above concept is why we come to love more deeply. As we perceive our partner less judgementally and spend time recognising their inner perfection we begin to see our own. As Mother Theresa said, "If you judge people you have no time to love them." This journey is the consequence of choosing to see perfection and magnificence in our partner. We come to love our partners not only for who they are, but for who we are when we are with them. The opposite is pretty simple and very common, making bitter and twisted relationships easy to find.

If the term 'meeting yourself' is to make any sense at all we need to understand that this is done relatively. It is in the clashes,

arguments, responses and reactions to my partner that I discover the parts of myself not obvious to me in my ordinary day-to-day life. Without these interactions I cannot see the ways that I behave and relationship provides that opportunity.

Therefore, it is critical that we examine our interactions with our partner and discover more about our inner selves so that we can modify the parts we don't like.

It's simply unevolved to blame my partner for the difficulties in our relationship, excuse my own substandard actions and deny that I have an issue. Yet we do it constantly without realising that we are confirming our own inability to grow. It's even worse to demand that my partner change to save me being aggravated.

It becomes obvious that if I'm to live the life of my dreams I need to explore my reactions to my partners so called misdemeanours, shortcomings and idiosyncrasies. What does it mean about me that I find these 'problems' so difficult to handle? One conclusion is that I lack the personal strength, tolerance or inner peace to ignore what is perhaps, after all, trivial.

Another core issue for relationships is that we tend to undertake them without a shared vision for their purpose. What matters to me needs to be written on a list and compared with my partner's. Making these lists is no guarantee of success, but not making them only ensures failure.

We need to approach our partner with the critical question: "What do you want from this relationship?" We need to listen like thieves to the answer - our future happiness depends on it because we need to deliver on that list, provided it's within our morals and personal boundaries.

We need two things:

1. To know our partner will ask us a similar question and be prepared to act on it.
2. The willingness to agree that what's on our partners list is treated seriously – by us.

This very first step in relationship building allows us to understand our differences and cater to them - instead of using them as a reason to argue. For example, “Don't bother arguing with me about whether I need lots of touch, (hand holding or hugs) just let me know if you are going to take it seriously or mock me because one of those choices leads to divorce and the other to a happy partner.”

We have no definitive data, but a Catholic priest we know says that the pre-marriage course he runs (in which the above exercise is worked through) causes 50% of intended marriages to collapse due to irreconcilable differences. While this might sound bad, it actually saves a lot of future heartache. It's pretty good thinking to undertake a pre-commitment course, but so few do.

Instead, what most couples do is move in together. In many relationships this single manoeuvre is the kiss of death. Living and loving together offers one of life's more blissful experiences - but only if you survive!

Many couples would be better off dating than moving in together. The separate lives we lead when we first meet require that we organise to see each other. This meeting up to spend time together is permeated by pleasurable activities - liked by both members of the couple. When we move in together dating stops and is often replaced by cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, lawn mowing, working, putting

out rubbish and passing like ships in the night. The only real way to avoid this is to ensure you invest time and energy in both your relationship and your partner. Set aside time to be together like you did when you were first dating.

As a man who has been happily married for over thirty years, I can honestly say it is worth investing time and effort in your relationship. I cannot describe the infinite rewards you will reap. Put all of your daily judgements, hardships and frustrations aside and simply turn up to be in the moment with your partner.

Finally, when you are struggling, take a deep breath and remember:

“If only you could love enough you would be the happiest and most powerful being in the world...”

*Emmet Fox*

## Jason's thoughts on relationships



Whatever you witnessed as a child will, nine times out of ten, present in your adult relationships. If expressing how you felt was not okay in your family, chances are you will struggle to do so in your relationships. Identifying our family patterns and rising above them is critical if we are to have happy, healthy relationships as adults. The key is to remember that we are not our patterns.

Once you discover what your family patterns are you can redesign them.

Every time you do so, you reinforce positive behaviour that will inevitably result in a beautiful future. For example, as a child I was taught not to talk about things that were bothering me. As an adult, I had to learn to speak up and express how I am feeling without blaming anyone else. This was awkward and difficult to begin with, but the more I practiced the more natural it became. Sometimes I still feel anxious about telling people how I feel, but I have learnt the hard way that keeping my mouth shut can be very damaging. I am not saying you need to tell the checkout chick your life story, but the people closest to you need to know how you really are so they can support you appropriately. I have also learnt that I can be sad, angry or scared and still be okay. When my wife asks me if I am okay, I can say, "Yes, I am just a bit scared about xyz."

Like everything else, successful relationships take time, energy and effort. If you want your car to run effectively, you need to get

it serviced regularly. The same goes for relationships. Many people get into relationships and then cruise along on autopilot assuming everything will be fine. It won't. Establish what both parties want out of the relationship and then find ways to help each other achieve those outcomes. I like to make sure that I help my wife achieve her goals for our relationship, even when those things are not important to me. I do this because I understand that helping Narelle meet her needs first (and this does not mean you have to become a door mat) is the fastest way to ensure my needs are met too. It's also a great way to guarantee that our relationship goes to the next level. For me, the key to a rewarding relationship is to give first, then receive. That said, I give without expectation of anything in return – I do it simply because I want to express love and support for the people I care about.

Here's an example of why putting the other person in the relationship first can be so rewarding...

One of the most profound lessons I have learnt about relationships came from one of my primary school teachers. I clearly remember struggling with a teacher – he was at his wits end about how to deal with me and I spent most of my time sitting in the hallway outside the classroom feeling frustrated. I asked my parents if I could change classes. My new teacher was completely different – he took me from failing to winning awards in less than a year. The main difference? He took the time up front to ask me what I wanted to get out of being in his class and how I learnt best. He taught me that there was always a solution to my problems and to take responsibility for myself. He made the effort to see the good in me when it would have been much easier to label me as a difficult student and put me at the back of the class. All of this left me excited about being in his class and made me want contribute to the relationship we had formed by



giving my best.

As I mentioned above, great relationships require time and energy. However, this shouldn't be a chore, it should be rewarding for both of you. At the start of each week, my wife and I discuss when we are going to spend quality time together. This is great thing to do because it proves to both of you that your relationship is important and you are willing to invest time in it. The sense of security that comes with that knowledge is amazing.

Another great thing to do is find ways to incorporate time together into other tasks that need to be done. Make no mistake, this cannot replace uninterrupted quality time alone with one another, but it can help you feel as though you are regularly connecting with your partner. Narelle and I do this in the morning by walking our dog. We both feel that this time together strengthens our relationship, because we are both at our best in the morning and we get to connect before we start our workdays. All up, Narelle and I spend about 16 hours each week connecting with each other. That may sound like a lot, but our relationship is the most important thing to us, so we invest time in making it beautiful.

Of course, relationships aren't always smooth sailing, but I believe that making mistakes and resolving them plays a huge part in the healthy growth of any relationship. It's important to acknowledge that we are all going to get it wrong from time to time. The real key to success is to search for the lesson, take it on board and move forward. Ask yourself questions like: if that happened again, how would I like to handle it differently? If you find yourself consistently in similar situations, you might need to search for the lesson you are obviously failing to learn.

Check in with each other regularly about where you are both at in terms of being fulfilled. I understand this concept can be very confronting because you may hear something you don't want to. Do it anyway. One of the main reasons relationships break down is a lack of open, honest communication - without judgment. I understand you may need to swallow a few brave pills at first, but if you find out now that something is wrong, you can at least try to fix it before it's too late.

I believe that before you can have a relationship with someone else, you must have a great relationship with yourself. By far the greatest success I have had in improving my relationships with others has been via working on my relationship with myself. It can be very easy to lay blame on others when it comes to relationships, but we need to take a good hard look at ourselves first. The better the relationship you have with yourself, the better your relationships with others will become. Make a list of the behaviours you are not happy with in your relationships and select one or two to work on. Make sure you let your partner know and ask them for help in developing better patterns. Explain how important this is to you and don't forget to mention that it will benefit them too. They may even decide to do the same.

Many of my clients ask me whose relationship I model mine on. The truth is I don't really have specific role models in this area. What I do is look at couples that have been married for many years and are as happy and in love as the day they first met. I take the bits I like from their relationship and apply them to my own relationships. Give it a go - you will discover great things to do in your relationships that you would never have thought of yourself.

Finally, keep searching for new ways to keep the fun and excitement in your relationships. Don't let the washing up, cleaning and other mundane activities come before spending quality time with each other. Make sure you're not one of those people who wait until the relationship is on death's door to act.



# CHAPTER 6

Health.

Consider this...

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), three quarters of deaths among people younger than 75 are avoidable.

In the last two decades, the prevalence of diabetes in Australia has more than doubled.

Before the age of 85, one in two Australian men and one in three Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer.

Cancer claims up to 40,000 Australian lives each year. In 2005 alone, nearly 100,000 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in Australia and this number is projected to grow by over 3,000 extra cases per year in 2006-2010.

Coronary heart disease is the largest single contributor to the burden of disease in Australia, followed by anxiety and depression.

Cardiovascular diseases, cancers and respiratory diseases remain the leading causes of death in Australia. Studies have shown that the major preventable risk factors for these diseases are tobacco smoking, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, insufficient physical activity, obesity, poor nutrition and diabetes.

Statistics show that these numbers are only going to get worse as a result of the population ageing. Australians have the second highest life expectancy in the world at 81.4 years – second only to Japan.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “Australia’s Health 2008,” *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*, cat. No. AUS 99 (Canberra: AIHW).

With governments, hospitals and health care centres pushed to the limit, it is our responsibility to do everything we can to promote our own health and wellbeing.

Health is often a non-event for the young – a gift acknowledged just after birth with the traditional “mother-and-baby-are-both-doing-well” statement. We tend to continue to take good health for granted until we experience disease close to home. “Lack of ease” usually fits into one of two categories – the first is treated easily with creams, shots, diet and exercise, and the second is far more devastating. Rarely treated with the same ease as the first group, the likes of cancer, degenerative diseases and heart conditions create enormous pain and suffering. We are considered extremely lucky if we manage to survive the second group.

We are all carrying numerous viruses that would be devastating if they became active. The reason these diseases don't manage to gain a foothold in our system is that (by some miracle we don't completely understand) our immune system recognises the invaders and sends out killer agents called T-cells to engage with the virus. There is literally a war raging away inside us each and every day.

If our immune system takes even the shortest holiday, we are in for a rough time. Watch a family suffering from a cold – at least one of them will usually escape unscathed despite living in an environment crammed with 10 times the normal level of germs. If our immune system is functioning well we can even sleep with a partner who is sick, breathing in their germ-laden breath, and not become infected.

Try the opposite.

When our defences are low we can catch a cold just from travelling on a plane with someone who is sick, even if they are sitting 40 metres away. It becomes

**“Stress is the most common immune system depressor.”**

obvious that the most important thing we can do to look after our health is to ensure our immune systems are operating at peak efficiency. The better our immunity, the healthier we will be. Therefore we need to understand what has a negative impact on the immune system and work towards reducing our risk factor and promoting healthy immune function.

Stress is the most common immune system depressor. While a certain amount of pressure can be good, too much of the emotional component of stress damages our immune function. Our grandparents are often the best illustration of this – chances are the death of one of them triggered the passing of the other within a short time. Grief itself is natural, but when it is associated with an avenue of love being permanently shut down we see devastating effects. The second grandparent may have had pneumonia, but we instinctively know they died from a broken heart.

Very few people succeed at eliminating stress, even when they consume masses of time and energy trying to relax. The biggest mistake we make is taking a break to “get away from it all”. More often than not we spend three weeks relaxing on a blissful island somewhere, and after only two days back at home we feel like we never left.

Working long hours inside is also damaging to the immune system. There is a reason farmers in their mid seventies are often as fit as a fiddle – the hard work outdoors is excellent for building health and fitness.

The next immune system killer on the list is unrealised dreams. When we lose hope, or feel that our efforts are not getting us where we want to go, we get sick. In order to avoid this you will need to determine your values and act on

them – this is discussed in more detail in the life management chapter.

In our experience, very few people allow themselves enough “me time”. This is devastating for the immune system. Many of our clients fail to allocate enough time to the activities that revitalise, refresh and rejuvenate them.

Health care professionals have a saying, “take the time out to care for yourself before you are forced to”. This holds true for many of us – we have had hundreds of clients who are forced to stop and take a break when they get very ill. Too many of us run on empty for too long, and then we end up wondering where the magic in our lives has gone.

**“Too many of us run on empty for too long, and then we end up wondering where the magic in our lives has gone.”**

Poor diet is another immune suppressor. The amount of food we eat that is intrinsically bad for us is absolutely astounding. We could spend a lot of time talking about the health problems associated with being overweight, but you have probably heard it all before. We will simply say this – every extra kilo depletes your energy and shortens your life span.

While we are on the subject, we would like to recommend the following diet. If you stick to it, you will achieve amazing results. There is only one rule....

### **Do not eat until you are hungry!**

When you think you are hungry, drink a large glass of water and wait another 15 minutes just to be sure. If you are still hungry, eat about half of the normal serving size, and do not eat until you are full. It takes the body roughly 20



minutes to get the message to your brain that it is full – in this time we could eat triple what we need.

Even if you are a food lover, do your best to think about the body as a car that needs fuel – poor quality fuel will only clog up your filters and eventually result in break down. And if the body is like a car, then water is its oil – so get drinking.

**“Excellent health has everything to do with your attitude.”**

The self-coach develops daily stress management techniques and consistently applies them – no matter how long it takes. Investing time and effort in looking after our immune systems (and therefore ourselves) is essential for good health. Take the time each day to go outside, even if it’s only for ten minutes, eat balanced meals, drink plenty of water, take a few minutes out just for yourself, and ensure your emotions are properly processed. There are hundreds of other immune system depleters, and

many strategies you can employ to improve your health, but if you focus on some of the ones outlined here you will be well on your way to health and vitality.

Of course, good health is about more than fresh air, exercise and good food. Excellent health has everything to do with your attitude.

This concept of mind over matter is not new.

The influence of the mind in healing is addressed in almost every medical tradition from as far back as the ancient teachings of Ayurveda. What is new is the legitimisation of research in this field. Today, we find governments, academic institutions and hospitals around the world beginning to fund mind-

body medicine programs, which has lent it credence and helped it to expand its reach beyond people interested in alternative medicine.

The modern concept of mind-body medicine was developed in the 1970s, when George Engel, a well-respected medical researcher from the University of Rochester, made the bold statement that modern medicine needed a new way of thinking about health and illness.

He proposed what he called the “biopsychosocial model”, in which health is the outcome of many factors interacting together. This provides the theoretical framework underpinning mind-body medicine.

In Engel’s view, health is not just a matter of “the drugs keeping up with the bugs”. Rather, health is determined by an interaction between:

- our genetic vulnerabilities
- environmental factors such as germs, viruses, or pollutants
- psychological factors such as stress, lifestyle, attitudes, and behaviour and
- social factors such as supportive relationships, economic well-being, access to health care, and family and community patterns of behaviour.

When we look at the big picture of all the factors that influence health, we can see that many are within our direct control.

Engel’s perspective is gradually penetrating the thinking of mainstream medicine. However, if you’re sceptical about the mind-over-matter concept, it might help you to know about the growing body of medical evidence supporting it. In fact, there are now more than 100,000 scientific articles emphasising the effects of mind on body and body on mind. Just some of the clinical findings include:

- 36% reduction in visits to physicians by chronic pain patients (*The Clinical Journal of Pain*, 1991)

- 50% reduction in doctor visits after relaxation-response based intervention (*Behavioral Medicine*, 1990)
- Lowered blood pressure and decreased medication in 80% of hypertensive patients. 16% able to discontinue all of their medications (*Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation*, 1989)
- 100% of insomnia patients reported improved sleep and 91% either eliminated or reduced sleeping medication use (*The American Journal of Medicine*, Volume 100, 1996)
- 57% reduction in physical and psychological symptoms for women experiencing severe pre-menstrual tension (*Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 1990)
- Infertile women who practice mind body medicine have a 42% conception rate, a 38% take-home baby rate, and decreased levels of depression, anxiety, and anger (*Journal of American Medical Women's Association*, 1999).

Mind-body medicine strategies have helped millions of men and women reduce the stress that can cause or exacerbate conditions such as joint pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, hypertension, repetitive strain injuries, cardiac disorders, chronic pain, migraine headaches, diabetes, menopause, gastrointestinal disorders and infertility.

Today, mind-body medicine integrates modern scientific medicine, psychology, nursing, nutrition, exercise, physiology and belief to enhance the natural healing capacities of body and mind. It encompasses a wide variety of techniques including biofeedback, relaxation training, autogenic training, meditation, guided imagery, spiritual healing, prayer, and many other short-term psychotherapeutic interventions.

**“What if your thoughts and beliefs affected your success or failure in every area of your life?”**

So, what would happen if your attitudes and beliefs – positive, mediocre and negative – influenced every cell in your body? What if your thoughts and beliefs affected your success or failure in every area of your life?

Every day, most of us prove the connection between our mind and body to ourselves by engaging in a common activity – worrying. Each time we create a negative thought in our minds, our body responds with tears, increased heart rate and blood pressure, irregular breathing, increased muscle tension and stomach tension, to name just a few. In fact, one thought can cause millions of cellular biochemical reactions.

How does this happen? Here's a quick biology lesson.

Our brain is linked to two pathways of communication: the nervous and circulatory systems. In the case of the nervous system, the brain sends nerve impulses to all of the body's tissues, which in turn influence behaviour. Everything from muscles and bones to the heart and lungs, veins and arteries, to the glands of the endocrine and immune systems – it's all “wired” by the brain.

The brain is also a gland. It manufactures thousands of different kinds of chemicals and releases them into the bloodstream. These chemicals circulate throughout the body and influence the activity and behaviour of all the body's tissues. The brain could be described as the ultimate apothecary, producing many more drugs than science has ever invented.

The cells of the body have receptors on their surfaces that function somewhat like satellite dishes. These receptors receive the chemical messages released by the brain and respond accordingly.

While the brain can send messages through the nervous and circulatory systems, it also receives feedback, both in the form of nerve impulses and from its own receptors that sense chemicals released by other tissues in the body.

The message is simple: your body begins and ends with your brain. What you think affects your body and what your body does affects your brain.

**“What you think affects your body and what your body does affects your brain.”**

Let's look at an everyday example. Imagine it's night-time and everything is quiet. Suddenly, you see someone outside, near a window. Your body starts to respond. Your pupils dilate. Your heart rate goes up. You start to sweat.

**“Parts of the human mind doesn't know the difference between what is real and what is imagined.”**

The belief that something threatening is out there produces a host of physical responses that you have very little control over. If you were told to calm down and turn off these sensations, you couldn't. But if the belief changes – say, it turns out that it's just your husband coming home – the physical response changes.

The question is: how do you tap into these powerful, unconscious responses?

As astounding as it may seem, parts of the human mind don't know the difference between what is real and what is imagined. That's why your heart can race when you imagine someone at your window, when in fact it's just a shadow. Your mind imagines something and then sends messages to the rest of your body, which acts accordingly.

Brain scan studies show that in looking at a picture of a tree, or in simply imagining the tree, the same areas of the brain show the same patterns. Elite athletes who sit for two weeks and imagine shooting hoops improve their free-throw scores as much as those who actually practiced. Researchers have demonstrated that volunteers can significantly improve muscle strength simply by imagining doing repetitive tasks, even though they don't physically move those muscles.<sup>23</sup>

You've probably heard dozens of stories about the "placebo effect" – where patients start to feel better even though they are only taking a sugar pill. For years, scientists have looked at the placebo effect as just a figment of overactive patient imaginations. Sure, dummy medications seemed to curb epileptic seizures, lower blood pressure, soothe migraines and smooth out jerky movements in Parkinson's – but these people weren't really better. Or so scientists thought.

**“New research shows that belief in a placebo leads to real changes in brain chemistry.”**

Now, using PET scanners and MRIs to peer into the heads of patients who respond to sugar pills, researchers have discovered that the placebo effect is not all in patients' heads but rather, in their brains. New research shows that belief in a dummy treatment leads to real changes in brain chemistry.<sup>24</sup>

In 2006, researchers found that anticipation of relief from a placebo could lead to an actual easing of aches, when the brain makes more of its own pain-doubling opiates. Brain scans of Parkinson's patients showed increases in a chemical messenger called dopamine, which leads to an improvement in symptoms when patients think – mistakenly – that they are receiving real therapy.

23 Lyn Freeman, *Mosby's Complementary & Alternative Medicine: A Research-Based Approach*, 2nd ed. (USA: Mosby, 2004).

24 Linda Carroll, "Placebo's Power Goes Beyond the Mind," *MSNBC*, 21 August 2006, viewed 24 June 2009, <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14309026/>>.

Studies in depressed patients have found that almost as many are helped by placebo treatments as by actual medications. In fact, as it turns out, a person's response to placebo treatment may offer clues as to whether "real" treatments with antidepressants are likely to work.

So, can we control our physiology?

Researchers are just starting to appreciate the power that the mind can have over the body. The autonomic nervous system, in charge of constant functions like heart rate and breathing, was named "autonomic" because it was thought to carry on independently in the background of our lives. However, with the discovery of the "relaxation response", in which quiet breathing was found to be able to lower blood pressure, scientists uncovered ever-increasing evidence that we can, at least to some extent, affect our own physiology.

More than a hundred studies have verified that relaxation can lower blood pressure. Biofeedback studies have demonstrated the ability to raise or lower the temperature of one finger, or raise the temperature of one small square of skin on the back by imagining a candle flame at that spot. Diabetics have been able to increase the temperature of their feet by several degrees, thereby increasing extremity blood flow (vital in counteracting the blood vessel complications of the disorder).

Looking at the basics of brain connections, if you are right handed, the left side of your brain is more associated with linear thinking, maths and logic. The right side is linked with creativity, pictures and relationships between objects. This right brain has very dense connections to the limbic system and amygdala, parts of the brain that are responsible for emotion and "five sense" memories.

**"We can, at least to some extent, affect our own physiology."**

The smell of wood burning, or of bread baking; hearing the sounds of the ocean or the wind in the trees; the feel of an old t-shirt – all these can trigger memories of another time, and the emotions that went with them. These limbic system memories and emotions are in turn densely connected to the hypothalamus, the main switchboard of brain function.

On one track, the hypothalamus interacts with the autonomic nervous system, where pleasant memories are translated into decreased heart rate, blood pressure, respiration and relaxed muscle tone. On another track, the hypothalamus sends signals to the pituitary gland, which controls many bodily hormones and functions. Pleasant memories are translated into a decrease in cortisol, the stress hormone, and normalisation of sex hormones and blood sugar levels. These hormones combine with output from the autonomic nervous system and feed back into the immune system, making immune cells function at their optimum. In short, sensory images provide immediate access to the right brain, translating that image into feelings and then into bodily changes – both positive and negative.

**“Sensory images provide immediate access to the right brain, translating that image into feelings and then into bodily changes – both positive and negative.”**

This happens constantly and spontaneously in our daily lives, but we can also have conscious input. Patients have successfully prepared for surgery by imagining improved function and decreased pain, while martial arts masters can smash bricks using their heads and experience no pain or injuries. Current affairs television shows and local newspapers are littered with stories of people overcoming tremendous difficulty. When it comes to mind-body medicine, we have only scratched the surface – we are just beginning to understand the power and majesty of the mind-body connection.



Although the high technology treatments of modern medicine are extremely useful, most people have given up their inner power to heal themselves, trusting only their doctor to fix them. The result is a terrifying pill-popping mentality that forces us to seek external solutions for problems we have the power to resolve. Pharmacies are extremely profitable businesses because doctors prescribe so much medication – often at our request. A sore throat can earn us antibiotics, and slightly elevated blood pressure is treated with medication rather than tackling the cause of the problem. A study published in the British Medical Journal established that the British take (on average) nearly 400 painkillers per person per year. We have become almost entirely reliant on modern medicine to keep us healthy<sup>25</sup>.

And yet, time and again, research shows us that people who take control and make their own choices for better health are more active and happy and live longer than those who do not.

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25 Steve Bloomfield, “373: That’s the Average Number of Painkillers We Each Take in a Year. Is it too Many?” *The Independent*, 20 November 2005, viewed June 24 2009, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/373-thats-the-average-number-of-painkillers-we-each-take-in-a-year-is-it-too-many-516127.html>>.

### **Case study**

Jane was diagnosed with aggressive stomach cancer, and the doctors told her there was nothing they could do. She was given one year to live. Her husband John came along to The Mental Toolbox to find out what he could do to help her, and to learn some coping strategies for himself. He was so inspired that he sent Jane along to the next one. She attended, thinking we were all insane, but discovered several concepts that helped her. Jane identified with the idea that she should control her own health, and she got very angry about being given a death sentence by the doctors. She decided that she would attend the doctor's funeral – he would not attend hers. Fifteen years later, Jane attended the doctor's funeral and had a shocking realisation. Her life was tied to his – as long as he was alive she was staying healthy to prove him wrong. Jane realised that her health should only be related to her. She is still healthy and happy.

The bottom line is that you have absolute control over your own health staying disease free and maintaining vibrance and vitality is within your grasp if you simply put in a little effort.

### **Self-coaching exercise – Evaluating your own health and wellbeing**

Ask yourself the questions below and use the answers to formulate a plan for improving your own health. –

1. How would you describe your health: great, average or poor?
2. Are you taking regular medications, and if so, do you think there is a different solution you could try?

3. How important is health to you, and what are you willing to do to be fit and healthy?
4. Does your health affect your daily life – is there something you want to do but can't because of your health or lack of fitness?
5. Have you ever had to fight a serious illness? How did you do it and what was the result? Do you think there was something you could have done better?
6. Does your physical health affect your mental attitude?
7. What kind of regular exercise do you do and how often do you do it? Do you think this is enough?
8. What are your eating habits like? Can you identify any patterns you have with food? What could you do better?
9. Do you get enough sleep or do you have sleep difficulties?
10. Are you often tired?
11. What do you do to relax? Do you think this is healthy? What new relaxation habit could you introduce to improve your physical and mental health?

## Paul's thoughts on health



If there were a tablet you could take three times a day that would cause you to wake up with an energised and excited attitude – would you take it? (NOTE: this tablet will have to be taken 5 days a week)

Would you still swallow it if it guaranteed to free you of (or stop you ever getting) diabetes?

How much hesitation would you experience if this tablet cost next

to nothing?

Would you insist your kids took this tablet knowing that it would reduce the onset of most diseases by 80%?

If this tablet also caused you to live 30 to 50 years longer than those without access to it, would you take it regularly?

What would you feel when you discovered that over a twenty year period, this tablet caused a 10% increase in your intelligence?

If this tablet prevented the onset of Alzheimer's, most degenerative diseases and increased memory capacity, could you force yourself to get it down your throat?

The tablet exists. It's hard to get your hands on - the drug companies are keeping it secret because there are many billions of dollars to be made pedalling cures for diseases you might never contract if you take this pill.

Therefore you'll have to make your own tablets - don't worry it's a completely legal activity. I have described the recipe below so that you can cook them up at your house.

Pass it around among your friends – but be careful. Like all miracle cures, there are doubters out there who will tell you that it won't work or that they have tried it already and it didn't work on them.

We have it on good authority (from our own research) that these people haven't got a clue. What they failed to mention was that they didn't try it for long enough.

The recipe is below. It is comprised of four points on which you must be absolutely non-negotiable.

1. Your body is a temple. If you treat it that way you get to stay on the planet longer.
2. Failing to exercise is not an option – just get it into your routine. Finding the kind of gymnastics that works best for you might take some effort. Most of us give up after saying, *“But I get bored sitting on a bike that's going nowhere...”* I do too, but I refuse to let that stop me living an extra 30-50 years. There's a saying, *“Build a bridge...”*

3. Eat fresh, healthy foods. Don't whinge about not liking them – find a way to make it great. Eat healthy foods often enough that you come to like them - that's what you did with cigarettes and beer. If you don't like tofu and lentils – find a new recipe that makes them taste good. I did. Imagine actually feeding your body what it needs to work properly...
4. Rest. Find activities that refresh and revitalise you, then make sure they become a regular occurrence. The old chestnut, *"I haven't got time..."* means that you'll end up making time by involuntarily visiting the hospital. You do have time – you just refuse to make some tough calls. Note: resting does not include watching television.

These four simple changes would wipe out the obesity epidemic, provide us with never ending energy and deliver optimum (vibrant) health. That's the miracle cure. The tablet.

Given that there is so much free information out there about health, I am now going to do what I do often and go off on a (relevant) tangent.

Your current state of health is a reflection of what you have done to date. It isn't a good indicator of what you are doing today. The miracle of the human body is that it can cope with an enormous amount of mistreatment and keep going. Smokers don't pay today. They pay in small ways that most of us wouldn't tolerate today, but the real result happens in a few decades. They face the possibility of dying an ugly, agonising, drawn out and entirely preventable death.

It is therefore possible to say you don't actually lose anything today if you don't go to the gym. You just lose your chance at a decent middle to late life because of the twenty years you spent saying, "I'll go to the gym tomorrow".

If there is anything we are masters at it is the ability sell ourselves on an idea we wouldn't let our kids sell us. We force them to clean their teeth for long enough for it to become a habit, but we don't do the same to ourselves when it comes to making positive health choices.

My grandfather used to talk about the lack of sugar during the war. It meant that he either had plain tea or none. He hated it but got used to it and was eventually unable to stand tea with sugar in it. The same occurred with milk. For sixty years (until his passing) he drank straight black tea. He loved it.

I had a similar occurrence a few years back when using a grain free diet as a means of battling terminal cancer.

That meant no bread, pasta, rice or any other grains. It was big deal but not as big as death. That made it relatively easy for me to look at a piece of bread and see a killer.

I was at a gig during this time frame and simply ate the fillings out of the sandwiches provided for lunch by the organisers. One

Dr. Otto Warburg won the Nobel Prize in 1931 for proving that cancer cells thrive in a glucose rich environment. Cut the grains out and starve the cancer cells to death is the theory – which in my case worked a treat, leaving me cancer free.

Most grains get converted (as do complex carbohydrates) very quickly to blood sugar, causing a surge in insulin production, a known weight loss inhibitor. That's why low GI foods are best for maintaining ideal body weight. They supply their energy without the blood sugar spike.

of the attendees remarked on my strength of character when I said I was avoiding bread but slid pretty quickly back into her (big fat) shell when I said that for her it was a choice about fat or skinny but for me it was life or death. The truth is she had a life and death choice too, but she wasn't strong enough to resist temptation.

In fact, what she wasn't strong enough to deal with was her addiction to that particular food. Most likely because she had no idea she was addicted.

For most of us food equals love. When we want to treat ourselves, something usually gets popped into our mouth. It could be food, fingernails, chocolate, cigarettes, alcohol or any number of other digestible things. When we are 'down' we are much more likely to treat ourselves or want to 'lift' ourselves. This lift is highly dangerous and addictive because of our emotional relationship with it. It stops us getting to the root cause of the 'down'. So the down goes away (we are distracted from it) and we think everything is fine.

In reality the 'down' will return soon enough if there is something fundamentally wrong. If we can make it go away with a dose of chocolate because we are completely unaware that we are trying to self heal – the chocolate seems harmless enough. It is this attempt at self-healing that is critical.

Our friend in the bread story above has become addicted to the high doses of sugar and salt in the bread. She's also in love with having her bad feelings sent packing – so the bread calls out to her from across the room. The last thing she is likely to do is the very thing she needs most - sit still and listen to the craving. Explore it, get to know it and watch it lose its grip on her (see emotions) as she processes her feelings instead of using food as a drug to change her mood.



There is another aspect of health that I would like to mention and that is what we do with health care professionals. I have a couple of clients who run a naturopathic clinic in Brisbane and another who runs an acupuncture centre in Melbourne. Both of them have worked with me over the past 6 – 12 months to take their business from ordinary to exceptional. They both now earn six figure incomes and previously were short of clients - to the point of calling themselves penniless. The acupuncture practitioner now works 3 days a month (he has hired help in) and the naturopaths are onto a 3-day working week for the same reason, using the same technique.

At first what I proposed to them seemed ludicrous and sounded a lot like me playing with someone else's livelihood. But they persevered and proved them themselves to be both forward thinking and brave. For me, their success is proof pro-active health management is a concept Aussies will embrace.

What did they do?

They told all of their clients that:

- They were changing the nature of the business
- They were sick of seeing clients only when they were ill and if the clients wanted to continue in that vein the price would go up
- A new, pro-active system of health care management was being introduced
- The clients were to come to the clinic as often as they wanted to
- The clients didn't have to make a booking – just turn up
- The clients would pay a monthly fee for this unlimited care

- The fee was one twelfth of a yearly commitment because they didn't wish to work with anyone who wouldn't make health a priority, and
- In return for this commitment the clinic would address itself to creating optimum health however the client wanted to measure it, be that free from flu, weight loss or improved energy levels.

Both clinics are full and have a waiting list of people who want to be clients. The practitioners are now using their skills to establish and maintain great health as opposed to focusing acute care, where crisis management is sometimes all they can hope to achieve.

What about you?

What would happen if you went to the practitioner of your choice, told them you wanted something similar to that described above, they agreed and you got on with it?

My fearless prediction is that after you'd been at it for a while, you would struggle to find words that would describe the difference it has made to your life.

## Jason's thoughts on health



Both of my parents were very health conscious while I was growing up. There were never any soft drinks or junk food in the house, although we were allowed a treat on weekends. Thus, the food habit I developed was to eat healthy 80% of the time and have a treat one day per week. I still eat that way today.

I also have a fairly rigorous exercise regime. I do two or three strength training sessions per week, sometimes with weights and sometimes using bodyweight exercises. Strength training keeps your bones strong and helps to burn body fat while you are resting. The science behind it is this: the more muscle you have, the better you burn body fat while doing nothing. There is a mountain of information out there on this subject – just Google it if you are interested. It also makes me feel great and that helps me in every other area of my life.

In addition to strength training, I do four or five cardio sessions each week. I like to mix it up to prevent boredom, so these sessions are anything from running to boxing. Cardiovascular exercise is fantastic for maintaining optimum physical health – it keeps us fit and improves our overall sense of wellbeing. I also do a yoga session at the end of the week. It keeps me flexible and improves posture, thus preventing injuries in my other training. I love the connection between mind and body that I experience with yoga and it's quite relaxing so it's a nice thing to do at the end of the week.

For me, the most important thing to get across with regard to health is that doing a small amount of regular exercise, and finding the joy in doing so, is the key to long-term health. The same goes for eating habits: if you eat sensibly 80% of the time, having treats like chocolate, sweets or fast food the other 20% of the time will not be such a big deal long term. Of course, this only applies in combination with regular exercise. The other important concept to grasp is that the shape and size of your body is directly related to what is going on between your ears. Our physical self is a direct reflection of our self-esteem, self-image and beliefs about health and fitness.

If you catch yourself saying you are too busy to exercise, then you are putting your own health at the bottom of your daily list. Regular exercise is the key - even if you only start with 15 minutes and build up. Be consistent with your training and eating - it's much better for you than sticking to it for a month and then doing nothing until you are dissatisfied again. I do my exercise and eat healthily 80% of the time and then give myself the other 20% off. For most people it is the other way around.

Getting your health and fitness sorted will have a lot to do with getting your head right. As a young man I had several events occur that I did not know how to deal with. The only way I knew how to cope resulted in me gaining over 50kgs in 12 months. Some people smoke or drink, but I used to eat when I was stressed. Although I had no idea at the time, the extra weight was there to protect me. I was still going to the gym, but I was eating poor quality food in large quantities. Here we discover the most basic rule about staying at our ideal weight: if you put more calories in than you expend, you will inevitably be overweight. In my case, I needed to get my eating

habits healthy again, increase my gym time and learn how to deal with stress more effectively. Once I started to work on those three areas, I went from 153kgs to 100kgs in just six months and won an Australian Body Building Title.

Like any difficult time in life, that period helped me to establish my core beliefs about health and fitness. I learnt that the current state of my health is directly related to my thinking processes. I also learnt that to respect myself means respecting my health and taking care of the body I was given. The details might be different for you, but the important thing is to establish your core beliefs and then spend your life living up to them.

I'll use myself as an example. First, I have no doubt about what health and fitness means to me. I have a crystal clear health and fitness goals, so when the temptation to sleep in or eat poorly arises, it simply gets overshadowed. I have a no excuses policy and take absolute responsibility for my health and fitness.

My biggest long-term health goal is to be active for as long as I am breathing. This came about from observing my grandparents. I watched both of my grandmothers' health habits as I was growing up. One chose an easier lifestyle in terms of staying active. The result was that at age 70 she had a fall and never recovered. She was bed ridden for the years leading up to her death. My other Grandmother chose to walk everyday – she also gardens and mows the lawn (and still does both to this day). Granted, she has some aches and pains, but she keeps going. She is often heard saying, “You have to keep moving.” I agree - when you stop your body slowly starts to fade away. I make sure that the first thing I put in my diary is when am I going to exercise. I eat well 80% of the time, get plenty of rest and

reward myself by getting regular massages and other treatments. I put my health first and that allows me to have energy and enthusiasm for everything else I do in life.

If you are about to start putting your health first, there are some things to keep in mind. I suggest that you start by focusing on either exercise or food for four weeks. When a new personal training client who had not trained for years and was overweight came to see me, I would start them off just focusing on their exercise. This is important because we need to feel good about establishing a positive, healthy habit without having to change too much at the same time. Too many people get to the point of total dissatisfaction and say, “That’s it, tomorrow I am going to start eating healthily and train everyday.” This normally becomes too much to handle and they quit within a month. I recommend you get some regular exercise for about four weeks and then once you have been doing that consistently, start changing your eating habits. This will mean speaking with an expert or purchasing learning materials like books to educate yourself in this area.

The other important thing you will need to do is set some really clear goals for your health and fitness. If your goals don’t excite you when you think about achieving them, keep working on them until they do. This becomes vital when the chocolate bar tempts you. Ask yourself this question: “Would I rather get back into my old jeans and have the energy to play with the kids, or will I go for instant gratification?” I use this method every time I am faced with the urge to do something I ultimately know is not in my best interests. If you don’t have a clear goal in this area, then the short-term gratification will win every time. For those of you who are really serious about getting in shape, I recommend seeking professional help to fast track your results and

keep you on track. Shop around until you find the trainer who is right for you.

My most profound lesson in terms of health has been that it is up to me to make sure I look after my health. In addition I have learnt this: the benefits I get out of investing small amounts of time regularly exercising and practicing good eating habits far out way the short term gratifications I might gain from developing poor habits. Having more energy lifts my mood, my self-confidence and my enthusiasm for everything I do in life. For example, I remember going snow skiing with a friend a number of years ago. I advised him to get into shape before going. He ignored my advice and after the first two hours of skiing, my friend was absolutely fatigued and couldn't really ski much for the next two days. It's moments like those that highlight for me how keeping in shape can help me enjoy so many other activities in life.

We talked in the chapter about allowing yourself 'me time'. I start every day with 'me time' - for me that involves exercising with my friends. Then I come home, walk the dog with my beautiful wife and meditate. By the time I start my working day, I have had about four hours of 'me time'. I usually wake up at 4.00am, which I love. I also have a massage every two weeks and take regular saunas at my gym.

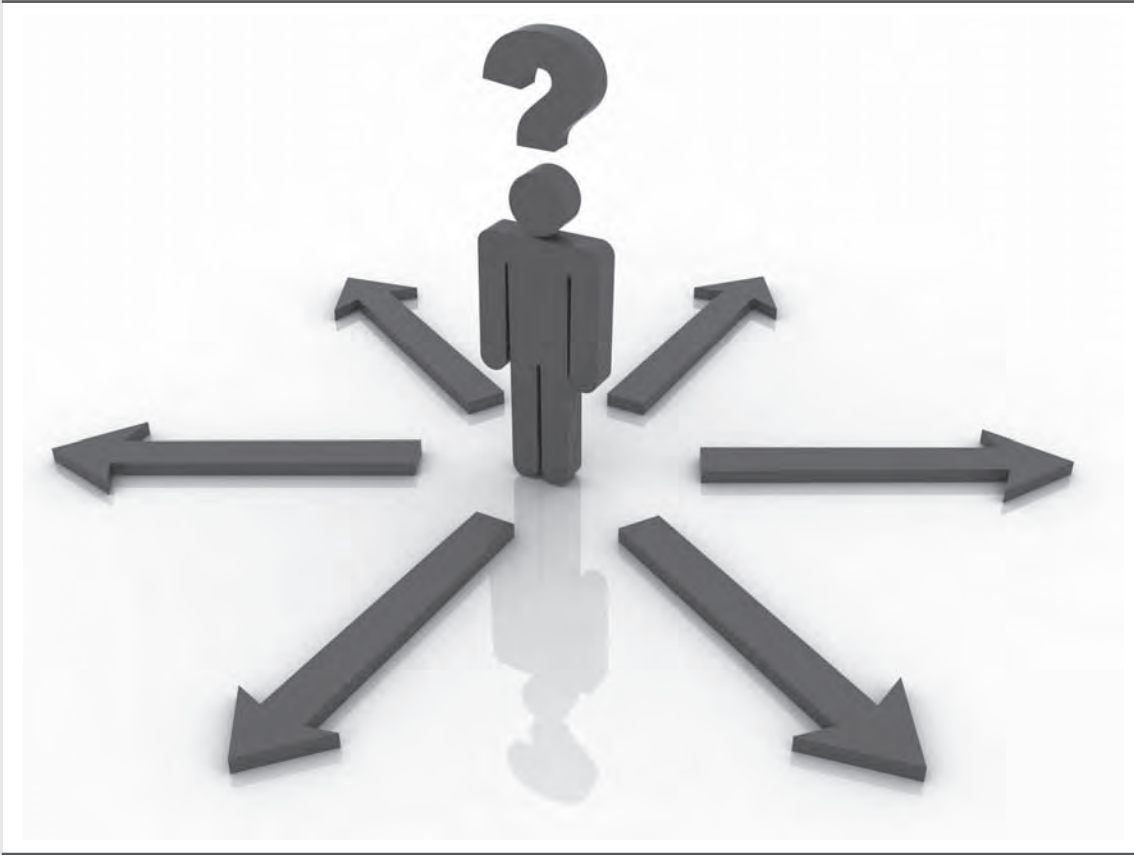
We also cover mind body medicine (very briefly) in this chapter. My own personal experience with mind body medicine started when I was 153kgs and I learnt to use visualization to change the beliefs I had about my current state of health. I also used these techniques to boost my self-esteem and self-image. Everyday I use these same techniques to be relaxed under any kind of pressure, so I can keep

my immune system at peak performance and not get run down by being stressed. My suggestion would be to start using some form of meditation or visualization on a daily basis - be aware of your self-talk.

Invest small amounts of time daily towards your health and fitness so you can enjoy a longer life ahead. I often hear people say, "But I don't like exercise or health foods." They are focusing on the wrong thing. I suggest you focus on what you do want, not what you don't want. There are plenty of things I don't initially like doing as well, but I understand it is up to me to find a way to love them. You need to go beyond your current limitations and excuses and find a way to make health a major priority in your life. If you want a real kick in the pants to get you going, go and visit the terminal ward in a hospital. Your health and fitness is your responsibility. Make no excuses - find a way to master this area of your life.







# CHAPTER 7

Self Image.

If we asked you to describe yourself, what sort of self-portrait would you paint?

Would it be complimentary or critical?

Think about this for a moment.

The self-image is a mosaic of ideas and value judgements we hold about ourselves. It is how we view our own personality, capabilities, skills, body, mind and personal potential.

While most of us agree that it's important to have a good self-image, very few people seem to know how to acquire one – or even how they got the self-image they have now.

The first thing to understand about our self-image is that *it is not real*, even though it feels like it is.

**“Self-image is important because how we think about ourselves directly affects how we feel about ourselves and how we respond to life.”**

Self-image is something we have carried with us since childhood, and is as familiar as our favourite teddy bear and as comfortable as an old pair of socks.

However, self-image can also prevent us realising our personal potential.

Self-image is important because how we think about ourselves directly affects how we feel about ourselves and how we respond to life.

Self-image can determine the quality of our relationships with others. How we think and feel about ourselves influences the way we react or respond

to the challenges that life throws at us. A positive self-image affects our physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual well-being. So does a negative self-image.

Self-image is a product of learning. Parents or caregivers have the greatest impact on our self-image – they are mirrors reflecting back to us a picture of ourselves. Our experiences with other role models, such as teachers, friends and family contribute further to the reflection in the mirror. Relationships reinforce what we think and feel about ourselves.

The picture we see in the mirror may be a real or distorted view of who we really are. Based on this view, we develop either a positive or a negative self-image. We begin to make value judgements about ourselves based on this distorted self-impression. We see ourselves as “smart or stupid”, “pretty or plain”, “caring or callous” – you get the point.

Over time, the strengths and weaknesses we learn as children are internalised and affect how we act as adults. The result is that we *believe* we actually *are* the subconscious collection of other people’s impressions.

Think about that for a moment. Is your self-portrait really a picture of what you think of you, or what other people think of you?

The interesting thing about our self-image is that it is usually not open to question or reason. We accept that it is so. And so it is.

“How do I look?” we ask ourselves, although we already have a clear mental picture of our physical appearance.

“How am I doing?” we ask ourselves, although we’ve already made up our minds about whether we’ll succeed or fail.

**“We have countless contradictory facets to our self-image.”**

“How important am I?” we ask ourselves as we interpret everything that happens to us through the distorted looking glass of our self-perception.

So, when we believe we lack self-confidence, perform poorly in public speaking, do not know how to lead others, will never be successful, cannot create a good relationship, and so on – guess what? We’ll defend that belief, even to ourselves.

With a positive self-image, we are able to claim our assets and potential while being realistic about our liabilities and limitations. In contrast, a negative self-image focuses on our faults and weaknesses, distorting failure and imperfections and making us blind to our personal potential.

The self-image lies deep within our subconscious brain. It is made up of sensory data and memories that combine to form a picture of the self that is detailed, wordless and very powerful.

We have countless contradictory facets to our self-image. It is possible to be proud of succeeding at netball and simultaneously feel completely lost when it comes to maths. We have a self-image “score” for every subject you can imagine. In this case, perhaps ‘nine out of ten’ for netball and only ‘two out of ten’ for maths.

Self-image essentially becomes a filter for what for what we think we can or cannot do. It is a protective mechanism – self-image stops us from getting hurt by preventing us from trying to do things we can’t or fit in where we won’t. When we “know” we’re only a “two out of ten” in maths, we’re unlikely to put our hands up to answer the maths teacher’s question – saving us potential embarrassment.

So, while we plan success in our endeavours and take all the appropriate actions, the self-image takes stock and considers if this achievement “fits” within the overall picture.

### **Case study**

Jane has subconsciously given herself a nine out of ten for netball and a two out of ten for maths. One day she performs badly in a netball game – and her self-image gives her a score of just three out of ten. She may be upset, but she will most likely put it down to something unusual or different – her mum was watching, she was sick, or she didn’t train properly that week. Thus, she can explain a bad day on the court and return to good form quickly.

Conversely, a good result in maths will be explained with statements like “you helped me” or “I was just lucky this time”. Jane has an endless list of explanations that will allow her to return to the normal situation – her two out of ten for maths.

This example illustrates why performance and self-image scores tend to correlate. Either our self-image adjusts, or we find ways to explain the gaps. Sadly, it’s much more common to explain away any success, and eventually the self-image wins out.

Although self-image functions primarily as a protective mechanism, it can quickly become our worst enemy. We need to be in absolute control of our self-image because it can only function two ways – protect or sabotage.

### Case study

Fred's self-image score for money is four out of ten. He doesn't know this, he just thinks he isn't meant to be rich and explains that he doesn't need money to be happy. Fred has the occasional mishap with money, which allows his score and performance to remain the same. There was the financial advisor that lost all his money, the wife who took nearly everything, and the business partner who stole ten years of profit.

If we told Fred he had self-image problems he would prove us wrong by explaining that "it isn't me, money just makes people turn on you".

One day Fred wins the lottery and receives three million dollars in prize money. This is not congruent with his self-image score, so over the next twelve months Fred manages to blow the lot.

Fred's story is very common – many lottery winners are back to square one within just a few years and have a trail of broken relationships behind them.

Take Evelyn Adams, who won the New Jersey lottery not just once but twice, in 1985 and 1986 to the tune of \$5.4 million.

"Winning the lottery isn't always what it's cracked up to be," she says. Today, the money is gone and Adams lives in a trailer.

"I won the American dream but I lost it, too. It was a very hard fall. It's called rock bottom. Everybody wanted my money. Everybody had their hand out. I never learned one simple word in the English language – 'No'. I wish I had the

chance to do it all over again. I'd be much smarter about it now," says Adams, who also lost most of her money at the slot machines in Atlantic City.

It's clear from Evelyn Adams' story that before you can correct the patterns that create self-sabotage, you need to uncover the areas where your self-image score is low.

As coaches, we have consistently discovered that the best way to reveal a client's self-image is to let natural conversation continue for an extended period. This is achieved by asking questions, most of which are different versions of "tell me more..."

Then we listen.

To begin with, we listen to the literal meaning of the words a client uses without forming an opinion. We focus on what is actually coming out of their mouths. For example, people who swear are using words that have many different meanings. This is an attempt to hide a deeper meaning – an emotion. Ironically, it does exactly the opposite. Swearing requires a tone of voice to convey its meaning – "shit" could be a positive or negative expression depending on the context of the sentence and the tone of voice. Listening to the tone allows us to hear the emotional content behind the words.

Next, we listen for words or phrases that are emphasised or overused. They generally tell us about any underlying emotions.

We also listen for habitual statements that convey the client's view of the world. These are usually very general and are spoken as absolutes – no room is left for the possibility that it might not be true.



Let's look at Fred from our example above. He would use expressions like:

- “There's always a rip off merchant around”
- “They'll get you one way or another”
- “The only certainties in life are death and taxes”, and
- “You won't be any happier if you get rich”.

Finally, we ask about the results the client has achieved so far. We ask them to tell us how they feel about any average results. These conversations are full of self-description – results are explained away, blame is laid, and reasons are given for failure. Self-sabotage, defeat and denial are common themes – this almost always happens when someone refuses to take personal responsibility for the events that have occurred in their life so far. Bad things happen to all of us, but winners ask themselves what actions they can take to ensure the next step goes as planned.

**“If you want to be successful as your own coach, you will need to learn to recognise your own patterns and adjust them accordingly.”**

If you want to be successful as your own coach, you will need to learn to recognise your own patterns and adjust them accordingly. Self-coaching requires exploring your subconscious programming so you can:

1. Discover your self-image score in each important area of life
2. Correct the patterns that are holding you back, and
3. Maintain a healthy score in the face of adversity.

Below is an exercise that will change your life. You can adapt it and apply it to any area, and we encourage you to do so. Take some time and work through this thoroughly – you won't recognise yourself when you finish!

## Self-coaching exercise

### Step one – Your inheritance

Ask yourself “what is my self-image inheritance?” Write as much as you can about your role models – parents, teachers, friends, neighbours and anyone else who influenced you. The story is not important, just how it made you feel.

For example, the suburb you were raised in. It doesn't matter where it was, just how it felt. You could ask yourself the questions below.

- Was it middle class, poor, or privileged?
- What were the taboo subjects?
- Who was the leader in your street?
- What was it okay to be good at?
- What wasn't?
- Where did you fit?
- Who was cool and why?
- What were the social norms?

### Step two – Critical choices you made along the way

What choices have you made that influenced your self-image?

Once again, write as much as you can, and don't worry about the story – just focus on the result. Take the time to explore this fully.

This exercise works best if you are alone, but if you are working with a partner, take turns talking about these choices and the effect they had on your sense of self.

### Step three – Influential People

Examine the people who have influenced your perception of yourself.

- How did they do it?
- What was your reaction to this?
- What have been the consequences for you?

Write your thoughts. This section may be full of regret, fear, hurt, sorrow, loss and grief. This is not wrong. Take your time and be gentle with yourself. Above all, ask for help if you need it.

#### Step four – How do I manage discomfort?

Ask yourself what you do to lessen uncomfortable or painful emotions.

Let's use Jane from our first case study. To prevent discomfort when being praised for her "accidental" success in maths, she makes statements that take her out of the limelight as quickly as possible.

- What do you do when things get tough?
- What do you do when something doesn't align with your self-image score for that subject?
- What do you consistently do when you feel emotional – arguments, yoga, chocolate, alcohol, television, shopping, sulking, the silent treatment, me time?

Write them down. They are keeping you stuck because they manage the pain instead of healing it.

Heal the pain and you will be able to move forward. There are exercises in the emotions chapter that will help you with this.

#### Step five – What would be better?

Ask yourself the following questions.

- Is there a better way for me to handle this situation?
- What is my pattern and what would it be better for me to do?
- Can I do that, and if I can't, who knows how?
- Who has done this before and succeeded?
- Am I willing to ask them for help?
- If you need help and you aren't willing to ask for it then get used to being stuck.

#### Step six – When do I start?

We have noticed that the single most important concept in coaching is implementation. Most people know what to do, and if they don't they can learn. This is knowledge – useful, but ultimately just ideas. Doing what we know is in our best interest converts knowledge into wisdom. Ultimately, to know and not to do is not to know.

We call this the difference between head and heart. We can talk about the benefits of exercise until we are blue in the face, and still never go to the gym. If we truly know in our hearts that exercise is what we need, nothing will stop us from getting there.

Ask yourself this: if I am embarking on this journey of self-discovery and liberation, what do I need to do and by when?

Write the answer down and commit to achieving this goal. If you think you will find it difficult, tell a friend about what you are doing and have them hold you to your word.

#### Step seven – Massive positive change

The single most important factor in improving self-image is becoming a person of your word. The fastest way to elevate your self-esteem is to make a promise to yourself and keep it.

If you have to make the promises small to begin with, that's fine. In our experience it is much better to keep small promises consistently than to go for something bigger and break your promise. We have discovered that people gain momentum from the smaller commitments and move on to bigger ones.

The simple truth is that you cannot respect yourself if you do not keep your own word.

Start small. Stick to your guns. Repeat.

Simple, really.

## Paul's thoughts on self-image



I was born into a middle class family that lived in a middle class suburb and educated in middle class public schools. I found myself in the graduating class of high school an 18 year old who figured he fitted into the middle of that group. In other words, I was average.

I wasn't the best at football or maths and I wasn't the worst. I did need a stint in a remedial class in English during year eleven, but that was more due to lack of effort than talent.

The term of remedial English was the result of discovering girls - more correctly, the advent of my first proper girlfriend. My teacher was smart enough to realise I wasn't actually clueless and wise enough to encourage me to turn my attention towards the books for long enough to gain a rudimentary grasp of the language - something for which I'm forever grateful. Given that this is my fifth best seller in a row - perhaps she can rest assured that she made a difference - even if it took forty years to show up.

The consequences of this middle of the road positioning were both great and diabolical. I came to understand that I'd never amount to anything, be a bit of a nobody and life would be - well, ordinary. No rock star fame or stellar business success was on the agenda and a life as a schoolteacher seemed a good fit for me. At the same time I had an innate sense that I could muddle my way through pretty much anything. That I was average enough to be capable of whatever challenge I faced and was supported or educated in.

Life was set to continue in that direction until I met Mary (my wife) who came from much more humble origins, but had the advantage of seeing my potential rather than my track record. She was the first person to successfully convey to me that I could take ordinary and build on it.

The twenty-year reunion of my graduating high school class resulted in a shocking realisation of how wrong I had gotten it all. I had myself in the middle of an imaginary line of 300 kids - at the top were the talented, smart and good-looking kids and at the bottom were what my Mum called 'no hoppers'. I thought life was going to pan out according to that plan - it had been drummed into me that the kids with good marks would become doctors and lawyers who would inherit the earth. What I discovered at that reunion changed my life forever.

The one truly profound moment in my high school life occurred in year eight. It has stuck with me ever since as a stroke of genius uttered by a teacher not universally liked but totally respected at my school.

As a class we had been tormenting one particular kid because he was different. The teacher in question grabbed the whole form one day when that kid was away and let us have it with both barrels. His threats of physical punishment were, in those days, something to take seriously and he made his point quickly. He had us for a 40-minute period and got his message across in 5. He then drifted off into a rant that became an inspired recitation of how to make your life work. I can still hear his words ringing my head fifty years later... "Get just one thing in your life and make it work. Play the piano, charm snakes, write concertos or run your legs off but keep at it until you succeed. Never, ever give up. Specialists succeed - generalists must embrace mediocrity. Once you have grasped victory - maybe then you can work on a second field of achievement. And then son, you can call yourself a man. Right now you have the chance of a lifetime - but you'll mess it up if you pull this other kid down and forget to pull yourself up."

The 'no hoppers' had, for the most part, gone out into the world and had a go, generally becoming very successful. The talented, gifted and beautiful had almost universally managed to mess up royally.

I was sick for weeks. I spent twenty years believing I was meant to be ordinary, only to suddenly discover that I could, perhaps, be destined for bigger and better things than I had ever imagined.

At 40 years of age I set about changing myself - and therefore my life. By this time Mary and I had just had kids and realised we had better act on our dream of bringing them up in the country. We sold everything and moved onto 250 acres in the bush near Canberra, where we knew nobody. We started building the dream house, which would have seminar and accommodation rooms so that we could run our workshops 'in house'.

I convinced Mary that, as an ex woodwork teacher, I could build the house in six weeks – so we should live in a caravan during the building process. 18 months later the house still wasn't finished. At age 43 I had an unfinished, unfinanced house (the bank wouldn't touch us) and an old wreck for a car.

It was as financially low as I'd ever been. I was as lucky as a man can be with family; Mary and I were (still are) deeply in love and our kids could only be described as angels visiting from heaven – but we had nothing in terms of possessions or money. This average crap was really getting to me.

Ten years later we had it all sorted. Cars, boats, planes, holidays overseas and money in the bank. If you want to know how we broke our financial barriers in business terms, read my book *Resolving The Money Riddle: How I Went From Sweet FA to \$10 Million a Year in 18 Months*.



On a more personal level, every single step forward was possible only due to a change in the way I saw myself.

If you hope to succeed in life, you have to become a person you can believe in. That means developing self-respect. The fastest way to build a deep-seated sense of self-trust is to start making promises to yourself and then delivering on them. For most people that means starting small.

When we are working with addicts we don't get them to promise to never shoot up again. We start with the next hour. Then we try for another one. Eventually we work with two hours at a time. That's two hours when they don't shoot up while left to their own devices – not when we are supervising. Once we have that in place we start working on half a day and build slowly to a whole day. That's it. The addict who can make it through one day has it licked because tomorrow is another day, and each new day allows them to build a track record they can rely on when things get rough.

You have probably heard it a thousand times. Take everything one day at a time. Each victory builds a small reservoir of self-respect. Big achievements occur one brick at a time - like the Great Wall of China.

The question then becomes, "What will you promise yourself?" Make sure that you can deliver on the promise before you commit because your subconscious will be watching. For most people getting fit and healthy is a great example. Don't vow that you'll run around the block every day for the rest of your life – tomorrow will do. After that you can make another deal with yourself.

Self-love is a consequence of self-respect. You just can't tell yourself that all the drama is over and now you love yourself. There is only one way to love yourself that I have ever seen work and I've described it in the sentences above.

What I have seen work repeatedly is dedicating yourself to getting a win in one field. Like getting fit - the benefits are staggering. It is way more than just blowing off some fat. You'll feel emotionally stronger, more personally capable, be more balanced and have a more positive view of life and your current circumstances. You'll start to see life as the opportunity it truly is rather than struggle with your personal limitations.

You also need to feed your brain better fuel. If I'd run with the rubbish established in my mind instead of substituting better information I'd have some pretty poor results now. That higher-level information isn't just positive thinking - although that's a great start if you haven't figured it out already. A 'glass is half full' person looks at the facts and interprets them for a better experience.

Look at your thinking patterns. On a recent 12-day road trip I had the opportunity to observe my thought patterns and was stunned to notice that they recurred regularly. I started calling it the loop. A series of thoughts would turn up almost always in the same sequence. I began to watch for the length of the loop, thinking that it ran for about two hours before coming around again. I was stunned to discover it was only minutes!

It is important that we organise our thinking. At school we were shown what to think but not how to think. This becomes important when we discuss Emotional Intelligence – the ability to influence your

feeling with your thinking (read the emotions chapter). For now just understand that thoughts create feelings. If our thinking influences our emotional world – we better get on top of it!

Another way to improve our thinking process is to use affirmations. We all know that calling a five year old a bad boy once a day is enough to result in a delinquent teenager. That child wasn't bad – they became so. The same is true for us. Whatever lie you repeat often enough becomes the truth.

It's very much like setting goals. When you set the goal it has not actually happened yet but we insist that you think, talk and act as if it has because then it will.

Meditation is one of the most powerful self-image building tools I have come across in my 25 years in the self-help industry. Start with the kind of beginners' material we publish and move on to the more eastern styles. You'll find that meditation not only increases your critical thinking abilities, it also powerfully affects your emotional stability and your sense of being okay. If you meditate each day you will have an unrecognisably beautiful life 12 months from when you start and you'll realise you have only just begun. If it's good enough for the Dalai Llama, it's good enough for me. I have read everything that he has written because it has had the effect of helping me understand that my self-image is whatever I determine it will be. The Buddhist concept of detachment is a key factor at this level.

At your very core you are peaceful, perfect and serene. You see the world as it is including your so-called strengths and weaknesses. This inner essence of yourself is what I like to call the real you. This is the part of you that is loved by those who care about you. This 'spirit', essence or real you has no emotions and is able to observe you going through life at the physical mental and emotional level.

Until we are able to separate ourselves into these two components: the first being physical, mental and emotional and the second being spiritual, we will be at the mercy of the circumstances in our lives. When we are connected to our spirit we are able to step back and observe what is going on as opposed to participating in it. When we are watching we can decide how we feel. This concept is the root of emotional mastery, which is paramount when attempting to build self-esteem.

The last thing we need to consider when building self-esteem is what we contribute to the greater good. The act of giving without the possibility of return is a powerful tool in raising our sense of worthiness. If you have no money spare there is still plenty that you can do to help your fellow man. At the very least you can visit retirement villages and read to those no longer capable - you might be surprised at what you learn. If you want to explore the money aspect of self-esteem, grab a handful of cash and throw it out the window of your car. I'm positive you'll have a powerful emotional experience. If that's too much you can mow the next-door neighbour's lawn, give ten dollars to the next windscreen washer at the traffic lights, or buy a homeless person a meal. Long term, you need to consider what your contribution to the planet will be. Once you have – get on with it.

## Jason's thoughts on self-image



At the end of the day, the level of success you experience is directly related to your self-image. The results you achieve in life will be in line with the level of self-image you possess. If you unintentionally learnt from your parents that you only receive praise when you do something well, that can impact you as an adult. You learn that you are only worthwhile when doing something better than the time before. For example, if you can already spell the word dog, then you will have to spell a more complex word to get the same pat

on the head. This is called approval by achievement syndrome. As an adult, you will strive for better jobs, houses and cars to feel good about yourself or earn self-worth. We all know that only lasts for a short period of time. There is nothing wrong with getting a better job, just understand that you need to do it for your own reasons – not the ones you have been taught to care about. What we need to do is look inside ourselves to improve our self-image. Hoping that acquiring things is going to make you feel worthwhile will never do it long term.

The first thing I get my clients to do is to start changing their self-talk. Most people lock themselves into their beliefs by describing themselves that way. For example, “I have always been shy” or “I am not a confident person.” The first step can be as easy as saying the opposite. Find a role model - one of the quickest ways I have found to learn new behaviours is to hang around and model those

who exhibit the traits that I want to possess. How does that person respond in certain situations, what language do they use and how do they deal with being under pressure? Set little challenges each day that you may have been putting off doing and then keep your promise to yourself and follow through. This goes towards building a healthy self-image, which in turn will increase your confidence. Then buy yourself a note pad and write your victories for the day in it. I did this for 12 months straight and I can assure you that my confidence and self-image went through the roof. I still use this method today when I need a boost. An example of writing in your victory book: 14/07/09. Today I spoke up at work about the poor conditions we work under.

The key is to start small. We talk in the chapter about how self-image has little to do with reality. I have taught thousands of people how to get the mental edge in life. I struggled to learn at school and actually failed high school. Standing up in front of people teaching them does not match up with my track record – yet here I am a raging success! (There's that high self-esteem I was talking about!).

I don't have a huge number of specific role models for self-esteem. I simply admire anyone who is comfortable in their own skin. People who don't need to try to be something they are not. For me there is nothing more appealing than a person who doesn't need other people's approval to be liked or accepted.

One of the most important things to remember when building self-esteem is to be patient and compassionate with yourself. While we all need to make sure we don't let ourselves off the hook, we also need to be gentle with ourselves. Treat yourself like you would your best friend. If your friend was in a job they didn't like, would you

belittle them or would you be supportive? This is how we need to be with ourselves. When you are patient with yourself you will be able to move forward instead of being stuck in the negative state that comes from beating yourself up.

When I was about 21 years old, I said to myself I would get serious about my career at age 30. When I turned 28 I was driving forklifts for a living – I constantly berated myself for being stupid and failing to achieve greatness. To be honest, even mediocrity would have been acceptable at that point. I learned to be gentle with myself and focus on what I wanted – not what was wrong with my current situation. I also found ways to make my current job the best it could be, instead of focusing on the negative aspects.

The best thing I have ever done for myself (in terms of self-esteem) is learning to love and accept myself warts and all. I learned to laugh at my shortcomings instead of trying to defend them. I take small steps to work on the weaknesses that I think are important in improving the quality of my life. My self-talk is like a best friend - compassionate, supporting and truthful, while simultaneously encouraging me to strive to be the best I can be. My self-esteem was really boosted when I started to do the things that were out of my comfort zone on a regular basis. Keeping a record of my personal triumphs in a victory book has also been great. If I'm going to tell anyone how great I am – it might as well be me!

The more you improve your self-esteem, the better your results will become. The simplest way to build your self-image is to keep promises to yourself. If you say you are going to the gym tomorrow, go. Every time you do what you say you will, it gets recorded on your self-image scoreboard and vice versa. Make sure your scoreboard swings in your favour.



# CHAPTER 8

Career.



From the distinctive Nike tick to the snapping crocodile image on Lacoste shirts, and from a can of Coca Cola to an Apple iPod – the products we choose brand us to the world.

Big companies have understood the importance of brands for decades, but now people – driven by a generation of technology natives – are beginning to understand how personal branding can help them stand out from the crowd in the brave new world of work.

Management guru Tom Peters predicted the trend towards personal branding in his 1999 book *The Brand You: 50 Ways to Transform Yourself from an 'Employee' into a Brand*. In it he hypothesised that the twenty-first century would usher in the era of the individual, and that senior managers would become their own brands, which he calls “the CEO of Me, Inc.”, to protect their careers.

“Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You,”<sup>26</sup> Peters said. His argument is that the best way to have a satisfying career is to establish our own micro equivalent of the Nike tick.

The term ‘personal branding’ is defined by Wikipedia as “the process whereby people and their careers are marked as brands”.<sup>27</sup> In other words, personal branding is essentially how we market ourselves to others. Career management once focused on self-improvement, but the personal branding concept suggests that success comes from self-packaging.

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26 Tom Peters, “The Brand Called You,” *Fast Company Magazine*, 18 Dec. 2007, viewed 19 June 2009, <<http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/10/brandyou.html>>.

27 “Personal Branding,” *Wikipedia*, viewed 19 June 2009, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal\\_branding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_branding)>.

**“People with  
personal brands  
have an edge.”**

In the personal branding stakes, it was CEOs who first rolled the dice. Donald Trump, for example, transformed himself from a property tycoon into a household name in the fields of entertainment, retailing and recreation by creating a brand. From early in his career, Trump understood that people with personal brands have an edge when it comes to doing deals, promoting products and services, and carrying out negotiations. Today, Trump uses his name extensively on buildings and the products

he endorses – everything from Trump Towers to Trump Steaks bear his moniker. Of course, mass media has played its part in his brand identity – who doesn't associate Trump with the catch phrase: “You're fired”?

Before the age of the Internet, it was hard for everyday people to stand out from the crowd. Having a good idea meant convincing the local radio station or paper to give us airtime. A great product was marketed door-to-door, or by investing a large chunk of money on television advertising. Getting ourselves out there used to require attendance at network marketing events where we would be lucky to meet a half dozen people.

However, Web 2.0 technology amplified our personal visibility and completely revolutionised our ability to network effectively. In the new world of work, everyone has a chance to stand out.

The term Web 2.0 was first coined in 2004 to identify the growing number of web technologies that facilitate collaboration and information sharing between users. Since then, Web 2.0 has spread like wildfire. Newspapers are struggling to remain viable as advertising revenues fall; meanwhile news websites and blogs are attracting millions of people every day.

**“The next generation of workers already connects and collaborates in a virtual world.”**

Anyone who is serious about their career must understand that the next generation of workers already connects and collaborates in a virtual world. They can talk and text at the same time, have a host of social networking sites marked as favourites and don't remember a time before the Internet.

In the era of Google, MySpace, YouTube and Facebook, and with a blog born every minute, anyone can become their own brand. Generation Y workers understand this best of all. Ask any smart member of Gen Y, and they'll be able to clearly articulate their value proposition – what their value is to any organisation – to any prospective employer.

Young people look to their idols – actors, musicians, designers and other celebrities – and recognise that brand is everything. They observe people like Sean Combs (better known as hip-hop performer Puff Daddy, P Diddy or just Diddy) and admire the way he has transformed himself from a rapper into a branded superstar. Few people can recall a Puff Daddy song, yet this chameleon has launched a successful clothing line, underwear, fragrances, a restaurant chain, and has become one of world's richest entertainers with a net worth estimated at US \$346 million in 2006.<sup>28</sup> Whatever we think of his music, we cannot deny Sean Combs' incredible ability to leverage his personal brand to make millions.

Generation Y workers recognise that, while they may not be multi-million dollar musicians, they can apply the same techniques to launch their own careers. Ask anyone under the age of thirty to show you how they use technology, and

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<sup>28</sup> “Sean Combs,” *Wikipedia*, viewed 1 June 2009, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean\\_Combs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean_Combs)>.

you'll soon discover that they are building a strong personal brand. It may be through social networking sites, writing a blog or registering their own domain name and creating a website which showcases their skills and experience in much the same way the previous generation of workers presented a bound and embossed résumé.

In fact, it's fair to say that Google *is* the new résumé. In 2006, a survey by an American recruitment company found that as many as four in five recruiters use search engines to find background data on candidates.

**“In 2006, a survey by an American recruitment company found that as many as four in five recruiters use search engines to find background data on candidates.”**

With the popularity of social networking sites, blogs, and online forums on the rise, 77 per cent of recruiters said they use search engines to gain a more complete picture of job seekers, and 35 per cent admitted to eliminating a candidate from consideration based on the information uncovered online.<sup>29</sup>

**“Another trend making waves overseas and soon to hit our shores is the video CV.”**

This means our top ten search results on Google could make or break our careers. We simply must learn to manage our personal brands very carefully.

Another trend making waves overseas and soon to hit our shores is the video CV. Video-sharing websites such as YouTube are helping companies

<sup>29</sup> “Growing Number of Jobs Disrupted by Digital Dirt,” *Execunet*, 12 June 2006, viewed 19 June 2009, <[http://www.execunet.com/m\\_releases\\_content.cfm?id=3349](http://www.execunet.com/m_releases_content.cfm?id=3349)>.

to identify and recruit new employees. Take a quick tour of YouTube and you'll find the search term "video resume" results in more than 33,000 hits. And don't assume it's simply "multimedia" students, IT geeks and budding film directors who are selling themselves online – everyone from financial advisers to business analysts are making their own CV movies to give themselves the best shot at their dream job.

Social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have become another recruitment channel. A 2009 American survey found that 68 per cent of companies were using online social networks to support their recruitment efforts – and a further 13 per cent were planning to introduce social recruitment strategies in the next year.<sup>30</sup> It's no surprise then that many college students in the US pay for Google AdWords or Facebook advertising to ensure their personal brands stand out from the crowd.

So, what does all this mean?

It's simple really – the way people look for talented employees, business partners, products and services has changed forever.

It also means that "Googling" yourself is a smart career move. Remember, the results you see on your screen are the same results that everyone else sees.

Of course, developing our own brand is not just about embracing technology. Another personal promotional vehicle is old-fashioned word-of-mouth marketing – tapping into our networks of friends and family, colleagues, clients and customers is the best way to build a brand.

**“Googling’  
yourself is a  
smart career  
move.”**

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30 "Jobvite 2009 Social Recruitment Survey Results," *Jobvite*, 2009, viewed 19 June 2009, <<http://www.jobvite.com/Recruiting/2009-Jobvite-Social-Recruitment-Survey.pdf>>.

**“You need to be yourself because everyone else is taken and replicas don’t sell for nearly as much.”**

We’ve all heard the old cliché: it’s not what you know, it’s who you know. It’s a cliché because it’s true. If you know 250 people and each of those people knows 250 people, then the second level of your network contains 62,500 people!

How can we best use these groups?

Before we promote ourselves we need to start working on our reputations. We must identify our key talents and passions, and then become experts in a field that interests us. It’s imperative that we are known for making a significant contribution to our areas of endeavour. Teach, write, lecture, present – the important thing to do is get out there and become visible.

We must also ensure we build brands that are trustworthy. Gen Y personal branding expert Dan Schawbel suggests that the key to successful branding is authenticity. “You need to be yourself because everyone else is taken and replicas don’t sell for nearly as much.”<sup>31</sup>

He’s right. Being authentic gives us the best chance of promotion and of commanding a premium price tag. Just as Apple charges a premium for an MP3 player we can buy at the fraction of the price elsewhere, if we have the right brand, we can do the same. And in business, people want to purchase from people they know, like and trust. When we give people great results, they’ll refer even more people to us.

Trustworthiness in the age of personal branding is crucial. Consider the World Wide Web. Anyone can have a website or a blog. But how do we know which

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31 Dan Schawbel, “Personal Branding Blog,” viewed 19 June 2009, < <http://personalbrandingblog.wordpress.com/page/6/>>.

**“Everything we do communicates the value and characteristics of our brands.”**

sites are worth visiting? The answer is all in the branding. The sites we visit time and time again are the sites that we trust – those with brand credibility. The same is true with email. How do we decide which emails to open and which to delete? Personal or corporate branding.

Taking charge of our personal brand means becoming the captains of our own careers. We are our own chief marketing officers, and that means protecting and fostering our brands. Everything

we do communicates the value and characteristics of our brands – from the emails we write to our phone manner, from our business cards to the cars we drive. Sound superficial? It is. But it's also reality.

Whether we like it or not, developing a strong personal brand is as much about style as it is about substance. We all know that first impressions count. Most people have sized us up within three seconds of our initial meeting. It takes just one glance for someone to appraise our visual and behavioural appearance from head to toe. They'll consider our demeanour, mannerisms and body language and even assess our grooming and accessories – watch, handbag and briefcase. Within those three seconds, we make an indelible impression.

So, if we never get a second chance to make a first impression, what skills can we teach ourselves to make sure we get it right first time, every time? Below are some techniques you can use to impress everyone you meet.

The easiest way to create a good first impression is to give the person you are meeting your full attention. When being introduced to someone for the first time (or speaking to them on the phone) greet them as though you're sincerely delighted by the opportunity to interact with them.

Looking people in the eye is also a simple but effective strategy. Think about how it makes you feel when the person you're talking to continually takes their eyes off you to check out other people in the room or look down at their phone. Instead, look at and listen to the person you've just met and they'll feel as though you value their opinions and insights.

Be responsive. When someone you don't know leaves you a message or emails you, get back to them quickly as you can (within 24 hours is a good rule of thumb). If you return calls and answer emails promptly, you're letting people know that they matter to you. They'll appreciate your efforts and your reputation will be all the better for it.

**“Another good way to impress is to respect people’s time.”**

Another good way to impress is to respect people's time. Keep your correspondence concise (and use the spell-check function if spelling and grammar are not your strong points). Leave short voice messages that clearly explain the purpose of your call and provide a number they can call you on. Rambling telephone messages are always a poor reflection on your personal brand.

And, finally, acknowledge that appearance counts. Whether you like it or not, people will judge you based on the way you present yourself to the world. So, don't dress for the position you have now, but the one you aspire to.

So, how do you create a strong personal brand?

1. **Identify your career mission statement.** What is your personal value proposition? What makes you tick? What fires you up? Is it challenge? Reward? Recognition? Power? Prestige? Human interaction? Once you've



answered these questions for yourself, you'll have a better understanding of what you want from a career. Then you can develop a value proposition or mission statement that you can clearly articulate in one line.

2. **Start to think about your personal brand.** In the past, you may have used a business card, professional portfolio or résumé, letters and references. Today, you can expand this to include a video résumé, LinkedIn profile, blog or website. You may even like to hook into social networks such as Twitter or Facebook to create a compelling personal brand.
3. **Communicate your brand.** Consider writing articles for magazines (both traditional and online), attend networking events, embrace opportunities to speak in public or appear on expert panels, post your comments on other people's blogs and position yourself as an expert in your field.
4. **Grow your brand.** Remember, as you grow and develop, your brand will too. Every time you achieve a new goal, gain a new job or receive a new award, you need to update your online presence to reflect this. Review your mission statement annually to ensure you are still on the right track.

### Self-coaching exercise

Contact five people you know well and trust and ask them to describe you in ten words. For example, they may say you are “detailed” or “analytical”, “caring” and “people-oriented”, “driven” or “ambitious”...

When you have your list of words (there should be around fifty), start to assess them and put them into categories. These are the characteristics that people know you best by – but it doesn't mean that you must accept them. Then ask yourself:

- What themes stand out?
- Which characteristics do you want to embrace as part of your personal value proposition or your personal brand?

- Which characteristics would you like to change?
- What steps will you take to change?
- What characteristics will you need to pursue your goals and ambitions? Are any missing?

When you're determining your value proposition, remember this: your most important asset is probably what you've got rattling around inside your brain. One study of corporate knowledge found that 42 per cent was unmanaged – in other words, within employees' heads – while the rest was spread across paper and electronic repositories.<sup>32</sup> While a century ago the smokestacks and factories of US Steel made up America's most valuable company, today it's Microsoft – a company that sends its most precious assets out the door each night. Spend some time thinking about what assets you have that other organisations or people might need.

Finally, we must give away the mental picture of climbing the ladder of career success. That's long gone. Careers are no longer linear – today they are a maze of sideways, forwards and diagonal moves that teach us new skills, provide us with new experience and expertise, help us to develop new capabilities, introduce us to new contacts and help us to constantly reinvent ourselves – and our personal brands.

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32 David Braue, "Banking on Brain Power," *ZDNet Australia*, 17 Dec. 2002, viewed 19 June 2009, <<http://www.zdnet.com.au/news/business/soa/Banking-on-brain-power/0,139023166,120270706,00.htm>>.

## Paul's thoughts on career



My maths teacher falling about laughing shattered my teenage dreams of piloting fighter jets for mega dollars. Of course, he was right - any attempt at that level of study would have ended in disaster, probably more for my passengers than me, as we'd have ended up in exotic locations purely by accident.

My second choice was one made by half my graduating high school class. We all trooped off to teachers college because it was a great fall back position.

We didn't really want to end up on the other side of the desk but three years to find out what we wanted to do with our lives while getting an allowance to study meant the pressure was off. For me, the education in how to teach was secondary to the world of girls and parties, so I majored in them both.

My first job was in a high school in the Western suburbs of Sydney teaching woodwork. Despite the kids being keen to learn (and a pleasure to teach) I felt trapped and amused myself by pre-fabricating new parts for the house that Mary & I were renovating at the time. Me teaching kids was never going to last because I found it difficult to not dream about the future and the horizon from inside a school was a bit limited.

When I quit teaching I moved into sales and my first foray into the professional sales arena was nearly my last. Fortunately for me selling

is a skill rather than a talent and I learnt quickly enough to survive. The consequences of working with a company that went broke whilst owing me a years salary were enough to send me looking for something I felt was missing but couldn't put my finger on.

I attended a personal development course similar to those we currently run and was transformed. Not only did I stop smoking, stop nail biting, lose a few kilos of fat and begin to earn great money – I discovered what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I'd been missing teaching but didn't want to go back to a high school. Teaching adults the benefits I'd gained through introspection and personal development lit my fire and I was up and away in an evangelical rush that hasn't really stopped.

That was twenty-five years ago and Beyond Success is now a multi million-dollar operation.

Why tell you that story?

In my opinion, it illustrates the keys we all need to create successful, rewarding careers. Let's have a closer look at what I mean by that...

1. To find the dream job/business you'll need to be out there. Not many people report the blinding flash that changes their life occurring while they sat at home waiting. This means we need to be on our way to somewhere if we wish to find the place we are really after. You'll need to set and pursue goals that are meaningful to you now in order to discover that which you will be turned on by later. There is no substitute for action!

2. You'll need to be interested in and excited by your current activities. If your job doesn't do it for you - find a way to be enthusiastic about whatever you can. It is critically important that you are 'engaged' with life as it (life) won't give you the goodies if you are just playing with it.
3. You need vision. I knew that I wanted to be wealthy – I just had no idea how I would create that wealth. I was forever dreaming up ways that businesses could be built, expanded, grown, bought and sold. I couldn't go into a boat yard without figuring out how they could sell more boats or build them faster and cheaper. I saw opportunity everywhere.
4. You need to be up to date. Hot ideas are only at that temperature for a short while and then the next rage turns up. We have kids who keep me informed about the latest and greatest and I believe its one of the keys to success in business. If we didn't have the kids I'd find another way to remain on the edge of current developments so that we remain relevant.
5. Be prepared to spend time and money in order to learn what you need to know to get where you want to go. Be prepared to spend this money long before you have it in the bank. You'll be rewarded with the ability to move

I have a builder friend who can no longer work in the construction field because of injuries sustained in the course of his work. I offered to get him into a career changing educational program (through one of my contacts) that would allow him to make five times the average wage whilst staying at home with his two gorgeous kids. He declined despite a zero dollar entry fee into a \$5,000 program that others were falling over themselves to get into. If you are asking yourself how dumb this guy is you are only having the first thought. It's really his "stuck" mindset that is his biggest problem.

with the times. It's the standard model but we resist it like crazy. Learning to be a bricklayer will cost three years effort and you will have to endure massive workloads and abuse. This we consider okay, but we are reluctant to pay a few measly thousand to learn how to trade the stock market – saying to ourselves that if it were any good they wouldn't be teaching it – just doing it. It is this automatic suspicion of something ridiculously legitimate that stops many a budding entrepreneur.

6. Remember that most professions are skills not talents. People learn how to be a brain surgeon every day. Sure, it takes time to learn the skill but if you don't you get to spend the rest of your life stuck where you are right now. The specialist who performed a radical prostatectomy for me in 2003 attended university and worked hard to get outstanding grades for nearly ten years. He charged twenty grand for six hours work and I paid him gladly. He performed three of those operations that week. Time, money and effort are all required to get where you want to be.
7. Be aware that your journey to the ultimate job/business may take you up many apparent dead ends. These may be part of the overall learning required for you to be able to take up the perfect opportunity when it presents itself. Keep reminding yourself that some kind of learning or personal development is happening while you are in the cul de sac. Your effort is not wasted as long as you keep learning. Remember that you may have to travel through several 'professions' to find the one that floats your boat.

8. Understand that the ultimate job is a great thing compared to a time filler that just pays the bills, but it will never deliver as much personal development as a business will. What works is to practice your passion as a profession and for most people that means setting up in business for themselves so that they can keep it all 'pure'. I've lost count of the number of people who have come to me lamenting that they love what they do but dislike the work environment or the way they are forced to practice their profession. The only real remedy is to go out on your own. The learning will be frustrating and difficult, but chances are you will love every minute of it. I do.

Obviously, I am biased towards being in business because that is what has worked for me. If you would prefer to work for someone else, then my advice is this...

Only ever work for a solid employer who demands much of you. This is the number one requirement of your work environment. You need bosses who are prepared to back you and then push you. You will thank them forever.

Above all remember this...

*The ability to sell is the ultimate skill.*

If you are unable to be persuasive and influential you will remain light years away from your potential because you will be incapable of convincing people to deal with you rather than someone else.

One of my students realised he was afraid of the whole selling

arena, so he decided to go and get a job selling in a commission only environment. His efforts got him threatened with redundancy so he doubled his input and over a two-year period rose to the number one sales spot on the team. This single event convinced him that he was much more capable than he thought he was, so he went and earned a law degree despite having left school at age 16. To my knowledge he's never used that degree despite graduating in the top 5% of the entire university. He values his selling skills more than the degree and last year his business generated \$6.85 million. This year is looking like double that.

What was that two years learning to sell really worth? In my opinion, it was priceless. Would you give two years to gain the skills and confidence necessary to earn tens of millions every year?

If you wouldn't, have fun staying stuck. If you would, I suggest you get on with it.



## Jason's thoughts on career



The message I received in regards to work while I was growing up was that any job is better than none. School, for me, was something to get through – it was never enjoyable. My favourite subject was lunch. When it came time to leave high school I was scared about finding a job because my grades were poor and frustrated knowing that I would have to settle for whatever I could get.

It's easy for people to blame their job for not providing what they are looking for. For many years I blamed my job for failing to provide me with the fulfillment I was looking for. Eventually I realised that it's more about what I bring to the job than the task itself. I now love my job simply because I choose to. While we need to bring our own positive energy to any job, it is still important to find the one that allows us to express ourselves. Thus, it becomes relatively easy to choose a career. Just look at what the career needs to provide you with – a chance to express creativity, opportunity to expand your skills set, working with people, leading a team – the possibilities are endless.

I can remember hearing a story about two brothers who were shoe shiners. One said it was the worst job in the world – he thought everybody looked down at him. The other said it was the best job in the world – he thought you get to meet fantastic people, work your own hours and make people smile. It becomes obvious that how you experience your job has everything to do with your perspective and what you bring to the table. I have been on both

sides of the fence and as an employer I now search for those who want to be apart of something bigger than just working 9.00am – 5.00pm and going home.

One of the most important lessons I have learnt with my career is that I simply have to support myself in going after what I want. In my experience, when you back yourself in what you truly want to do and commit yourself as a team player, the rewards follow. It's also important to consistently set goals and targets that challenge you. I regularly sit down for about 30 minutes and decide how I can make a difference in the business this week. It might be by telling my team members what a great job they are doing, making extra phone calls or helping others in some way. At the end of the day, my message is simple: give 100% to whatever you are doing and you are guaranteed to get 100% back. This way, even if where you are not in your preferred career right now, you are at the very least developing a great work ethic by giving it everything you have. Believe me, if your employer has half a brain they will notice.

If you want to change careers, you will have to be proactive. Draw a line in the sand by setting a date for when you will change jobs. Once you set a date and give notice, you will actually have to make it happen. The key here is to give notice – the threat of having no job at all might just be enough to make you spring into action. On a personal note, you should be aware that if you are staying in a career for the wrong reasons it will slowly destroy your spirit. Of course, I am not suggesting that you walk in on Monday and quit. I am suggesting you start taking positive action to change your situation.

1. Set a date by which you will change jobs.
2. Start investigating what it will take to make the change – what skills will you need to develop?
3. Explore your fears and concerns around making the change, and then come up with a solution for them.

We all know that if you are going after a new job you will need to stand out from the crowd. If there were thousands of people in your field, why would an employer or customer choose you? You absolutely must have a clear answer to this question – it will be very difficult to succeed without one. This is called niche marketing, i.e. you must cater to a group of people that is an inch wide and a mile deep. There is an abundance of material out there on this topic and I suggest you learn everything you can about marketing. Even if you don't intend to start a business, a sound knowledge of marketing principles is essential - you will need to know how to market yourself just like we talk about in the chapter.

In the chapter we also talked about mission statements. We gave you plenty of information about how to create one, so I would simply like to take this opportunity to share mine with you.

*“I will embrace and see each day as not just another day, but one filled with opportunity and excitement. To live the days given to me, gratefully, with discipline, purpose and as an adventure.”*

This is my current one, but my mission statement has changed from time to time. As you take on different roles in your life, you may need to alter it. Don't be too concerned about getting your mission statement perfect, just make a start today and let it evolve.

As I am partner in Beyond Success, my long-term career goals are centered around growing public awareness of our brand. We are looking at expanding both in Australia and internationally. Heightened public awareness results in us reaching more people, which for us means changing the world. My short-term career goals are set based on the targets I will have to meet to make the expansion we dream of possible. The rest of my career goals are more personal. For example, becoming a great leader. I believe that the results of any organization are a direct reflection of the quality of leadership said company experiences. Thus, I spend time studying great leaders in order to become one.

The greatest lesson I have learned in terms of career is to take responsibility for the level of success I am experiencing at any one time. This way, I actually have the power to do something about it. For many years I blamed my bosses for my lack of success, which meant I was powerless to do anything about it. I have also learnt that every obstacle is an opportunity for me to learn and grow. Remember, your current situation is perfect for you – wherever you are right now is where you are meant to be because there is something for you to learn from it. Make sure you set goals and take the appropriate steps to move towards them. You always have two options in life – you can either complain and do nothing or you can express gratitude for where you are, learn what you need to and move on.

You only get one chance at life. Are you prepared to settle for second best or will you have a red hot go at getting what you really want?





# CHAPTER 9

Leadership

Can you name several (current) leaders that you admire?

Hundreds of books, websites and articles declare that they contain brilliant advice on how to become a great leader. Yet many people, asked to name a leader they respect, struggle to identify more than a few individuals.

Why? Well, we think it's mostly because inspiring leaders are extremely rare these days. When was the last time a person in a position of power really impressed you? The leaders of today leave a lot to be desired, and the vast majority of the population have stopped going along with them just because they are told to.

Let's take a look at why we are questioning those leading us.

Traditional leadership roles have military roots. The first time people were brought together (in large numbers) to collectively achieve a goal was either for hunting or war. This trend continued into the industrial revolution. When unskilled workers were brought into factories, somebody had to tell them what to do and how to do it. The only model in place for managing large numbers of people was the "command and control" structure employed by the military.

Peter Drucker, author of *The New Realities*, writes that the command model – with very few at the top giving orders and a great number at the bottom following them – has been the norm in large organisations for more than a hundred years. It is easy to see how this model encourages people to climb the ladder in the hope of achieving power and responsibility. The problem with control-based leadership structures is that they create barriers that prevent effective teamwork. Yet, it is this ability to work together that strengthens an organisation's ability to survive in the modern marketplace.

This centuries old idea that one should submit to authority simply because it exists was first questioned by Baby Boomers, and has since been obliterated by their Generation Y children. They have wiped out the automatic legitimisation of an individual that previously came with rank, privilege, power or promotion.

No longer content with being told what to do or how to do it, the new generation is setting its own rules – rendering traditional leadership strategies useless. These days, you are far more likely to find prospective employees interviewing companies about their financial, ecological and ethical credentials than the other way around. The view that the corporation will either help or hinder an individual's progress is paramount.

**“No longer content with being told what to do or how to do it, the new generation is setting its own rules – rendering traditional leadership strategies useless.”**

Generation Y simply started the trend. The general population now apply the same set of rules. While questioning our leaders can excite change, it does pose some problems. If traditional roles are no longer relevant, and the concept of leadership as a form of authority is all but extinct, how do we lead?

What does it take to lead a family, business or organisation in this new era?

It's actually quite simple. First, let's look at what is becoming less relevant in the modern world.

Large institutions that previously wielded great power are suffering the consequences of having their ideologies questioned by a population that is becoming increasingly empowered by the opportunity to choose for itself.



Governments that (not so long ago) acted for the long term public good have been exposed as groups of self-interested politicians working only to get re-elected. Banks that once towered in the corporate and financial sectors are falling prey to unredeemable debt, and overwhelmingly, people are deserting traditional church denominations.

Are we less spiritual? It's unlikely. In our experience, people are just less interested in all the pomp and ceremony that comes with traditional religions.

Now let's take a look at what is currently growing exponentially.

1. Non Government Organisations that are set up to serve a community of self-designated, self-chosen interest groups. They are collections of ordinary people who are stopping places like Africa from degenerating even further. They do more than any government can, because they choose to be there, and are not limited by politics.
2. Establishments like Bendigo Bank are becoming increasingly popular as communities realise the advantages of having financial institutions that set out to serve them by re-investing profits locally.
3. Charismatic spiritual groups led by ordinary people who emerged from the crowd and demonstrated that they were living up to their own values by donating their time for the betterment of the group.

**“The old ‘lead by example’ adage is actually fundamental to successful leadership in the modern marketplace.”**

The key concept applied by all of the above organisations is knowledge of both the self and the group being led. The old lead-by-example adage is actually fundamental to successful leadership in the modern marketplace.

According to management thinker, Jagdish Parikh, the gap between what we learn about leadership and what we experience exposes a fundamental flaw in current leadership models. He claims that the qualities that make an inspiring leader are not innate characteristics – they are skills that aspiring leaders can teach themselves. Parikh believes that self-knowledge and self-mastery are essential qualities for great leaders.

“Unless one knows how to lead oneself, it would be presumptuous to lead others,” Parikh says. He adds, “If you don’t lead yourself, someone else will.”<sup>33</sup>

Modern leadership demands that we exhibit the ability to adapt our style to achieve the maximum effectiveness. Rather than using their own preferred style, inspiring leaders are able to take different approaches to suit the varying needs of their teams and the challenges they face. Before you can adapt your style, you will need to know what it is. Below we have explained the traditional leadership styles so that you can identify yours.

### **Authoritarian Leader (high task, low relationship)**

These leaders are task oriented and are hard on their teams. They make little to no room for collaboration, and expect people to do what they are told without question. When something goes wrong they tend to focus on blame rather than finding the root of the problem and preventing it from happening again. They are intolerant of creativity, so it is difficult for their workforce to contribute or develop a sense of teamwork. Their teams usually achieve a lot because they fear what might happen if they don’t.

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<sup>33</sup> Jagdish Parikh, “The Zen of Management Maintenance: Leadership Starts with Self-Discovery,” *Harvard Business School*, 5 Sep. 2005, viewed 23 June 2009, <<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4790.html>>.

**Team Leader (high task, high relationship)**

This type leads by positive example and attempts to create an environment in which all team members can reach their potential – both personally and professionally. They encourage their teams to reach goals effectively, and work tirelessly to strengthen the bonds between team members. Team leaders normally form the most productive and successful teams.

**Reward Leader (low task, high relationship)**

This type of leader uses reward power to maintain discipline and encourage the team to accomplish its goals. They very rarely use coercion because they fear that doing so would jeopardise their relationship with the team. This style is sometimes effective, but if the team is not particularly interested in the task, it can produce lacklustre results.

**Absent Leader (low task, low relationship)**

These leaders employ a “delegate and disappear” style. They are not interested in achieving goals or fostering teamwork, and essentially allow their teams to set their own course. This usually creates a power struggle within the team as they attempt to produce a more effective leader from within their own ranks. These teams often fail to produce more than average results.

None of these types of leadership are wrong; some are simply more effective than others. Which type should be used depends on both the team being led and the task they are trying to complete. Being able to adapt our style to suit any situation is imperative if we are to be effective leaders.

Why?

Because the temporary (or situational) leader is today’s king. People flock to them in massive numbers because they are authentic. They walk their talk.

We can no longer expect to command attention just because we received a promotion, an award or a new qualification. Even if we could, the attention would not be enough – it's meaningless without the practical leadership skills to back it up.

If you want to lead your family, impact on your company or influence your partner positively, you will have to know what is important to them.

In order to hold a position of reverence in someone's life, you must become the kind of person who can help them reach their personal and professional potential. It's not enough to know what is important to your team; you must assist them to reach their own goals if you expect them to make a contribution to the group.

**“If you want to lead your family, impact on your company or influence your partner positively, you will have to know what is important to them.”**

While this may sound like putting yourself last, it is a very effective tool for creating outstanding teams who look up to you. However, if you expect it to work, you must be genuine. Showing a legitimate interest in each member of your team will automatically establish an environment that is essential for effective teamwork.

Today's leader intrinsically understands this and works on establishing shared values within their team. This means finding which values are agreed on by the contributing individuals and working with them in mind. In any group there will be dissension, but healthy disagreement creates a more robust project because a better solution is most often found when debating the strengths and weaknesses of each view. We are not advocating forced agreement or

compromising your team members' values, but if you focus on what the team has in common, you will invariably receive a better result.

If you hope to successfully lead any organisation, you must be able to clearly articulate your personal values and show that you live up to them. Without requiring anyone to agree with you, make your values known to your team.

The next step is to spend enough time with your team to help them elicit their personal and professional values to the same extent that you have. It is essential that this is a selfless act you carry out for the team members' benefit. Some experts call this relationship building, but in our opinion the relationship is simply the consequence of your assistance.

This is a very proactive method of building a team, and most people don't take the time to do it. Many leaders only have the time to stop what they are doing to correct the team's behaviour. This is a recipe for disaster – see why in the case study below.

When we lack empathy for our team members on a personal level, it simply means we have not taken the time to find out what is important to them. If we are not proactive leaders, we only have ourselves to blame when our teams fail to be inspired by our best speeches – to them it's just words spoken by someone who doesn't know them at all.

## Case study

Jack owns and runs a manufacturing business he has built from scratch. He's a genuinely hard worker and all round good-guy who has risked it all to have a go. The business has grown quickly and there are now 90 people working in it. While he once worked alongside his employees bolting, cutting, sawing, gluing and packing orders, Jack has now moved off the factory floor to juggle finances, organise the sales team, oversee the factory operations, order stock, and ensure compliance with OH&S. He's busier than a one-armed paperhanger doing jobs he's had no time to learn at college or read about in even the simplest of books.

He doesn't get onto the factory floor much anymore because he's working dawn to dusk and not getting on top of his 'to do' list.

Then they mess something up in the factory. It's expensive and time consuming. Faster than a speeding bullet Jack is on the factory floor subjecting someone to a withering blast of his frustration – all the more forceful because he's letting go on everything built up over the past month.

This happens a bit more regularly than Jack realises. Let's say, once a week.

Then, one day the guys in the factory post a caged cockatoo near the bottom of the stairs. The next time Jack comes rumbling out of his office and hits the steel stairs two at a time, the cockatoo acting as sentinel sends the word and the factory is suddenly empty.

**Case Study (continued)**

We've worked with Jack for a number of years and know him to be a good person. His employees didn't. They only ever saw him with a full head of steam and blood lust in his eyes. They were afraid of him and acted accordingly.

We convinced Jack to take half an hour a day to wander around the factory floor getting to know the people who worked there. He began voicing his genuine concern for their welfare and listening to them.

Within weeks Jack reported being more effective at work. He discovered that the workforce was a brains trust that could solve most of his daily frustrations because they were at the coalface and knew what to do almost as soon as he described a problem.

More often than not, people are happy to question their leaders. This means that teams will no longer do what they are told because they are afraid of the consequences if they don't. Generally, if we don't like a leader we have the option to simply leave.

Modern leadership is conferred on those who wear it comfortably and have demonstrated that they have the best interests of the group at heart. As we mentioned above, modern leadership is usually temporary. In fact, we really only lead as long as we are needed in that position. One could argue that we are in constant need of inspiring leaders, but we have repeatedly seen a leader emerge for the duration of a project and merge back into the team at the project's completion.

Modern leadership is all about knowing what you stand for and acting accordingly. Treasuring the differences between individuals while still acting for the wellbeing of the team as a whole encourages those with a counter point of view to see that you are unbiased.

**“Modern leadership is all about knowing what you stand for and acting accordingly.”**

In his book, *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman reports on the level of optimism shown by American presidential candidates from 1900-1984. In 18 out of 22 elections, voters chose the more optimistic candidate.<sup>34</sup> The public seems to respond well to messages of hope and opportunity – a leader must show that they have a vision.

Leading in the modern world requires us to have a unique vision for the future. But how much is too much? Leaders who focus on unattainable goals often demonstrate naïve optimism by hoping that everything will turn out okay in the end. Team members become frustrated when they realise that this is far from reality. On the other hand, leaders who focus too heavily on difficulties foster negativity that often leads to apathy and pessimism within their teams. If we tread this line carefully, we can create a team that is both optimistic and realistic. Our vision needs to be carefully balanced between focusing on opportunities and identifying problems.

There is much talk in the community about the need for visionary leaders, but this view is extremely limiting. It implies that a leader only needs a vision to be successful. This is simply not true. A leader must have a vision, but also the ability to get their team to accept ownership of the vision and develop enough

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<sup>34</sup> Martin Seligman, *Learned Optimism* (New York: Pocket Books, 1998).



commitment to carry it through to completion. Modern leaders can empower their people and inspire them to create their own vision and do what it takes to make that vision a reality.

When you attempt to improve your leadership style, stay within the limits of your personality. You will lose respect if you come across as artificial. You must also ensure that you remain within the reaches of your own comfort zone. If your personality lends itself towards a factual, logical style of leadership, you will lose credibility if you behave like a cheerleader.

**“Modern leaders can empower their people and inspire them to create their own vision and do what it takes to make that vision a reality.”**

Below is a formula for leadership that we have found extremely successful.

1. **Know yourself and seek self-improvement** – ensure you are living according to your values, work with your strengths, and improve on your weaknesses. Develop your vision and spend time turning it into reality. Learn to be flexible and adapt your style.
2. **Set an example** – become an outstanding role model for your team. They need to be able to see what is expected of them. As Ghandi said, “we must become the change we want to see”.
3. **Know your people and take care of them** – take the time to get to know your team, help them identify their values, and show sincere concern for their wellbeing.
4. **Make sound and timely decisions** – assess your options, make your decision, and then stick by it until you find a better solution. If you don’t support yourself, how can your team expect you to back them up?
5. **Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions** – search for new ways to improve your organisation. When things go wrong, as

they invariably will, do not blame others. Accepting responsibility for your mistakes and actively seeking solutions will encourage your team to do the same. (See point two).

6. **Keep your team informed** – make sure your team members feel like you are being honest with them and letting them know about things that affect them.
7. **Foster a team atmosphere** – although many leaders call their organisation a team, they are often just a group of people doing their jobs. Undertake training as a group, and encourage your team to get to know one another by doing so yourself. (Again, see point two).

Below are some exercises you can do to explore your current situation in terms of leadership.

### **Self-coaching exercise one**

“Don’t tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.” *George S. Patton*

Based on what the quotation above, here are some questions for you to ask yourself and your team:

- How often do you tell people what to do and how to do it?
- How often do you allow your team to make mistakes?
- Does your team rely on you for the answers?
- How often are you surprised at the results they get?

### **Self-coaching exercise two**

“Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” *Dwight Eisenhower*

- Do you delegate your workloads?
- What have you not delegated yet that you know you should?
- What can you do to let go of more work?
- Do you know the strengths and weaknesses of your team?
- Does your team want to work for you or do they need to work for you?

## Paul's thoughts on leadership



Although I didn't realise it at the time, setting up my own business 25 years ago meant assuming a position of leadership. Of course, a leader in a fledgling organisation is both an oxymoron and a necessity if the enterprise is going to be successful.

In the beginning I was just leading myself, but I had no idea how critical that process was to the success of the venture. As you might expect, I managed to lead myself up several garden paths

that were dead ends.

My first mistake was to consult my entire team of one and do whatever they said, which resulted in me doing only the jobs I liked. I was able to explain away what wasn't happening and the business faltered. The bottom line is this: we must be able to lead ourselves before there is even the slightest chance that we will be capable of leading others.

Leading ourselves can be extremely complex. In general, those of us who are trying to escape being told what to do will have difficulty. For many of us there is a tendency to want to undermine authority. It shows up as the almost automatically taken stance of opposition. They say black and we say white. They say stay and we leave just so that we can feel independent. Its like we don't want to be told what to do – we are sick of being pushed around. We don't have the

actual thought, “Life will be better when I’m running my own show” but the lure of being in charge is powerful.

Little do we know that we subconsciously transfer our automatic resistance to authority to ourselves. Once we are in charge we consciously get on with it but subconsciously pull against the boss (us) so that we can feel like we are running the show. This emotional resistance to being ‘told what to do’ never shows up as a thought. If it did we’d be aware of it and able to respond appropriately. This conundrum is usually the source of the often heard complaint, “Why can’t I get myself to do what is in my own best interests? I like the gym, I get good results, I pay for it willingly, I have more energy, I lose weight, I feel great – and I just can’t make myself go with any consistency!!!”

Therefore we struggle with the oldest and least effective form of leadership - we try to force ourselves to get on with it. Without a whip this method is pretty useless – yet we persist because there doesn’t seem to be any other option.

What would be better?

Almost anything.

The need for a modern form of leadership is obvious. How we will develop it in the next ten years isn’t, unless we take a completely new approach; one that dispenses with the idea that a leader is someone superior and embraces the ideal that leaders spring up to serve a need. New leaders will perhaps emerge from the rank and file for a limited time, purpose or function and then blend back into the crowd.

This concept has a lot going for it but will be limited by our ideas around leadership being a reward for long-term service. If you can overcome that idea by accepting that the team will naturally operate for the greater good of all its members you can build magnificent teams. You will need to enhance (perhaps even establish) equality as a cornerstone concept and encourage brainstorming, think tanks and idea fests. Team leaders will self-select for various projects as long as you insist that the group operate with the end goals as a guiding force.

Can that be done?

Jason and I have seen it happen on countless occasions. During team training exercises (both real and role played) we have noticed that groups of randomly selected people naturally coalesce and perform functions that deliver results for the team – especially when we set the teams up to compete among each other. It is this healthy competition that turns out to be the deciding factor. Without it there is little need to ‘strive’ and power struggles can develop. When the team works to win for everyone, status, superior roles and bossiness naturally vanish.

It therefore follows that today’s leader is probably a self effacing, not so obvious cog in the wheels of the business (or family) who understands that they are serving a larger purpose for the duration of the project. They will perceive themselves much more as a co-coordinator and facilitator than a boss. Quite often they will refer to themselves as “the person responsible for...” rather than “the person in charge of...” This makes them great listeners because they understand the necessity of producing coordinated effort and will willingly work with individual idiosyncrasies. They see no real

need to change someone when they don't have to put up with their strange behaviours for too long and when cooperating produces the result they wanted anyway. Generally speaking, these people are well respected because of their unassuming stance and are therefore considered a vital part of the team by the team.

There are countless texts full of theories about teamwork, motivation, incentives packages, rewards, punishments la, la la...

Try this. Compare two of my clients.

Bill has a business that employs 350 people. His work life is full of drama instigated by his desire to get the lazy bastards who work for him to actually do some work. He is convinced that they would nick his shirt right off his back if he left the buttons undone. The hidden camera system in his warehouse is chiefly there to trap whoever it is that works there when they pay a visit over the weekend to rob him.

Jack runs a similar show with 900 people under one ten acre roof. While walking me around on a tour he was able to greet every single worker by first name and ask about his or her wife or kids – also by name. Jack considers himself lucky to have so many great people willing to help him build the business. He provides a cooked lunch every working day and makes the time to turn up and eat with the warehouse guys a couple of times a week.

The differences are obvious. One guy wants to understand mass motivation and has formulated his own version of a 600-year-old people management scheme. His piss poor results have not influenced him to change anything except in the direction of getting tougher on them. Jack is onto something the first one says he doesn't have the time for.

If you don't know what floats the boat of each individual on your team – it's because you haven't asked them.

Jason and I have no qualifications in this area if you don't count the school of hard knocks. That has forced us to look at what works and what doesn't as we have worked with teams all over the country. And what we have seen produce outstanding results repeatedly is leaders assuming that they know nothing - not that they are dumb. They are willing to treat each individual not just with respect and care but to seek to understand that person.

Here's how we see it...

- It's incumbent upon us as leaders to value our team members highly enough to take the time to explore their values. We must then seek to provide work opportunities within that value framework.
- We need to know why people work.
- Modern leaders understand that their role is one of coordinating and facilitating. They WANT their teammates to shine.
- We have to be able to articulate what constitutes work satisfaction to each team member.
- The team MUST be more important than the individuals comprising it but they MUST agree about purpose, methodology and targets.
- New leaders emerge to fit a situation and may not stay on in that role once the project is complete.
- This mission or vision then needs to be used as the measuring stick for the team's performance.
- Next comes the selection of goals or milestones for the team as a whole. Ideally this is also established before too much



actual work takes place.

- Then individuals write their own job description with accountability measures and targets or milestones along the way.
- As work begins we plan ahead for check in times, methods and possibilities for feedback and progress reports.
- We figure out how we will communicate about missed targets, unfulfilled deadlines, poor performance, reviews and rewards.
- As a leader we need to visit each member of the team and ask how we can assist them in reaching their personal responsibilities and goals. It is our job to provide the mechanism for our team to become winners.
- Once action stations are declared the smart leader will skulk around looking for opportunities to praise individuals. We probably need to go as far as quietly vanishing when we see poor performance. Most people don't need to be reminded of the bit they messed up – especially if they have a good track record.

Leadership also means that you may be personally less productive. Rather than bemoan your inability to reduce the length of your 'to do' list, understand that some of those tasks need to be delegated so that you have the time to devote to your team. They need you.

Not to boss them around but to soundboard, discuss, report, analyse, react, sleep on, guide, direct, reassure, communicate, empathize, listen and give feedback.

One of the great unsung leadership skills is delegation.

Most of today's leaders are pathetically hopeless delegators varying somewhere between, "Get this done by next month, don't talk to me until then," and micro managing every task. When delegating it's important to establish what is being asked of the poor bugger saddled with the task.

- Is it within their skill set?
- Do they have the time?
- Are you giving the associated decision making responsibilities?
- What are the boundaries?
- What timelines, goals and reporting milestones are you requesting?
- When do they come to you if they get behind?
- Do they have access to the necessary resources?
- What will the ideal result actually look like?

Speaking of leadership skills – we think the following are obligatory.

### **Listen**

If you are not a great listener – become one as a matter of urgency. Without overstating the obvious – you learn nothing while you are talking so communication is not about disseminating information – it's about establishing what the other side needs to know, what they mean, what they want, what they don't have, what they want you to do and how they are travelling with the work flow. Learn reflective listening. For example, "Correct me if I'm wrong, I think what you are saying is...."

This allows us to:

1. Check that we truly understand what they are getting at and
2. Convey the importance of their position, thoughts, actions, feelings, progress and impact on the project.

**Be authentic**

Leaders who emerge to serve the teams' need for a facilitator are usually authentic. They see no need to act a certain way because they have position or power. In fact, they do not perceive the situation they are in as powerful and any status they may have will soon vanish as they merge back into the team. The advantage of this stance is that they can be completely themselves as nobody is expecting more. Many a time Jason and I have seen a mousy, quiet, non-assertive individual speak eloquently and self-assertively on behalf of the team and the greater good. They do this because they wouldn't let the team down by having one member act in a substandard manner. Extraordinary really.

**Understand it's all a game**

The Buddhists spend a great deal of time explaining that we are not our results. Our worth is innate. We are children of God who are perfect. Leadership may be serious but it is also a game we are privileged enough to play in order to discover another aspect of ourselves. Whether you are a leader at home, at work or in your church, you have the profound opportunity to develop yourself beyond the norm. Embrace it as such but understand that those who love you will not love you more when you succeed or less (in the very unlikely event) you fail. Practice separating your self worth from your results – you'll be glad you did.

## Jason's thoughts on leadership



If you were brought up in a family that struggled to communicate with each other in a positive way, then you may struggle as an adult. The best way to recognize family patterns is to ask yourself some simple questions. How did your father display leadership in your family? How did your mother demonstrate leadership in your family? In what ways do you exhibit those same patterns?

Once you identify your family patterns in these areas, then it's time to design your ideas about leadership. One of my favourite methods for doing this is to study someone who you admire as a leader. When I find myself in leadership situations I often say to myself, "What would (name of person) say or do in this situation?" Do this on a regular basis and before long, it will become a new pattern or habit for you. Then you will start developing your own style. Read plenty of books on what it takes to be a great leader, or watch movies about great leaders. Remember, we get results out of the things on which we focus most.

Personally, I don't believe there is such a thing as a natural born leader. The key word here is "believe." Some people believe that they can become a great leader, while others think that no one would want to listen to them. What if you had a big enough desire

or passion, and knew you could make a difference in people's lives? Most great leaders have a very clear concept about what they want to achieve, and know that they alone can't make a difference. One of my very close friends Aaron Brooks, CEO of Harcourts Real Estate in Queensland, gave me a valuable piece of information about leadership. He said that he uses vulnerability leadership, which means he trusts the people in his team to do their job. It doesn't mean that he doesn't oversee what is happening in the business. What it means is that he takes the pressure to be a great leader off of himself by trusting others to do what he can't. We can learn how to become great leaders by developing better communication skills and understanding people on a deeper level. When we work on these areas we become more comfortable being leaders.

I look up to my grandmother most. She was taken from her family in Poland at age 16 and made to work in a slave labor camp for the next five years. The night before they killed everybody in her camp, she hid in the field. She stayed hidden for four days before American soldiers came to rescue her. Then she had to travel to Australia with a four-year-old and a two-year-old without the rest of her family, only to learn to speak a different language and start a new life in a country she had never heard of before she left Germany. Her ability to persist during very tough times, and do it with a smile and sense of humour while supporting her family in the process – that is the kind of leadership I find inspiring. I often think of her when I am faced with a difficult challenge and ask myself, “How would she deal with it?”

A great leader is a person that is comfortable in their own skin,

knows who they are and what they stand for in life; a person that is okay with being wrong and making mistakes. More importantly, a person that sticks his or her hand up when something goes wrong, without making a big song and dance about it. A great leader is strong enough, mentally and emotionally, to speak up and be less concerned about people liking them over doing what is right. A great leader walks his or her talk, is open to new ideas and looking at things from all angles, and always looks for ways to progress. A great leader must look at the whole picture and take time to reflect on it.

Apart from my grandmother, I have fond memories of the Judo instructor I had when I was five. He exhibited confident strength without aggression and instilled confidence in my abilities with both his actions and words. He passed on the idea that discipline is the key to having the life you have always dreamt of (I only learnt that later on in life), but that it also represents freedom and personal growth. He allowed me to fall down and make mistakes, so I could learn to pick myself up and prevent those mistakes from happening again. He taught me that if I didn't do the work, then the only person I was letting down was myself, because I would stay on the same colored belt and skill level. He told me it was my choice.

I believe if you truly want to help others coming across as fake will not be an issue. Remember, we can all tell if someone is interested in us or not. One of the key mistakes I see leaders make in their businesses is not spending the time up front in helping their team get clear on their purpose. Instead, they want to just get on with it. This can be messy for many reasons - they don't have the skill set

and can find it uncomfortable. Spending a small amount of time with your team at the beginning of each week can result in everybody being clear on what needs to be achieved during the week. This leaves you able to get on with your priorities. The other action you can take is this: once you have helped others first, let them know what you need to achieve yourself and what it is going to require. It never ceases to amaze me when I work with bosses and they say that so and so are always interrupting them, which results in a lack of performance on their end. When I ask if they have explained that they need to get x, y, and z done this week to their team, they respond with, "I shouldn't need to." Oops! People are not mind readers; you need to train them. Make sure that you spend small, regular amounts of time checking in with your team. Otherwise, you will have nothing but big headaches and time-consuming problems down the track. It all comes down to being clear on your objectives and being able to communicate them to your team.

I know several situational leaders, and pride myself on being in the same category. To me, situational leaders are the people that are simply willing to go the extra mile to assist you in achieving what's important to you. In a business sense, I have seen it result in employees feeling and acting like they own the company. Hours worked is not an issue for them because it is more important to hit goals and targets, along with achieving the company's greater purpose and vision.

In my experience, it is a matter of give and take, which comes from having a good attitude. When I work with businesses, it's a matter of sitting the team down and asking them what they will or will not

stand for. Get your team or family involved in this process. It has a number of advantages - it gives them a sense of belonging and ownership, and makes it easier to talk about later if these values are not being met.

I like to start the process by asking, “If we were to hire a new team member, what qualities would we want them to have?” Then you can move onto responsibility within the team. For example, if someone is not pulling his weight, how do we deal with it? Find out how everybody likes to be spoken to when they are not pulling their weight. Is there any consequence for poor performance or behaviour? Setting up the meeting with some ground rules will reduce the chance of issues escalating into conflicts. Everybody has the right to be heard and his or her view should be respected. Everybody also has the right to disagree or have a different viewpoint. It is not okay to make your feedback personal. Our main aim is to find a common ground regardless of our different viewpoints. To finish, I always say this: “Is everybody okay with these ground rules?” The obvious answer is yes, simply because they work in everybody’s favour. These are just some examples of how to set up these types of sessions, and I am sure you could come up with plenty of others.

If you are new to a leadership role, follow the information in this book and re-read it several times. Find a leader that you admire and model yourself after them. Have someone you can seek assistance from while you are finding your feet. Get a mentor or coach and attend workshops to sharpen your skills. Understand that you will make mistakes, and make it okay for that to happen. Just remind yourself that making mistakes means you are actually trying to do the best



you can, and that you will become a better leader when you learn from them. This will allow you to take the pressure off yourself. Make sure you ask for help. Too many leaders fall into the trap of thinking that their team will think less of them if they don't know something. If anything, you will gain their trust and respect. Learn as much as you can about how you operate and how other people operate.

Becoming a leader will be one of the best personal development programs you will ever undertake, no matter if it is in a family or professional sense.

Just remember that you have what it takes to be a great leader inside of you right now.



CONCLUSION

If you have spent any time at all on personal development, you will know that there is a cavernous gap between what we know we should do and what we actually get on with.

Have you ever thought anything like the following?

“There I was going to the gym and really enjoying it. I’d paid twelve months membership up front to help with my commitment. I was getting results. I actually liked going to the gym. And then, for no reason that I can explain...I stopped going!”

**“It is our emotions that dictate what we do.”**

There are hundreds of examples of the same problem – going to the dentist, taking up yoga, giving up alcohol for a month, finally going on that diet, or starting a savings account – just to name a few.

So, why do we consistently fail to do what we know would be good for us?

In our experience, it has everything to do with the belief that we will act rationally. This assumption will ensure failure. We are primarily emotional beings; human behaviour is largely an attempt to control mood. It is our emotions that dictate what we do.

We could tell you to go to the gym until we were blue in the face, but until you find an emotional reason to go, or you deal with the emotions preventing you from going, you simply won’t.

### Case study

Kelly is a gym instructor who teaches aerobics classes at 6am seven days a week. She is extremely fit and healthy. Several months ago she participated in one of our seminars. Another participant was explaining the difficulty he had in getting out of bed each morning to go to gym. He mentioned that he never felt like getting out of his cosy, warm bed. The rest of the group murmured agreement. We asked Kelly how she managed it every morning, and her response astounded everyone in the room...

“You simply take the feeling out of the equation. You know it’s good for you, so what you feel about getting out of bed is irrelevant. When you hear your alarm go off, don’t think, just get up and get your ass into the gym.”

When it comes to human beings, explaining irrational behaviour is not difficult. We will do whatever we can to avoid being uncomfortable – no matter how absurd it may seem. We rarely act in a way that will fulfil our long-term needs - there are too many unsatisfied emotions swirling around within us.

**“Look at the  
difference  
between what  
you want and  
what you need.”**

Look at the difference between what you want and what you need. In our experience, most people fail to do what they need because they are spending their time indulging in their desires. We can describe to you the absolute necessity for a savings strategy in elegant simplicity...

“Do this or you will end up on a pension, cold, hungry and unable to afford a bus ticket.”

...but very few people have the emotional intelligence to overcome the desire to buy a new flat screen television and put the money in the bank.

We tell ourselves that we'll start saving next week, and the cycle continues. So now we have two problems – getting started and then keeping it up. Let's take a look at what normally happens.

Once convinced that ten per cent of all income should be placed in savings, we start out with zeal. At this stage we are full of excitement about the possibilities, and look for ways to get a little extra into the savings account. In the gym, this shows up as an extra five minutes on the treadmill. A few weeks later, our enthusiasm wanes and saving starts to feel like a chore. We continue with mounting doubt – it's no longer exciting and the progress seems less than impressive. The bank balance is growing too slowly.

We are now at the most dangerous stage. It seems like there is plenty of suffering (“going without”) happening and not much to show for it. Remember, this is only a feeling – not a fact.

One day we walk past a shop that is selling the flat screen we really want for half the normal price. All that's needed is a small deposit and the rest goes on interest free finance. Miraculously, the down payment required is almost equal to the balance in our new savings account. It's not hard to guess what happens next – we blow our savings and accrue some extra debt.

Experts in the financial sector tell us that this scenario is enacted millions of times over by one individual in their working life. There is one exception. If the balance in the savings account ever exceeds our emotional threshold we begin to protect the account rather than raid it. The same happens in the gym; if we have a big enough breakthrough we start to resist the temptation to eat poorly or miss a session.

The key is learning to hang in there until we reach our emotional threshold. Therefore, the self-coach will search for ways to reduce the pain of getting there. There are two strategies that we have found consistently work.

The first is a training partner. We cannot overstate the benefit of having someone along for the ride with you. The number of occasions when you would let yourself down by sleeping in is dramatically reduced when you would be letting someone else down as well. The same concept can be applied to other subjects. This is the easy part – just find someone to work with and go for it.

A far more effective strategy is to learn the components of emotional intelligence that impact on your behaviour. This requires us to understand the difference between the long-term, big picture benefits and our current desires.

Let's look at an example – chocolate and exercise.

The chocolate treat is a small-picture, temporary desire. If we allow it to, it has a mighty pull. The key is to remember that the desire will pass – either because we move on or we eat the chocolate. Either way, if you are patient, the craving for something sweet will pass. The best way to ensure this happens is to focus on the big picture. Ask yourself the following two questions.

1. What do I really want when I am craving chocolate?

If we look deeply we will find an emotion. We recommend you place the chocolate on the table in front of you and just look at it. This will bring up a feeling. Once it does, deal with it and move on.

For most of us, food is much more than nutrition. If we treated it like fuel, we would all be fit and healthy. It is our emotional needs we must satisfy if we are

to overcome the grip that food as a treat has on us. Self-coaches look for the emotion and find an alternative way to appease it.

For example, if the emotion you find is loneliness, ask yourself how else you could deal with it. Can you call a friend? Write about it? Draw it? Tell the dog all about it? Would it be best to explore this feeling? You will need to act on the answers to these questions to achieve a result.

## 2. What is my big-picture, long-term benefit?

If we don't focus on the big picture, it is almost impossible to avoid being a target for the powerful emotions that surface when chocolate is present. We recommend you get and use a goal book. It is a way of writing the future before it happens, and is more powerful than you can imagine. You will need to put these two questions and their answers together, but when you do they will work magic.

The harsh truth is that most of us are hopeless at dealing with emotions that make us uncomfortable. Ridiculous as it may seem, we act like babies in situations we weren't taught how to handle. For example, speaking in public is reputedly the world's number one fear. It ranks even higher than the fear of death.

Instead of dealing with the emotion (in this case fear) in such a way that it no longer debilitates us, we do absolutely anything we can to make it go away immediately. We know it will happen again, but in that moment we don't care as long as we can feel better this instant.

Why?

We think we can't handle the feeling. The truth is that we can – we do it every day.

The result is what we call our personality. We tend to describe ourselves as being a certain way, but in reality what we are talking about is a collection of strategies for removing ourselves from uncomfortable situations. “I'm just not the dancing-on-tables type” may be an accurate statement, but it is also a subconscious strategy employed by its owner to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

If you are going to succeed as a self-coach, it is imperative that you know how to handle your emotions. Self-coaches realise that almost everything they do is emotionally driven and seek the hidden truths within themselves. This involves going inside yourself in order to discover (and heal) the patterns or emotions that are holding you back. It can be scary to consider what we may find, but the committed self-coach would rather deal with it now than let this unknown determine their behaviour – and therefore their results.

Once we understand the above, we can look at the deeper answer to the question “why can't I do what's good for me?”

It's simple – we won't allow ourselves to experience the kind of outrageous success we would have if we improved in every arena.

“Self-sabotage” is the name we assign to the idea that we deliberately make mistakes that will cost us something we care about. It is often a mystery to us because there is no self-talk about it, but we are all affected by it to some degree. In fact, much of the struggle to be successful is the fight not to mess it up in some creative new way. We have to be okay with success at the deepest level before we can achieve it.



CEOs of Fortune 500 companies say that the most common form of failure within their organisations is people who are due for a promotion sabotaging themselves. When these same people are asked what they consider to be the most important ingredient in their own success, they overwhelmingly say self-development. We need to coach ourselves into success, and a part of this process is dealing with our pre-programmed, hard-wired levels of allowable success.

Self-sabotage is all about reaching your own glass ceiling. We only create a new way to sabotage ourselves when we get close to rising above what is established in our subconscious as okay within our family, peer group or culture. Until we deal with our internal resistance to success, we are limited to expressing our inner genius by creating new ways of messing it all up.

Below is an exercise that will help you re-program yourself to allow maximum success.

Consider the following questions and write your answers down.

- What would my mother's attitude to me succeeding be?
- What would my father's attitude to me succeeding be?
- What would my friends' attitude to me succeeding be?
- What would my God's/Gods' attitude to me succeeding be?

Once you have established your subconscious programming about success, you will need to create a new pattern.

- What actions must I take to re-program myself?
- What thoughts do I need to train myself to think?
- Who has done this already that I can replicate?
- Who can I spend time with that will influence me positively?
- What feelings about success do I have that I need to change?

- Do I have to deal with some guilt about being successful?
- Am I angry about the way I was “trained”?
- Can I be okay with this level of success if it means metaphorically leaving my family of origin?
- Am I willing to stand out and be different?
- What challenges do I need to set for myself?
- Will my values be compromised if I am successful?

So, what does personal success look like to you? How will you get there? NFL supercoach, Vince Lombardi, once said that “the difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather in a lack of will.” If each of us is to adopt that philosophy – to be willing to do and dare – then we are well on the way to achieving our vision of life and realising our dreams.

One of the most common – and the most costly – mistakes that we make is to think that success is due to some innate talent, genius or magic – in other words, to something external to ourselves.

Instead, success primarily comes down to our personal ability to hold on to our dreams. We decide to learn a language, start a business, take up an instrument, embark on an education or train for a marathon. Will we be successful or not? It depends more on pluck and perseverance than anything else. Remember the Chinese proverb, “With time and patience, the mulberry leaf becomes a silk gown.”



## Paul Blackburn

Paul Blackburn has taught more than 100,000 people how to better their lives during his three decades as a success coach, counsellor, author, instructor and keynote speaker.

Paul is the founder and chief instructor of Beyond Success, a training organisation that helps people to reach their personal and professional potential.

Paul's client list includes chief executives in ASX 200 companies, and his top 10 clients are worth more than \$200m between them.

Paul's down-to-earth style has been favoured by Olympic athletes, sales teams, educators and Australian Government departments, as well as the people who lost their homes in the 2003 Canberra bushfires.

Dozens of Paul's clients acknowledge him as the single most influential factor in their 'millionaire status', while hundreds more claim that the practices and concepts taught to them by Paul helped them to overcome terminal illness, infertility or depression. Paul's techniques also helped him recover from an aggressive cancer in 2003.

An inspiring speaker, Paul's audience size ranges up to six thousand, and his presentations are marked by their relevance, value and contagious energy. As one of his students noted, "It is not possible to listen to Paul and resist change. Paul has the ability to inspire even the most negative person to change their life for the better."

Paul is also a successful author. After more than ten years in print, Paul's first book, *Beyond Success*, remains a best seller.

Paul has built Australia's premier coaching business, all the while maintaining a strong marriage and a loving family life. Paul and his wife of 33 years, Mary, have two adult children and live on a property outside Canberra, Australia.



## Jason Urbanowicz

In just 12 months, Jason Urbanowicz went from earning \$20,000 to more than \$100,000 a year. He also went from weighing 153kgs to winning an Australian bodybuilding title in just over six months. But life wasn't always that easy for Jason.

After failing school and spending years drifting from one job and from one pay packet to the next, Jason embarked on a personal development journey which culminated in him becoming a life coach with Beyond Success.

Within six months, Jason was operating his own successful coaching business. Today, he works with hundreds of clients – from people at the beginning of their careers to chief executives of large companies, and from motivated people wanting that extra edge to people needing support to help them get their lives back on track.

Today, Jason is a Director, Speaker and Corporate Trainer at Beyond Success, and teaches the Mental Toolbox workshops to thousands of people around Australia.