BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF FLEE 9 TO 5

click!

FIND THE MOMENT WHEN EVERYTHING CLICKS & FALLS INTO PLACE

BEN ANGEL
In this highly revealing book, Ben Angel takes you on a moving journey through personal struggle and the science of influence, to find that elusive 'aha' moment when everything 'CLICKS' and falls into place, in business, career, love and life.

A sudden death of a loved one and a turbulent struggle to regain his identity, Ben explores the simple idea of getting back to the top of his game by learning easy, yet profound ways to influence outcomes based on the premise of 'why we do what we do.'

Woven with heart-moving stories, a brilliant sense of humour and 50+ scientific studies on human behaviour, influence and persuasion, this original book ranges across fields as diverse as politics, pop culture, psychology and music, to show you how to step up and become an authentic leader that shapes the world we live in.
PRAISE FOR

Flee 9 to 5
Get 6 - 7 Figures & do what you love

“The subject is fascinating...”

“Best of all, I was inspired along the journey of reading this book, to come up with new ideas I could implement along the way that was not necessarily in the book. He gave me the motivation and inspiration any business owner needs!

Ben Angel's style of writing is captivating, easy to follow and even includes inserts about his own personal experience which makes it easy to relate to. Best of all, this is the first book that I have managed to finish right through to the end for the first time in so many years!”

Delphine Jamet - Amazon Customer

“It’s aimed at people who, like you, want to make massive change in the world...”

“The path from your current situation starts with clarifying your vision. From there you must know how to monetise your personal brand and automate that process so you have the freedom to enjoy your lifestyle while adding an ever-expanding base of products to generate more profits.

The best thing about what Ben Angel has done in this book is that he’s mapped out a step-by-step system that anyone can copy. Use this book to beat overwhelm and find freedom.”

Daniel G. Taylor – Customer Review

“Interesting terminology...”

“Ben Angel is considered one of Australia’s leading branding and influence specialists. The book focuses on how business operates in today’s fast-moving, technology-driven, social-media environment. Ben refers to ‘cracking the code’ in the social-media world and finding the tipping point for sending your business idea viral.”

Janene Murdoch, Educated Investor Financial Bookshop
“Reading Flee 9 to 5 is like having a friend along for the ride”

“Ben covers so many areas that I will need to go back and re-read all the parts that I have marked with sticky notes and highlighter! Yes I destroy my books that I read and LOVE. This book is a KEEPER, I read a lot of books and a large percent of them end up being donated to the local library after I don’t find them worth keeping or even worse I can’t get into them so I put them down unfinished, not this one!”

Lynne Hayes - Author of Explant-ology

“Hurricane Sandy meets the 4hr work week...”

“This game-changing book will put bosses on notice, redesign people’s lives around their passions and show people how to profit from their knowledge in simple and easy steps by doing what they love and already know, but in a brand new way.”

SteamFeed - Digital Hub For Startups

“You must read this book to start or grow your business”

“Ben has done a wonderful job of sharing wisdom to make the change from employee to entrepreneur. So much information and by following his steps you are well on the way to success. If you are in business or thinking about starting a business this is a must read.”

David Brown

“Best Book on the Subject for sure”

“This Book is amazing! No bull "you can do it" feel gooderies, I think that's what I really appreciated about it, it's no nonsense! It takes you step by step through a lot of terrain a lot of other books don't touch..If you're a business owner solopreneur in a service business or products or trying to figure out what you'll hang your entrepreneurial hat on this book breaks down the nuts and bolts of how to get yourself out there in front of lots of customers online in person however it makes sense for you..I took a risk with this one because there weren't any reviews really but i'm glad i did, it's helping me so much with my business”

Ama Nkwa
ALSO BY BEN ANGEL

Flee 9 to 5
Get 6 - 7 Figures & Do What You Love

Watch the short-film entitled “How to Find Your Life Purpose,” based on Flee 9 to 5, by visiting www.benangel.co/purpose

Available through Amazon & Audible
Author’s Bio

Having dedicated the past 15 years of his life to the field of personal & business development, accredited life coach, bestselling business & lifestyle author, Ben Angel has helped tens of thousands of individuals globally unleash their entrepreneurial vision on the world with confidence & conviction.

Followed by over 100,000 internationally & fast growing, Ben is the author of the groundbreaking book, Flee 9-5, Get 6-7 Figures & Do What You Love and numerous online courses in marketing & personal development.

His inspiring short-films, have been featured by Entrepreneur & Success Magazine's in the U.S. who are followed by a collective 6 million fans worldwide.

Ben wrote ‘Click’ as a way to help you uncover that moment that everything clicks & falls into place allowing you to become an authentic leader that shapes the world we live in.

To learn more about Ben and his online courses visit benangel.co
Easy Ways to Find Ben!

Ben is a highly social guy, so be sure to look him up on the following social media channels

Facebook

Become a fan of “Ben Angel” by finding him on facebook.com/yourwaytothetop

Twitter

Follow @BenAngel on Twitter.com/benangel

Instagram

Check out the feed of @benangelauthor via Instagram.com/benangelauthor

YouTube

Subscribe & keep updated with Ben Angel’s latest videos on youtube.com/benangel

Free Downloads, Articles & More

Visit benangel.co to register for exclusive business & lifestyle downloads, articles and special offers.
THE NEW SCIENCE OF INFLUENCE

CLICK

When ‘everything’ falls into place

by

BEN ANGEL
Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents, Fay and Steele Angel who instilled in me a sense of compassion, drive and pride in everything I do. Without your love and endless support none of this would have been possible.

Steele Angel
13-8-1953 to 19-10-2005

Picture:
Dad and I. Thank god I grew out of the red hair, you know what they say about red heads!!! (They’re lovely people apparently!)
Introduction

WARNING: Do NOT read this Book unless you want Radical Results!

Q.) How often have you lain awake at night imagining how much better life would be if only you could find a way to give it your absolute all – instead of wasting away in front of the TV escaping from it by watching your favourite re-runs of Glee, CSI Miami or Desperate Housewives?

Q.) How many hours have you spent obsessively craving the better things in life but never doing anything about achieving them? All that wasted energy spent just imagining when you could have actually been experiencing:

* more adventure
* a glittering career
* your own thriving business
* falling in love
* looking after your body
* growing the hair back on your head
* finding passion for a cause (other than for yourself)
* hanging out with more authentic people
* more money in your bank account

Q.) Or is it closer to the TRUTH to say you’re kept awake at night feeling instinctively that you’re destined for bigger things, yet just not knowing how to make it work when the ‘softly, softly’ kid-glove approach of other self help books only gave you enough steam to peel a postage stamp off an envelope before running dry?

If any of these circumstances mirror your state of affairs – IT’S GO TIME!

It’s time to take some SERIOUS ACTION! Allow Click to pop your cherry, rob you of your innocence and deliver you some KICK ARSE RESULTS. How? By showing you how to find that moment when everything ‘CLICKS’ and falls into place – in ALL areas of your life.
Prepare yourself for the naked-truth!

During this groundbreaking personal journey you are about to embark on, you WILL have to be prepared to get naked (emotionally speaking). You will be forced to strip bare and reveal to yourself your own true inner workings, primal instincts, subconscious drivers and the TRUTH behind whether or not you actually have what it takes to bring your goals to life.

Not only that, but you will be required to take a good, long, hard honest look at the landscape in which you play your game, whether that be at work, in love, at play and even spiritually speaking. No matter what you focus your attention on, boy oh boy is it time for a reality check!

The Unedited Naked Truth that Everyone Else Has Been Too Afraid To Tell You!

For years upon wasted years your parents and friends have told you key fundamental lies whenever you have failed. Lies such as:

* The timing wasn’t right...
* They obviously didn’t see your true potential....
* You were so over qualified for that position anyway...
* They never rang back? Oh they must have lost your number...

Now, they may have told you these lies thinking they had your best interests at heart, but the fact of the matter is that there is only one common denominator in each of these scenarios. Are you ready for it?

Are you sure?

Okay…here it comes…

It’s…

YOU!

(OUCH) Yup, that’s right! You’re the common denominator. And if you can no longer blame others, then who’s left to blame? Sobering thought, isn’t it?
**Never FEAR...Help is on Hand!**

This book will teach you how to find the X factor to catapult you to greater success in all aspects of your life. It will reveal to you the fundamental lies society has perpetuated for centuries, which are holding you back from getting what you want. Lies such as:

* beauty doesn’t matter
* you’re fine just the way you are
* you haven’t reached your goals because the timing isn’t right, that’s all

CLICK will also take you deep down into the rabbit hole to uncover the hidden ‘secrets’ that predetermine how successful an individual can become, based on scientific research that the other so-called ‘self-help’ books either deny exists or choose to ignore.

But here at CLICK we’re not about just fluffing you up for one or two rounds: we’re about making you rock solid from the inside out so you can go Bigger Better Harder Faster and win the title fight of YOUR LIFE.

**You Had Me at “Hello”**

Your sheer ability to captivate and inspire another human being is the soul of your success. It is more useful than having superior speaking skills and runs deeper than a ladder on your favourite stockings.

In fact, it runs gene deep. DNA and other environmental factors greatly influence – even ‘mold’:

* who you are
* how you interact with others
* how you are received by the world

You must therefore uncover and eradicate any personal misalignments blocking you from being heard or influencing others (and therefore your own future).

It doesn’t matter how much work you do on your internal world if you can’t communicate your desires clearly to the external world as well. Because it is in this external realm of the senses that you must ‘be’ – and that means mastering how to gather the collective force of others around you in order to fulfill your dreams, and theirs.
**Primal Instincts Are Seductively Sexy!**

We all inherently possess certain primal instincts that provide us with the structured framework in which we behave. These ‘fixed action patterns’ can be unlearned as well as inherited, and each has the capacity to either severely derail your dream machine OR be turned to your advantage to serve as a powerful leveraging tool when properly understood.

You might like to think you’re more than just an animal strutting around the planet with your mobile phone in one hand and your many addictions in the other – but science tells us different.

Examples of the ‘fixed action patterns’ to be found in animals and humans include:

* courtship
* fight or flight
* reproduction

…all activities that are not based on previous experience, but instead all inherited via our DNA. In other words, patterns that occur without any forethought or conscious processing required.

Other instincts are based on memory, experience and a deeper connection to ‘source’ – and whether you call that ‘God’ or refer to it as the Universe is unimportant. What IS important is tapping into your instinct and intuition to achieve maximum success for yourself and your life by rectifying any primal in-congruence that may otherwise hold you back or slow you down. Which is why...

*Your Excuses Will NOT Wash With Me!*

By understanding and uncovering the fundamental lies society has smeared all over our primal behaviours in an effort to justify why they haven’t got what they wanted, you will no longer be able to justify your own excuses. Instead, you’ll have to own them.

You do have a choice...at the end of the day you can either:

a. keep your excuses tied up with a neat little bow in a beautifully crafted box stashed under your bed with all of your other most treasured possessions (e.g. vibrators) OR,

b. you can actually have what you want (e.g. a real lover).

It all sounds pretty easy and straightforward, right? Well maybe, maybe not...
**Who You Are Isn’t Who You Need to Be**

With each incarnation of your (hopefully) ever-evolving ‘selves’, you are radically altering the way that others perceive you. It’s crucial to understand this and be able to take control of the messages you’re giving out and how that is impacting your presence in the world.

And if you haven’t reached the goals you set out to achieve years ago, it’s because who you ‘are’ isn’t who you need to be to reach them: pure and simple.

The great news is that this book will:

* show you exactly who you need to be without painful change (although there will be radical change in terms of your results) or fear of internal rebellion;
* give you blow-by-blow, step-by-step secret formulas based on scientific studies for taking control of your life once and for all.

So are you ready to join me under the covers and discover the unedited NAKED TRUTH about your life and how to live it… properly?

Because if you’re truly prepared to Find the Moment When ‘Everything’ Falls into Place, then now is the time to dive in head first with sheer abandon! Come on – let’s get naked started (!) with a highly revealing personal journey of my own....

WATCH THE SHORT-FILM BASED ON CLICK AT
WWW.BENANGEL.CO/WHOAMI
CHAPTER ONE - The MOTHER of all BITCH-SLAPS!

When the wake-up call comes, will YOU be there to answer the phone?

Fuck me…MORNING? Again? Already?!

Prizing open a pair of very tired eyes, I sensed the predatory and all too familiar disappointment already lurking, waiting to pounce and overwhelm me before the sun had even properly risen.

With a deep sigh I heaved a sleep-heavy head over to gaze out of the window, desperately seeking some new form of inspiration. But as my eyes searched for something – anything – to focus on, my heart sunk: it was just another day, a day like any other. Just one more endless day of hamster-wheel hyper-activity, striving to get my fledgling business off the ground and struggling to maintain my motivation.

I hauled myself out of bed in time for a 6am gym session, gradually working some juice back into my body, preparing it for the gruelling scheduling demands ahead. By 8:30am I was showered, shaved and folded neatly into the tiny box I called my office - a space so small it felt as if the walls were pressing in against my brain as intrusively as the overwhelming workload.

As time dragged on without any real sense of accomplishment, I felt myself suddenly snapped to attention by a phone call from my brother. Considering we’d only rung each other once or twice over the years since leaving home, the sobering effect was immediate.

We’d never been close growing up. In a family of farmers, he was the golden goose, while I was more like the black sheep: writing music, dabbling in sculpture, and launching my own business still in High School, so desperate was I to escape, experiment and express myself.

By the time I hit seventeen I’d already moved out of home, hungry for more adventure and variety than I felt the narrow confines of a farmer’s life could offer me. This was back in the days before BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN had made gay cowboys cool, and I really couldn’t see myself as the farming type – especially since I was gagging for my first sexual experience with a sexy beast with two legs, not four!

I was therefore somehow unsurprised to hear my brother’s voice travel down the phone and ask me without the merest preamble whether I was “sitting down”. Intuitively I knew this wasn’t going to be a casual chat about the latest cricket scores. I felt my body collapse even deeper into the fake leather chair I’d crammed into the corner and listened with cautious anticipation for whatever was coming.

“Ben? Ben! Are you there?”
“Yes, I’m here. What is it?”

“Dad’s got a brain tumour. It’s serious.”

And just like that…SMACK!…right across the face!

I’d just been dealt one of the biggest wake-up calls of my life to date. The mother of all bitch-slaps. One that – even though I couldn’t fully grasp it at the time – was destined to transform how I perceived my ‘self ’ and others…forever.

Throughout the course of this book I promise to share how, warts and all.

Dad’s brain tumour was the size of a golf ball and it had taken up characteristically stubborn residence right in the middle of his brain. My whole body instantly ‘knew’ the situation was dire before our conversation unfolded…and yet with each new revelation I felt like I was pin-wheeling down the proverbial rabbit hole; hurtling ever downwards into unfathomable depths of fear and denial.

I was about to crash-land with one hell of a bump, and from there begin negotiating the most inhospitable emotional terrain my sheltered young life could have imagined, travelling a barely perceptible path that was slippery at best.

I didn’t know how to respond to the news. I’d seen actors’ reactions in movies to similar circumstances and they always seemed to scream and fall apart in a heap on the floor in tears but I felt frozen. It just wasn’t me to go to pieces. Instead I sat shrouded in a morbid stupor of disbelief. The most that I felt in those moments of after-shock was uncomfortably numb.

Instinctively I just knew this wasn’t going to end well. I’d experienced a knowing of similar quality before – something at the time so inexplicable to my rational mind that I’d mentally filed it under “unidentified” - and there it stuck. It had lodged itself in the middle of my own brain for well over six months: an experience that was about to make perfect sense at last in the most uncanny way...but more of that later.

For now let’s take a time out to acknowledge something startling. It’s a simple maxim (all the best ones are), which, if you are one of the lucky few who really take it on board in advance, will change the whole course of your life for the better – as anyone who wasn’t as lucky will attest to (!):
Wake Yourself Up… Before Somebody (or Something) Does It For You!

Have you ever had a wake-up call so aggressive that it forced your whole body into the present moment? One of those sharp SMACKS! across the face, which leaves your cheeks burning and your brain acutely focused on immediately and scrupulously assessing every minute detail of this thing you call your life?

Ask most people and they’ll say a big, resounding “Yes”: and if your answer is “No”, well count yourself lucky – because YOU still have time to shake YOURSELF awake more gently into the inevitable questions:

“How am I…really?”

“What is the point of all this?”

“How do I really feel about the path I’m on?”

“Whose goals am I aiming for anyway? Are they mine? Or are they society’s / my parents’ / my peers’?”

…and – crucially – the BIG one:

“Am I willing to do WHATEVER it takes to improve my current situation and FINALLY, TRULY ‘live the dream’? To create AND simultaneously enjoy the life I’ve only ever imagined up until now?”

“Go Confidently in the direction of your Dreams. Live the Life you have Imagined.”

~ Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862)

Inevitably, we all experience these moments of personal epiphany and realisation that shake the soul – it’s just a question of when, how and who or what from? The sooner the better, in my opinion: it can come as a harrowing shock if it gets shelved until you’re on your deathbed facing the unavoidable and can do little to put the wisdom into practice..!

Such are the critical ‘moments’ that define a life: who you are, how you consciously evolve – and how the external world responds to and reflects your own ‘self’ back at you as if you’re looking in a mirror. Just like when you focus on a particular colour intensely for a minute and
then glance up and see that same colour everywhere, so your antennae will be ‘tuned’ to receive more of precisely what you put ‘out there’. A kind of ‘instant karma’ as it were.

Sobering, isn’t it?

Sometimes these defining moments arrive disguised as the passing of a loved one; a personal battle with some intense illness or affliction; the experience of abuse; or simply through finding yourself suddenly deep in the midst of some sweeping cinematic JERRY MAGUIRE ‘tipping point’ of knowing to the depths of your soul (without even having to believe or be able to describe what the soul even is) that, “Enough is ENOUGH: something has to be done… NOW!”

“Indecision brings its own delays…Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute. What you can do, or Dream you can, Begin it: Boldness has Genius, Power and Magic in it.”

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832)

You may be reading this book and already recognise yourself fitting into one or other of the categories above. Others will simply possess a persistent sense of some innate and undying urgency to taste, smell, see, seek out and experience as many adventures as possible – often for the sheer joy of it. Still others are addicted to the intense peaks and troughs of ‘roller coaster risk’ – either directly, or through vicarious means such as hoovering up all the latest salacious gossip about Lindsay Lohan, Lady Gaga or some other celebrity figure featured in the gossip columns.

And then there are those of you (like me) who think you’re living up to your true potential and yet unwittingly require one hell of a great big KICK up the ARSE to jolt you into proper action. If you’re lucky, this happens while you’re still young and agile enough to recognise the DIAMOND in the ROUGH and get MOVING!

In any case, regardless of where your journey departs from or what the catalyst may be, the crucial question remains:

“What do I WANT, what can I GIVE, and am I WILLING to do WHATEVER it takes to Get it, Give it, and LIVE it?”
**WHATEVER It Takes…and then some!**

I used to grapple with this ideal. What are the parameters that define doing **WHATEVER** it takes to fulfil my own unique desires: professionally, personally, emotionally, spiritually and societally?

And what am I **willing** to forgo to achieve these end goals? To move from one place to the next with ease, enjoying not only the final destination but – crucially – the *journey* as well?

As life goes on, my definition of doing **WHATEVER** it takes has come to mean adopting Barack Obama’s attitude of, “**YES I CAN!**”

Please believe me when I say, I know: it sounds kinda wanky, right? But the **TRUTH** is also that it helped a comparatively unknown political orator with passion, conviction, drive and vision become the nation’s first Black American President of the United States - against *all* the odds. There’s no denying the personal mastery in that.

And so for me, embodying these inspiring qualities of ‘the Obama attitude’ means that I am willing to:

* devote personal time to nurturing my talents;
* work night and day ‘as need be’ to deliver to deadline;
* forgo ‘play-time’ to better focus on what is required of me;
* give all of myself whenever in the company of others – for my own enjoyment but also for theirs.

**What it doesn’t mean** is trampling madly all over the excessively botoxed faces of my competitors or peers to get to the top at any price – i.e. at the expense or wilful inconsideration of others (haven’t their fragile egos and waxwork-shiny foreheads suffered enough?).

**This is because the ‘cost’ I am willing to pay to achieve my goals is my burden and mine alone** – it’s *my* trade off, not theirs (unless we mutually agree to journey together in one way or another, that is).

And in reality, I have also come to realise that my personal and professional choices are never real burdens at all – unless I choose to make them so. Instead, it is surely one of the highest forms of privilege to be born as free as we allow ourselves to be: to come to realise that I/we have the opportunity to surrender to emotionally powerful, humbling, insightful and rewarding moments, albeit tough on occasion!
“When you’re going through hell…keep going!”
~ Winston Churchill (1874 – 1965)

Whether you’re seeking greater success in career, love, or life (and your reading of this book is evidence you are) then it’s gratifying to embrace the fact that it will always come hand-in-hand with some kind of personal cost – or rather, personal investment – helping facilitate the success. In fact, these ‘labour pains’ are a very reassuring sign that you’re on the right track!

Again, the actual form this realisation takes can show up in many ways. Some of the most common include:

* the process of releasing outdated notions of who you used to be or (accurately or not) believed yourself to be (i.e. letting go of the ‘old’ to embrace the new you);
* sweating it out in limbo while the pieces of the puzzle fall into place (an intensely uncomfortable but ultimately rewarding experience of actually getting to know your(true)self: no diversions, no distractions, no self-deceptions…just the cold hard facts of who you REALLY are in each moment…be it weak, strong, deceitful, generous, vulnerable etc);
* working 24/7 to get the skills and / or knowledge you require up to scratch in order to confidently take the next ‘educated’ step in your life.

Remember to (really!) ask yourself: “What is the price I am willing to pay / the level of personal investment I am willing to make to transform your DREAMS into a REALITY you can literally experience? (Hint: if you can’t taste, touch, smell, see and interact with it, it’s not real yet!)

‘The Law of Unintended Consequences’

Life can be messy and doesn’t always play the tune you feel like dancing to: there you were, moving along quite nicely thank you very much… and suddenly the DJ skids the needle off the record and the chic nightclub with the elegant crowd becomes a fetid trash-ridden hole with chewing gum glued underfoot as fierce houselights flick on at closing time!

Suddenly you wonder where you are and how you got there, but the TRUTH is there are consequences for every thought / decision / action we embody (in the example above you could have left on a high an hour or two earlier while the vibe was still good) – and this fear-based attachment to how we believe life ‘should’ be often ends up costing us more in the long-run than if we’d been brave enough to follow our intuition in advance of calamity. As Goethe kindly mentioned earlier, “Boldness has Genius, Power and Magic in it”, remember?

Or, as a wise American author once remarked:
Yet so many of us still persist with the struggle: we battle ourselves internally, desperately trying to resist the reality of what is actually unfolding right before our eyes – if only we’d open them and see! You can try re-calibrating your ‘inner GPS’ (Goal-Persistent-Story) all you like, but without the emotional suppleness birthed from breaking through a chrysalis or two (whether willingly or not), I’m here to confirm you’ll be in for a far tougher ride to the beauty taking flight on the other side!

“**The MOST ‘unintended consequences’ are often caused by our most fervently held, unshakable ‘good intentions’.”**

~ Ben Angel

**Imagine this scenario:**

You go out of your way to get fit. You hit the gym, run religiously every other day and attend aerobics classes whenever possible. The weight is dropping faster than a starlet’s knickers. You’re in flow and you’re LOVING it…and then a few weeks into your regime instead of getting hit on, you suddenly hit a wall. “**OMG...WTF??!”**

Your appetite has become an insatiable bottom(-less!) pit from all the exercise. This time instead of dropping weight like a Diva drops disco biscuits, you “suck like an electrolux” instead - and find yourself hoovering up food like every meal is your last.

To compound the error, due to a lack of awareness / education / willingness to learn, the food your ‘OLD self ’ assumed to be healthy is actually laden with sugar. The ‘NEW you’ has achieved some superficial results by taking a one-pronged approach (increasing energy expended) but the ‘OLD you’ stays attached to what it thinks is healthy fuel.

For you to get any further down the yellow brick road, you need a scarecrow with a sharper brain than yours to pull back the curtain and enlighten you about the TRUTH of your perception of reality: basically, the information regarding how sugar turns to fat…and the Wizard of Oz is not the one who should be running this show: it’s YOUR LIFE – so for God’s sake Dorothy, grab it by the balls and live it!

But no – the ‘OLD you’ won’t bend, won’t break, won’t be flexible. It clings to the skin you’ve already outgrown; “**But it was working before...what happened?”,** it whines. The weight starts piling back on, you finally lose hope and eventually abandon your exercise regime altogether, falling back into your OLD bad habits – AND compounding the problem by continuing to hoover up the excess ‘fuel’ you’ve become accustomed to.

“**LEAP, and the net will appear.”**

~ John Burroughs (1837 – 1921)
You KNOW you’ve hit rock bottom when you’ve crossed the line (metaphorical, not marathon!) to find yourself devoted to your television set instead of the treadmill, shovelling great fistfuls of M&M’s down your throat when THE BIGGEST LOSER comes on – without even a trace of gag-reflex left, despite witnessing man-boobs so heavy they put Pamela Anderson to shame: ‘How did I get here?? I was doing so well!’

Well of course, the ‘NEW you’ was doing well… but the ‘OLD you’ was hell-bent on self-sabotage.

Such fear-based retention of false security (OLD familiar habits and / or supposed ‘knowledge’) undermine everything dramatically in the end, despite your ‘NEW self’’s best efforts to experience a TRULY profound and very REAL BREAKTHROUGH - which is what makes this scenario such a perfect (and all too common) example of ‘the Law of Unintended Consequences’ in action.

This law has a tendency to ambush us when we least expect it. It will throw our lives into chaos and disarray to FORCE the learning, unless we’re smart enough to master throwing caution to the wind when appropriate instead. The key is learning how to roll with the punches instead of take the heavy blows. It’s a difficult (blow) job but somebody’s got to do it.

After all;

* If not YOU, who?
* And if not now, when?

Fortunately, help is at hand to take a firm grip of your rock hard stubborn nature: unintended consequences can be broken down like a desperate housewife into three easily digestible categories to ensure you don’t choke as you swallow some NEW information. Ready? Then let’s plunge straight in:

‘The Law of Unintended Consequences’

will stand out like a pimple on prom night and can be recognised as being at play through either:

a.) a BENEFICIAL unforeseen advantage (i.e. perceived as ‘a win’ or good luck);

b.) a NEGATIVE unanticipated outcome (i.e. the personal cost exceeds expectations; severe repercussions are experienced after the ‘honeymoon period’ of a slight delay);
c.) **an EFFECT which clearly contradicts** the originally well intentioned, yet poorly executed journey to a desired outcome (i.e. the supposed solution actually goes on to make the matter ten times worse).

Running smack-bang into one of these manifestations of the law is like encountering an axe-wielding maniac while you’re out for a leisurely stroll.

Of course the good AND bad news is that what goes up must come down – and that goes for obstacles, walls and ego as well as genitals (hold on a sec...does that mean my cock will be down to my knees when I’m 80!? SWEEEEEEEET!)

Unintended consequences hold us back, push us forward, catapult our lives to explode in a thousand unexpected directions simultaneously…but they are also both the calm before the storm and the refuge afterwards. Why? Because they belong to ‘the Family of Certainties’ (particular rites of passage; life-shattering, soul-enriching breakthroughs it is necessary to learn how to navigate in order to grow) - and with any certainty (especially the predictably unpredictable ones!) you can learn how to set yourself up for success instead of failure.

In fact, the ‘NEW you’ must have (by definition of its existence) succeeded at learning how to cope, manage and maximise opportunity in order to thrive and survive. And even if it falls down once or twice or a million times, sooner or later the ‘NEW you’ does out-wit the ‘OLD you’: it’s just a question of how much time you waste not getting the lesson the first time around!

(And unless you’re really into S&M, I don’t recommend beating yourself up with a bigger stick than necessary before you stop suffering and start blooming!)

This ‘**Law of Unintended Consequences**’ was popularised by Robert K. Merton, an American Sociologist who passed away at the ripe old age of 92 in 2003.

Merton in fact proposed **five possible laws of unanticipated consequences**, suggesting that by fully understanding these laws we can fill in the gaps left by conventional education with the vital knowledge required to:

1. increase the chance of running successfully towards the reward of achieving our goals; and;
2. away from the axe-wielding maniac

- which is a perfect example of the ‘carrot or the stick’ (positive or negative motivation), i.e. I am motivated to get out of debt (negative / away from motivation) or I am motivated to make more money (positive / towards motivation)

**Merton’s five Laws of Unintended Consequences are as follows:**
1. **IGNORANCE:** It is unfathomable to anticipate every outcome, thereby leading to partial investigation (i.e. just a partial snapshot of the big picture; uneducated decision making);

2. **ERROR:** Inaccurate investigation of a problem or following a path that worked in the past but may not apply to the current situation (i.e. repeating the same behaviour over and over again, hoping for a different result);

3. **IMMEDIATE INTEREST:** An immediate ‘personal’ need clamouring to be met, often with harmful disregard for negative impact on future outcomes (i.e. forsaking long-term reward for short-term gain; an inability to stay the course and embrace deferred gratification);

4. **BASIC VALUES:** Values which may prevent you from taking certain key actions (or ‘steps to success’), thereby hindering progress (i.e. stubbornness; pride; the ‘received opinion’ of society, culture, family or peers; intense moral or religious doctrine etc);

5. **SELF-DEFEATING PROPHECY:** Seeking solutions in advance of problems actually manifesting, and thereby wasting time and energy steering oneself off course (i.e. it would be wiser to manage the art of flexibility and creative response as / when something arises, rather than try to engineer a fixed, rigid and ultimately flawed architecture of response in advance of investigating a REAL problem as / when it shows up: the higher the tower (of false security), the harder the fall).
When It HIT Me!

It was on reviewing Merton’s five laws, while simultaneously retracing my steps over the years, that some of the principles knocked me out with the force of a two-by-four travelling at 100km/hr!

Several of them may well have prevented YOU from receiving the ‘pay day’ you may feel you deserve for past efforts (i.e. consistently achieving all your goals up until now).

Being creatures of habit, our ‘immediate interests’ have the powerful potential to prevent us from learning how to deftly dodge the bullets and catch the curve balls that LIFE will always hurl at us – guaranteed!

Instead we end up feeling ambushed; blindsided despite our ‘best- laid plans’ (or partners!), tripping over vaginas left right and centre… bloodied by unexpected consequences and axe-wielding maniacs, all of which – however ‘unintended’ – still remain our own personal responsibility to fix up and move on from.

Are You In Denial…Or Just Plain Ignorant? (OUCH!)

Self-denial (denial of the reality of your present experience or situation) appears at first glance to serve a valuable purpose: it represses painful thoughts and / or memories - because if you don’t think about it, then how will it hurt you, right?

WRONG!

Because although this common practice of self-denial may appear to be protecting you from harm in this moment, the greater damage you are self-inflicting (that of NOT fully making friends with yourself; failing to get to KNOW yourself warts and all) accumulates surreptitiously to be a far greater (and unnecessarily painful) price to pay later on.

As a personal branding specialist it’s challenging to strip naked in front of an audience and admit this, but I promised you warts and all so here it comes…because I’m about to share something personal (the warts are just a metaphor, don’t panic) from my firsthand experience of paying a very high price indeed...
It Was Like Going 10 Rounds With Mike Tyson – Ear Intact!

My dad’s name was Steele Angel (I know, right, all very 70s’ porn star) and it always seemed as if he had nine lives - as well as the nine inches the name suggests!

My father had what you might call ‘a troubled childhood’: first his own dad died from a blood clot at just forty-one years of age and then dad lost his nineteen year old brother to leukaemia.

And yet Steele himself appeared unbreakable. In his wilder, younger days he survived several minor and one major car accidents (once breaking his back before going on to make a full recovery) and as a father he was an inspiring role model.

Somehow he knew just exactly how to get the ‘juice’ out of every situation, every single day - with a bold entrepreneurial spirit to rival the ‘intrepid’ nature of many an alcohol-fuelled adventure back in the day – traits I’m fortunate enough to recognise that he instilled in me (the fearless tenacity I mean, not the grog!).

So when the diagnosis of that stubborn brain tumour showed up, Steele took it on squarely, just like everything else in his life. Within a few short weeks he’d gone straight into surgery despite the risks, just to have it tested for malignancy and to “take a chance at a normal life”.

But the tumour was far from normal. It was malignant. And it was determined to stay put. The surgeon couldn’t possibly remove all of it and dad was given six months left to live – at best.

Yet before he’d even had the chance to recover from his surgery, dad’s body went into severe shock. He was moved to the country hospital in our small hometown of Balaklava, smack-bang in the middle of nowhere in rural South Australia.

Dad was confined to the palliative care unit, featuring dubious cream drapery and dim, sickly-yellow lights, which cast insidious creeping shadows throughout the entire ward.

The reflections from car mirrors driving past outside would bounce off the ceiling and play tricks on all our eyes, let alone dad’s, which only added to the surreal quality of the experience of witnessing this once-mighty oak tree of a man, now somehow fallen; diminished; shrunken.

Dad couldn’t move and he couldn’t speak: he just lay there - immobile, mute - hooked up to a morphine drip to lessen his pain.

The only self-expression dad had left was the ability to look each of us in the eye and respond to our touch by holding all our hands in turn with the faintest of grips. His own hands were rough to the touch: workman’s hands; farmer’s hands.
Even though he couldn’t say anything, dad was still determined to let us know that he knew we were there. Every now and then we’d receive some sure, direct and intentional eye contact accompanied by a little squeeze of our palm, as if he despite everything he was still the one reassuring us that everything was going to be alright; that we’d be ok without him. Dad was still in there somewhere and the poignancy of his indestructible inner spirit still fighting to communicate with us despite his body falling apart at the seams was both gut-wrenching and awe-inspiring to witness.

After one week of Steele being bedridden without any signs of improvement, the doctor made it very clear to us that even if he made an heroic recovery, he would still be lucky to live a month or two at best – certainly in a great deal of pain or so high on morphine he’d barely be present.

The doctor asked the fateful question no one ever wants to have to think about, let alone hear… or respond to:

“Do you want to turn his life support off?”

After an agonising night of despair, the decision as a family was made. “Yes...” said my mother, with both of us sons by her side, backing her up.

We were all in agreement. As a family we’d had a few important “What if...?” conversations over the years, and none of us were ever in favour of prolonging any unnecessary suffering, dad included.

Besides, it would have been supremely selfish on our part to keep him so artificially alive when it was clearly time to go - and the fact we’d already looked those hard decisions in the face as a family in the past saved a lot of unnecessary extra grief and despair: there were no ‘opposing thoughts’ – this is what we’d all agreed to in advance. It wasn’t easy, but we were unanimous: it was what dad would have wanted.

Steele Angel passed away on the morning of 19th October 2005. He was fifty-two years old and otherwise in the prime of life.

I was 23 and did the only thing I could: I dived earnestly into the deepest form of dark denial imaginable; so deep I could barely see the faint glimmer of hope floating just above the surface of my grief.

In a few short weeks I’d lost my father, my hero and my greatest inspiration - my lifelong role model – and with the flick of a switch the lights began to fade and slowly go out.
Cognitive Dissonance

Leon Festinger, born in New York City in 1919 was a popular American Social Psychologist responsible for the development of the theory of ‘Cognitive Dissonance’ which shaped the way psychologists looked at human decision-making and behaviour patterns.

At its core, the theory of ‘Cognitive Dissonance’ is a simple one, but in order to fully comprehend it we must first understand,

a. what is meant by ‘cognitive’;
b. what is meant by ‘dissonance’;

…and how the two may variously succeed or fail to interact, sometimes resulting in an intense internal conflict that may either,

* hold us back;
* create confusion (stalemate / limbo);
* or alternatively, ‘force’ a resolution.

DEFINITION: “Cognitive Dissonance”

a.) COGNITION: N.
1 The mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment (i.e. a ‘fact’ or ‘thought’ you hold as true).

b.) DISSONANCE: N. dis • so • nance
1 A harsh, disagreeable combination of sounds; discord.
2 Lack of agreement, consistency, or harmony;
Conflict:
3 Music A combination of tones contextually considered to suggest unrelieved tension requiring resolution.

Cognitions are units or ‘pieces’ of information – the sort of stuff we each possess in unfathomable quantities such as the texture of a fact / belief / assumption that we hold to be so – and this includes everything from statements about the world to personal declarations such as, “I love Oprah and going to the beach” to survival perceptions such as, “that man is out to get me”.

Generally speaking, our independent ‘cognitions’ have relatively little to do with one another. As described above, they are typically unrelated and provide a neutral experience when pitted against one another (i.e. one does not override the other).

At specific times however, our ‘cognitions’ (thoughts) are directly related. For instance, “I enjoy exercise and I love going to the gym” is one basic example of two separate cognitions, which
also inter-relate meaningfully (they are congruent and supportive of the overall outcome of fitness and pleasure).

And *then* there are other times... Oh boy, there are the *other* times...

...times when they smash together with the full force of two worlds colliding, causing ‘destabilisation’ and shaking you to the very core of your being, calling into question EVERYTHING you thought you knew.

For example, perhaps you’d love to have more money – and yet you hate money because of all of the perceived wasted effort or hardship it has cost you / caused in the past and you’re afraid that once you earn it again, you’ll only lose it.

These two cognitions are troublesome because they are expressing opposing desires (the desire to have money and the desire to avoid it) – and so even if you make a lot more money in future, you may still suffer one hardship or another and quite possibly lose it...and so self-sabotage occurs.

This is what is known as ‘dissonance’ – two conflicting thoughts unable to ‘breathe’ or harmoniously co-exist in the same space together. Eventually one will suffocate the other and win out. These ‘cognitive dissonances’ can be found in numerous areas of our lives, such as;

* **Deciding** whether or not to leave a cheating spouse if YOUR cognitions are that you firmly believe in:
  a. monogamy (non-negotiable);
  and
  b. love equating to honesty and a life-long commitment (no divorce or separation);

i.e. the covert nature of being unfaithful is the dissonant element which disagrees and conflicts with both;

* **Starting your own business** when YOU believe:
  a. it is your passion;
  and
  b. you don’t have the money for it;

i.e. (b) is the dissonant element requiring resolution;

* **Dating** - when YOUR cognition is that:
  a. all men/women are cheating liars who should die a horrible death - or at the very least be forced to listen to Fran Drescher’s voice from the Nanny for 10 days straight;
and

b. there’s a happy ever after

i.e. how can there be any happy endings (as it were!) if you can’t even ever get beyond the ‘dissonance’ of categorising every potential partner as a “cheating liar”?

According to the theory of dissonance, when thoughts conflict with one another, one ‘must’ eventually triumph – it is only a case of which one. During the process we often become desperate for resolution: we bite our fingernails; we seek out myriad distraction; or we act like we’re okay whilst sweating it out internally (whether consciously or otherwise). Nonetheless we also feel ‘compelled’ to stay with it, to obtain resolution: it is an inbuilt function of the human psyche.

**Forced Into Submission or Forced Into Change**

Humans hate experiencing this dissonance / incongruence and try to rid ourselves of it however we can, often reverting to OLD habits which no longer serve us, despite the ‘dissonant’ factor actually being the NEW one, preferable to adopt in order to improve our lives.

**There are two main ways by which we can reconcile this divide:**

* reposition / evolve / abandon our OLD viewpoint and adopt the NEW one;
  * or,
* dispense, reject or avoid the ‘dissonant’ information and revert to habitual thinking and / or patterns of behaviour, whether they serve us well or not.

**“So What?”**

At some time in your life – or maybe on several occasions depending how quickly you assimilate new learnings! – you will hit a critical point: a point which forces you to make a decision and / or submit to change. The question to grapple with and (really) answer for yourself is two-fold:

1. “How much pain must I feel before I reach the pivotal “Aha!” moment point which ‘forces’ me to live the life of my dreams?”

And:

2. “Am I willing to submit and continue down the same path I always have, stuck in a perpetual ‘Groundhog Day’?”
**Diving Deeper and Deeper Into Denial**

Six months after dad’s passing, the pain had somewhat dulled. I continued to get on with life as best I could – and I *thought* I was “doing okay”. Little did I know things were about to catch up with me personally - with the full force of a tornado!

I’d been attempting to convince myself for months that I was okay. I kept working and refused to take any time off, distracting myself as much as possible. This included having copious amounts of sex (may seem fun from the outset but not when it turns into an addiction) because at least the chemical rush of endorphins provided me some relief from the dull pain I was enduring.

One particular week, things started to change...*radically*.

One night I woke-up in darkness, incomprehensibly cold. It was as if someone had turned my bed sheets into ice and was forcing them down on top of me with sheer vengeance. My body was shaking uncontrollably and my muscles tensed up as if someone was twisting them around like an electrical hairdryer cord continually wound in the same direction.

As I breathed through the pain hoping it would pass, I just assumed I was coming down with the ‘flu. I remember thinking, “I can handle this,” and tried to brush it off. To my confusion, I felt fine the next morning and was able to go about my day as usual. I was just unbelievably grateful that the episode was over...or so I thought!

Night-time rolled around again...and so did the agony! And it kept on happening...again and again and again, night after night. I began to dread going to bed and sunsets – however stunning – became harbingers of doom instead of beautiful scenes from nature.

Pretty soon, I came to fear it. I was fine during the day but every night the same ‘coldness’ would loom and revisit to torment me, throwing its suffocating icy blanket of pain over my entire body.

Every night when this happened, I would crawl out of bed and drag myself down the dark hallway to the bathtub, finding my way clumsily by the filtered light reflected from street lamps outside onto the polished floorboards indoors. I’d lift myself into the bath tub and douse myself in scolding hot water until the severe icy pain subsided and I was able to move my limbs again and go back to sleep.

Astonishingly, I was so deeply lost in my self-denial that I allowed this to continue for *fourteen torturous nights* before I finally decided that I’d had ‘enough’ and booked myself in to see the doctor.

I waited in the doctor’s office, distracting myself with Hollywood gossip rags touting sordid tales of celebrity misconduct and reading all about Tom Cruise and the Church of Scientology –
riveting in the sense that I was desperate for ANY distraction from the purpose of my visit – until finally the doctor beckoned me into his office.

“Mr Angel, please come in.”

He looked old, bald, unfit and he wore glasses. Yet a quick scan of his office convinced me he was also ‘happily married with 2.4 kids and half a Labrador’ – the typical domestic idyll.

My judgement went into overdrive – probably just to have something to do to distract myself from the purpose of my visit. I indulged thoughts (cognitions) such as, “Why do the ugly ones always have life-partners?” and, “Why doesn’t HE go and see a doctor?? He looks like shit – talk about ‘do as I say, not as I do’…try practising what you preach…this is BULLSHIT!” and so on and so forth.

I’m not proud of it, but that’s the truth (warts and all, right? I did warn you earlier on I was going to be honest in this book!)

After a series of questions, my doctor came to an emphatic conclusion, one that I was not in the least bit expecting:

“**Ben,** he said, **“your whole body is going into shock.”**

“But why? I feel fine, generally speaking...” I replied.

“Because you’re **grieving**, Mr Angel! Your body is going into shock every night because it’s the **only** time you fully relax.”

“I don’t understand...”

“Night-time is the only chance your subconscious mind and body get to heal themselves - and they are taking full advantage of any opportunity to do for you what you appear to refuse to do for yourself: namely, **grieve!”**

I was confused...this didn’t make sense: as far as I was concerned, I had been becoming emotionally more resilient day by day, week by week. With every month that passed I felt stronger, healthier, happier…or so I thought.

In fact what was happening was that my conscious mind had literally refused to accept the psychological pain, completely shutting it out by locking it in a sturdy ‘Ben-proof vault’ and throwing away the key.
Meanwhile, my subconscious mind was desperately trying to save me from myself and blow the lid on the whole charade; to rid my body of all of the anguish and pain I’d suffered but denied myself expression of for the fear of falling into the sadness and never coming out.

But through willingly diving down into such deep denial I had only succeeded in creating a different kind of prison for myself, one of equal if not greater anguish – and my beleaguered subconscious was fighting tooth and nail to restore some coherent equilibrium between the increasingly diverging inner and outer realities.

I had destroyed all balance and all trace of harmony to the point where my own mind was at war with itself, manifesting physically what I would not allow to be processed emotionally.

I was flawed.

“Does the subconscious mind really have that much power over the body?” I asked – intellectually shocked now, feeling the creeping dissonance of simultaneous revelation still cloaked in a thin veil of disbelief.

“Evidently so”, came my doctor’s sobering and quite emphatic, stern reply.

**Why We Default and Dig In When We Shouldn’t !**

We’re not always conveniently aware of the constant turmoil churning beneath the surface of things, least of all ourselves. In fact, we routinely block the flow of our natural processes just in order to function ‘normally’ throughout the day! The irony of the TRUE reality of things was lost on me back then, but not anymore…

A study conducted by Gal Rucker discovered that when we are not rewarded, encouraged or forced to state our ‘thought’s / positions’ we have a propensity to reject the new information and ideas (dissonance) instead of adjusting our model of the world to accommodate the new information. Even more warped, when we are made to feel uncertain we (our ego) will usually argue even harder against the new TRUTH.

One experiment carried out by Rucker utilised ‘framing techniques’ to make the participants ‘feel’ uncertain:

One group was instructed to recall a time when they were full of uncertainty, while a different group were told to recall a time of absolute certainty.

The participants then were surveyed to establish whether they were vegetarians, meat-eaters or vegans, and how important it was to them (how confident they felt in their opinions).
It was discovered that those in the group who had been recalling times of uncertainty were significantly less confident about their eating habits.

However, when the participants were asked to write their beliefs down and convince someone else to adopt them, they would write *stronger* arguments than the group who felt more inherently confident (certain) of their personal choice.

In short, this study demonstrates how people who are innately confident and secure in themselves have nothing to prove: there is no need for intense self-justification.

On the flip-side, those experiencing a state of personal dissonance or disarray will argue their position until they are blue in the face – even when it serves no beneficial purpose to themselves to do so – apparently in some tragically doomed mad scramble to ‘save’ themselves, their identity, their sense of security, however tenuous.

And the more tenuous the belief, the more tightly they tend to cling to its tattered remains; desperately seeking ways to justify why their current situation is acceptable (just as I was doing by repeatedly convincing myself over and over again that I was “doing okay”, until it became a warped kind of mantra bearing no meaningful relation to reality).

The attempt to convince others is ultimately an attempt to reconcile the fragments of our own selves: we are just trying to convince ourselves that we’re okay when sometimes we’re not – and often for good reason!

**And so the useful question to (really!) ask yourself becomes:**

Q: What am I currently trying to convince myself is okay when in reality it clearly isn’t? At the very least, what do I deny that could simply be better, more enjoyable, more adventurous, more full of fun?

Common areas for self-exploration using this simple self-analysis method include:

* all of your relationships;
* the amount of money you are making/spending;
* any of your goals, which are for one reason or another continually put on hold.
‘Force’ Your Own Hand

With the propensity to justify our own situation even when we are not in the best position to do so, we must take heed and look at our options for embracing change and rolling WITH the punches – as opposed to taking the unnecessary body blows!

This is very important and effective work: because through ridding yourself of cognitive dissonance and / or incongruence, you release the ingrained patterns of behaviour holding you back from achieving your goals. In this sense, ‘forcing your own hand’ rather than waiting for LIFE to ambush you with a confronting scenario, can be a very powerful and empowering exercise.

Educate yourself on the processes required to reach your end goal and uncover all of the conflicting thoughts that could conceivably hinder your progress on the journey.

Once you have identified them, challenge yourself further and really examine whether or not holding onto these cognitions truly serves you:

* are they supportive or do they collide?
* which one do you feel will win out above the other?
* what do ‘you’ need to do in order to cleanse yourself of one of the ‘dissonant’ thoughts?

Whatever occurs, your mind will try and rid yourself of the dissonance however it can - even if that does mean self-sabotaging your own goals – simply in order to try and avoid suffering through ongoing conflict.

The preference, of course, is always to carry out these investigations and experience those wonderful “Aha!” moments when everything clicks easily into place consciously as opposed to letting your subconscious open up a can of ‘whoop-ass’ on it! After all, that is the lazy approach…which only generates all the ‘unintended consequences’ we explored near the beginning of this chapter.
Your Memories Are Full of Errors

If I asked you to remember where you were and what you were doing on the 31st August 1997 you might struggle.

But if explained this as being the date on which Princess Dianna passed away as a result of injuries sustained in a collision in the Pont de l’Alma tunnel in Paris, France, the likelihood is suddenly very high that you would be able to share at least some vivid detail of that day (i.e. what you were wearing or doing, how you heard the news and from whom etc) - particularly if you lived in the UK at the time.

And yet, research shows you would be grossly inaccurate about a large portion of your memory. This calls into question more of our ‘selves’ and our constructed identities (ego) than some people care to explore. But BE WARNED: If you refuse to do it for yourself consciously, your subconscious mind and body are likely to embark on a far rougher and more thorough procedure than you can possibly imagine, as I discovered to my detriment!

“FLASHBULB Memory”

Flashbulb memories are vivid, precise and long-lasting memories of a personal incident pertaining to a discovery of shocking events and can be associated with significant events, such as:

* death of Princess Diana or Michael Jackson;
* assassination of Martin Luther King or John F. Kennedy;
* 2004 ‘Boxing Day Tsunami.’

The emotional ‘stimulation’ that occurs assists in our ability to recall the details of such a memory – yet not necessarily with a great degree of accuracy..!

In 1885 Hermann Ebbinghaus created a formula for the dilapidation of memories:

\[ R = e^{-t/s} \]

Where…

\[ R = \text{memory retention} \]
\[ S = \text{the relative strength of memory} \]
\[ t = \text{time (otherwise known as the ‘forgetting curve’)} \]
It was considered for some time that because ‘flash bulb’ memories feel so lucid, that they are therefore not as easily forgotten as other types of memory.

**But the shocking news, it turns out, is that even these memories are full of errors!**

A memory researcher by the name of Ulric Neisser uncovered something very interesting in this area:

In 1986 the space shuttle Challenger exploded into a fireball in the sky just after take-off and Ulric conducted some key research immediately thereafter.

The following day he had his students write down their memories of exactly what happened (from their viewpoint) - i.e. where they were, what they were wearing, what had happened and even what the TV coverage was like etc.

Three years later he asked them to write down their memories of the event again. Over 90% of the later reports varied significantly from the original accounts. One individual, when shown her initial description of the report written three years earlier, commented: “I know that’s my handwriting, but I couldn’t possibly have written that.”

As many as half of the participants were in a state of dissonance or incorrect in their recollection of about two thirds of the facts, and very similar results have been noted through conducting research on other events such as those occurring on ‘9/11’.

Therefore, if the way we interact with the world is based upon our past experiences and memories, this gives rise to some very intriguing questions:

Q. “Have our memories of the past been blown out of proportion, so much so that they physically manifest in preventing us from taking action in the now (present moment)?”

Q. “And if so, what are the implications if our recollections are inherently inaccurate?”

Q. “Are we behaving the way we do today because we have in- correctly remembered a specific moment in time and attached an emotion to it?”
Destabilisation Serves a Purpose

Whichever way we look at it, there are ‘key defining moments’ in every person’s life. They destabilise us and take us out of our comfort zone. And yet, with this often-painful destabilisation comes correction; labour; healing; regeneration; evolution; and rebirth. And then it’s just a question of when and how you finally arrive at this place.

If you’re unhappy with your life the way it is, then it’s time to take action today! Because if you desire to get more fun, more sex, more joy and more money out of your life…then it’s time to expect the unexpected, embrace the flux (even your own memories play their tricks on you!), and learn to surf the waves instead of feel overwhelmed by them.

So I invite you to consider THIS BOOK as your very own personal wake-up call – after all, you picked it up and read this far for a reason, right?

And if it helps even one person get ahead of the game and consciously awaken their awareness rather than sleepily drift along until a traumatic deathbed scene and full-body shock bitch-slaps them SMACK! Across the face…well then, I don’t mind showing you my warts and all…so long as YOU show YOURSELF yours…(!)

WATCH THE SHORT FILM BASED ON THIS BOOK!

Visit benangel.co/whoami to watch the short film based on this book. It was featured by both Entrepreneur & Success Magazine’s to their collective audiences of 6 million followers.

And, also checkout my groundbreaking Audio Program, “The Entrepreneurs Vision” (benangel.co/entrepreneursvision) This program will help you achieve more in the next 30 days than in the past 3 months alone. Based on several powerful visualisation techniques, it will help you realise your potential to get more out of your health, wealth, career and relationships.

Enter in your exclusive password VISION for a special surprise.
CHAPTER TWO - In LOVE With a BEAUTIFUL NOTION

Sex Addiction, Emotional Desires and Rites of Passage

The doctor’s diagnosis of my own condition shook me to the core. Was it really possible I was so messed up I didn’t even know I was grieving?

Or – worse – that I had refused to allow myself to grieve my father’s death at all…and in doing so had denied him, denied myself and denied the whole traumatic experience to such a profoundly deep level that I refused to acknowledge the loss or give it room to breathe, unfurl and (ultimately) heal?

Was I really that unaware of what was TRUTHFULLY going on both in and around me? In the words of my doctor, “Evidently so!”

I decided to devote some time to better understanding myself and what had happened. Now that it had been so unceremoniously pointed out to me, I couldn’t ignore it – and when I thought about my dad and how his courageous spirit was always such an inspiration, I felt sure I had it in me to face my demons.

My friend Chantelle sent me a detailed report on the grieving process around about this time, and it was on reading this that I realised how ignorant I was about the psychological healing that was required. How had I expected to simply take my father’s death in my stride? Mad but true.

Reading about all the necessary healing stages of grief I instantly recognised one emotion in particular, that of ANGER: the force of that particular mo’fo was unmistakable!

But I also realised that in not allowing most of the other emotions to flow equally – through being frightened to, in fact – that ANGER was the only one showing up with any real presence… and even then I was warping it; somehow using ANGER for my own ends – not to heal, but instead twisting it to rev me up and keep me speeding along, hoping to avoid the inevitable collapse into vulnerability I couldn’t bear the thought of.

I realised I had been mistakenly revelling in an unrealistic concept of myself as somehow ‘invincible’. But now, it appeared that the TRUE strength was in facing my demons – all of them – and whatever the hell was really going on, at least I’d settled on something concrete now.

“To Thine Own Self be True, And it must follow as the night the day Thou canst not then be false to any man.”
I’d finally come to my senses and decided enough was enough: it was time for me to do whatever it took to get myself back on track. No more self-denial. I was over feeling so depressed and shocked at having been essentially held prisoner by my own psyche inside my own skin.

After losing dad, my own diagnosis was the second big ‘wake-up call’ within the space of a year – and I wasn’t about to waste the lesson a second time round!

**No More Excuses!**

Through sheer force of determination – albeit with ANGER surging closely behind – I yanked all my self-help books off the shelf and got to work on myself, still not ‘awake’ enough to realise back then that the most they could do was get me fifty percent of the way. I needed more. In fact I needed much, much more...

Meanwhile, in the background to all this, I’d developed a particularly unhealthy and obsessive coping mechanism: I was becoming addicted to SEX. Considering the other predominant emotion fuelling my ‘recovery’ at that stage was ANGER, the combination didn’t bode well.

Week in, week out, for one year I indulged in increasingly meaningless sex with random strangers. Somehow I thankfully retained the presence of mind to keep myself ‘safe’ during this time, but the promiscuity itself – while neither here nor there in the general scheme of things – marked a radical departure from my previous patterns of behaviour and should have rung alarm bells for me a lot sooner than it did.

Sex became a game to see how fast I could pick someone up online or in a bar and get them into bed. It felt like fun at first, a kind of sport (although none of them helped with my career progression, I might add; I must have been sleeping with the wrong ones!). I was spiralling out of control until one day I finally did wake up enough to realise why I was doing all this and how the warped motivation underpinning the behaviour was damaging to all my personal interactions, not just the ones between the sheets...

I came to realise how the sexually charged power-rush I gained from so many seductions was becoming increasingly vacuous and superficial. It was addictive because it seemed to give me a sense of control in my life, something that I’d been aching to regain for many bleak months after losing dad. But the TRUTH was staring me in the face: this sense of control was false.

In the beginning I delighted in there being no attachment. I perceived myself as having the upper hand in every encounter: I had lovers at my beck and call and would cut them off on a whim whenever I wanted. I didn’t think there was anything wrong with this at the time but the
fundamental TRUTH was that *this behaviour wasn’t really me.* I’d lost myself in a mêlée of shallow distraction to avoid the raw pain of grief, and this wasn’t good for anyone – least of all me.

Secretly I craved a much deeper connection with other human beings – but what I was settling for was the superficial physical aspect of just being ‘seen’: feeling wanted, desired, accepted, attractive…and maybe even somewhat loved. The casual nature of it all kept the personal investment to a minimum: I could experience a fleeting taste of more positive emotions but not get in so deep as to risk getting hurt.

On top of all this, I hid the whole thing from everybody in my life: no one had the faintest idea of what I was doing (and I include myself in that) – and this only served to put even more distance between myself and any chance of genuine warmth or *real and authentic* human interaction.

I drifted away from my friends and withdrew into an anonymous and soulless world, one that I thoroughly embraced at the time and then eventually came to reject just as fervently. It took a full year to recognise my behaviour for what it was, because although I’d heard of people spiralling into other addictions as a way of coping or escape – food, alcohol, drugs, gambling…even crappy reality TV shows etc – I simply didn’t take sexual addiction all that seriously. I was in the grip of it – a very firm grip!

I was sinking fast and I couldn’t get enough.

**Who You Are Isn’t Who You Need To Be**

There’s a reason why the cruel-to-be-kind nature of the book *HE’S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU* was a runaway bestseller. Penned by *SEX AND THE CITY* writers, Greg Behrend and Liz Tuccillo, it candidly exposed the simple bald truth: that if a guy you’re into is not:

* asking you out
* calling you up
* inviting you out
* answering your calls
* comfortable with using emotional language such as, ‘relationship’, ‘dating’, ‘commitment’, ‘girlfriend’ or ‘boyfriend’…

…then you can kid yourself all you like - but the cold hard fact of the matter is that *HE’S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU!*

This high voltage dose of TRUTH - telling empowered a whole new generation of men and women to ‘wake-up’ and quit wasting their time on fruitless endeavours – which is exactly what
this chapter is all about: it’s what I managed to do, and what I hope to empower YOU to achieve, also.

Because we’re not just talking about the realm of SEX and personal RELATIONSHIPS here: the very real implications for the rest of our lives can be just as sobering.

Let’s be clear: I’m not saying any of this to trample on your self-esteem or piss on your (Mardi Gras) parade. Rather, I’m sharing all of this with you to drive home an often much-needed reality check:

That who you are choosing to be right here and now in this very moment may not actually be anything close to who you need to be in order to achieve your goals.

Sounds obvious, right?

And yet millions of people – educated, intelligent, loving, ambitious, inquisitive and capable people just like YOU – lack the basic self-awareness to complete a successful ‘self-inventory’ at one time or another.

Believe me, I know: I’ve been there.

So although it may not be ‘politically correct’ to say so, here’s the HONEST TRUTH: sometimes we simply DO require better personal grooming, a better education, more varied intimate experiences (shady or otherwise!) or some kind of cataclysmic OhMyGod moment of unbelievable terror to propel us over the threshold and catapult us into the next phase of our lives.

Personal evolution comes through being able to accept every part of yourself as it is right now – without judgement, without scorn, and yet with a genuine desire to cut out the dead wood, release the negative patterns of behaviour no longer serving you, and get to grips with the serious business of getting a handle on your TRUE potential – and how to have FUN realising it!

You Cannot Outperform Your Own Self Image

Your ‘self-image’ or ‘self-concept’ describes the image you hold of yourself in your own mind – basically, you are self-determining reality based upon who you believe yourself to be. Note that you can be right or wrong about this!

For example, continuing to hold onto a (potentially false) self-belief that, “I’m a slow learner” based on a throwaway comment from a first grade teacher or parent when you were growing up can easily end up impairing your whole perception of yourself as someone with the unlimited potential to improve your skills and learn as an adult.
Your self-image is constructed from a number of key elements, including (but not limited to):

* education
* gender
* social status
* sexuality
* personality traits / characteristics
* values
* experience

…and so on. Unrestricted by linear time, your self-image also combines elements of future and past selves, i.e. your personal perceptions (however far-ranging or limited) relating to:

* who you believe you were
* who you believe you are
* who you believe you will become

The QUEST for the Positive Self-Concept

Psychologist Carl Roger hypothesised that we are each engaged in the personal quest for realising our own ‘positive self-concept’ – and that everyone is striving to transition from his or her ‘real’ (actual) self to their ‘ideal’ self (the idea being that the closer someone gets to being an authentic expression of their ideal self, the happier they will be).1

Perhaps if we were clearer on who we wanted to become (as opposed to what we want to have) we would achieve our personal goals faster and with more precision. The only snag is: to evolve from the real self into the ideal self, you have to actually be able to see yourself as you REALLY ARE to start with.

Without this clear (and accurate!) perception of your own identity, it is easy to become lost and embark on the all-too-familiar struggle of being tossed on the waves of life (succumbing to others’ ideas of who you are and what you should be doing) instead of mastering the art of being captain of your own destiny.

In short, we can never outperform our own self-image (even when others see more potential in us than we are able to recognise ourselves) but we can grow and evolve this self-defined identity to achieve ever-expanding positive outcomes…providing we’re willing to be brutally HONEST with ourselves.
I sank to my knees under the weight of sadness. I just didn’t believe I could do it. I was shuddering with grief – sobbing uncontrollably.

Mum gathered me up in her arms and held me tight, trying to console me as much as her own breaking heart could muster; drawing on everything she had inside to lend me every spare ounce of strength she had to give. She’d just lost the love of her life, her mischievous partner-in-crime; her travelling companion through life for the last three decades, year after loving year. I couldn’t even fathom what she was going through and it cut me to the quick not to be able to stand tall and stoic for her.

Dad’s oak casket was resting just a few short metres away from where we both stood. It was the day of the funeral. Mum and I were on the farm where dad grew up; the rambling homestead where they’d nurtured one another tenderly for over thirty years, raised us kids, and dreamed of growing old together for another long time to come.

But all that was in the past. Dad was dead and mum was alone in the world without her soulmate. I felt robbed of all the things I wish I’d said to dad and every future experience I wouldn’t be able to share with him or ask his advice about.

Dad’s coffin had travelled to the farm in a white hearse for an unconventional private send off. It had survived a bumpy dirt-track road and rocky dry creek bed to arrive at this final destination in country South Australia.

When it was taken out, lifted and placed on the back of his old white Toyota Ute, the whole scene was symbolic of how dad lived his life: out in the country; earthy; hardworking; well-grounded in honest toil and integrity. Yet the pristine condition of the casket in contrast to the lack of vitality contained therein was an emptiness I felt swamped by. It created an intolerable tension so acute that it compressed my heart and squeezed my chest to the point where I sank to my knees.

I was experiencing some severe internal conflict.

I knew I needed to see dad’s body one last time for the sake of closure but I just couldn’t seem to bring myself to do it. And yet I feared that if I failed to go and ‘say goodbye’ this one last time, I would be in danger of deceiving myself in the future – living in some kind of fantasy where he’d just gone away on holiday and I would never properly accept he wasn’t coming back.

Eventually, with mum’s support and my brother by my side, we all managed to traverse the fifteen metre chasm between where we stood and the open casket containing the body once home to the previously boisterous head of our family. We took a collective deep breath and gazed inside together one last time.
What surprised me was how peaceful he looked, and also how alive – as if he were about to leap up and surprise us like the prankster he used to be. I suddenly remembered how he’d once hidden a dead snake in another kid’s water bottle at school (not that I’m advocating that, you understand!). He was always so mischievous, and I liked to think that was where my equally wrong sense of humour comes from.

After overcoming my fear to approach the casket, I felt a blessed sense of relief wash over me. Dad was at peace and out of pain and in the end that was the best possible outcome compared to the only other alternative, strange as it felt to acknowledge so.

The closure I received that day was only partial – there was more to come in ways I could not possibly have imagined that day – and on that day of the funeral as I put my dad to rest, I also surrendered my concept of ‘self ’ because everything I ever felt I could feel certain of was somehow gone and I consigned a part of myself to be burnt with him in the crematorium.

No longer knowing who ‘I’ was, where I wanted to be, or what I was living for, my concept of ‘self ’ just somehow collapsed. It shattered into a million unrecognisable shards and seemed to scatter all over the floor. All the positive aspects of my character – the things I liked the best about me – were also the traits I loved the best in him: I had been so happily invested in my father’s love, approval and acceptance that suddenly I didn’t have any meaningful frame of reference for who I was or how to be without him.

It was a defining moment: on some level I understood I had to let the shattered ‘OLD self ’ rest in peace as well.

It wasn’t about picking all the shattered pieces up off the floor for reassembly; it was more a matter of discovering the entirely ‘NEW self ’ which was waiting to step up; the one I could point to and know was completely borne of my own volition, not based on my attachments to others’ opinions of me.

I had to let go of who I was (a boy who’d just lost his father) and look towards the future (a man of his own making).

But what sort of ‘me’ was that?

The thought of who or what I was about to become scared me through and through…but it was an inevitable process I was about to get dragged into the midst of, ready or not!
**Who Do YOU Want to Become?**

It’s a real challenge to train your mind to ‘catch yourself ’ accurately observing *who you actually are being* moment-to-moment and adjust accordingly.

Similarly, we can never 100% predict who we are going to become in the future while living moment by moment, yet most people would agree that becoming more aware of who you REALLY are (and making the necessary ‘course adjustments’ to get back on track) as we morph Madonna-style through the many reincarnations of our ‘selves’ throughout life. If you’re lucky, you learn something with each shedding of the skin and each ‘reincarnation’ of yourself is a ‘new and improved version’ as you age.

**You certainly can choose to commit to each upgraded ‘self ’ being a more powerful version moving you ever-closer to your ‘ideal self ’ – but only if you are also willing to allow the inevitable changes** (loss of what was to move into what will be).

“Every choice you make has an end result.”

~ Zig Ziglar (b.1926)

Who you desire to become in the future (the perception you hold of your ever-evolving ‘self ’) will impact many things in the present, including:

* how effectively you evaluate your present self;
* how compassionately you get yourself back on track;
* how compassionately you therefore treat others;
* how others will treat you (in this moment and the next);
* how quickly and accurately you achieve your goals, including popular choices such as:
  * a healthy bank balance;
  * dream promotion;
  * thriving own business;
  * successful relationships of all types;

…and also whether or not others are likely to feel inspired to help you along the way.

We are all connected in some shape or form and it is only possible to achieve your dream outcomes with the assistance of / interaction with other people (partners, customers, clients, family, friends) – so you may as well enjoy the process!

Before looking for external support, however, it’s important to get clear on exactly what kind of person you want to be. You can do this by **answering these few telling questions…honestly!**:
Your Concept of ‘Self’ in Evolution

* who do I see my ‘self’ becoming? (i.e. well-travelled; accomplished at work / home; decisive; action-focused; a loving partner / friend / parent; healthier; charitable);

* who do I need to become to reach my goals? (i.e. a motivated self-starter; less fearful; more senior at work);

* How will I become so? (i.e. the specific actions or activities required: exercise; counselling; meditation; higher education; counselling; taking an educated risk).

My Sad Music & Weepy Movie Fast a.k.a: The Happy Tunes & Inspiring Movie Diet!

I knew if I really wanted to move forward I had to change: let go of who I had been as well as who I was.

Why?

Because the Ben I had become was an overly-sensitive, fragile sack of crap, crying at even the hint of a sad lyric or movie title – let alone actually listening or watching them! I think it was Paris Hilton playing in the background one day when I suddenly decided, “That’s it! I’m turning all this sad crap off!” (Although listening to Paris in the first place is probably sad for different reasons…).

Everything was affecting me way too much so I made a conscious decision that whenever a sad song came on the radio, even in the car with friends, I’d turn it off or change the station. I put myself on a very strict ‘happy tunes and inspiring movie diet’ where any kind of cheating meant defeat.

And defeat wasn’t an option for me – because defeat could too easily have equated to suicide for me during that time. It was already something I’d heavily contemplated in my late teens and not something I ever wanted to revisit again.

In order to accelerate the change process, I became a seriously determined piece of ass! I’d turned into a person I had never wanted to become, a person I abhorred. A pathetic loser who seemed perfectly fine on the outside but was in a bigger mess inside than a supermodel’s anger management issues (“put down the phone, Naomi, and step away from the assistant!”).

It was time for me to leave ‘Loserville’ by closing one chapter of my life and opening another. And this time I wouldn’t find the answer within the pages of a ‘self-help’ book. My current self didn’t need ‘help’ – it needed killing off and completely re-birthing!
I needed more education in my area of specialty to further my career. I believed that through growing and evolving myself professionally my business would take off and I’d rediscover that sense of enjoyment and confidence I’d missed for so long. I wanted to close the gap between my ‘current self’ and my ‘ideal self.’ And so I set to work.

**Rites of Passage**

A rite of passage is a ritual that marks an individual’s evolution from one status to another, often in the form of ceremonies to symbolise milestones such as: puberty, adulthood, marriage, parenthood, death – or in my case, **punching the shit out of a pillow!**

I did something the ‘OLD me’ never would have considered: I went to see an energy healer – someone who helps you release blocked energies within your body (kinda like a prostitute but with a very different quality of ‘happy ending’!).

In one particular session, the practitioner pushed me as hard as possible to trigger my anger about losing my dad. She wanted me to punch the beanbag she’d placed on my lap but I just couldn’t. I wanted to, and I tried, but I just couldn’t. Despite telling myself I was willing to do WHATEVER it took to get happy and healthy again, I hadn’t truly committed to it, because here I was feeling too self-conscious to follow simple instructions. I let my head rule (“What the hell is this going to achieve?”) instead of allowing my heart to open and give it a try.

But on the drive home I really tried to ‘feel’ into what she had said about us all having unresolved energy within our body, which causes harm on a physical and emotional level when it’s not released. I knew this was true – my body had gone into major SHOCK, after all… so I finally committed to doing WHATEVER it took and thought, “Okay – what do I have to lose?” I figured that after giving my wrists such a workout with all the copious sex I was having, putting my knuckles into the picture wasn’t that big a stretch really!

I went home and worked myself up into a state of anger, sadness and despair by thinking about everything that had happened…all the choices…my regrets…the loss…and then it began!

I laid into my pillow, punching it harder and harder until I burst into tears. To my surprise the anger that had been so intense only moments ago suddenly evaporated into grief. When it was all over, I felt great! I’d released the tension. It was like taking the cap off a pressure cooker you just know is going to explode and make one hell of a mess over everyone and everything in the vicinity otherwise.

Reading hundreds of personal development books had taught my mind to think positively – and yes, that’s always more helpful than thinking negatively! – but now I knew that it should never
be at the expense of safely expressing real feelings. I had experienced the damage of suppressing them and the joy of releasing them: it was a transformational understanding.

I slowly began to be able to observe things more clearly from many perspectives and learn to see situations as they really were – instead of what I was making them out to be.

The conclusion I came to was that the experience I’d just gone through of losing a loved one, was simply a profound rite of passage – something all of us go through one way or another. It was a blessing in disguise to become even clearer later on. I was about to come into my ‘own’ and find my ‘NEW self’ – but not before a lot more work.

* Rite of Passage Exercise *

List a few of your own rites of passage, using more paper if you want to. Make sure they are YOUR rites of passage (not your partner’s or your kids’!).

Recognise them as being the pivotal and / or defining moments in your life to date. They may be joyful, traumatic, intense, meticulously planned or completely unexpected. For example: bereavement; achievement; weight loss or gain; falling in love (or breaking up!), marriage; pregnancy or parenthood; promotion (or getting the sack!); your first skydive…whatever resonates most strongly for you.

Make a brief note of any outcomes they sparked: changes in your behaviour, emotions you didn’t realise you had, unintended consequences (positive, negative or neutral) and how you feel they have shaped your sense of ‘self’ as it stands today:

Rite of Passage #1:

Rite of Passage #2:

Rite of Passage #3:

Rite of Passage #4:

Rite of Passage #5:
By recognising these rites of passage for what they are and the impact they have had on your present day attitude and desires allows you to keep the good, release the bad, and start seeing the beauty of opportunity in ANYTHING life throws up in the future.

**The Anatomy of Desire**

“He would walk around on his skinned feet, leaving bloody footprints up and down the corridors, looking for someone to love him.”

Excerpt from the short story “The Anatomy of Desire” by John L’Heureux

The first step to attaining any desired outcome is understanding the desire itself that is driving it.

**A University of Michigan study in 2008** found that whilst humans experience desire and fear as psychological opposites, they in fact share the same brain circuitry, with the ability to flip from desire to fear in an instant.2

Emotions are generally at the core of what we desire to experience. Unless we’ve mastered the art of remaining equanimous through a contemplative practice such as journaling, most of us are at the whim of being motivated by our extreme aversion to some experiences (pain, suffering, poverty, bereavement) and a craving for others (satisfaction, fulfilment, the rush of natural/chemical ‘highs’).

Dissecting your desires to understand the emotions driving the experiences you do / don’t want to have will help you see how they form the basis (consciously or subconsciously) of who and what you are and hope to become.

According to Lott & Lott, “We experience feelings towards something a split second before we can intellectualise it.”3 – meaning that very rarely in nature are our decisions actually logical.

A brain imaging study led by Benedetto De Martino of University College London proved this by revealing in their experiments that the brain’s wiring emphatically relies on emotion over intellect in decision-making, even though we tend to ‘consciously’ believe otherwise.

Imagine this scenario, for example:

You’re looking to purchase a new television set (could you imagine seeing Janice Dickinson in 3D, she’s scary enough in digital!). It isn’t the actual TV (‘object’) that is at the core, driving your desires. Rather, it’s the emotions you hope to experience ‘via’ the TV. It might be love, lust, sadness, conflict or trauma depending on what your taste in programming is (and that’s just from watching THE VIEW!)
This is why losing a physical object (the TV gets stolen) it is our attachment to the emotions and bio-chemical rush it used to stimulate which causes us to grieve – not the actual object itself…and learning to distinguish between the two can be a liberating rite of passage in itself!

**Desires of the Heart – an exercise in ‘Self’ LOVE**

The simplistic beauty of this next exercise is that it highlights key values and emotions you wish to experience. So no matter what the outcome, as long as you experience your desired emotions, you will get closer to your ‘ideal self’ (and hopefully experience heightened levels of happiness as a result, regardless of the ‘context’ in which they appear / play out).

Next to each outcome you write below, place more emphasis on noting down the emotions you feel the experience will trigger rather than describing the goal itself: this is how you really get under the skin of who YOU are and what makes you really tick. Don’t be afraid to use more paper if you need to; getting to know yourself and making friends with yourself properly takes time!

**Desires of The Heart**

* **GOAL #1: i.e. starting your own business**

Emotional Outcome: i.e. sense of adventure

* **GOAL #2: i.e. getting into a relationship**

Emotional Outcome: i.e. sense of connection

* **GOAL #3: i.e. making more money**

Emotional Outcome: i.e. sense of control / relief
A useful by-product of this exercise is that through identifying healthy emotions we desire to experience, we can also highlight unhealthy desires that cost us personally and financially (instead of watching copious hours of low-brow television we could be educating ourselves in a chosen field for greater emotional reward).

The cost of our addictions to certain emotions and physical chemical rushes extends into other areas of our lives, too…let’s take a look:

**Is Your Expanding Waistline Restricting The Size Of Your Pay Packet?**

You only have to watch Nigella Lawson cooking to understand how inherent our desire to consume food (or emotional fulfilment!) really is. Her decadent and salacious wordplay seduces us into delving headfirst into a sensual cookbook and consuming all the scrumptious food depicted. Ahhh…that delicious chemical rush of food on the tongue!

Sugar cravings have even been likened to drug addiction, for example! Many individuals living in western cultures unwittingly use sugar as a form of self-medication to momentarily boost their energy and moods (just think about the last time you ‘craved’ something sweet and how hard it would be not to succumb!).

The regularity and circumstance on which some of us push a button on a soft drink machine is jarringly similar to the way lab rats (who metabolise sugar very similarly to humans) press a switch to produce a food reward.

A study out of France presented at the 2007 annual meeting of the Society of Neuroscience, illustrated that when rats were given the choice between water sweetened with saccharin (artificial sweetener) and water containing intravenous cocaine, a whopping 94% chose the saccharin water! The same thing happened when the saccharin was swapped for sugar.

Even offering the rats larger doses of cocaine made no difference – and even rats already addicted to cocaine swapped to the sweetened water when presented with a choice between the two.

Intense sweetness was more rewarding to the rat’s brain than cocaine…which demonstrates that no matter how much we try and convince ourselves we are ‘liberated’ from our primal desires, the TRUTH is we’re simply not!

Each of us is being run by primitive programs driving us in ways we’re largely unconscious of – just so we can experience the specific emotions and chemical rushes day in and day out that we crave. Don’t believe me? Just experiment by going without coffee, sugar, alcohol, television, mobile phone, the gym (!) or cigarettes for a couple of weeks and see how you FEEL about it!
The American Psychiatric Association defines addiction to include three key stages:

1. binging
2. withdrawal
3. craving

Bingeing is a stage that much of western society is currently experiencing, particularly when it comes to the overindulgence in food with obesity rates skyrocketing worldwide.

And it’s costing us way more than just our health: it is impacting on our pay packets, too.

A study discussed in ‘The Real Cost of Living’ by Carmen Wong Ulrich found that wage discrimination exists just as much as hiring discrimination. The research revealed how the majority of respondents who hire on a regular basis admitted to nearly always choosing the thinner job applicant during the selection process. The study went on to expose that on average, overweight employees make $1.25 per hour less than colleagues with a low-BMI rating – which weighs in at a hefty six-figure financial loss over the course of a lifetime! What an opportunity cost! These ‘heavy losses’ equate to millions in lost investment opportunities over the years for one individual alone! Not to mention the pressure obesity places on our health care system.

Let me be clear: none of this is about advocating people be stick thin. Rather, it’s about being a *fully healthy human being* inside and out – because your health (the mental, physical and emotional ‘space’ you take up in the world and how you use it) has a direct cost or benefit for whatever you are seeking to achieve in your life.

**‘The Theory of Natural Selection’ and its Benefits**

Charles Darwin originally discussed the Theory of Natural Selection in his book, ‘*On the Origin of Species*’ first published in 1859. It suggests that nature selects those characteristics which enhance an organism’s ability to survive in its environment – particularly where procreation is concerned.

And so this society which we have (evolutionarily-speaking) co-created, tends to lend its support to individuals with more of the so-called ‘favourable’ traits and characteristics, and so it self-perpetuates.

To some degree the ‘self-help’ revolution has been responsible for making us believe that we’re ‘okay’ just the way we are. For some of us that might even be true – but I’m guessing since you picked up this book, you’re already seeking to further improve yourself.

The reality of the matter is we have to deal with and influence others to get our ideas across the line, to be ‘selected’ as a mate, to influence the kids to make good decisions, or to be the one selected for the high-profile corporate job we aspire to.
The way this ‘selection’ occurs isn’t always fair – however, it does in most cases (not always) lean towards those individuals who will enhance the environment they are hoping to be a part of – otherwise, what’s the point??

By failing to enhance our key attributes, we’re performing anti-plastic surgery and quite literally cutting our nose off to spite our face. Therefore, whatever you can do to enhance your position in society (with others rather than at the expense of them!) is a very worthwhile personal investment of your time, attention and financial resources.

One saying that has always resonated with me for its emphasis on each of us taking on board our OWN PERSONAL responsibility is:

“What others think of you is none of your business”

This is a statement I agree with…but only to a certain extent. I don’t agree with being closed to others’ opinions or input, as this can hurt or hinder your progress (think about the damage of rejecting ‘dissonant’ information as discussed in chapter 1).

External feedback from others is still helpful to further ourselves so long as:

1. it doesn’t force us into becoming someone we don’t want to become, and;
2. it is neither to their detriment or ours.

Constructive criticism can help to force our own hand, stretching us for the environment we aspire to thrive in. There is also a place for ‘polarisation’ (the art of dividing a group of individuals into two opposing factions,) for the purposes of inciting fresh thought and driving change. Yet to go into any environment with an “I don’t give a damn what you think” attitude right off the bat will come across as brash and prevent you from getting your message across. Remember: persuasion is an ART…and here’s where we learn a little more about mastering it:
THE ‘ULTIMATE’ SUCCESS BLUEPRINT

STEP #1: UNDERSTAND

Understand who you need to influence and why (i.e. boss, colleague, media, partner, children);

STEP #2: FIT IN

Fit into the existing mould enough (without losing yourself) to understand the way they do things and why (i.e. their processes, how they think, how they behave – basically learn as much as you can about the way things already are);

STEP #3: BREAK AWAY

Break away from the mould – but only once you have an educated view of how the mould was formed in the first place. For example: Lady Gaga worked for years perfecting her talent, writing hits for other artists such as Britney Spears, The Backstreet Boys and The Pussy Cat Dolls. This gave her the education necessary to make it BIG and explode onto the scene by being TRULY original. She was able to assess what worked, what didn’t and how to leverage all of it. The benefits of this process are ‘ENORMOUS!’

I can already hear some of you saying, “But hang on a minute - they don’t take the time to understand me!” That’s right, but it’s only because you’re not a key influencer as of yet. Don’t panic! That’s what I’m just about to groom you into, so soon you’ll have a lot more influence in your world. In the meantime, to expect others to understand you before you’ve given them the same respect is ludicrous. It’s a two way street.
**Don’t kid yourself**

We’d all like to think that we’re exempt from the pain of putting in the hard yards to reach our goals – after all, that’s what we’ve been led to believe by a lot of the self-help Gurus of the world.

And sure, positive thinking can make the process enjoyable, but let’s face it: it’s still not easy to stay motivated and focused day in, day out. Remember Darwin? There’s a reason why his work gets referred to as ‘survival of the fittest’!

We each _must_ (and one way or another, _will_) be broken in key areas of our lives to make us stronger in the long run. This process is reflected in our biology:

* to build muscle we are required to damage our muscle fibres.
* when the muscle fibres heal, we grow in strength and can adapt to the new strains placed on our body.
* Body builders practice the art of continually damaging, then repairing, their muscle fibres to gain mass.

So in life it helps to think of yourself as an ‘athlete’ of your own destiny, training for your own marathon – at the end of which will come a huge reward. As they say in bodybuilding, ‘No Pain, No Gain!’

**In Love with a BEAUTIFUL NOTION…and Addicted to CONDITIONED RESPONSE**

Our society seems to be in love with the beautiful (yet misguided) notion that we are somehow exempt from being impacted by our primal triggers. But these primal triggers and conditioning are constantly at play not only within ourselves, but also in our peers and those we seek to influence, so it really pays to recognise and work with them.

For example, we are each conditioned to behave in certain ways (evolution’s way of preserving the species). The brain has a tendency to look for recognisable patterns to preserve energy and with this realisation comes the realisation that we also have an entire set of pre-conditioned responses we deploy without fully understanding why (a topic much discussed by Ivan Pavlov in his 1927 investigation known as ‘Pavlov’s Dog’).

We each have ‘conditioned responses’ to certain actions / behaviours.

**Take the following, for example;**
* feeling compelled to rush to answer the phone / doorbell;
* pulling over when the Ambulance siren sounds;
* an increase in appetite at the smell of food;
* stressing out when we see a police car behind us;
* tensing up at the site of a masked man;
* cringing at the whiff of bad breath;
* getting aroused by a hot visual of the opposite / same sex;
* addicted to checking email or Facebook constantly;
* putting your hand up before you ask a question;
* saying “Please” and “Thank you”;
* driving through GREEN lights and stopping at RED ones;
* cringing at the site of Crocs (not the wildlife…but the fashion-crime shoes made out of plastic: I throw up in my mouth a little every time I see them).

We have been conditioned in ways we are hardly aware of. This ‘pre-conditioning’ in both ourselves and others impacts how we effectively communicate and influence the world. It is well within your ability to successfully captivate and inspire others - this is at the soul of your success.

So if you’re ready to do WHATEVER IT TAKES to close the gap between your ’self ’ as it is today and your ‘ideal self’, then let’s take a look at how you can move into becoming the captivating and inspiring individual you are destined to be. It’s time to turn the whole world on its head!
CHAPTER THREE - The SECRET to INFLUENCE

Being Upstaged by a Dog, One Critical Mistake & Hunger, Sex & Fear

T Minus 20 Minutes and Counting…

The countdown was on and my adrenalin had just kicked in. It was streaming through every vein in my body. I wasn’t sure if I was going to run out the door or have a heart attack right there on the spot!

Excitement, fear, dread and self-doubt all swirled around beneath my apparently composed exterior. I was sporting one of those award / loser faces. You know the one: some celebrity at the OSCARS is desperately trying to look neutral in anticipation of the announcement – and then sickly-pleased as the camera pans, whilst secretly wishing Tom Cruise would leap acrobatically off a couch and land directly on top of the award recipient! Yeah, that face.

I breathed calmly (“in, out…in, out”) in an effort to relax. After all, I was sitting with the National Minister for Tourism, with a Government Official on one side a Channel 10 media commentator on the other. We formed the speaker line-up to address the Tourism Student Alliance Summit - an initiative put together to inspire up- and-coming industry elite.

As panel speakers, we were positioned at the head table, just one metre away from the 4ft tall stage, which in turn faced the 700-strong audience of expectant faces!

T Minus 10 Minutes and Counting…

The speaker before me, Tim Cope, had the audience spellbound. For a while there I thought Harry Potter himself was going to yell ‘SURPRISE!’ from the stage and reveal his true identity! Tim had been awarded ‘National Geographic Adventurer of the Year’ in 2006 and regaled a personal story of travel and adventure to rival any other.

He’d followed Genghis Khan’s trail from Mongolia to Hungary, all 10,000kms of it on horseback, with his dog Tigon, given to him as a pup on his journey through Kazakhstan in 2004 to keep him company, by his side.

The audience were devouring every word Tim uttered as if it was their last meal and they’d never see another piece of food again! How was I meant to compete with that??
“(Oh CRAP!”) T Minus 5 Minutes and Counting…!

I was up next. Tim was upstaging me before I’d even spoken! Underneath the table my hands were firmly clasped together, one thumb rubbing the top of the opposite hand – something I do when I’m nervous. The only thing I could think of in that moment was, “How the hell am I going to follow Tim? This guy’s fantastic! I’m going to fall flat on my face in front of 700 people!!!”

T Minus 2 Minutes & Counting…!!

Tim began wrapping up his story. He’d mentioned going through a fundraising process to try and fly his dog Tigon back from overseas to be with him in Australia. What he failed to mention was whether it was successful or not. With this question unanswered, the host went on to thank Tim and lead the audience straight into the Q&A.

Naturally, the very first question was, “What happened to Tigon?”

Without a word, Tim executed the perfect whistle - a whistle that travelled to the back of the room and woke Tigon with a joyful start. The dog came bounding from the back of the auditorium through the audience of 700 and up onto the stage to lick Tim’s hand.

Sighs of happiness and thrilled emotions rippled throughout the venue accompanied by claps and cheers. The audience was beside themselves. It was as if Bambi had been brought back to life after being shot. I would have burst into tears myself if it weren’t for the thoughts running through my mind – of which, “Motherfucker! I’ve been upstaged by a fucking DOG!”

T Minus ZERO…“Please welcome BEN ANGEL to the stage!”

I heard the host announce my name as if from a very long way away. It was my turn...and there was no way I was going to let a flea ridden mongrel upstage me! It was ‘GO’ time!

In-flu-ence

[in-floo-uh ns] - noun
1. the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviour, opinions, etc., of others.
The Law of Influence

If it wasn’t for the power of influence:

* Oprah wouldn’t have inspired generations of men and women to live more consciously;
* Martin Luther King wouldn’t have inspired millions to stand up for what was right to gain their liberty;
* Richard Branson wouldn’t have established an international brand with a devoted following;
* Apple wouldn’t have sold millions of iPhones, iPads, Mac-Books, Apps and more.

**Influence is a key component in everything we do** – and whether consciously or not we are influencing others on a daily basis for or against our own causes.

The preference of course is to do it as consciously as possible – for the benefit of all the parties involved. And to learn to be aware of all the subtleties – such as the many hidden pockets of influence such as:

1. The secretary whose unique knowledge and discretion really runs the company;
2. A partner asserting their status over an entire family;
3. The musician who looks great by calling on thousands of other people at will to support their charity;
4. The agent pulling a model/actor/singer’s strings behind the scenes.

If you’re failing time after time to reach your goals, then the fact is you don’t have ‘buy-in’ from those individuals around who would assist you otherwise.

The way you influence others (for good or ill) dictates whether or not they will support you or leave you out in the cold when you need them the most. By becoming an influential force in your environment, you will not only get others’ buy-in, you will also be seen to enhance your chosen environment – an advantage like no other.

In 1958 a Harvard psychologist called Herbert Kelman identified three broad assortments of social influence, as follows:

**Social Influence – as Defined by Herbert Kelman in 1958**

1. **Compliance**: People appear to agree with others by actually keeping their disapproving opinions to themselves;
2. **Identification**: People are influenced by someone who is liked, trusted, respected or aspired to (i.e. celebrity/friend);
3. **Internalisation**: People agree/accept/adopt a new belief or behaviour both publicly and privately.
A position of influence should always be treated with great care and respect. Under no circumstance should it turn into compliance: compliance breeds discontent – discontent that will eventually come back to bite you BIG time if not managed carefully (i.e. *YOU actually become the ‘dissonant’ element in somebody else’s life* – an element they must ‘rid’ themselves of or move away from).

Occasionally compliance IS given – for example at work – where employees must conform and comply to ‘company policy’ or the CEO’s directives. However there is *always* a way to do it with grace and class instead of succumbing to (or worse still, dishing out!) an abuse of power.

**And so the QUESTION really becomes: How is one to INFLUENCE ethically?**

In my experience, many people (mis-)perceive the Art of Influence as something sinister or manipulative. I disagree. It is a tool like any other and works with the precision of clockwork, much like a car. The car (influence) is neither inherently GOOD or BAD…it just depends how considerately you drive it!

Just like a car, influence can help transport you from place to place and situation to situation with ease…or steer you off course into a ditch – but that doesn’t mean we get rid of the vehicle! Instead we understand how to drive safely: we get ‘under the bonnet’ of our own and other people’s desires in order to get the best mileage out of how we travel through life / work / a specific project together.

**How Often Have You Made This ONE Critical Mistake?**

Let me ask you a question: If you could have anything you wanted in your life, what would it be?

When I ask this question at my seminars and workshops, the majority of participants respond with things like:

* “more money”
* “a thriving business”
* “a more fulfilling relationship”
* “to find the courage to follow my passion.”

Many of them have read countless personal development books and yet still struggle to reach their goals.

Why?

After all, they’re intelligent, educated people who care about where they’re headed. And if you work on yourself hard enough there has to be a ‘pay off’ sooner or later, right?
Actually, no – not always!

Usually it’s because they all keep making the same ONE critical mistake – the mistake of not selling their core ideas / passions effectively. Let’s face it, we’re all sales people: I sell you one thing (coffee) and you buy another (emotion: namely, the romantic feeling of strolling through the park on a caffeine kick before work).

The time you negotiate trading off in order to spend it with others in your life (partner, boss, mentor, lover, kids etc) in order to experience specific emotions or benefits from being in their presence is another example. There is a buy / sell / trade relationship occurring amongst us constantly. Some more examples might include selling your…

* partner on the ‘idea’ of a committed relationship with you;
* your kids on the ‘idea’ that drugs are bad;
* boss on the ‘idea’ you deserve a promotion;
* customers on the ‘idea’ your products are superior to that of your competitors (be careful: is this actually TRUE?);
* friends on the ‘idea’ you’re fun to be around and worth making plans with;
* husband / wife / lesbian lover on the idea those Jimmy Choo shoes are worth every cent

The individual that rapidly rises to the top is the one who holds the power of influence in their hands within their personal sphere of influence (the people and places they have contact with) and can mould and adapt to their environment as required.

So how can we tell when we’re being perceived in the best possible light, especially when there are so many other factors going on under the surface? Let’s take a look...

‘Fixed Action Patterns’ – The Tipping Point Required To Hit Your Mark

In his iconic book, ‘Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion’, Robert B. Cialdini PHD explored how we each have ‘fixed action patterns.’

‘Fixed action patterns’ (FAPs) are sequences of intricate behaviours dictating how we respond to specific stimuli. Cialdini describes these patterns as tapes:

“Click and the appropriate tape is activated; whirr and out rolls the standard sequence of behaviours.”

Cialdini explained that without realising, we each have a set of standard ‘tapes’ that respond to words, colours, behaviours, gestures, sounds and visual patterns.

‘Fixed action patterns’ differ from ‘conditioned responses’ in the sense that FAPs are not ‘learned’ but genetically inherited down through generations; they’re innate.
‘Conditioned responses’ on the other hand are learned behaviours, which eventually get taken over and driven by our subconscious mind - hence we become unaware we even possess them, or execute procedures on ‘auto-pilot’ (i.e. driving without having to examine every little change in gear obsessively).

Some species exploit the FAPs of other species, eg cuckoos laying their eggs in the nests of other birds who then parent the ‘intruders’ as their own young (don’t you wish you could do that with your kids sometimes?!).

As humans we respond to various aspects of one another including (but not limited to):

* face shape
* smells
* attire
* sentence structure
* environment
* personality
* actions
* energetic engagement

Each of these attributes works in the back- and foreground, influencing our perceptions and impressions of others and vice versa. Countless studies have been conducted in each of these areas, including a keen interest in deciphering an individual’s ‘personality type’ based solely on what they keep in their environment (office, lounge, bedroom, wardrobe etc).

**Case Study**

In May 1942 shortly after the U.S. government entered the second World War, a formalised process for identifying suitable candidates for working behind enemy lines was put in place.

One of the selection criteria was to take ‘the Belongings Test’ – in which applicants were required to accurately describe individuals on the basis of what they had left in their bedrooms. Items included: a timetable, clothing and a single receipt.

The research provided strong evidence that much can be learned about a person from the spaces in which they dwell and their belongings, research that was further backed up in a similar study conducted in 2002.4

Our environment is just one of many key aspects reflecting our externalised representations of ‘self’: a cluttered workspace often signifies a cluttered mind or overwhelming sense of incompleteness, for example. So if we’re careless or unconscious about how we project our internal
‘self’ out into the external environment around key influencers, we put ourselves at great risk of falling out of favour.

Our external representations of ‘self’ must be successfully monitored to achieve rapid success in our lives. The process is not dissimilar to how a publicist works – in that they consciously manage the public perception of their celebrity / actor / company / individual both in front of audiences and in the media.

This ‘self’ management must be consistent – but not to the point you lose yourself in the process and place your ‘self-worth’ in the hands of others. That self-esteem is yours and yours alone to hold on to, cultivate and nourish.

“Suck on that, Tigon – you didn’t even get a doggy treat – Ha!”
~ Ben Angel…on a roll!

Meanwhile, back at the Tourism Student Alliance Summit, I was busy mustering as much energy, personality and enthusiasm as I possibly could as I strode confidently onto the platform sporting a smile bright enough to dazzle half of Sydney.

It was MY turn to speak – and there was no way I going to let this flea-ridden mongrel (okay that’s an exaggeration, the dog and Tim were both fantastic) overshadow me. I refused to be the ‘forgotten’ speaker of ANY day, this audience included. I wanted to leave a lasting impression to keep all 700 of them buzzing until well after the event was over.

Echoing through my mind was the maxim: ‘You’re only as good as your last performance.’ I decided then and there I couldn’t make this merely great…I had to make it outstanding!

Because when you’re a professional speaker, the only way to command prices of $2,500 - $10,000 per engagement is via word-of-mouth. One bad performance can literally cost you tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars – and instantaneously grind your career to a screeching halt.

Like anything we do publicly, speaking is the perfect platform for things to go wrong as well as right! If screw up badly, your blunder is broadcast live to the audience right there and then, as well as an additional few thousand – or million! - if the clip goes viral on YouTube. And if you weren’t scared of public speaking before now, that ought to do it!

As I took my place on stage I looked down at the audience.

There were well over 700 pairs of brightly lit eyes peering right back up at me…expectantly.
And that’s when it happened...

*My mind went completely BLANK!*

I’d love to share with you what actually happened during my presentation or snippets of what I said – but I can’t! It’s not that it was so awful I’ve repressed it, nor was it so shocking that I’ve wiped it from my memory altogether. It’s actually just that I was in ‘a state of flow’ (more about that later) where everything I’d learned came together and I simply influenced the audience with ease and grace.

Have you ever had a job interview and walked out not knowing whether or not it went well? Or been set up on a blind date and only remembered afterwards how much his breathe stunk or the plunging depths of her cleavage?

Well, that’s what happened to me (not the plunging cleavage, although mine is great). I’d gone into a state of flow in which I’d made the conscious decision not to think about what I was going to say anymore.

It worked because I had previously ‘conditioned’ myself to enter this zone whenever I walked out on to a stage. The moments prior to this are often tense and riddled with nervous energy. But as soon as I leave my seat and make my way up, I immediately ‘let-go’ of all of my intentions and just allow my success to manifest. I imagine fear, anxiety, stress or competitiveness slipping away with each step I take and choose instead to reside in the complete trust that whatever I was about to share will be perfect for those about to hear it.

And so on that (very daunting!) occasion, I could rely on what I’d conditioned myself after many years in the industry to trust: that the only way to successfully shift the hearts and minds of others and influence their future is to be absolutely and utterly present yourself.

*When you’re present and conscious with a genuine desire to use your skills and talents for the benefit of others*, there isn’t one thing that you could do or say that would impact others negatively.
Over 100 Lined Up...

Whatever I said, it must have worked. The audience cheered! And as soon as I walked off-stage I was mobbed by over 100 students who’d already lined up to grab a copy of my first book, complete with signature and photo!

Okay, okay, I do remember a couple of things I said – one Joan Rivers’ quote in particular which won them over by instantly appealing to their insatiable desire to be rebellious:

“I think saying go fuck yourself is a very pleasant way of saying good morning to someone you don’t like.”

“Judge Me Baby, One More Time!”

The word stereotype originates from the Greek (stereos), meaning firm, solid; and (typos), meaning impression, i.e. “solid impression.”

Just as the students were assessing (or judging) me up on stage, I was stereotyping (or judging) them before I’d even entered the room. I’d already made key advance assumptions about the personality types there present and how I would influence each one using the content I was going to deliver. Nothing was left to chance – just like nothing should be left to chance when YOU are influencing key individuals in YOUR sphere of influence.

The Trick is Not to Judge The Fact We Judge!

Typically, humans do not like to be categorised because we feel it reduces our unique qualities down to under-valued generalities. And yet we all do it to a greater or lesser extent. The notion that we do not judge others (even while not enjoying receiving it ourselves) is an ideal rarely achieved. Why? Because our primal brain has three main functions:

**Hunger**: the collection of food to sustain life;
**Sex / Procreation**: to produce offspring to continue genetic lines;
**Fear**: preservation of the species (fight or flight).

Our primal brain is constantly judging people and our environment to assess potential threats and act accordingly to preserve the species: ironically, the trick is not to judge the fact we judge – and learn how to work with this fact compassionately instead. Because until evolution kicks in, this isn’t going to change anytime soon.
So no matter how much we try and convince ourselves we’re politically correct individuals in public, the TRUTH is that in private…we’re not.

“What you do speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)

A recent study conducted by the University of British Columbia in 2009 proved this point. The study found that Canadians and landed immigrants with names such as ‘Jill Wilson’ or ‘John Martin’ were 40% more likely to be offered an interview than those with Chinese, Pakistani or Indian names.

6,000 mock résumés to meet specific job requirements in 20 occupational categories. They were sent out to 2,000 online job postings in the Greater Toronto Area. It was discovered that distinct foreign names had a huge negative impact on the ability for an applicant to land a job because of the stereotypes their names alone suggested.

So whilst stereotyping is a far from ideal way to assess others (it promotes generality over real human interaction) it does serve a few useful purposes, so the key is not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Stereotyping can be useful because:

* It is too difficult to take in all of the intricate details of each individual’s personal characteristics all the time, so we group them together to save us from continually processing new information, thus creating mental shortcuts;
* Categorising others is a fundamental human function enabling us to simplify, forecast and organise our world. Without this function, we’d collapse under the overwhelming weight of all the incoming streams of information;
* It serves as an acceptance tool of SELF-identification, too (feeling a validated sense of identity through belonging to a particular group; by belonging one feels accepted / ‘normal’).

In any given second our subconscious mind is receiving 11 million pieces of information! And yet it only passes 16 to 40 pieces of this input onto the conscious mind – the few it deems to be significant. Based on these minimal slices we form our impressions of others. So in reality, we’re forming opinions based on a mere 0.00054% of the information available to us. This clearly has its drawbacks as well as its advantages (and the process of stereotyping is a good example of this).

It is our subconscious mind’s role to judge, categorise and deem information worthy – so we can’t help but do it (don’t judge yourself for it!). We can however learn to make conscious decisions not to behave in certain ways after we’ve had time to consolidate the information – and this is where healthy distinctions and discrimination kick in.
**Inherent Disadvantages and Balanced Benefits**

We each possess inherent talents and handicaps and through recognising how these influence and impact others, we’re able to turn disadvantages into benefits. By understanding the science of how others behave we can re-position ourselves to enhance key attributes that influence others. Studies have shown:

* **When it comes to standing erect at work, every inch counts.** According to a study conducted by psychologist Timothy A. Judge of the University of Florida and researcher Daniel M. Cable, PHD of the University of North Carolina, “each inch above the average height may be worth an additional $789 US more per year.”

* **It pays to (kiss) and “make-up”**… Women who wear subtle make-up earn 23% - 30% more than those who don’t – probably because cosmetics emphasise the eyes and the mouth, which are key means of communication.

* **Always introduce yourself with a firm handshake.** A study conducted by John Bargh, PhD, a professor of psychology at Yale University and Lawrence Williams, PhD, of the University of Colorado discovered that we perceive individuals with warm, firm handshakes to be kinder and more generous than those who offer a hand of cool or cold temperature.

It may seem like stating the obvious, but the study uncovered information on the part of the brain called the insula, which correlates feelings of trust and empathy with physical temperature and other social emotions such as embarrassment or guilt.

(Makes you think twice about offering a handshake after holding a cold glass of water, doesn’t it?).

**When time is scarce and ‘everything is on the line’, the IMPACT you make needs to be profound – and operating on ALL levels.**

**To Cue or Not to Cue?**

What happens when the cues we’re giving off go horribly wrong and we fail to influence others or convey our ‘real’ selves effectively?

The reason this happens is due to the ‘missing’ pieces of information (*11 million* filtered right down to 16 to 40, remember?), which would otherwise tell us how to most effectively behave in the present environment.
By educating ourselves effectively on all of the different aspects of ‘standing out’ we learn how to create a powerful impression and begin to close all of the gaps (between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ self) previously holding us back.

The faster you close these gaps, the more exhilarating your journey to success becomes. The exciting news is that it will begin to speed up significantly – but only at the rate that you’re able to digest and apply NEW information.

**Open Heart > Open Mind > ability to absorb NEW information > accelerated success!**
**Maximise Your Assets and Minimise Your FLAWS**

Let’s be clear about something really important here: the research in this book is *NOT* here for you to:

* beat yourself senseless with it;
* get obsessed or paranoid about every little thing that you do (although that nose picking really should stop!);
* judge yourself harshly.

**What the credible research IS being shared with you here for is to:**

* empower you with some of the NEW information your processor (brain) may have ‘missed’;
* kit you up with the TOOLS (knowledge and education) to enable you to put your best foot forward in every situation;
* encourage you to **minimise your flaws and maximise your assets**

**So how do we apply this research, practically speaking?**

* Well, if you understand that **increased physical height has a positive impact on success in the workplace** – then it would be a great idea to dress in clothes that elongate the body (as shown later);
* And if you understand that women who wear make-up earn up to 23% - 30% more income…then hell, I’d even wear it myself!
* And If you understand that greeting key personnel for the first time with a cold handshake temperature-wise could mean you get perceived as ‘cool’ and ‘distant’, then it makes sense to hold your drink in the opposite hand.

**These are ALL techniques that up until now only the ‘elite’ or widely-read have been aware of…**but my hope for readers of this book is that precisely because these small details make ALL the difference…we should ALL have equal access to them!

It isn’t about changing who you are: it’s about TRULY showing up *as your real IDEAL self*…for the rest of the world to see and appreciate… and benefit from, too.

**This book will also take you on a ‘journey of subtraction’:**

* removing elements from your environment which prevent the world from seeing and appreciating the real you;
* removing elements that trigger others into creating unhelpful (as opposed to useful) stereotypes of you;
* removing elements that impede your ability to effectively communicate with, persuade and influence others;
* removing elements that cloud your vision about who you are and where you see yourself going, which could otherwise hold you back in all areas of life.

**WARNING:**
MORE SUPERFICIAL THAN KIM KARDASHIAN

Let’s get right down to the HARD NAKED TRUTH: some of what I’ll reveal to you (oo-er!) in coming chapters will be 100% superficial – no ifs or buts. Why? Because the psychology of influence is unavoidably interwoven with numerous external factors receiving critique, evaluation and judgement all the time. We can’t eradicate it, so we may as well work with it – and learn to transform ‘judgement’ into ‘discernment’.

**It’s not right – it’s not wrong – it just is!**

Moral implications aside, if you are dismissed because of external factors you could better manage, then you are simply letting yourself down. This is a barrier that only YOU have erected (there’s that sexy word again!) and only YOU can dismantle. Aspiring that others not judge you based on external appearance is a ‘beautiful notion’ to spend a night with – but don’t fall in love or your heart will get broken!

*Never Believe Your Own Hype!*

Promise me this: no matter how successful you become, you must remain grounded and develop in humility. No matter how much money you make, please treat everyone (from CEO to vagrant) with the same courtesy and respect. No one is better than you, and you are no better than anyone else: it all comes down to basic goodness, dignity and (self-)respect

Later on I have some great easy-to-implement processes to help you consolidate and truly benefit from all this new information so that you truly can Find The Moment When Everything CLICKS And Falls Into Place…! But in the meantime, let’s take a tour of the relationship between ‘influence’ and ‘perceived value’ coming up in chapter 4…
CHAPTER FOUR - The POWER of PERCEPTION
Perceived Value

The relationship between Scarcity and Value

We all have a perceived value in the marketplace. For example, the ‘scarcity rule’ describes ‘supply and demand’ this way:

* if you’re inaccessible (scarce), your perceived and real value increases significantly;
* if you’re accessible (easy) then you’re perceived and real value drops.

The scarcity rule is not one that everyone subscribes to (there are plenty of senior managers in the world whose ‘open-door policy’ engenders a very effective quality of highly-valued interactions) – but it probably is fair to say the scarcity rule is the most prevalent, especially in the western world.

And it doesn’t only relate to how accessible you are: the scarcity rule and its implications also extend to how rare (or not) your particular skills and talents are. Identifying and evaluating these accurately will enable you to leverage the power of YOUR unique perceived market-value…and turn that perception into a tangible monetary value, too.

“Accentuate the Positive…”

It all comes down to accentuating the positive (e.g. you might have a natural talent for ‘big picture thinking’) and eliminating the negative (e.g. if ‘attention to detail’ is simply not your forte…let it go!).

“You’ve got to accentuate the positive, Eliminate the negative... And latch on to the affirmative: Don’t mess with Mister In-Between!”

(1944 song made popular by artists such as: Bill Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin & Cliff Richard) ~ composed by Harold Arlen with lyrics by Johnny Mercer

Getting to know your REAL self (your talents/abilities vs. flaws/weaknesses) will enable you to move on to the next stage: that of mastering the impression you are constantly having on others. It will empower you enormously…and gets right to the heart of working with an understanding of the reptilian or ‘primal’ brain, as touched on earlier.
**Understanding and Influencing the Primal Brain**

The primal brain yearns for security, and because of this its natural default setting is to react defensively whenever dearly held beliefs come under fire. When challenged, it will seek reasons to reject rather than assimilate the new information – which obviously tends to limit us and keep us ‘stuck’.

Of course, not everybody operates this way – some people are insatiably curious and their innate talent is to continually embrace, evaluate and assimilate new information. But for most of us, it takes a conscious effort of will to embrace change and take this thirst for knowledge to the deeper level of becoming second-nature.

The primal brain’s natural urge to ‘judge first, assimilate later’ (if at all) is probably where 99% of the general population operate from…which is why understanding this and working with it is such a valuable skill.

For this reason, if there is ‘dissonance’ (incongruence) in how you communicate through your words, actions, body language, general behaviour etc (also known as ‘giving a mixed-message’ or ‘not walking your talk’), then your attempts to inspire or influence others will be at best limited – and at worse, a completely ineffective waste of time (not advised!).

These ‘alarm-bell inconsistencies’ show up in a myriad of ways, including:

* visually
* audibly
* linguistically
* conceptually
* logically
* physically
* emotionally

…and can be summed up as combining to create an impression known as **NQR** (‘not quite right’). Whenever we sense something or someone is ‘NQR’, we often notice the hairs on the back of our necks stand up or that we get goose bumps. In short, our guard goes up and our subconscious mind (primal brain) will generally refer back to the ‘safe ground’ of long-held core beliefs already accepted as ‘true’.

These so-called ‘facts’ contain a mixed bag of accurate and inaccurate (aka ‘false’) beliefs, because they are based upon our subjective and often inaccurate interpretation of past facts and personal experiences, rather than being 100% present and evaluating the actual moment right now. Our primal brains hold on tight to the false security of these perceptions – even when they were formed with the limited understanding available to us during childhood.
Bearing all this new information consciously in mind, it’s time to move on to learning **how to create a compelling impression**. This requires learning how to get around the primal brain and its many security guards! We need to step up our communication skills on all levels to bring them into authentic alignment – so that every part of ourself is ‘singing in tune’ – and this is where ‘**perceived value**’ comes into play…

**Perceived Value**

An increase in perceived value is automatically coupled with obtaining rapid results in many areas of our lives. It dictates how much the market, client or employer will pay for your time, or invest in your personal development. **Perceived value** directly impacts upon:

- your real, monetary value (wages / consultancy fees);
- the training / learning opportunities / apprenticeships available to you;
- the quality of mentorship you give / receive;
- your desirability (how ‘attractive’ you are to a potential partner, client or employer);
- any potential promotions;
- all of your personal and professional relationships.

Anyone you’re creating an impression upon (basically, everybody you ever meet or interact with) is assessing you and judging whether or not you satisfy their requirements to fulfil their needs. We all have busy **primal brains** occupied with placing perceived value on those around us, instinctively asking questions of ourselves subconsciously, such as: “Is this person worthy of my time or should I invest it somewhere else?”

**Before we continue…**

…let’s partake in a little experiment - for the purposes of which, please put aside your conscious conscience momentarily, and lend me your **primal brain**…!

**Instructions**: Please rate the following seven occupations in order of **perceived** importance, where #1 denotes the MOST important role and #7 is the LEAST important:

- CEO
- Toilet cleaner
- President
- Movie star
- Doctor
- Accountant
- Garbage collector

**Now answer these Questions…**
Q.) What did you discover?

Q.) How did you define the term “importance”?

Q.) Which role did you rate as more important than the rest?

Q.) Did you base your decisions upon your own perception of value…or the value you perceive society places upon each role?

**Politically Correct…Privately Nonsensical?**

What this simple experiment is designed to illustrate is how nonsensical ‘political correctness’ can be – and how ineffective in the face of our **primal brain** at work. After all, if we were all creatures of political correctness instead of the primal brain, we’d rate all the roles equally, right? But I bet you didn’t…and if you **did** (refuse to participate / bend the rules / rate one or more role equal) you’re in the distinct minority!

Most people rate the roles similarly, with a scale of “most to least important” revealing the influences of whatever their general cultural / social / hereditary background might be, relying on the **primal brain’s** default-setting for applying **perceived value**.

Statistically speaking, those with **higher perceived value** will – ‘in the real world’ – tend to:

* be higher income earners;
* be treated with greater respect;
* gain access to greater opportunities;

You may be feeling uncomfortable round about now.

But just because we don’t like to admit all this, doesn’t mean it isn’t true: we are dealing with the warts and all of life, remember?!

Besides, judging doesn’t make you a ‘bad person’ – this process isn’t done consciously, it’s the subconscious mind’s way of applying **perceived value** in order to prioritise which bits of information to pay attention to out of the torrent of potential details coming in.

**Note:** It’s worth noting here that you do not need to be financially well-off to have a high perceived value for those around you… but you do need to have a far more valuable commodity: that of ‘**presence**’.

It’s sad but true that many people journey through life without receiving any real respect or appreciation from others because their perceived value is so low. This is because **perceived value is closely connected with a more well known term, ‘self-worth’** (or self- esteem).
Do you want The GOOD NEWS, the BAD NEWS…or BOTH?

Well, the TRUTH is that that the only individual able to successfully dictate your market value is…YOU – and this is BOTH the good news and the bad!

* GOOD – because it’s all up to you and nobody can stop you;
* BAD – because it’s all up to you and no one can save you!

If you have low self-worth, then others will price your importance accordingly and you’ll fail to garner the support and recognition you seek (if you can’t find it for yourself, how can you expect others to resonate with it?).

Conversely, if you are compassionate with yourself, learn to know and love yourself and cultivate a high self-worth (which is a very different thing to being arrogant or egocentric) then your ability to earn a higher income, attract quality opportunities and enjoy high calibre relationships is significantly improved. In short, the value of your stock shoots through the roof, regardless of what job or role you choose to play in life.

Your own sense of perceived value and credibility are key factors for consideration when propelling yourself forward, but it’s far from enough: if you fail to assess others’ credibility just as closely, you’ll never be number one.

Be Careful who You Trust: Why the Primal Brain is not enough

We all make assumptions about individuals, their credentials and trustworthiness based upon evidence such as:

* the certificates they have on their wall;
* the car they drive (for good or ill);
* the lab coat, the uniform or the scruffy jeans they wear;
* the personal items in their lounge / kitchen / study / office (think back to the experiment mentioned earlier in the book)…

…and so on. These are all examples of visual representations of perceived value and credibility – but in some cases relying on them can have deadly consequences – and this is why it is so crucial to be able to entertain a wider range of possibilities than our primal brain alone allows.

As a society we have been ‘conditioned’ to trust specific individuals who appear to tick all the boxes (the white coat; the certificate on the wall; the charismatic personality; the clever vocabulary etc)…and yet none of this should ever be a substitute for us consciously conducting
our own due diligence, particularly when it comes to matters of the heart, taking calculated personal or professional risks

(drugs, sex, financial investment) or – in the medical terms – the question of life and death.

Moral Obligations and Omissions of Information

I believe we have a moral obligation to present all the relevant information about ourselves to others, in order to empower them to conduct their due diligence on us with ease and grace.

You see, deliberate omissions of information can be as deceitful as outright lies if they significantly change the context of a situation.

I don’t believe in leading people on and I don’t believe in ‘letting people think’ something about me which I know is fundamentally untrue, just because they fail to take the measure of me accurately.

But as much as I’m idealistic, I’m also realistic: I know that not everyone is going to be as forthcoming with honest information as I choose to be. The sad truth is that not everybody chooses to prioritise authenticity – and so this book (as you will have realised by now) is both about:

But as much as I’m idealistic, I’m also realistic: I know that not everyone is going to be as forthcoming with honest information as I choose to be. The sad truth is that not everybody chooses to prioritise authenticity – and so this book (as you will have realised by now) is both about:

1. learning how to influence another person ethically through by-passing the knee-jerk perceptions of their primal mind;
   And also;
2. how to bypass my (your) own primal mind in order to be fully present to ‘read’ other people’s behaviour accurately based on real evidence, not mere conjecture or primal assumptions.

The practical tools you will need in order to master these two life-changing practices will reveal themselves chapter by chapter. The crucial thing to note from the outset is that there’s no hidden agenda here – you can trust me, honest! This book’s purpose isn’t about influencing you to be distrustful of other people. Rather, it is to assist you in continually evolving as a more trustworthy and insightful individual (ever-closer to your ‘ideal self’) and then you are free to choose to be supported only by those people you know you can trust. And what of the others? Well, you learn how to recognise them, bless them…and let them go: without any personal cost, recrimination or ill will.
TOP TIP:

Conduct Your OWN Due Diligence

* Conduct your own (intuitive / emotional / intelligent) due diligence whenever you seek advice from others – including friends, educators, mentors, professionals, authority figures and parents;

* Take nothing as gospel. Test it all against your own experience…whilst remaining open to the fact that YOUR experience may need ‘upgrading’ too;

* Whenever making life decisions seek a variety of opinions from diverse and trusted sources, weigh up all the pros and cons, and FEEL INTO YOUR OWN WISDOM before making a final decision. What you discover might surprise you! Be open to anything without being naïve…otherwise you may not live long enough to regret it à la Dr Death!

14 Easy Steps for Boosting Perceived Value

Want to hear something fantastic? I see you as the shining, valiant, honest and successful ideal individual brimming with integrity that you TRULY are…and so I’ve got fourteen amazing strategies below guaranteed to boost your own perceived value if applied correctly.

Each of these strategies will have a positive impact on your own credibility. As you will soon learn, these factors can be applied to many areas of life: individual, material, spiritual, emotional, physical and so on. Let’s take a look...

1. AUTHENTICITY

Your (genuine!) ability to be sincere and honest will boost your perceived value significantly. The great thing about this is that you really can’t ‘fake it till you make it’ – because others (quite possibly also reading this book!) will simply know.

As the pioneering and hugely successful father of positive motivation, Zig Ziglar, often observed: “You can have whatever you want…so long as you help enough other people get what they want first.” If you really choose to adopt this collaborative attitude towards people and genuinely see them as companions on the journey to success rather than obstacles or pawns, the irony is that your own success is in the bag!

You can’t help but evolve into a well-loved key influencer if you truly take this principle on. People respond passionately and positively to genuine humility because it’s a quality that simply can’t be faked. A myriad of doors you never even dreamed of will magically open up to you… And as if you needed any further inspiration, just think of how Gandhi inspired whole nations
into self-liberation. Yes – that’s nations, plural: not only in India during his own lifetime, but in early 2011, peaceful protesters in Egypt and other areas of the middle east took courage and inspiration from Gandhi’s power of influence and the books Gene Sharp wrote with his cooperation. Talk about an enduring legacy! A rising tide eventually raises all ships.

2. EDUCATION

Formal education is a funny one – because I believe it comes with a crucial caveat: it is only important to those who believe it is…or for roles in life that specifically require certified, specialist knowledge.

In addition, there are many different forms of education: formal, informal, cultural, covert, overt, higher, theoretical, practical, experiential…by arduous study or through careless mistakes…as long as you get some learning you’re getting an education! I only completed year 11 at school, yet am paid thousands of dollars as a marketing strategist, consulting for corporate organisations nationwide across Australia. This has only been possible because I leveraged credibility through experience every inch of the way throughout my career.

So if you don’t have the formal education to back you up, then back up what you do have with the relevant experience you’ve gained throughout your life. And if that means going out and doing work experience at the age of 50, then go do it! After all, whether you swallow your pride and do it or not, you’ll still be one day older tomorrow: better to be one day older AND one experience wiser than not!

3. UPBRINGING

This is tricky as it can work for or against you – and which way you play it is 100% your choice. Humble beginnings can shame you into low self-esteem or inspire others with your drive to succeed; a privileged upbringing will paint you as a bratty little rich kid or a generous spirit who shares the fruits of your fortune…it’s up to you! Never lie about where you’ve come from – but do consciously focus on sharing the TRUTH of your personal history in the most relevant, heartfelt and palatable way (recollections, insights, epiphanies, mistakes, successes etc) for inspiring and connecting with others.

4. ENVIRONMENT

By now we’ve acknowledged it’s no secret that judgements about YOU will be formed based on the nature of the environments you inhabit (a cluttered desk denotes a cluttered mind!). So whenever inviting others into your home, office or car, be mindful of the impression you are making.

What does a dirty house, cluttered office or smelly car say about the state of your mental affairs, attention to detail or ability to be organised and deliver to deadline? And if you are naturally
untidy – well then don’t just de-clutter your environment for the benefit of others: do it for yourself!

A cluttered area has a tendency to reflect and amplify the emotional weight of feeling overwhelmed. We can end up labouring unnecessarily under the weight of tasks perceived to be undone, when in reality 99% of it might only be a visual mess rather than a literal one. My advice? Don’t take the risk of making the rookie mistake of this easily avoided bad impression!

5. QUALITY

I can spot a fake a mile away – a Louis Vuitton fake, that is! Gradually increase your selection of quality possessions and accessories – particularly clothing – as this will shift your perceived value up a gear instantly. The ‘self-objects’ you favour are once again a reflection of your own opinion of yourself, which is in turn presented to the world for all to see.

But in the words of THE HITCH HIKER’S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY…“Don’t Panic!”: you don’t have to go out and spend a fortune on expensive suits, jewellery or cars – just remember that ‘Quality is preferable to Quantity’ and choose to spend what money you do have to invest on a few well-chosen pieces, rather than a whole raft of tat.

Educate yourself to recognise quality in finer details (neat stitching; tactile natural fibres; clean edges; neat paintwork) and rest assured that a few fine pieces to carry you through will pay dividends later on when you can afford to splash out.

6. CONSTRUCTION

Anything you own, wear, communicate or promote which is of flimsy construction (right down to the structure of your sentences!) will give the impression of being cheap – and not in a good way.

The quality construction of your clothing is vital: seams sewn correctly will not pull or unravel (God forbid you ‘come undone’ at a posh networking soirée or in the boardroom!) and neither will there be any unsightly puckering or buttons popping. To test a garment’s construction, give it a shake, tug or pull to see how firmly it holds up (steady on, boys!). If it’s tactile, sturdy and supple – but not stiff – then you’re onto a winner.

The same goes for your handshake: too limp and you’re a pussy…too aggressive and you’re a steroid junkie. Your handshake should use the same amount of confident pressure it takes to hold a glass of water – no more, no less (just no cold glasses in your right hand, remember?).
7. FEEL

Touch, texture and ‘feel’ is a very particular way we test for quality. This one’s very context-dependent though: if you notice the head foreman’s calloused hands on a well-run construction site, you perceive a hard-worker still humble enough to ‘pick up tools’ with his men if needs be; but an equally rough handshake from a corporate CEO might create the uncomfortable impression of a lack of personal hygiene, polish or finesse.

Different tactile sensations are appropriate for different environments and contexts – as anyone who’s ever had the misfortune to eat in a fast food restaurant (hard plastic seats and bad Muzak = fast customer turnover) or the pleasure of staying in a five star boutique hotel (plush to-die-for deep soft furnishings that invite you to snuggle all day!) can attest to.

8. CONSISTENCY

Consistency is a key tool in demonstrating reliability and trustworthiness. If you habitually run late or cancel on people, appointments or dates, you’re giving the impression your time is always more important than theirs. STOP! Even if it wouldn’t bother YOU if it happened the other way round, it does bother most people. In fact, if it’s got to the stage where you don’t even value your own time enough to call other people on being late for you as well, then you really need a reality check on good manners!

Start practising being a man or woman of your word (that word being ‘consistent’) in relation to always:

1. being where you said you’d be;
2. bringing what you said you’d bring;
3. delivering everything you agreed to deliver…on time, every time, no excuses!

If this mean taking on fewer commitments in the first place in order to hit every single note with perfect pitch, then that’s a million times better than trying to be all things to all people, over-stretching yourself and letting them down.

9. STATUS

Hmmmm…disturbing flashbacks of 80s’ power-dressing with shoulder pads the width of Boeing 747 wings suddenly come to mind…but enough of what I’ll be going clubbing in this weekend; back to the book!

The term ‘status’ refers to our relative social, professional, or other standing within the groups and/or ‘tribes’ we participate in. This can refer to anything, such as the book club we attend, our circle of friends from Uni days, family, other parents, gym buddies, work colleagues, academic peers and so on.
We may hold a higher position of status in one group and lower in another. Our status indicates our abilities, skills and efforts invested in a certain area and is not something to be judged, criticised or bragged about, but rather to be observed and learned from. For example, if I’m the weak link in the orchestra and I know I’m letting others down, my choice is to practice harder or leave. But I do so realising that being a bad flute player in my spare time doesn’t bleed into other areas of my life or sap my high-status confidence at work, where I’m brilliant at closing the deals.

Once a certain status has been acquired, external reinforcement in the form of others’ expectations tend to further enhance this belief about self. Try to be aware of your status as it really is – and from there make a calm decision about whether it is supporting or derailing you in terms of closing the gap between your ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ self – and then just act accordingly.

10. POSSESSIONS (things of beauty)

The consistency of quality or theme of your ‘self-objects’ or possessions is important for suggesting you are congruent and well-balanced. For example:

* someone keen on travelling might have prints or little sculptures from around the world dotted about at home;
* someone with an insatiable curiosity and a love of words might own a sizeable library of well-loved books and have lines of handwritten poetry stuck on the fridge;
* a musician’s house is bound to give pride of place to the piano or an enormous sound-system…whereas a couch potato’s biggest shrine will consist of an enormous sofa and a wide-screen TV!

The whole point being that the real and congruent self-expression of who you are right now (in this phase of your life) is great to be aware of. Every now and then have a really good ‘spring clean’ to stimulate your awareness of who you were...who you are...and who you desire to be – and then express that in the things and people you choose to surround yourself with: aim to be discerning rather than indiscriminate!

11. CONNECTIONS

Also known as: ‘credibility by association’. Hone your people skills and be discerning (there’s that word again – but it’s a good one!) about the calibre of people you surround yourself with and what their perceived value in the marketplace is... because like it or not it directly impacts on the impression you make as well.

The prolific growth of social networks (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook etc) has made this information more accessible than ever, despite your privacy settings. Be aware of who you are openly connected with on these platforms: just like the way in which we discussed influence earlier in the book, it’s not the platforms themselves but the way they are used which is key. They
can ruin lives, undermine credibility or conversely establish a positive platform for sharing good work and creating a clever, clear engaging brand.

Everybody gets judged based on who their friends / colleagues / associates are – why do you think people like having their photos taken with celebrities? – so make sure you choose and share yours wisely. And if you suddenly find yourself hanging out with Oprah…well then find me on Facebook, please – I want an invitation!

12. PRESENTATION

Your personal presentation should encompass a lot of other disparate elements doing their own thing, but simultaneously applied at the same time.

For example:
* your personal grooming (hygiene, hair, make-up);
* what you wear (the quality and style);
* how you behave (your manners);
* how you communicate (clear instructions / creative flair);
* how elegantly you convey yourself (are you hauling your laptop around in an old rucksack or sporting a chic cover-slip?);
* your topic of conversation (do you show more interest in others or in yourself?);
* the actual quality of your work or interactions (PowerPoint, marketing material, website, business literature, interpersonal relationships, negotiating skills etc)…

…and so on. Others will judge you on all these little bits and pieces of information, and what you’re aiming for is to be a ‘whole’ self who is more than the sum of your parts.

Unfortunately, the primal brain in others is more likely to either:

* find fault and criticise you first, accept you second – so try not to let anything stick right out like a sore thumb (yes, especially that!), OR
* evaluate you as a competition and actively seek or create imagined flaws in order not to feel intimidated by you – which is why ‘classic understated quality’ works better than ostentatious dressing designed to show off wealth for the sake of it.

Ask yourself: Is the way I look, sound and act in alignment with my message? Does my overall presentation reflect a consistently healthy level of perceived value? Do I come across as credible, confident and inspiring? Is there anything I can do to improve my overall presentation at this time? Who can I ask (mentor, friend) to point out one specific thing for me to improve on right now?
13. VULNERABILITY

Sooner or later everybody comes to realise that there is enormous power in vulnerability – and hopefully this book will help YOU be one of the ones who ‘gets it’ way in advance of your deathbed, because that gives you plenty of time to USE this knowledge!

A confident, self-assured individual with ‘nothing to prove’ is way more influential than somebody ruling with fear or desperately pin-wheeling to try and please you at the expense of their own dignity!

Your willingness to let others ‘in’ by sharing something heartfelt from your internal world is one of the quickest ways to build instant rapport (just don’t make the details too salacious!). It demonstrates your courage to ‘be seen’ and an invitation to truly ‘see’ another person, transcending the knee-jerk primal stereotyping we discussed earlier. It encourages the other person to take a little leap of faith with you and form a more meaningful bond / relationship / connection for the duration of your time together.

Most celebrities wouldn’t be as well loved today if we hadn’t shared the roller-coaster ups and downs of their journey with them (think Lindsay Lohan and Britney Spears…there’s even an OPERA made out of Anna Nicole Smith’s life story, which says it all I think!). Of course, there’s a time and a place for everything, but we’ll come and cover all that later.

14. EARN THE RIGHT: THE RIGHT TO EARN

Society has ingrained in us that if someone hasn’t ‘put in the hard yards’ and ‘earned the right’ to success, then his or her gains must be somehow immoral or undeserved. Not so. Not every heiress is a selfish sycophant, or every penniless artist a compassionate humanitarian.

As discussed in chapter 1, this piece is really about re-framing all your past experiences and endeavours, finding the value in them, and naming the price you are willing to pay to achieve your desired outcome. This may include:

* advanced vocational training
* higher education (university under- / postgraduate study);
* direct ‘on-the-job’ experience (whether paid or not);

Make a private note of these factors privately but keep them back as ‘aces up your sleeve’. Don’t boast about them unnecessarily as sometimes that can work against you in the same way.

Although these fourteen psychological principles will help you achieve dramatic results swiftly, don’t fall into the trap of believing your own hype. They’re a good, solid start – not the end goal itself.
What you are doing here is building a TRULY secure foundation (which helps your **primal mind** to be at peace), radically improve your **perceived value** (both in your own eyes and the eyes of others), and thus in turn positively impact your presence, power and influence in the market place.

**Context | **ˈkɒntɛkst| noun

*The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea in terms it can be fully understood and assessed: the decision was taken within the context of planned cuts in spending.*

*The parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning: word processing is affected by the context in which words appear.*

**Who is More Credible: Lady Gaga, Oprah…or YOU?**

If you had to state categorically who was more credible – **Lady Gaga** or **Oprah Winfrey** – who would you choose?

Every time I put this question to an audience, people throw their hands up in the air emphatically asserting **Oprah** to be the more credible out of the two. But is she really? In whose eyes? And if so, why?

At time of writing, Lady Gaga has 50,000,000 fans on her Facebook Fan page with Oprah trailing behind with a mere 1,500,000. Quite a stark contrast in numbers considering ‘the Queen of Daytime television’ has a career spanning 25 years so far and is consistently watched live or in re-runs by millions of viewers in countries all across the world. By comparison, **Lady Gaga** has only taken three years to attract a dedicated online following tens of times more impressive than **Oprah’s**!

The question of credibility comes down to it being in the eye of the beholder: who it is that’s peering through the lens. For example, if your ‘lens’ (also known as your personal filter, world view or ‘model of the world’) defines a credible person as someone who must possess a certain age / status / track record, then Oprah will take pole position in your eyes. On the other hand, if your ‘lens’ has been trained to focus on the value of uncompromising self-expression coupled with brave, unique and astounding artistic talent, you are far more likely to perceive Gaga as infinitely more credible.

**Big Brother is LISTENING to You…**

These shifting perceptions are like adjusting the pace and volume of various musical instruments in an orchestra:
* ramp up the tuba for deeper, earthier or more ominous musical undertones;
* highlight the trumpet to create a lighter, more airy and playful sound.

The Art is in finding the right blend in every moment to accurately convey the emotional heart of each piece, tailoring it to each particular audience and set of circumstances.

**Turn up your Attributes!**

Which of your personal attributes you ‘turn the volume up’ on is dependent on who you’re trying to influence; who’s observing you.

The ‘beholder’ in whose eyes and ears you are being ‘witnessed’ could be:

* your lover;
* your boss;
* your client;
* your audience;
* the media;
* your family, friends or peers.

Find the credibility factors that resonate with that particular individual / audience and push the volume up to shift perception and influence them accordingly. All you need to do is identify which three attributes to prioritise above the others (you do have more than three to choose from, right? Don’t panic: by the end of this book you’ll have dozens!). This puts YOU in control and shifts the context of the situation to your advantage.

**“SHOW ME THE SIZE OF YOUR…!”**

Did you know that the more expensive a car gets, the smaller the car emblem becomes?

It has been shown that wealthy clients prefer ‘understated’ emblems on their cars, as they feel that there is no need to ‘assert’ their status.

However, those in lower income brackets statistically speaking prefer larger logos as a way of ‘proving’ their self-worth.

Take a stroll through a Mercedes-Benz dealership. You’ll soon discover that their logos get smaller as the price goes up on their varying models. What you may expect others to desire may not be entirely correct for their demographic.
Unlock The Key to Influence: 7 +/- 2? …or 3 to 4?

Thanks to the ‘personal development’ movement, it is commonly believed that humans recall between 5 to 9 (often referred to as, “7 +/- 2”) ‘chunks’ (pieces) of information at a time before having to make space to commit it to long-term memory, or let it go. This is relevant for knowing how many pieces of vital information to limit your presentation in order to ensure nothing gets lost and that the main thrust of your message gets through.

** NEWSFLASH **

In fact, the figure of how many pieces of information get retained is an inaccurate urban myth propagated by a man called Miller. Miller published the theory without ever backing it up with substantial research.

It wasn’t until Alan Baddeley came along and exposed Miller’s theory as mere ‘presentation’ rather than credible ‘research’ that the facts got clearer - and a lot more useful...

To test Miller’s theory, Baddeley conducted a long series of studies on memory and information processing. Baddeley concluded that:

1. The actual number of pieces (‘chunks’) of associated information retained is only: 3 to 4… not 5 to 9, as was previously assumed.
2. We can only remember 3 to 4 pieces of information for around 20 seconds before ‘losing’ them unless we make room in our long-term memory, committing them to ‘the vault’ via techniques such as conscious effort and repetition.

It makes you think about barking too many orders to your husband/ wife, doesn’t it?
**1800 CALL ME NOW!**

You can observe your own natural default setting to ‘chunk’ information into groups containing three to four pieces each the next time you memorise a nine-digit phone number by ‘chunking it down’ into three ‘groups’ of three figures. You’ll probably be able to hold 3 to 4 complete phone numbers in your mind that way, before needing to make a more permanent record (either in your notebook, or your long-term memory).

Next time you’re up after midnight with no one to do (er, I mean nothing) then tune in to the late night shopping channels (the only time I’ll suggest you subject yourself to this torture, I promise!).

After a while you’ll notice how the linguistic formula they apply to mesmerise you is **chunked into the same 3 to 4 pieces of easy- to-remember, digestible information** (i.e. “Shed weight, look fantastic, feel fabulous”, or, “Melt fat, get ripped, boast rock hard abs this summer”).

These **linguistic patterns** make it easy for the general public to retain the key selling attributes of a product / service which influence them to buy (“And BUY NOW!”).

The 3 to 4 pattern has also been found to be rhythmically pleasing to the brain – like a kind of ‘mental music’, which ties in with our theme of the orchestral elements discussed earlier.

Political figures follow this formula, too. Observe the speech patterns of your political leaders: the way they speak is expressly designed – usually by a dedicated speechwriter – to influence the masses. I have no doubt Barack Obama or Julia Gillard would do a phenomenal job for Danoz Direct promoting the ‘Ab Rocker’ considering their foundation training in persuasive linguistic patterning!

**The Point of No Return**

Next time you want to influence someone into recognising that you’re the perfect choice for: the job / a contract / promotion / a pay-rise,

* get clear on the **3 to 4 key reasons** why YOU TRULY BELIEVE this to be the case;
* remember that **less is more**;
* be aware that there is a ‘**Point of No Return**’ in every conversation – a point after which you will have over-exposed yourself (oo-er!) and overloaded the other person with “too much in- formation”
* **stick to your Top 3 to 4 pieces of information** – because after the 4th bit you need to learn to “SHUT UP!”...because that’s probably what those around you are thinking!

So much **magic** happens in the silence after a powerful message has been delivered. Don’t squander it!

1, 2 or 3…? You Decide
It gets even spookier. We don’t just prefer to digest information in chunks of 3 to 4. It has also been found that we can’t effectively choose between more than 3 to 4 items at a time.

This explains why a menu of over 50 items, a wedding with over 100 decisions or too much choice of what to wear to a special event can slam us shut in confusion. Too many choices can result in paralysis; stalemate; and the inability to make any choice at all – which is, of course, a default decision in itself…and one of the least empowering kind, at that!

“When you have to make a choice yet fail to make it, that is in itself a choice.”

~ William James (1842 – 1910)

The key to influencing individuals and groups is to:

* clearly state the benefits in chunks of 3 to 4;
* give them 2, 3 or 4 options (‘calls to action’);

TWO Angel’s Past 52!

So far there has only been two Angel males who have made it past fifty two years of age within the last three generations.

Now, I intend to break this record (!) but nonetheless, the fear of going to an early grave got firmly reinstated in my mind immediately after my father passed away.

I realised in that moment that when we give people something of value and then take that option away again, they will fight even harder to get it back than they did to protect it in the first place.

“You don’t know what you have until you lose it.”

~ (Proverb)

This has been hypothesised as being at the heart of many a cultural, social and political revolution, where they were triggered by a nation’s civil liberties (human rights) being given but then revoked.

CASE STUDY

* on June 16, 2008 the state of California began granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples in the United States;
* this was later overturned with the introduction of ‘Proposition 8’ – an amendment to the constitution that limited marriage to being opposite-sex only;
* the marriages already conducted prior to the revocation of the privilege by Prop 8 remained legally recognisable – famously including between actress Portia De Rossi and comedienne Ellen Degeneres.

This sparked outrage and the movement to support gay marriage was heard all over the world. Ellen leveraged position as one of America’s leading talk show hosts to maximise television coverage and send a clear message calling for solidarity and support for gay marriage.

Celebrities came out in their droves and ranks of the funny, confronting and impactful No H8 Campaign began to swell (http://www.noh8campaign.com/). The campaign featured hundreds of photographs of celebrities (e.g. Kim Kardashian, Kathy Griffin, Tori Spelling, Gene Simmons, Kelly Rowland) with grey duct tape sealing their mouths shut in protest, with ‘NOH8’ written over their body or face.

The gay community of California (as well as the wider global gay community watching closely) had been given a taste of more equality…and they weren’t about to let it regress and slip through their fingers!

* On August 4, 2010 a federal judge called Vaughn R. Walker declared that the Prop 8 ban on gay marriage was unconstitutional.
* at time of writing the case is still going through its legal battle in the federal appeals court.

* meanwhile, the determined march on to freedom and equality has been ramped up significantly since then, notably the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ protests in relation to the Military’s policy banning openly gay, lesbian and bisexual people from serving and dismisses anyone who ‘comes out’, regardless of how many years they’ve spent serving their country and putting their own lives at risk.

* Lady Gaga got the world’s attention in which she yelled at the top of her lungs at a National Equality March in Washington DC, “Obama, I know you are listening: ARE YOU LISTENING? We will continue to push you and your administration to bring your words of promise into reality, we need change NOW: we demand action NOW!”

* In December of 2010, President Obama showed that he DOES listen, and repealed the ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ policy in positive response to the protests.

* Lady Gaga had worked wonders: the ‘hottest’ talent on the planet in that moment was endorsing gay rights – leveraging 26,000,000 fans on Facebook at that time alone to get agitated and vocal. Her support changed the way public opinion was perceived and made an
impact like no one else could have done – even Oprah! (So much for weighing up influence and credibility).

**Scarcity’s Practical Application**

Removing an option (object / service / notion) from someone triggers an increase in his or her perception of its value. Basically, it skyrockets its value through the roof! We need to be aware of how others are imposing scarcity on us and how we are applying it to others. This principle comes in handy when you are negotiating, for example you can:

* **Threaten to withdraw your offer on a property if the vendor keeps trying to push up the price.** Give them your final offer and let them know it’s only valid for 24 hours (you do have to be willing to shed the ‘attachment to outcome’ and walk away for this to be effective);

* **Threaten to take your business elsewhere** (to another bank / school / supplier) if they do not give you a better deal;

* **Give your mother-in-law 24 hours to “shape up, or ship out!”**

**Scarcity** continues to play an important role in the way we influence and are influenced, even as the TRUE frontiers of science, psychology, sociology and so forth are increasingly demonstrating the bigger benefits of behaving abundantly with compassion (for each other and the planet).

There remain many inaccuracies around perceptions of scarcity. For example, greedy people panic about ‘running out of resources’, yet we hold the key to our own survival through being able to DISCERN when our ‘natural survival instincts’ are serving us…and when our primal brains have become too overdeveloped and need tempering with some **conscious compassion.**

**Social Proof and Its Impact on Perception**

It was Saturday night and my friend Jodie and I had gone to the cinema to check out Tim Burton’s ‘Alice in Wonderland’ featuring Johnny Depp and Anne Hathaway. As we entered the cinema, the smell of popcorn shot up our noses and tickled our senses. We walked up the stairs to the back and climbed over several people to get to our seats.

Not even 5 minutes into the opening of the film, I noticed a man in danger of seriously hurting himself: it was the cinema’s concierge. He’d walked all the way up to the top of the stairs to help a young couple find their seats, but as he turned to walk back down he fell hard on his bottom. It wasn’t because he was clumsy; it was because he had a disability, which caused him to twitch and be unsteady on his feet.
Jodie and I had both seen him there many times and he always impressed us with how he never let anything stop him from doing his job: he always performed to the best of his abilities.

This particular day he was attempting to get down the stairs again, falling over or nearly so with more or less every step! Jodie and I were sitting right in the middle of a row at the back and watched in fear he would fall down a whole flight of stairs! We kept hoping and expecting that someone near him would help him but no: not a single soul even stirred!

Despite a full cinema, not one of the one hundred-plus audience members – even those on the aisle he nearly fell on! - offered to lend a hand. I was appalled. I jumped out of my seat and made the other cinema goers pull their legs in so I could go and help. I held out my arm so he could loop his through mine and walked him safely down the stairs to the entrance.

What really bothered me was:

Q.) What made so many individuals turn a blind eye, pretend not to see someone in danger, refuse to help even despite there being no REAL risk of harm to themselves? Was it a perceived risk (fear of ridicule or of the help being unwelcome) – or were they actually prepared to let someone remain in danger rather than ‘risk’ missing the start of a movie?

The answer went much deeper than that: there was a primal programming at play – and this particular program is known as, ‘social proof’.

It Skews Our Perception

The term ‘social proof’ describes how, when we do not have enough information to make a decision, we wait and base our action / inaction on the decisions of others. In the cinema example above, nobody got up to help…because nobody else got up to help! I know it sounds crazy, but it’s true! Everyone assumed the usher as safe based on the ‘social proof’ that everyone else seemed to be assuming the same.

It takes you being present enough to see yourself, others and situations the way they really are that will allow you to ‘break free’ from primal programming such as social proof. If not, it will continue to have an uncanny ability to skew your perceptions significantly – for good (feeling inspired by positive role models / peers) or ill (choosing to remain in denial).

We believe others before we trust our own instincts!

Studies conducted by Latane and Darley illustrated this:

* in one experiment, researchers brought one subject (Participant A) into a room to complete a survey on creativity;
* in the same room there were additional ‘dummy participants’, pretending to take the test, but secretly in on the study;
* the researchers would then start to fill the room with smoke from an incoming air vent and see how long it would take Participant A to respond, while the ‘dummies’ in the room pretended not to notice anything.

**The conclusion they came to was that:** the more people in the room there were who ignored the smoke, the longer the real participant would ignore it. But if the participant was alone in the room, they would leave to get assistance almost immediately. **Social proof** was at play, manifesting as ‘group think’. In the company of others, Participant A’s willingness, confidence or ability to ‘do the right thing’ was diluted: they would trust their own perception when alone (nobody else to rely on) - but if there were others present and not reacting, Participant A would also fail to react; fail to lead; fail to step up.

**‘Good Enough’ just isn’t good enough!**

As we can see from these illustrations, others’ perceptions greatly impact on the context and significance of any given situation or individual. This has enormous repercussions for our own lives and in turn influences how quickly we progress.

Assuming that you have all the key fundamental factors down pat simply sounds good enough – but ‘good enough’ isn’t good enough! We must learn to observe ourselves as the product we are, showing up in different key environments.

This product – YOU – can be perceived in a myriad of different ways. If you’re failing to gain traction in any area of your life, conduct a personal assessment on your **perceived value** and you will soon see why progress has been slower than expected – and what to do about speeding it up.

So…are you really ready to **Find The Moment When Everything CLICKS And Falls Into Place?**

Well then hold on tight – because here we go…!

**WATCH THE SHORT FILM BASED ON THIS BOOK!**

Visit [benangel.co/whoami](http://benangel.co/whoami) to watch the short film based on this book. It was featured by both Entrepreneur & Success Magazine’s to their collective audiences of 6 million followers.

And, also checkout my groundbreaking Audio Program, “The Entrepreneurs Vision” ([benangel.co/entrepreneursvision](http://benangel.co/entrepreneursvision)) This program will help you achieve more in the next 30 days than in the past 3 months alone. Based on several powerful visualisation techniques it will help you realise your potential to get more out of your health, wealth, career and relationships. **Enter in your exclusive password VISION for a special surprise.**
CHAPTER FIVE - The CASTING COUCH

How to Sleep Your Way to The Top, Word Biology and ‘The 10,000 Hr Rule’

Getting into bed (networking with) the right contacts metaphorically speaking (!) is essential for:

* acquiring vital further education;
* making connections to increase your net worth;
* associating with ‘good company’ (marinating in the positive influence of mentors in positions you aspire to);
* accessing a constant source of motivation and challenge to encourage / stretch you (personally and professionally);
* exposure to much needed insight into the inner workings of a chosen area of interest (i.e. relationships; business mindset; ‘best practice’ benchmarks; career path; spirituality; contribution; philanthropy; and health).

Hints For FINDING THE MOMENT THAT CLICKS!

To speed up your progress, get to the top faster and experience more of those beautiful moments of epiphany when everything falls into place you must:

* seek out mentors and role models willing to share their proven vehicles and formulas for success with your best interest at heart;

* prove yourself worthy (through commitment, reliability, willingness to learn and work hard) of receiving ‘inside secrets’ not typically revealed publicly or through standard education;

* learn to discern the BEST from the REST and select your (high calibre) mentors with a bit more savvy than Nicole Kidman chooses movie roles!.

Dunbar’s Number: 150

As popularised in Malcolm Gladwell’s book, ‘The Tipping Point’, ‘Dunbar’s number’ is a theory suggesting each of us can only maintain stable relationship with a maximum of 150 other people (i.e. meaningful contact once a year minimum) at any one time. This theory was first introduced in the 1990’s and is widely accepted worldwide.
Anthropologist Robin Dunbar theorised that this limit is a direct function of relative neocortex size, which in turn limits group size. Supporters affirm that numbers exceeding 150 require more rules and laws than the average person can handle in order to maintain a stable group / network of meaningful contacts.

It was initially believed this theory only related to offline relationships (i.e. in the ‘real world’ as opposed to ‘online’) – yet this has been proved wrong.

In 2010, Dunbar decided to turn his attention to Facebook and begin an all-new study (not yet released at time of writing) to investigate how well his ‘offline’ findings held true for ‘online’ communities and relationships. In an interview with the London-based Sunday Times, Dunbar said:

“The interesting thing is that you can have 1,500 friends, but when you actually look at traffic on sites, you see people maintain the same inner circle of around 150 people that we observe in the real world. People obviously like the kudos of having hundreds of friends but the reality is that they’re unlikely to be bigger than anyone else’s.”

At time of writing, Dunbar hasn’t adjusted this observation. It would appear that at its core the theory holds firm for both on- and off-line relationships: we simply can’t manage more than 150 meaningful ones each. This observation is further backed up by Facebook itself, with the social network juggernaut reporting the average user has 130 friends (which sits beautifully in the middle of Dunbar’s average range of 100-150 meaningful relationships per person).

**Weak Links Yield Better Results**

Our networks are a reflection of our ideals and values and allow us to feel supported through being around likeminded individuals who we feel know and understand us. But this is also where in the problem lies… Because if you’ve made the commitment-to-self to evolve and are in the process of becoming more than you were / are, don’t be surprised if stretching yourself beyond your comfort zone makes other people uncomfortable.

You are likely to need to step beyond your existing networks, because only some of the individuals will have the capacity to journey with you and be genuinely supportive – probably the ones who are striving and open-minded themselves. The rest are bound to struggle with confusion of how to relate to the emerging NEW you (“What’s happened to you?”; “You’ve changed”; “Can’t we just hang out and club / party?”) and their negativity is in danger of holding you back and limiting your ongoing education.

That’s not to say you have to ‘drop’ all of your friends in one go… but do be willing to conduct the same ‘spring clean’ in this area that you would with your home / car / office. Recognise the weak links within your community of friends / colleagues / clients for what they are, bless
them…and let them go. Your time is too valuable for investing in ‘dead-end’ personal or professional relationships. Focus on nurturing the key influencers in your life and finding new ones willing to share their secrets of success with you…because they have already ‘been there’ and they care to help…for all the right reasons (and not just because you slept with them!)

In his book ‘Collaboration’, Morten Hansen states that the real value of collaboration and in networks isn’t to be found in the strong, established relationships – but rather in further developing the weak (yet aspirational) ones. I agree.

Research has shown that the aspirational (not damaging) ‘weak links’ in our networks offer access points to new realms we do not yet belong to or have earned the right to call ‘home’ yet; the very worlds we are seeking inroads into. By definition, our current social networks can only take us so far before we are required to ‘step up’ and move into the upper echelons.

“The time has come for you to evacuate ‘Plebville’. You’re not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy!”
~ Ben Angel

Q.) If you were to take a snapshot of the individuals who compose your various networks right now, what would it look like? Are they achieving the kind of success you aspire to? Are they making the kind of money you want to? And doing so ethically?

If not, something’s NQR: perhaps they lack sufficient education; have limited practical experience; are incongruent in their thought / action / behaviour; lack genuine self-motivation…and so on.

What the NEW YOU needs now is a NEW set of quality peers and mentors whose work is of high enough calibre that you can LEARN from them without wasting time trying to reinvent the wheel.

This isn’t to suggest you should become a carbon copy of anyone else. But it certainly is sensible to draw inspiration from others’ success and give it your own original twist. Over your time you will develop your very own ‘signature move’.

“Let’s not tell each other our sad stories.”
~ Scarlet Johansson’s character to Bill Murray (from LOST IN TRANSLATION)

In short, don’t waste years trying to uncover the formulas of how something works yourself, bumbling along with any of your OLD friends who are unwilling to grow: they can’t teach you anything. Better to go directly to the source and get your wisdom straight from the horse’s mouth. Yes – horses really do have radical blueprints for success and step-by-step guides to get
you galloping along in no time, trust me! All you need to do is learn how to discern an OLD nag from a sleek racehorse - and then ask one!

It’s not ‘The Formula Itself’: it’s ‘The Attitude’ with which The Formula is Applied…

I’ve been guilty of this. Well, I’m guilty of a lot of things…but let’s keep CLICK clean…just for now!

In the past I was always too proud to ask other people for help. I used to suffer needlessly in silence until my body gave me a whopping great big WAKE-UP call in the form of physical illness, subconscious stress and breakdown. Hmmm…sound familiar, anyone?

To disguise my fear of appearing inferior I used to conduct my research anonymously online, in order to keep my reputation as an ‘expert’ intact in the eyes of others. In time I came to realise how daft and ineffective these OLD habits were …but only after things abruptly changed for me first…

I hit a defining moment in my life. It was not long after dad passed that I suddenly ‘woke up’ to the fact that I desperately needed the support of others to help me along – both personally but professionally. I sought out key individuals who had achieved impressive results in their own lives, including multi-millionaires, philanthropists, and non-business folk enjoying successful, strong and loving long-term relationships.

Merely by being in their presence I found myself soaking up both the success strategies these people applied and also (crucially) the attitude with which they applied them. I soon learned it wasn’t just a matter of possessing a ‘proven formula’ or ‘success blueprint’ – it was also the presence these people brought to the table that made all the difference between a ‘good’ and a ‘great’ result.

Immersive experiential learning cannot be obtained from ANY text or ‘self-help’ book – even this one! The best you can hope for from a great book is that its stories and insights will inspire you to TAKE ACTION and immerse yourself in your chosen field.

This realisation shifted my mindset completely: if I really wanted to become more than I was and had been, I knew I had to start hanging out with others already operating on an entirely new level –and I didn’t just want to be a spectator, either. I was up for diving into the scrum and learning how to play on their home turf…and at a whole new excellent pitch!

Your ‘Hit List’ Re-defined: How to Reinvent the way You Network

To reach your outcomes and achieve happiness, you must accurately identify individuals who will enjoy helping you close the gap between your current ‘self’ and your ‘ideal self.’ Achieve this by listing all the mentors / role models / key influencers who inspire you – however
ambitious. Then seek out ways to learn from their success; mirror their behaviour; follow in their footsteps and integrate their quality experiences into your own – for example:

* best practice;
* impressive personal / professional ethics;
* recipes for successful, loving relationships;
* wealth strategies;
* calculated risk taking etc.

The key is to have as diverse a ‘hit list’ of individuals as possible, including a healthy blend of those who already sit within your current ‘150 network’ as well as NEW contacts outside: the ‘positive weak links’ or ‘access points’ from which you can TRULY and rapidly benefit.

Your Hit List Re-defined

Use this grid to compose your ideal list of top quality role models and mentors.

**A Role Model** is someone you aspire to be or be like. You needn’t know them personally or even be living on the same continent. You just need to feel INSPIRED by their life / style / success / flair / honesty etc and all this can be sought from a distance from any ‘hero’ or ‘heroine’ (actors, philanthropists, celebrities, journalists, explorers, pioneers, Oprah, Lady Gaga etc)

**A Mentor** is someone at least potentially accessible (don’t worry about ‘how’ just yet – we’ll cover that later). They should excel in an area where you’re struggling and be willing to help point you in the right direction. Your mentor should also be willing to spend personal time with you and share their ‘secrets to success’ and/ or proven strategies. Hopefully they will also be willing to openly share their personal experiences and introduce you to ‘the right people’ to help you get moving. Sound good? Here you go:

**Career**  
Role Model: _______  
Mentor: _______

**Play / Adventure:**  
Role Model: _______  
Mentor: _______

**Health / Fitness:**  
Role Model: _______  
Mentor: _______
The HUGE effect Role Models have on YOUR LIFE

There’s a lot to be said for identifying the key role models and attracting quality mentors in your life. Shockingly few individuals ever take this simple initiative to meet with others able to teach valuable shortcuts to success and tips for avoiding stumbling blocks.

Thankfully you’re right here right now reading this book…so I think it’s safe to say you’ve already positioned yourself in the top few per cent destined to find the moment that everything CLICKS in no time!

CASE STUDY: The Influence of Role Models

Role models impact us significantly. Recent studies conducted at Flinders University School of Medicine (Adelaide, Australia) have illustrated how the key to effectively tackling childhood obesity is to target the parents (role-models) not the kids themselves.

Sounds obvious, right? Yet how often do we really, TRULY get it?

According to the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 17% of children and adolescents aged 2 to 9 years old are obese. This number has been increasing since the 1970’s. The added psychological and financial pressures this place’s on today’s youth is extreme – and we’re only just beginning to observe the longer-term side effects and social influence of this for the future.

It was discovered that for young children, their parents were the key role models influencing their behaviour (in this case, eating and exercise habits). Researchers enrolled 169 mothers of moderately overweight/obese children into a six-month “healthy lifestyle” program. The parents (rather than the children) were educated in areas such as:
* portion size;
* setting limits;
* ‘conscious’ food purchase and preparation;
* experimenting with new recipes / tastes / flavours;
* developing healthy new behaviours;
* how to read and understand nutritional food labels;
* taking pride in using their NEW awareness to set a good example (i.e. ‘being a good role model’) for their kid(s).

At the conclusion of the program, researchers took the children’s BMI measurements and found them down by an average of 10% across the board. The kids had even kept the weight off a “staggering” eighteen months later.

Curiously, the parents’ weight did not change at all during the study. Perhaps it was because they didn’t have their own role models to inspire and encourage them along?

What this study demonstrates is how important it is for us not only to be a good role model for others, but how much we need our own role models, too – which makes perfect sense when you think about it! So the question is…

Q.) …WHO should you choose as your role model(s)? HOW do you select which key influencers have the powerful potential to shape the rest of your LIFE for the BEST?

“10,000 Hours...And Not a Minute LESS!”

I once received a phone call from a speaker and consultant called Paul, fresh back from some very specific training.

The course was about “How to Sell from Stage” and was a sales process with a very unique formula as favoured by the likes of Anthony Robbins. If Paul missed a mark he could expect to lose anywhere from $5,000 - $40,000 from one event, so the training was valuable to say the least.

He shared his excitement at having instantly established a new group of individuals fresh from the same training who planned to give each other presentation feedback and tips on how to improve. It sounded like a great idea from the outset…but was it really?

I mean, just who would you rather have as a role model to take advice from?

* A peer or colleague with only a few hours of practical experience under their belt, OR
* A seasoned yet cutting-edge professional hitting the mark time after time?
This is where Malcolm Gladwell earns himself a second mention in this chapter: His 2008 book, ‘Outliers’ examines the factors contributing to high levels of success and notably quotes neurologist Daniel Levitin, who puts it like this:

‘THE TEN THOUSAND HOUR RULE’

“In study after study of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice-skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, this number comes up again and again. Ten thousand hours is equivalent to roughly three hours a day (or 20 hours a week) practice over 10 years… No one has yet found a case in which true world-class expertise was accomplished in less time. It seems that it takes the brain this long to assimilate all that it needs to know to achieve true mastery.”

~ Daniel Levitin ~ Neurologist and Author of “This Is Your Brain On Music”

We only need to look at Lady Gaga again (and why the hell not… she’s HOT, am I right?) to see a popular modern-day example of the TRUTH of ‘the 10,000 hour rule’ in action:

* despite appearing to some to be ‘an overnight success’, Lady Gaga had accumulated well over her 10,000 hours of experience easily before the age of 20;

* she honed her craft by writing hit songs for Britney Spears, The Pussy Cat Dolls, New Kids on The Block, Adam Lambert and more before she ever became a pop star in her own right;

* Lady Gaga had already penned several #1 chart-toppers for other artists before she even stepped up – but when she did arrive – well, she more than boldly claimed her well-deserved place as an iconic and rightful heir to any Pop Queen’s throne!

Q.) “Sure, this all sounds great in theory, but how does it pan out for the average Joe Bloggs and MY own ability to put all this easily into practice??”

My business partner and I at the time decided to put ‘the 10,000 hour theory’ to the test…with a clever twist: Instead of applying it to ourselves this time, we applied it to our mentors and advisors with terrific results:

1. Through one newly formed partnership we were able to sign off more than $110,000 worth of new contracts and sales within three months. How? Read on…
2. We connected with those at the top of their game who ALL had over 10,000 hours of experience in their respective fields and nothing less;
3. If anyone was under this benchmark, we simply refused to entertain the thought of taking a ‘punt’ on their advice;
4. We only wanted recommendations from those who had already applied this successfully in their own endeavours to achieve dizzying heights of success;
5. This included connecting with one individual who had personally worked alongside Bob Proctor (a godfather of the personal development industry and heavily featured on the runaway success of the film / book, “The Secret”).

**We Looked at All of The Intricate Details**

We decided to study all of the processes these experts embodied and recommended to ensure we weren’t missing out on anything. Sometimes this meant not only getting direct advice from the professionals themselves, but also going behind-the-scenes to see if their team members had any additional insights to share; things not immediately apparent to us without the help of their valuable ‘insider knowledge’.

And guess what? We hit the jackpot!
We also noticed how whenever we were missing a piece of the puzzle our minds would automatically fill in the blank spaces with assumptions on what to do based on the perception each professional created in us, combined with our own previous experiences which still held true.

But these assumptions weren’t always 100% accurate and we didn’t want ‘close enough’. That wasn’t anywhere near close enough for us!

We didn’t want to guess: we wanted reliable, hard facts and evidence only: linchpins of information that would make all the difference between delayed gratification or immediate results.

So we dug deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper. We dug all the way to the GOLD at the HEART of the matter! We got to the CORE. Which is what I will share with you now. Only if you want me to, that is? Ha, yes…I thought so! ☺
The Brain Fills in Blank Spaces to Help Us See

Researchers from the University of Toronto uncovered how the brain thinks it’s helping us see and interact with objects by filling in missing information. And so the question becomes: How are we filling in missing gaps in our education? After all, the method needs to be reliable, or else ill-conceived perceptions and inaccurate assumptions could end up getting fixed and significantly hinder our progress…

The visual information the brain receives is usually incomplete because most of what we see is ‘blocked’ by other objects. Allison Sekuler, associate professor of psychology at the University of Toronto, describes how:

“People take perception for granted because it seems so instant and automatic to us. Yet what many people don’t realize is that the objects we see are not necessarily the same as the information that reaches our eyes, so the brain needs to fill in those gaps of missing information.”

To prove this theory, Alison and her team of researchers (led by PhD students Richard Murray and Jason Gold), asked people to describe various shapes presented on backgrounds made up of different degrees of ‘visual noise’ – black, grey and white pixels similar to the static on a badly tuned analogue television. The shapes to be ‘seen’ correctly were either: illusory, blocked, fragmented, or real.

Some of the more difficult shapes to see appeared distorted (fat or thin) depending on the background noise. The visual quality of the contours (being fat or thin themselves) would be used by the brain to make assumptions about the actual shape itself. Researcher Jason Gold observed:

“Amazing we found that people used information from exactly the same locations even when the contours in those locations were hidden or missing altogether. In other words, people relied on contours that were not really there, but that had been constructed by their brains.”

This study helps us to see how our brains construct a visual ‘reality’ which may or may not be entirely accurate. It also reveals that if our brains didn’t fill in this missing information, we would go into complete overwhelm and not be able to recognise different objects or even function.

NB: This is a visual version of the ‘double-edged sword’ of our subconscious mind’s audiovisual-sensorial system for filtering out the 11,000,000 million of pieces of available information discussed earlier; only passing on / processing a tiny, manageable per cent. In both cases, we are continually missing out on the TRUTH of ‘the big picture’.
So just as we form stereotypes based on limited information, so we also form assumptions (or ‘projections’) of how things should be – to varying degrees of accuracy. When we misperceive things instead of seeing them as they really are, our ‘helpful’ brain is actually disguising hidden stumbling blocks – and if we’re ignorant of their existence, how can we overcome them? This is where educating ourselves in heightened awareness is so beneficial.

Because of there being so many different ways to evaluate and tackle a single task, the danger is that we go into ‘paralysis by analysis’. And so whenever seeking out a role model or mentor to assist us on our journey, it is crucial we place equal importance upon finding and engaging with:

* Genuine experts possessing **10,000 hours+ experience and/or practice** in their chosen field, and;

* a **wide range of different point of views** on the situation as a whole to help build up a more complete ‘big picture’.

**Why we Tend to Punch BELOW our Weight**

Q.) So why *would* anyone waste their time deferring to those with limited experience instead of choosing to go ‘straight to the top’ and accessing experts with proven worth in the marketplace and thousands of hours of successful practical application under their belts?

I **believe it comes down to self-worth.** The only reason any of us would hold back from approaching an individual at great heights of success is due to the ‘**perceived value**’ we place upon them. This is variously known as:

1. ‘hero worship’;
2. Or, ‘the pedestal effect’;

Most of us tend to make limiting baseline assumptions about ourselves as ‘not being worthy’ to be in the **presence** of our ideal role models or mentors – or else we’d confidently stride over / call up / write to them directly, right? Of course we would! So, **why don’t we and how can we overcome this?**

‘**The Confidence Trick**: Liberating Your NEW ‘SELF’ to SEEK OUT HIGHER GROUND through Cultivating Confidence’

Recognise the only difference between THEM (a top quality role model or mentor) and YOU, is that: they have already identified key role models / mentors and applied success blueprints to their own personal / professional life with sheer voracity! In short: they were once where you are and (hopefully!) they will possess the **empathy and humility to help you along in turn.**
To enjoy similarly giddy heights of success, you will need to get over any illusionary hurdles you have created in your mind.

**ACTION**: Commit to overcoming your FEARS and go out and contact your ideal role models and/or mentors…TODAY! It could save you the extra 10,000 hours of hard work in a particular area, as it did for me and my business partner! This can be applied to ANY area of your life, including relationships.

**A Dinner Date with Success**

Do you remember your first date?

First dates can be awkward and painstaking. You’re both trying to guess the other one’s REAL intentions – and that’s if you’re lucky! If not, it might be more accurate to say one or both of you is looking for the nearest ‘exit’ sign to make a beeline for the door and hot tail it outta there!

Luckily, meeting a REAL ‘pro’ is nothing like this – well, apart from the butterflies in your tummy – but I say take that as a good sign: you’re expanding your horizons and leaping (not just stepping!) out of your comfort zone. Hooray!

The easiest way of gaining insider information is simply by being authentic and honest about who you are contacting and why. Sincerely befriend or establish rapport with successful individuals in your field of interest by using these TOP TIPS to gain instant access to your own personal behind-the-scenes guided tour:

**MEETING THE BIG GUNS**

**STEP 1**

First impressions are crucial. They dictate whether the door graciously opens or gets slammed in your face! Send a brief, respectful email asking to shout them lunch at a location convenient for them and permission to ‘pick their brain’.

**STEP 2**

i. Do not expect an immediate response; successful people are often in demand. For example, I have magazine Editor friends who receive well in excess of 100 emails a day clamouring for their attention. Give them time to reply.

ii. Don’t expect a response at all! If you DO get one, fantastic. If not, no sweat: you’ve already ‘moved on’. And you might get a pleasant surprise later on when someone you DO connect with introduces you to your original target!
iii. Do not take anything personally because your self-worth should NEVER be synonymous with whether or not someone else makes time for you or ‘likes’ you!

iv. When someone DOES respond positively, set a time and date convenient for them and show you value their time by sticking to the plan come hell or high water. Be on time, every time: this could be your one and only opportunity!

STEP 3

Prior to meeting, write a comprehensive list of questions. Then cull this down to your ‘Top 10’ – your absolute ‘must-knows’. Don’t waste your time or theirs: you’re meeting with them for a reason – to fast-track your success – so stay focused.

STEP 4

Meet, greet and eat! Science has shown we form deeper bonds with those we ‘break bread’ with. Be gracious, thank them for their time and always pick up the tab: it’s an investment in further education. Follow up with a handwritten thank you note confirming any agreed next steps. Reliability and a willingness to be helpful in return (reciprocation) are key.

The 411 on Word Biology

According to years of studies and research, certain words and sentence structures produce opioid peptides such as enkephalin (a pleasurable chemical reaction similar to the ‘endorphin rush’ of physical exercise) in our brain. The language you use literally changes the chemical make-up of another’s brain – talk about influential!

By aligning your speaking skills to complement and support the natural biological preferences of your audience, you’ll trigger a release of endorphins in others that will make them feel great in your presence – a very powerful tool for capturing attention and influencing outcome.

As discussed in chapter 4, working with the human habit of interpreting / creating linguistic patterns (chunking streams of information into 3 to 4 essential ‘bits’) is key to influencing others through pleasing, stimulating and engaging their primal brain.

In this section we step things up a gear and look at vital words and combinations to help you easily and effectively communicate with the key influencers you’re about to come into contact with.

The words you choose to use or omit will make or break the effectiveness of any given interaction. If you do not accurately present the ‘big picture’ in its entirety, any little
inconsistencies will create a barrier to effective communication and could cause others to perceive you as being incongruent, inauthentic or untrustworthy. Not desirable! Such (mis)perception could cost you tens of thousands in lost revenue, or worse (given its unredeemable quality), thousands of hours of your TIME.

**INFLUENCING others by Learning how to Speak THEIR Language**

As you progress in key areas of your life, so your linguistic skills should also be continually evolving. Each specific area you enter will have its own lexicon (jargon) which you will need to master in order to avoid sounding **NQR**. This doesn’t mean you change who you are but it does mean making an effort to get to know the language of the industry / environment you’re hoping to assimilate into – thus eliminating potential barriers to effective communication.

“Very often in making a decision about someone or something, we don’t use all the relevant available information; we use, instead, only a single, highly representative piece of the total.”

~ author Robert B. Cialdini PHD on: ‘the single, highly representative piece of the total’ from, ‘Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion’

In many scenarios, the right combination of words can be ‘the single, highly representative piece of the total’ which makes the whole communication ‘click and fall into place’ as opposed to fall apart at the seams!

We only have to take a look at the music industry to see how well this works. Artists sell millions of albums a year by effectively communicating relatable ideas or emotions through the lyrics and melodies of their songs.

“As for the ‘algorithm’ which music labels use to pump out hit songs time after time…well, we’ll discuss that later in the book. Trust me – it will blow your mind!”

~ Ben Angel

**Beth Logan, Andrew Kositsky and Pedro Moreno** at the HP Research Laboratories in Cambridge conducted one particular study of interest on the matter. They explored a technique for automatically analysing song lyrics to determine similarities between artists and tracks.

The findings assisted marketeers and music buffs in achieving more relevant recommendations for future purchases in keeping with personal musical preference. Of particular interest to us in the context of this book, the study uncovered sets of recurring patterns of words featuring time and again in successful top selling songs (differing for each genre).
Semantic Analysis of Song Lyrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reggae</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>New Age</th>
<th>Rap</th>
<th>Rock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>girl</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Adis</td>
<td>I’m</td>
<td>I’m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lover</td>
<td>I’m</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>just</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>don’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love</td>
<td>don’t</td>
<td>day</td>
<td>got</td>
<td>know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>night</td>
<td>don’t</td>
<td>just like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let’s</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>love</td>
<td>nigga</td>
<td>got</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>got</td>
<td>sky</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>you’re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shout</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>ergo</td>
<td>shit</td>
<td>oh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see from the grid, some words are cross-genre while many others are not. There are several distinct words repeatedly used within specific categories, however, which help connect the listener and act like ‘opiate’ to the mind: fulfilling the desire or addiction to achieve a particular ‘feeling’ (emotion) or tonality from each genre. **Similar lists could be compiled for other areas of life, such as:**

- the best words to use for a successful first date;
- appropriate business / boardroom language;
- the numerical mindset of ‘accountancy-speak’;
- key words to use / avoid when negotiating…

…and so on. Up-skilling yourself on the appropriate language specific to your area of interest will fast-track your effective communication no end.

It’s common practice in the sales industry to commission ‘market research studies’ to identify key identifying factors of various target demographics. Discovering what their habitual linguistic patterns are is obviously a key element here. The results of such research generate millions through effectively worded and targeted advertising every single year. **Just imagine what it could do for YOU in your own personal endeavours!**
Study The Language of The Leaders

Getting to the top isn’t about ‘fitting in’ so much as positioning yourself as if you belonged there all along.

Whenever in conversation with key influencers, make a note (mental or written) of the words that regularly feature in their language patterns over and over again.

Through ‘reflecting’ these conversational keywords back at people through various modes of communication (face-to-face conversation, email, telephone, business pitches / proposals / presentations etc) you will connect with their primal brain directly because the language you are using will be non-threatening.

If your message isn’t getting through or proving influential, it’s not a question of whether or not you are ‘being rejected’ - but rather whether or not you have succeeded in engaging the primal brain without triggering their protective ‘defensive mechanisms’.

When something feels unfamiliar, it requires a willing brain to invest more time, openness and energy to process the new information. Think of it this way: depending on how gregarious or socially confident you feel on any given day, going out and meeting a whole new group of friends can be exhausting or energising – depending on how YOU react to the unfamiliar territory. Composure is key and should be cultivated and maintained. Through so doing, you’ll be able to spread your wings beyond only hanging out with your regular drinking buddies because of an addiction to familiarity and a limiting fear of the unknown. The same goes for your clients / peers / role models / mentors. So YOUR awareness of others as well as yourself in this sense is valuable, to say the least!
Time-Tested and Proven Words for Effective Communication

Below you will find a list of easy-to-apply seductive keywords and phrases you can use to fill in some of the most crucial gaps in effective communication. They’re time-tested and proven to ease the primal mind into being more receptive, open and willing to entertain ‘new’ concepts – rather than reject them instinctively out of hand through fear or misperception.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step-by-step</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to</td>
<td>Because</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realise</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to use</td>
<td>Easy to Understand</td>
<td>Easy to apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few simple steps</td>
<td>You see....</td>
<td>Attract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe you’ll</td>
<td>Isn’t it nice</td>
<td>Eventually...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you imagine</td>
<td>You might...</td>
<td>You may...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One particularly intriguing word (in bold above) is the word ‘because’…because it is the most effective way of transitioning into presenting a compelling reason for someone to take action. This was documented by psychologist Ellen Langer who experimented with the effectiveness of different words when pushing in line at a photocopying machine (ingenious!). Langer tested three different approaches and observed the following results:

1. “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine?” = 60% said YES

2. “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I’m in a rush?” = 94% said YES

3. “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I have to make some copies?” = 93% said YES

The experiment showed that giving someone a reason why using the word ‘because’ immediately increased the effectiveness of this simple request. And not just a little bit, either, but by a whopping 34-35%! The keyword ‘because’ was so effective in fact, that the actual ‘reason why’ hardly even mattered!
TO SUMMARISE: Be clear, confident and relevant in all your communication. Always strive to use the appropriate language to full effect: after all, with a few simple adjustments you could easily increase your sales by a whopping 34-35%! And the benefits are not confined to business, either…just imagine how much happier you’d be if your kids actually did what you asked them to do simply because you start to use ‘because’!

**A Strong Contender in Your Chosen Field**

Whatever playing field you’re about to run out onto, you must learn the rules of the game – but only from those who’ve played ethically and WON in the past. Make sure that you put in the effort to…

* Learn their language!
* Model their behaviour!
* Observe and emulate their ‘presence’!
* Apply their proven success strategies!

Let’s be honest: there are always going to be hidden elements lurking on the sidelines. So it’s up to YOU to develop your ‘**peripheral vision and intuition**’ by immersing yourself ‘in the game’ to **accurately** close all the gaps in your knowledge.

Start **Finding The Moment When Everything CLICKS And Falls Into Place** by doing WHATEVER it takes to become a heavyweight contender in / on your chosen field.

Why? Just because, that’s why! And for 93% of you that’s reason enough, right? Right! So what are you still doing HERE…get stuck in to chapter 6 already! (Tsk, tsk…)

**The Most Powerful Video You’ll Watch This Year…**

Head over to [www.benangel.co/whoami](http://www.benangel.co/whoami) to watch a short film based on this book & visit [www.benangel.co/entrepreneurvision](http://www.benangel.co/entrepreneurvision) to download my ground breaking audio program that will help you achieve more in the next 30 days than in the past 3 months alone & step up in ways you never imagined were possible. It’s time!
CHAPTER SIX - “I SEE DEAD PEOPLE”

Uncovering Your Talent & Enhanced Sensory Abilities (and How to Give ‘More’ than You’ve Got)

Okay, so now that we’ve:

* uncovered the psychological factors impacting how you’re perceived by others;
* raised your own awareness of ‘self ’ and how YOU perceive your own value as well as that of others;
* who the key contacts are that you need to be networking with;
* how to choose a suitable role model and mentor etc…

…it’s time to take a firm hand and ensure that your talents are also up to speed.

Now, if you’ve ever found yourself wondering why you didn’t: get the gig; pass the test; score (on) that date; or ever hear back from the girl / guy you were chasing…well, it’s probably because you sucked (and not in a good way). You either sucked at being engaging, sucked at putting your best foot forward, sucked at communicating, or – when push came to shove – you simply failed to bring the talent you professed to have to the table.

In other words, the gap between the REAL you (at that time) and the perception of you (both your own and/or the perception held by the decision-makers) was too wide a chasm to be crossed. So treat it like the valuable lesson it was and move on…because THIS is the chapter that will help to ensure it never happens again!

We’re about to dive deep into how you can set yourself apart from everybody else out there by significantly improving your life, love and work skills. Before we get on to cultivating your many / valuable / hidden talents however, let’s take a look at the science of human behaviour and achievement, because you may just be a teeny-tiny (or whopping great!) bit lazier than you imagine you are…
The Path of Least Resistance

Enhancing your talents and sensory abilities in order to ‘tune into’ yourself is an essential part of the self-mastery journey we’re engaged with here. And yet as humans we retain a curious tendency to both desire to fulfil our potential…and seek out the path of least resistance. Most of us carry this dichotomy around to a greater or lesser degree, despite often knowing it probably won’t be the most satisfying or successful course of action.

It’s a sad fact of human nature that the majority of us – particularly at work and especially if we’re unhappy there – will do the bare minimum possible to get a job done. Even if this still generates comparatively impressive results because you’re exceptionally clever/intelligent/talented, you’re still cheating yourself out of the giddy thrill of genuinely blossoming, striving and expanding your abilities.

The TRUTH for most of us however, is that our minimal efforts will rarely be enough to win us acclaim, garner respect, secure a pay rise or provide us with any real sense of satisfaction. Nor will it get you any brownie points in bed, incidentally (the term ‘starfish’ sound familiar?).

So why do we do it? (or not, as the case may be!)

The answer in one word is: Evolution.

Evolution has programmed our primal selves to preserve energy for key activities such as:

* gathering food;
* collecting water;
* creating shelter;
* procreating.

Beyond this, we’re simply wasting energy – as far as eons of evolutionary programming are concerned. Despite ‘modern life’ having changed extensively, our primal selves are lagging far behind and these basic primordial instincts remain deeply ingrained in us, influencing our behaviour as well as that of others. Given this evolutionary context, it’s easy to understand why most people take the path of least resistance, limiting themselves to activities that are adequate but not optimal for meeting the situation at hand.

According to Hebert Simon who came up with the term ‘satisfice’, the act of satisficing is a key decision-making strategy ingrained in the majority of people.1 Perhaps you’ve even observed yourself playing this out on a daily basis? Internal dialogue such as:

* -Should I give this project 110%...or knock off early and make it to the gym?”
* “Can I really be bothered to spend the extra time double-checking this document?”
* “Maybe there’s time for one more drink before I head home and get stuck into all those dreaded house renovations...?”

In most cases (especially when we feel ‘nobody’s looking’) we take the easy option to indulge ourselves in the ‘immediate gratification’ rather than hang in there for the ‘delayed gratification’ of investing in the bigger (sometimes harder) picture. Realising this about ourselves also impacts how we form expectations of others:

* “Do I really expect them to read my whole résumé from top to bottom?”
* “Can I really count on my partner to be faithful?”
* “Is it worth me giving my all in this relationship when the chances are that he / she won’t be?”
* “Is my boss really going to go through every line of this massive report with a fine-toothed comb?”

If we’re honest with ourselves (which is, after all, the only worthwhile place to start) then of course the answer to most of those questions immediately above is, “No”. This is mainly because the questions are negatively-geared by the primal brain, which is continually seeking to preserve your energy and protect you from harm – whether real, imagined, emotional or physical in nature.

**Could YOU wait for a Second Marshmallow?**

I often pose this question to my clients:

Q.) Are you willing to delay the limited pleasure of immediate benefit in favour for some BIGGER BETTER LONGER-LASTING but delayed gratification?

Invariably, they answer “Yes!” – but it’s my job to help them understand they never really mean it, at least to begin with until we’ve done some serious work! Their actions speak louder than words – and if they’re a client of mine it’s because they’re not in flow in every area of their life...yet...and it’s usually because they’re kidding themselves about just how dynamic vs. lazy they actually are.

So just how impactful are the ramifications of constantly seeking out immediate (and comparatively limited) rewards? Highly significant, actually - as one study from Stanford spanning decades suggests:
Mischel observed that in most cases, “They [the children] didn’t even bother [choosing option ‘c’) ringing the bell. Other kids would stare directly at the marshmallow and then ring the bell thirty seconds later.” 2 Approximately 30% of the children were able to delay gratification for up to 15 minutes to receive their second marshmallow – meaning only a small percentage had found a way to beat temptation!

FOLLOWING UP: The influence on later life

Fast forwarding to 1981, Mischel decided to follow up on his study. He was curious to find out where the children were in their lives and see if their ability to delay gratification (or not) had impacted them. What he discovered was that it significantly had!

Mischel sent out a survey to the parents still within reach and all 650 former child participants, now in high school. He asked questions about particular traits, including but not limited to topics such as:

* thinking
* concentration
* planning ahead
* peer relationships
* coping strategies for problems
* academic scores

Mischel discovered that:

1. the ‘delayers’ (kids who tried to delay gratification but rang the bell abruptly or could only wait 30 seconds at best) demonstrated behavioural problems in school and at home. They struggled with stressful situations, had trouble paying attention, found it hard to form and maintain friendships, and achieved lower S.A.T. scores.
2. the more ‘self-disciplined’ children (who could easily wait fifteen minutes for a second marshmallow) achieved S.A.T. scores on average 210 points higher than the ‘delayers’ described above.

Mischel and his research team continued to follow up with the subjects well into their late thirties. They found that the ‘delay-ers’ tended to have a higher (i.e. far less healthy) body-mass index (BMI) and were also more likely to have drug problems.

What was important about this study was not whether or not the children could delay gratification per se, but whether or not they were able to adapt themselves and / or a situation to their benefit. In later life, this extended to their capacity to seek out ways to ‘make things work’ – even when the odds were stacked against them.
The Burden of Opportunity

Wherever we live in the world, we all experience a constant flow of a myriad of options being presented to us every day – they just differ in nature from place to place and person to person. Even those living apparently limited or monotonous lives still have the choice of how to be / react to / engage moment to moment with whatever’s going on and whatever is (Gandhi comes to mind again).

Your own personal ability to choose, discern, master, ride, adjust and (positively) manipulate not only yourself but also each given situation to benefit yourself and others therefore bears direct correlation to how successful you will be in life. And as always, we’re not just talking ‘career’ here – but also friends, family, legacy, philanthropy, creativity, contribution and so on. The question is: which types of person do YOU WANT to be? Is your IDEAL self the one who is:

a. willing to delay instant gratification for significantly improved outcomes later on? OR,

b. choosing to succumb to the temptation of a lesser but immediate benefit NOW… despite knowing how it will limit you in future?

The ball is in your court – and there’s actually no ‘right or wrong’ answer. How come? Because the TRUTH is (as my father’s early death showed me) none of us really know how long we’re going to live, so there is always a balance to be struck between your ‘present’ self in the here and now, and your ‘future’ self out there ahead somewhere…

Freak accidents and bad luck aside however, let’s assume that if you’re reading this book, you (like me) do intend to look after yourself and live a long, happy, healthy and productive life. In which case, next time you catch yourself ‘satisficing’ (essentially: ‘settling for second best’) stop yourself and at least pause to consider the two options in front of you:

instant (lesser) gratification
vs.
delayed (yet greater) future rewards

The potential you possess to impact the quality of your life through such simple yet conscious decision-making is more powerful than your wildest imagination. The catch is: you can only ever fully realise this IF you are willing to go that extra mile, give 110% all the time every time – far more than you have ever done so in the past.

If you keep falling short of this mark and continually cheat yourself and others by settling for adequacy rather than optimisation, you consign yourself to generating more of the same limited results that you have done up to now, which doesn’t sound very inspiring, does it?
Diving Headlong into some Brave and Illuminating ‘Self-Experimentation’!

“‘I am my own experiment. I am my own work of art.’
~ Madonna

When I decided to write this book, I committed myself to a very strict, intense, short timeframe of 30 days from start to finish. Not because I’m crazy (although…!) but rather because I wanted to prove a point I hoped would be a source of inspiration to others:

* In giving myself 30 days to complete the entire project, I had to churn out 60,000+ words at break-neck speed and at high quality.

* Not only that, but because I was under the pump, so was my editor (thank you, O!) who got a mere third of 30 days to turn around 5-6,000 words of final manuscript per day!

* This left what remained of the original 30-day timeframe for my (awesome!) designer to get the book fully packaged up and ready to go in time for my 30th birthday at the launch party on March 30th, 2011. A hell of a lot of ‘30s’ in there, hey?!

I engineered all this to prove just the impressive efficacy of the practical wisdom contained in this book. I wanted to demonstrate through action and application how easy it really can be to achieve dramatic results within a short time frame.

The delayed gratification and huge rewards that came from hitting the mark with this project by a very specific future date was my own very special 30th birthday present to myself. And guess what? It’s been one of the most exciting, exhilarating, fantastic and unforgettable projects I’ve embarked on so far! The team and I hit every deadline, delivered every milestone and enjoyed sharing the deep satisfaction of a job well done. Magic!

Arriving at this point of personal commitment in my life however, has required a lot of self-experimentation to date. In short, I’ve played around with heaps of different techniques…so that YOU don’t have to! I have invested years of my life in dedicated self-experimentation to ensure I am continually learning how to be(come) the MOST effective ‘ideal’ version of myself as possible… so that I could confidently share it for the benefit of myself and others.
Rocket-Thrust Your Success

Ever been ‘in bed’ with a colleague or business partner (you know what I mean!) wishing you could THRUST like a ROCKET and fast-forward everybody’s experience of the BIG BANG of success? Well you’ve come to the right place! CLICK is all about rapidly accelerating your progress in every key area of life you choose to apply it to.

I’ll admit it: I’m a perfectionist. I have always been in the habit of monitoring how much I achieve within set time limits by using a simple digital timer available at any local electrical store.

By committing to getting this book finished within such tight deadlines, I measured my speed and discovered I’m capable of churning out more than 1000 words an hour. Pretty good going. However, I also discovered that if I gave myself THREE times as long, I only got an extra 500 words written at best. Crazy! So how come?

It’s because tasks have a strange way of expanding or contracting to fill the time allocated to them. It’s mind-bending but true! Try it for yourself if you don’t believe me. As Lucille Ball is credited with saying; “If you want something done, give it to a busy person!”

I worked with what I already knew about myself and separated my writing time into THREE x one hour chunks rather than one three-hour sitting. This simple practical adjustment boosted my total output to over 4000 words for every three hours of work: a MASSIVE increase in productivity overall!

It is this kind of applied self-experimentation in life that can help you pull out all the stops by working SMART instead of hard… just don’t waste time reinventing the wheel. As discussed earlier, LEARN from others’ experimentation…and then EXTEND this in your own unique way. Such are the finer distinctions that when applied to your life will make for the BIGGEST improvements.

“Over twelve years, my self-experimentation found new and useful ways to improve sleep, mood, health, and weight. Why did it work so well? First, my position was unusual. I had the subject-matter knowledge of an insider, the freedom of an outsider, and the motivation of a person with the problem.”

~ Seth Roberts, Psychology Professor and seasoned ‘self-experimenter’

To date, I have personally and successfully applied self-experimentation to my career, my relationships, and my health. Let’s take health as a shining example:

For years I suffered with persistent depression. I was forever having to ‘manage’ my emotions. I had to work hard to be constantly aware of how I was feeling and proactively participate in
regular exercise, whether I wanted to or not. It was exhausting. I later found out, (after years of trying to rid myself of skin blemishes and a red rash from around my nose) that I was in fact highly sensitive to caffeine – one of the major factors contributing to my own particular type of depression. Through remaining committed to improving my condition and educating myself about what I’d discovered, I was able to return to optimum physical and emotional health: a more ‘ideal’ state of ‘well-being’ which has in turn had a MASSIVELY positive impact on all areas of my life – not just my health.

If I hadn’t been willing to do the work myself and continually self-experiment, I would never have got to the bottom of this problem. In fact, I’d still be struggling with lack lustre energy levels and bouts of dark depression to this day.

Now, while I’m not saying self-experimentation is a cure-all for depression (it worked for me but there are many different depths and causes of depression out there, so please consult your own trusted professional wherever that’s concerned), what I am saying is that the principle itself still stands:

**Personal awareness + personal accountability + responsible self-experimentation = generally great results!**

So why not adopt Madonna’s positive mindset of self-experimentation as your own? It’s particularly useful when cultivating your talents in key areas of life, such as interpersonal skills, career or health. Monitor, test and measure every aspect of your performance until it becomes second nature and you’re guaranteed to fine-tune your results.

**Pareto’s Principle: ‘The 80/20 Rule’**

The Pareto Principle is also variously known as:

* the 80-20 rule;
* the law of the vital few; and
* the principle of factor sparsity,

This principle states that where most areas of life are concerned, **80% of the result / outcome can be traced back to 20% of the cause / effort.**

Business management thinker Joseph M. Juran proposed this principle and named it after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, who observed in 1906 that **80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population** – and (furthermore) that **20% of the pea pods in his garden contained 80% of the peas!** It has since become a common rule of thumb in business that **80% of your sales (result) will come from 20% of your client's (cause).**
In the end, it’s all about getting right down to being willing to monitor yourself effectively enough to identify **which 20% of YOUR time / actions / effort is responsible for generating 80% of YOUR results**...and then focus on that.

**There’s Value in the Unseen**

Despite great minds of acknowledged genius such as Albert Einstein proclaiming that “*Imagination is more important than knowledge*”, modern western society still tends to value what can actually be ‘seen’ (in the physical sense) more highly than ‘un-materialised’ ideas or visions alone (NB: it still remains fair to consider that without Einstein’s seed of imagination, where would we be?!).

**CASE STUDY:**

**If we can’t SEE it, can we TRUST OURSELVES to TRUST it?**

In a study conducted by B. Bushong, L.M. King, C.F. Camerer and A. Rangel, a team of researchers found that the mere fact of having an actual ‘physical’ product in front of an individual (as opposed to an image) increased how much the individuals were willing to bid on the item by a staggering 60%.3

The findings highlight how little value we have been taught to place on our soft and intangible skills and – in my opinion – how wasted some of our most useful sensory abilities and talents can be!

Put simply, for the majority of people walking around ‘seeing is believing’. If they can’t ‘see’ something concrete, the value placed upon it significantly decreases and won’t be taken seriously. This is why strong **personal branding and packaging yourself** up to be as tangible a marketable product as possible is one vital key to increasing your own **perceived value** in the marketplace.

For decades now the self-help gurus of the world have hypothesised that to attract abundance into your life you must create a dream board and fill it with images of places you’d love to go, amounts of money you’d like to make, and possessions you long to obtain.

This may work for some, but the science says otherwise, making a very valid argument for **physically engaging** with whatever it is you want to acquire as much as possible. This is why **test driving your dream car** or actually attending auctions to ‘walk through’ your dream home is way more effective than simply leafing through pictures in a glossy magazine.

**You are likely to value each desire 60% more simply through the physical realisation of your idea in the world**, however you can make it happen with what you’ve got access to right
now. Imagine what that extra 60% could do to improve your zest for life and help you bring a more determined ‘no-excuses’ attitude to everything you do!

“Okay…I see the sense in that…but what does the values of the ‘tangible’ have to do with cultivating MY talents?”

I believe that the fact that we tend to devalue the unseen should make us question how intuitive we really are as human beings:

* Can we trust ourselves to make the snap decisions required to catapult our lives into an all-new positive direction? Or are we doomed to continually repeat ‘more of the same’ based solely on what we already see as possible manifesting itself in the world?
* Have we lost or failed to develop the ability to be truly visionary?
* How can we open ourselves up and learn to ‘see further’ than just what appears right under our own noses?

In your quest for more out of your life, it is important to understand how much of a role intuition plays for you, and how you can leverage it to more effectively guide you in the right direction.

Generally speaking, once you have acquired a certain level of knowledge and practical experience in your chosen field of expertise, your subconscious will begin to guide you. Unchecked, its primal mind qualities will ‘fill-in’ the gaps previously missing – but how effectively you ‘join the dots’ depends on how open you remain to acquiring and assimilating NEW information over time, as discussed earlier.

The more knowledgeable you become whilst also remaining humble, the better chance your intuitive subconscious has of being able to fill in the gaps with the activities that will actually yield meaningful results and not just ill-based assumptions. The more you can cultivate this aspect of your mind the more you will be able to rely upon your intuition to guide you. So how do we learn to accurately decipher that which at first appears unreal or inexplicable? Let’s take a look...

Peripheral Vision = the aspect of vision occurring outside the centre of direct view.

To experience this yourself:

Find a spot on the wall in front of you and stare at it. Without taking your eyes off this spot take in all of the scenery around you that is in the ‘periphery’ of your direct vision. The more you practice, the ‘broader’ your peripheral vision should become.
Intuition is in part Guided by the Periphery

Almost all of us at some stage in our life has felt compelled to do something for a reason that felt ‘completely unknown’ to us. For too many years intuition has been placed in the category of pseudo-science and credited with scant plausibility in the mainstream.

Well ‘the mainstream’ wasn’t swimming so well the last time I checked (environmental damage; financial collapse; pollution and poverty; obesity; greed; war…) – what about you??

Well the good news is that what some so-called ‘primitive’ cultures in the world have always known is finally re-emerging back into the mainstream conversation for us in the ‘developed’ world: the tide of opinion on intuition has finally started to turn!

According to Gerard Hodgkinson of the Organisational Strategy, Learning and Change department at Leeds University Business School, intuition is the result of how our brain processes, retrieves and stores information at a subconscious level (although even he admits the need for much further study in order to fully understand this intriguing ‘new’ area and its full potential).

After analysing the range of published research papers available, Hodgkinson’s researchers concluded that the term ‘intuition’ describes the subconscious mind’s ability to draw on past experiences and external cues from our periphery to form decisions on an unconscious level. It happens so unbelievably fast that we have no idea it has occurred until we get the ‘message’ or receive the ‘intention’ – like a lightning strike in our brain that delivers an idea we feel compelled to act upon, no matter what.

To demonstrate his point, Hodgkinson refers to the documented case of a Formula One driver who slammed on his brakes when coming up to a hairpin bend without ‘consciously’ knowing why. The result? He avoided hitting a pile-up of cars on the track around the corner, which unquestionably saved his life:

“The driver couldn’t explain why he felt he should stop, but the urge was much stronger than his desire to win the race.”

~ Hodgkinson

To uncover what had actually occurred, this driver undertook forensic analysis by psychologists after the fact. He was presented with video footage of the event to see if anything jumped off the screen at him – it did – and astoundingly so!

The driver realised that without consciously processing it at the time, the audience which would have normally been leaping up and down, cheering him on to win was instead frozen immobile – and this acted as his cue to slam on the brakes. This occurred outside of conscious thought (there
was no time for the conscious brain to have noticed let alone process all this). Even the slightest delay in his subconscious intuitive processing would have cost him his life.

Sometimes we just have to trust what our instincts are telling us and tune in to them instead of out! This inbuilt program run by the subconscious mind is there for a reason: it’s there to keep us safe. Are there bugs in the system? Undoubtedly (we’re still evolving, after all) yet I can’t help but feel that when we get a ‘jolt to the system’ it’s the subconscious mind’s way of presenting us with a much needed ‘wake up call’ or lesson that needs to be learned at that particular juncture in our life: my own medical diagnosis of physical dissonance after my father’s death was, for me, one case in point.

! THE GOOD NEWS-FLASH !

*Your Subconscious will only give you what you can handle – and what you NEED in order to increase your capacity of what you can LEARN to handle in the future!*

The GOOD NEWS is that our subconscious mind only ever presents us with challenges when we’re in the position to deal with them. Sometimes we even suppress these ‘calls to action’ for some time until the time is right for them to bubble to the surface and be dealt with (like the way I ignored my need to grieve until my subconscious sent my physical body a message so powerful I could no longer ignore it!).

**We must get comfortable with stretching and extending ALL of our talents** – and understand that through so doing, we also need to get comfortable with feeling uncomfortable! This is actually a very healthy sign that we are expanding our comfort zone rather than resting on our (lazy) laurels! Keep cultivating the sparks of interest in you that you start to ‘tune into’: these are the seeds that will eventually manifest physically enough for you and everybody else to actually ‘see’ them in the conventional sense.

“At various points in your life you will be presented with a situation where you simply must let go and trust. This is obviously easier said than done, yet such are the magic gateways – the precious moments when things really click and fall into place for you: much like my own very revealing personal experience, description to follow..!”

~ Ben Angel

“I See Dead People”

The **TRUTH** is that the dust had barely settled on dad’s grave before I’d hurtled straight back into a hectic work schedule. Being the persistent hard-worker he was, when he was sick in hospital he made me promise to him that I would go straight back to home in Melbourne and get on with life and business. It’s hard to refuse the wishes of somebody on their deathbed.
This caused great inner conflict at the time as I wanted and most likely ‘needed’ to be there to support my mum in her time of need. Nonetheless, only a few short days after the funeral I found myself attending a 7-day ‘wealth creation’ workshop in Sydney with my close friend Lisa. The workshop had been booked months in advance. I wasn’t sure if I should go or not, but then I remembered what Dad had last said to me with a deep sincerity I’d never experienced before, “Get on with life!”

On the third night of the workshop we decided to go and stay with Lisa’s parents, who lived near the field where our hot air balloon ride was taking off from the next day. It was all part of the experiential learning process that was included in the workshop.

Late that night on the eve of the symbolic balloon ride, Lisa and I found ourselves at her parents’ big kitchen table, still doing workshop homework at 11pm. No biggy, right? I mean, we’d committed to both being there to learn; we were willing to do WHATEVER it took to get the most out of the lessons…at least that’s what I thought I was doing. In fact, my particular ‘education’ was about to arrive in a very different medium (excuse the pun)…!

One moment Lisa and I were alone…and then we weren’t.

Out of the corner of my right eye I sensed someone standing in the archway to the lounge room about two metres away from me, partially hidden by the shadows. I turned my head and couldn’t see anyone in the conventional sense (with my eyes) – and yet the distinct shape and powerful presence of another man in the room was unmistakable.

Just to give this a little context, imagine every single time you’ve ever just known someone else was looking at you or over your shoulder; you whip your head around and you’re right! Every time! Well THIS felt like that…multiplied by the biggest number you can hold in your mind.

Yep…THAT freaky. And to top it all off, I also flashed into panic at the thought that I was actually going mad. Meanwhile, Lisa was sitting at the top of the table with her head buried deep in her homework, completely oblivious to what was happening to me.

And then it suddenly ‘clicked’!

I remembered Lisa mentioning to me years ago that she could see spirits. I pretended to believe her at the time to spare her feelings, but the truth was I didn’t really. It wasn’t so much that I didn’t believe in ghosts (I did and still do) but more that I’d never actually ‘seen’ anything to convince me of her hidden talent. So I decided now would be the perfect time to ‘test’ her. I looked over to her and said: “Lisa, is there anyone else in this room with us right now?”

Lisa snapped her head up, stared directly at the spot where I could FEEL the male presence, and burst into tears. Her parents had long ago gone to bed. There was just me sitting in a daze, Lisa sobbing, and the distinct-yet-invisible ‘man in the archway’.
I instinctively knew right then that it was my father. It was as if he was keeping his distance to see how I would react and whether or not he should let me know that he was around. Lisa had met my father once before and she had known it was him immediately. I sat there trying not to burst into tears – still ‘holding it together’ – even then! Crazy!

Then I felt him move from the hallway and sit down next to me. I felt the physical pressure of his hand on my leg. Once again, still wanting to be sure this was ‘real’, I asked my friend, “Lisa, where is he now?” She described his hand resting on my knee and the exact spot where he was sitting.

All my panic instantly melted away and a very deep sense of calm washed over me. I felt overwhelmingly humbled by what was happening. I wanted to express how grateful I was to be in his presence – but no words would do. None of it made sense to my ‘rational’ or conscious mind…but I decided right then that I was fine with that.

After all, the experience was something radiant. And to have one of my best friends there to witness and share it only gave me more confidence and incentive to learn how to better ‘tune in’ to my own intuition in future; to ‘see’ more of the puzzle…to really start to understand the ‘Bigger Picture’ in life.

As for the balloon ride, we’ll that never took place due to inappropriate conditions which is incredibly symbolic of other times in our lives when things fail to fall into place simply because we’re not ready for them to yet.

Later on…more ‘SIXTH SENSE’!

One night a few months later I woke up in the middle of the night. I was lying on the opposite side of the bed to where I normally slept and my right hand was hanging over the side of my bed, facing palm up…and it felt as if dad was sitting or kneeling next to me, holding it. I just lay there with my eyes open trying to digest what was happening and whether or not it was ‘real’. Lisa wasn’t there to corroborate it this time... No, this time I had only my OWN intuition to rely on.

After a couple of speechless minutes, I leant over and checked the time: it was just after 2am – exactly the same time of the morning my dad had woken up in the palliative care unit in hospital one memorable night I was visiting. I recalled how I had risen from the chair I’d fallen asleep in, walked over to kneel by his side, and held his hand gently until he fell asleep again. I have no idea how long I was by his side for, I just knew at the time that it was a moment that I would never forget.
Initially, I kept all of these surreal experiences to myself until I finally decided to confess to my mum, completely unsure of how she was going to respond. My parents had been childhood sweet-hearts, married for 35 happy years before dad’s death, and I didn’t want to cause her any more grief than she was going through. The funny thing was, it ended up being a relief for both of us to share our strange stories: she’d had similar experiences and thought she was losing the plot herself! For several nights running she’d felt as if someone was on the bed moving around. All she could think of was that it might have been the family dog…but we both knew it wasn’t: Wolf slept outside.

In any case, it was comforting to acknowledge all our strange experiences. We couldn’t explain them logically – and yet our HEARTS were brimful of love.

Mum and I did grieve very differently (or rather, she grieved while I was busy suppressing everything!) but in sharing our experiences of feeling dad’s presence, we had a common and unbreakable bond to come back to, no matter what. I felt that even after his death, dad was still looking after his family and finding ways to bring us all together.

MORE to SEE than MEETS the EYE!

It’s no secret that our psychological abilities go way beyond that which we can see (perceive with our eyes). It’s an exciting time scientifically – yet science is only just beginning to scratch the surface of our mind’s multifarious layers, behaviour and untapped potential. In order to benefit from all this NEW information as it arrives however, we must learn how to get out of our own way first.

My personal experience of a visitation from my father isn’t unique by any stretch. I’m one of the few who’s decided to share it in hope it gives others the confidence to do the same and / or tune in to their own abilities and intuition – perhaps even make peace with their own past and puzzling experiences.

Do I personally desire to explore and develop these apparently mediumistic skills any further? Not particularly...! I loved the comfort ‘seeing’ my dad gave me, but I also once had a very disturbing experience of a spirit putting pressure on my chest and not leaving until I’d passed on a message to a mutual friend I hadn’t seen for three years – and I was a wreck for a whole month after that one!

The good news is that both you and I can empower ourselves to pick and choose which key areas of our ‘extra-sensory perception’ we wish to develop further. They include:

1. **Developing and Trusting Your Intuition**
   If something doesn’t FEEL right to you, chances are it isn’t (‘NQR’, remember?). If you sense something brewing, TRUST yourself not to sit idly by while a situation you could otherwise help correct unfolds in front of you. And if your instincts scream at you to
withdraw – whether from a situation, environment, relationship, job offer or so on…well then for heaven’s sake LISTEN!

This is your subconscious firing off alarm bells; communicating information coming in through your periphery senses (as explored earlier). If you ignore it, you run the risk of the ‘cognitive dissonance’ getting so loud that it interferes with your physical health in a MAJOR way – just like in mine. Sometimes it’s even harder to detect though, because dissonance often manifests as insidious self-sabotaging behaviour less easy to spot straight away…

It works in reverse of course too: so if on the other hand you feel a driving desire (or ‘call’) to attend a particular course, make contact with a specific individual or drive a particular route to work…for heaven’s sake FOLLOW IT! “See’ where it leads.

Through identifying what you want to be remembered for – what you want to experience, enjoy and share in your life – you are literally programming your subconscious mind to search for opportunities and solutions. Don’t expect to be able to recognise it consciously all the time, but do understand that your subconscious mind is always guiding you in the direction you FEEL you want / desire / deserve. **NB: beware if you start to exhibit continual self-sabotage, otherwise known as ‘bright shiny object’ syndrome.** The point of all of this work is to sit down, really get to know yourself and set your sights on the BIGGER PICTURE, on what to aim for overall - not only in the present moment.

**2. Tap Into Your Periphery vision (and other senses):**
One technique I have successfully used for years in my career as a professional speaker, is to train myself to go into a state of ‘peripheral vision’ on stage in front of live audiences. Scientific research has shown that it’s impossible to hold on to both a positive thought AND a negative one simultaneously; and also that it’s not possible to BE in a negative state when you’re maintaining this state of peripheral vision.

Being in this state also heightens your self- and environmental- awareness: you become more ‘tuned in’ to your surroundings and the feelings and behaviour of your own self and others – a very useful skill for adapting to varied situations and building instant rapport with different types of people.

*As soon as you choose to look and feel like you belong, you do belong.* It is from this strong, calm quiet ‘centre of presence’ that you can better influence the outcome of any given situation your immediate environment presents.
The Sensory Abilities of our Four-Legged Friends!

Dogs have been trained to detect everything from danger (bombs, drugs) to cancer chemicals being present in a human being’s breath (!) with up to 98% accuracy! One notable Labrador called Marine can even identify up to 12 different types of cancers simply by sense of smell.

Each of us can be trained to become ‘masters’ of our own domains but we must proactively seek out education that fine tunes our senses in all aspects.

The Importance of SETTING YOUR OWN CURRICULUM

It isn’t up to your parents, teachers, university lecturers, government or anyone else to set YOUR life’s curriculum for you: it’s entirely up to you! The curriculum YOU choose (or end up following by default of NOT choosing!) will dictate your destination...and your destiny: I urge you to plan well!

Of course, even the best-mapped routes allows for ‘wriggle room’ on the journey (unexpected surprises; interesting detours; challenges and threats that inevitably crop up) but it’s sheer laziness NOT to break down the key areas of your life and REALLY understand your own self, your motivation and what you need to be doing NOW in order to be enjoying ‘XYZ” later on... ok?

Experimentation & Curriculum Model

In the section below set the curriculum (courses, activities, books, travel etc) that YOU require in order for YOU to live YOUR definition of ‘success’ in all aspects of life. If one particular area of your life feels hopeless, hone in on it and list everything you can think of that isn’t working. Once you have a handle on that, your subconscious mind can start figuring out some wonderful solutions for you!

Try listing NEW things your OLD self has been too ‘closed- minded’ to entertain before: after all, NEW experiences by definition are the ones most likely to help you learn and grow! Be brave and ‘self-experiment’ (remembering to observe, test, measure, evaluate and assimilate as much as possible of what’s available):

Career:  

Play/Adventure:  

Health/Fitness:  

Wealth/Finances:
Spirituality/Self: __________________________________________

Relationships: __________________________________________

We must be willing to be our own guinea pigs and continually test and measure our progress in each area. We must be willing to be HONEST – with both ourselves and others. And we must learn how to USE all this information we are harnessing and turn it (through applied action) into WISDOM. Sure, from time to time certain areas of your life will streak ahead or lag behind. Don’t panic. Just pick up the balls you dropped when you can, keep on practising, and you’ll be hitting consistent home runs across the board in no time! And even THEN you’ll still be learning: it’s a joyful, exhilarating, never-ending process that will continue to unfold until the day you die. How great is that?!

Isn’t it ABOUT TIME you finally AGREE to UNCOVER your TALENTS?

Being brave enough to uncover and hone your natural talents is at the very core of what it takes to make your journey through a successful and fulfilling life worthwhile: not just at the end (delayed gratification of big rewards) but as you travel along noticing more details, more insight, more to be grateful for as well.

Further education in specific areas will enable you to empower yourself and step up with complete confidence AND humility (an important ingredient for ‘taking people with you’!).

Happy ‘Talent-Hunting’!

Of course you can work as part of a team, collaborate with others and have them work with or for you…but you must still get good at being the best YOU that YOU can be in order to attract and retain the very BEST TRAVELING COMPANIONS: friends, colleagues, role models and mentors who will always have your best interests at heart (as you have theirs) and whose opinion you can trust to come from a loving, honest and insightful place.

One thing’s for certain:

* if a racing car driver can slam on the breaks to save his life intuitively;
* and if a dog can sniff out cancer;
* and if “I see dead people”…

…then JUST IMAGINE what weird and wonderful OTHER TALENTS you, me and we are all hiding underneath the thin veneer of everyday life??!
Your talents run deep – that’s their strength! – but sometimes they’ve been buried so deep that you need some serious dedication to excavate them. Don’t leave it to chance. And don’t leave it too late. Do it NOW. Anything less is asking far too little of yourself… and contributing nowhere near enough to anybody else.

So Good luck…go well…and Happy ‘Talent-Hunting’!
The thought of possessing enough natural ‘X-factor’ (charisma; magnetism) to instantly appeal to anyone is a very powerful and seductive one.

Its practical application comes to the fore in helping us to:

* woo the opposite / same sex;
* influence outcomes;
* feel desirable;
* enjoy external validation;
* feel safe, secure and happy;
* feel ‘in control of our kingdom’;
* be empowered about who we choose to invite into our world.

**je ne sais quoi** | ʒə nə sɛ kwɑː | ʒə sɛ kwɑː

noun

* a quality that cannot be described or named
* easily: that je ne sais quoi that makes a professional.
* ORIGIN French, literally ‘I do not know what.’

The French term for this irresistible ‘X-factor’ quality is, *je ne sais quoi* – literally, “I do not know what” – which only serves to fuel the misnomer that this quality is somehow too elusive and inexplicable to be developed or manufactured.

I beg to differ.

Through my experience as a successful professional speaker, I have come to understand X-factor as a person’s ability to communicate and self-express effectively in front of an audience or within the context of an individual interaction. An X-factor delivery mesmerises the recipient by capturing not only their attention, but also their ‘Hearts and Minds,’ those with the X-factor fill-the-space when they enter a room with light, love and energy. It is unmistakeable. This ‘complete package’ radiates a personal presence distinct to each individual – in this case, YOU and YOU alone (it’s all about you!).

So far this book has exposed you to numerous key principles designed to help you step into, fully inhabit and self-express your own unique ‘signature self’ – the one-of-a-kind blend of talents, abilities, interests and passions that define who YOU are and want to be. In this chapter we’re
going to take another leap forward and dissect all the elements of this so-called elusive X-factor – and what truly makes it ‘click and fall into place’.

A Sure Prediction

Even though I grew up on a farm, I can’t say I was much of a farm boy! I loved creating metal-work sculptures and I enjoyed riding motorbikes from time to time. But as far as harbouring a genuine passion for being a farmer was concerned…well, I just didn’t have it. I preferred to lose myself in music, composing tunes and writing lyrics every weekend. I would always get up early in anticipation of catching up on the video music charts and feel the thrill of discovering who was number one. I would tape each show and watch the videos over and over again during the week - it used to drive my parents mad.

Because I was writing my own music at the time I was constantly on the lookout for musicians who were successful or inspiring and ask myself, “What is it that makes this group or individual so popular? How did they get to number one ahead of everybody else? How do they stay there against all the odds?”

Over six years of observation, I started to see certain patterns unfold. It wasn’t just about the algorithm in a song (which I’ll explain the relevance of in chapter 10); it was about the group or individual’s personal presence and how authentically it got conveyed through vision and sound.

These observations came in handy later on when I was working for Sanity Music as a teenager in Adelaide. The State Manager asked me to help her decide on the Christmas order quantities for singles and albums statewide: pretty daunting for a 17 year old!

She ordered tens of thousands of CDs based on my personal predictions, and luckily for me, they came up trumps. The reason I was able to predict the chart positions (and these days accurately assess the likelihood of an individual’s personal success) was because I learned to break key attributes down to their basics: the qualities making them succeed or fail miserably. As with everything in this world (including evolution) there is both an exact formula for generating specific results, and also the rare but important exception to every rule – as we’ll soon find out.

To help YOU become super influential and experience that ‘click’ of the moment where everything falls into place, I’ve outlined my breakdown of ‘je ne sais quoi’ below. Each element is then discussed in more detail throughout this and subsequent chapters:
“Seven Sure-Fire Steps to Je Ne Sais Quoi”

1. Physical Appearance  
   a) Face shape (unusual / memorable / strong features)  
   b) Hair  
   c) Smile  
   d) Body shape (height accentuating presence)

2. ‘Je ne sais quoi’  
   a) Quality of audience connection (reaching ‘one and many’ through vision and sound)  
   b) Energetic under- / overtones  
   c) Overall personal presence (‘the full package’)

3. Sound  
   a) Lyrics congruent with the performer’s appearance  
   b) Confidence when speaking  
   c) Vocal style in alignment with lyrics and appearance

4. Behaviour / Expressiveness  
   a) They behaved the way the audience perceived (desired / expected) them to – but still mixing it up to avoid becoming too predictable  
   b) They could express themselves, their thoughts and their emotions clearly

5. Head-to-Toe  
   a) The authenticity with which ‘it all fits together’  
   b) The consistency with which this ‘complete package’ is projected outwardly

6. Somatic Markers  
   a) Strong, emotive theme which connects with the audience (i.e. Tyra Banks’ ‘fierce’ persona created for and perpetuated by America’s Next Top Model)  
   b) Career decisions which create a ‘somatic marker’ in the minds of their fans (fully explained later)

7. Body Positioning  
   a) How they physically conduct (or ‘hold’) themselves in different circumstances and environments (otherwise known as ‘MAPS’)  
   b) How they exhibited vulnerability and/or power; in what context; and with an awareness to trigger / leverage which particular aspect of the audience-performer relationship.

The practical application of all this to YOUR relationships, career, social life and so on is in how much you can learn to ‘get yourself in sync’ and bring a unified, authentic and charismatic personal presence to the party. There’s no currency in being a wallflower. It doesn’t mean you
need to become loud or brash (let’s leave that one to the Hollywood brat-pack!) but it does mean you need to develop enough personal presence to capture their attention and influence your outcomes.

**Perfection Can Be a Barrier**

Before I continue with the scientific breakdown of X-factor, I want to touch on the subject of perfection. Many of you reading this may have it in your mind that ‘everything’ has to be perfect before ‘anything’ can really work. Not true. In fact, ‘being a perfectionist’ (aka ‘the fear of failure or success’) can be one of the biggest stumbling blocks, causing you to procrastinate or become stagnant instead of dynamic. Coming to all these various realisations is all part of the continual process of evolution of your ‘self’. As you progress and master even more key attributes, you will also become the master of your destiny and results.

Perfection isn’t always a good thing, particularly in the eye of the beholder (audience). There have been many revolutions throughout history around ideas of shifting ‘perfection and beauty’, which can sometimes be experienced as ‘an oppressive mechanism’ rather than a cherished ideal to the underdog. Being confident enough to expose your vulnerabilities (whether physical, behavioural, emotional or intellectual) wields tremendous power when connecting with others. The power of vulnerability (being ‘relatable) is something Oprah has particularly leveraged over the years through being so open about her never-ending cycles of weight-loss and gain.

**Demystifying “Je ne sais quoi”**

The quintessential quality many celebrities and ‘It-people’ possess can be understood as the way in which they ‘energetically engage’ their audiences. As discussed in the last chapter, the unseen is insanely valuable to us in all aspects of life, so why on earth wouldn’t you choose to cultivate it?

In every interaction we participate in, we’re not just sharing emotions and experiences with others, we are exchanging energy. This energy is created and transmitted via feelings and chemical explosions created in your mind by the various interactions you experience.

“Ever watch a movie and walk out of the cinema alive and buzzing? Every part of your body tingles and you feel like you can take on the world (we’re talking ‘feel good’ movie here, not Woody Allen, clearly!). A successfully emotive movie shifts you energetically due to chemical reactions in your brain and body; you’re vicariously experiencing the world on screen by proxy with an outcome as sure as if you were to down a can of Red Bull or take a huge hit of 100% Arabica espresso!”

~ Ben Angel
**Don’t Underestimate the IMPACT of Your ENERGY**

Unless you’re particularly self-aware, it’s easy to underestimate the energetic impact you’re having on others. An effective aerobics instructor can take your energetic state from sluggish to high voltage within minutes by stimulating an emotional shift similar to a stage performance by a singer or musician.

Consciously mastering your energy levels to shift up or down in response to that of others (mirroring or conveying excitement, passion, empathy, confidence etc) enables you to positively engage with them, creating rapport and a positive long-lasting impression. It is this ‘Art of Emotional Engagement’ that supermodels and performers such as **Naomi Campbell** and **Lady Gaga** have learned to master to stellar effect. Watch Gaga perform anything live and you’ll witness a performer giving it *everything she’s got* – and then some! Her high voltage energy is off the scale because she’s utterly committed to every moment.

Indeed, you yourself know whenever someone ‘checks-out’ of a relationship. They withhold their energy and attention from you, triggering feelings of rejection if you’re not careful. Remember the scarcity principle discussed earlier on? Well when we feel we’ve ‘lost’ something that was previously available to us, we always tend to fight to get it back. But whether or not we really should or need to is an entirely different story – and learning to apply the principles in this book to *pick your battles* is where theory + practice = WISDOM.

**Lady Gaga’s** performances are mesmerising because she connects so forcefully with herself and (so it feels) with every individual in the audience: she makes people FEEL SPECIAL in her *presence* to a degree others struggle to emulate. She plays an audience like an instrument, whisking them off on intensely emotive, energetic journey of light, sound, vision and theatrics. Imagine how lack- lustre and dull it would be if she maintained one monotonous ‘tone of voice’ throughout an entire performance.

Q.) So just WHERE does this Positive ENERGY FLOW come from?

Your own personal energetic flow is as unique as your own set of fingerprints. It flows from your wins, losses, hurts, successes, proudest moments and most humiliating failures. **These are the energetic under-currents and overtones you choose to bring** to any given moment / interaction / situation. We carry this energy everywhere we go. It is both inescapable (so you may as well learn to live with it) and **pliable** (because once you do you’ll be able to mould yourself ‘a charmed life’).
The Energetic Scale

As discussed over at www.benangel.co you can radically improve your ability to engage and influence others by investing some time and effort in measuring your interactions against the ‘Energetic Scale’. For the purpose of review and analysis, let’s say that:

* emotions sitting at the low end of the scale (0 – 4) involve negative feelings (guilt, anger, selfishness, apathy);

* in the middle of the scale (level 5) are our feelings of indifference (neither happy nor sad; a neutral experience);

* the upper end of the scale (6 – 9) is where the positive feelings hang out (happiness, satisfaction, contentment, enthusiasm, relaxation, peace, elation etc);

* and then there’s level 10: the bullseye! People operating from this highly positive space are energised, vibrant, charismatic, attractive, highly influential, ecstatic…and occasionally ‘over-the-top’ in some scenarios.

The key to mastering energetic engagement is to be willing and able to accurately observe where YOU are currently sitting on the scale with regards to your interactions with others. Below ’5’ and you’re likely to be leaving a negative lasting impression; whereas a level ‘5’ interaction itself will see you forgotten. Anything ‘6’ and above means you will be remembered for all the right reasons.

And level 10? Well let’s just save that for exceptional experiences or environments (like your early morning aerobics class).

“I’ve learned that people may forget what you say and forget what you do… but they will NEVER forget how you make them FEEL”

~ Maya Angelou (Renaissance Author, Poet & Activist b.1928)

By mastering how to shift your energy up and down this Energetic Scale, you become the source that helps others feel good; they will remember you fondly and keep coming back. You’ll not only leave a lasting impression, you’ll leave the right impression: the one that gets you the outcome you desire.
**Energetic Under-Currents and Over-Tones**

The next layer of complexity to become conversant with concerns the **energetic under-currents and over-tones** because when these fail to ‘meet’ harmoniously in the middle, your connection to others will be short-lived and doomed to fizzle out. This is because the ‘real’ reason anything in your life fails (particularly when dealing with others) is due to the integrity of your own internal congruence and how this is then projected outwards.

For example, if you are experiencing sadness, anger or frustration, it can’t help but show up in your physical appearance, tone, language or behaviour. These ‘tells’ (as they’re called in poker and other games of bluff) are the discreet yet devastatingly revealing little cues pointing to what is **really going on beneath the surface**. A ‘tell’ might take the form of a slight twitch, scratching the face or flushed cheeks. This signals a significant disconnect between the internal and external worlds and should ring alarm bells. Once again, whether it’s consciously recognised or not is not important: the subconscious has made note of it all regardless.

In contrast, **je ne sais quoi** and/or **X-factor** kick in when all the stars align (physiologically speaking) and all of our emotional undercurrents and overtones are congruent, naturally resonating outwardly to seduce the masses.

**Energetic Scale : some Practical Application**

Whether you are making a sales pitch or going on a date and you don’t feel quite right, you’re not connecting with that unique blend of talent and passion, which is distinctly ‘YOU’.

**Take time out to tune in to yourself** and you’ll discover the same **je ne sais quoi** available inside yourself that movie stars and leaders have.

**Remember that ‘practice makes perfect’** – and in time you will get better at connecting to that elusive ‘congruent moment’ when your inside and outside come together instantaneously and you feel powerfully, completely ‘whole’.

**NB:** If what you’re energetically expressing on the outside doesn’t match what you’re experiencing on the inside, you will lose influence through being ‘out of sync’ with yourself – and the message you’re attempting to convey will get lost.
Charisma, Neuroscience and Mind Reading

Neuroscientists and psychologists have long been intrigued as to how we so instinctively and instantly empathise another person’s emotions through simple observation. For example:

- You see a car crash and immediately cringe in pain;
- You watch a needle slide into the skin of another person and your muscles tense up as if it’s happening to you;
- You watch a speaker bomb dreadfully on stage and feelings of embarrassment overwhelm you…

CASE STUDY: The Magic of ‘Mirror Neurons’

A study of macaque monkeys in the 1990’s revealed great insight into the baffling nature of empathy through observation:

- Italian scientists implanted electrodes in the brains of several monkeys to observe the animals’ brainwaves during various activities.
- One day a researcher leaned to get his food and noticed that neurons began to fire in one of the monkey’s premotor cortex (an area that lights up when the animal is making the hand movement itself).2
- This incidental and staggering discovery introduced the world to ‘mirror neurons’ – a specific type of brain cell that fires when an individual performs an action personally and also when the action is being observed in another.

Follow-up studies on human participants have confirmed the existence of this ‘mirror neuron’ system in people as well as monkeys.

All this has an enormous impact on how we behave and respond to others. We can use the understanding to develop a more charismatic personality with X-factor to die for!! The fact that mirror neurons allow us to experience another’s feelings simply via observation empowers us to adapt how we respond: we can choose to fit in or stand out, whichever will be more effective in any given situation. When you see someone smile on television, your mirror neurons for smiling are also lighting up in that moment - no logical thought required!

Bring on the ‘Smile-Scan’

In Japan, up to date technology is being used to present customers with ‘happier’ interactions. In a city that treats its consumers like demi-gods, one Japanese railway company even employs a ‘Smile-Scan’ made by the company Omron to analyses how their employees smile when on the platform.3
This is how it works:

Staff are required to test their expressions before they begin work by smiling into a camera. The machine (which retails at $7,300 in case you’re keen!) measures ‘in real time’ the degree of: eye closure; eye corner curvature; wrinkle contours; mouth corner shape; and mouth closure. It then returns a percentage score, where 100% equates to a perfect, genuine and sincere smile. The device also offers training functions to help users who aren’t rating highly to improve their smile.

This smile detector is helping employees check their facial expressions more objectively and more positively influence the experience they are delivering to customers. The customer's mirror neurons get fired up with ‘feel-good chemicals’ which encourage them to experience heightened levels of customer service, merely through empathetic observation alone.

Mirror neurons aren’t only assisting businesses; they’re also helping scientists interpret the neurological processes occurring within social interactions, leading to important discoveries regarding: how we develop empathy; the evolution of language; and new therapies for stroke victims.

To instigate some positive transformation in the way you conduct and project yourself, observe your behaviour (inside and out) during the course of a wide variety of personal interactions. Through simple observation you can reprogram yourself to respond more effectively in any situation…which leads us nicely onto the next topic of self-control and versatility.

Self Control and Versatility

Through observing others’ behaviour and getting better at recognising the appropriate action for any given situation, we learn to apply increased levels of self-control. These keep our actions ‘within check’ and develop our personal versatility for standing out and cutting through the clutter, no matter which environment we’re competing in. Developing your personal flexibility makes life easier for you and everyone you come into contact with. Just make sure it’s not consistently at your own expense: there needs to be an equal energetic exchange (payoff).

To stand out for the right reasons, we must conduct ourselves with awareness and execute tasks competently, particularly whenever they have a direct and immediate impact on others. Mastering this vital X-factor skill enhances your perceived value and increases your influence over people and situations.

Likewise, your appropriate empathetic responsiveness to others is essential for mastering your emotional versatility. Learn to develop this by observing other people’s visual clues:

* how they behave;
* their facial expressions;
* the clothes they choose to wear;
* their habits, regular speech patterns, length of focused attention etc

This is so effective that I seldom take people at their word anymore – particularly if I do not know them very well as yet. Words can manufacture beautiful illusions in the mind; perceptions that in reality may never be fulfilled. You know the kind of people I’m talking about: they could sell ice to the Eskimos but have absolutely no personal qualities of real substance to back themselves up.

**Manipulators, Adaptors and Pacifiers (aka ‘MAPs’)**

Our nonverbal communication greatly impacts how others perceive us. You can look the part and sound the part…but if your body language or facial expressions don’t match your message, it will signal that something is ‘NQR’ and dissonance, disconnect and unanswered questions will ensue.

**As a leader in your chosen field** it is vital (for the sake of effective and trustworthy communication) that while ‘on show’ you never:

* massage yourself;
* pace nervously;
* scratch, sniff or fidget in your seat;
* rub or touch any part of your body (especially your neck or face).

All of the above belong to a group of body language gestures known as ’MAPs’ (manipulators, adaptors and pacifiers). Each is a sign of stress and act as a ‘tell’ that you’re not relaxed, might be lacking confidence, feel under pressure and are stifling part of your ‘true self’ – in short, ‘hiding something’ from yourself, your audience and the world. In order to feel and appear confident so that YOUR je ne sais quoi can shine through, you need to keep these MAPs in check.

Next time you’re in a particularly tricky situation, observe your body movements and really ‘see’ what you actually do. For example, do you:

* pick your fingernails?
* scratch your nose?
* fidget under the table?
* tap your feet or click your pen?
* Habitually adjust your glasses?
* Fiddle with your hair (perceived as flirting on a date – so be careful at work!)
Though seemingly harmless, these ‘tells’ are revealing more about you than you may wish to convey – and they are lowering your perceived value from being mid-to-high on the **Energetic Scale** and dragging you down to the lower end of the spectrum.

Now, I’m not suggesting you LIE or cover things up – far from it! But I AM advocating that you observe your current self *as you really are* in order to get to the bottom of WHY you do these distracting things, face your demons, and *let them go*! That way, you’ll be effortlessly congruent and effectively authentic…without even trying. Doesn’t that sound great?!

**HEAD TO TOE: it’s MAGIC when everything ‘CLICKS into PLACE’!**

When we say someone has ‘behaved out of character’, we usually mean they have done something unexpected based upon the way our own **primal brain** has **categorised** or **stereotyped** them. It can often come as a shock and cause us genuine concern over whether we can trust this person anymore; it calls into question their **credibility** etc. By contrast, when a person’s behaviour and expressiveness align seamlessly, their **instant appeal** and attractiveness for us immediately shoots through the roof.

The term ‘**Expressiveness**’ refers to your ability to communicate specific emotions through everything at your disposal **being in alignment**: appearance, tone of voice, body language, message, honest, vulnerability, energetic register, presence, focus, a true desire to be there…and so on. **Julia Gillard**, the current Australian Prime Minister at time of writing, was criticised for being “too robotic” when responding to the devastating Queensland floods in January of 2011. In contrast, the State Premier, **Anna Bligh** was praised for her ability to communicate a genuine sense of compassion…which prompted many Australian’s to ask themselves; *"Why isn’t she Prime Minister instead?"*

Both of these women are powerful and possess significant personal presence, yet they each displayed distinctly different communication styles on that occasion. To break it down:

* **Anna Bligh** had a more relaxed posture, indicating she was physically experiencing the same pain her constituents were going through.

* **Julia Gillard** on the other hand, exhibited an overly upright posture, prone to be misinterpreted by a viewer’s primal mind as being ‘elitist’ or dispassionate. There was no bending over to assist, no hugging, no clasping another person’s hand with two of hers – in short, during a situation calling for warmth and compassion, **Julia** conveyed stoic detachment. Whether consciously or not, this ‘stiff emotional chill’ was further emphasised by the strong, rigid suit she had decided to wear.
She later redeemed herself during a Federal Parliament session in which the victims of the floods were acknowledged. She struggled to hold back tears when speaking of a teenage boy and his mother who were tragically killed when a wall of water hit Toowoomba on January 10, 2011.

“The courage it takes for a young boy, 13-year-old Jordan Rice, to say to his rescuers, ‘take my brother first,’ and before that brave rescuer could return, Jordan and mum Donna were taken by the flood. But the legend of Jordan’s amazing courage will go on.” Ms Gillard said.

* Her show of vulnerability (although publicly criticised as potentially insincere) exposed another side of an individual whom at times can be seen as too harsh and disconnected. We each require a depth of connection with another to better understand them and the message they are speaking, in this case of great heroism.

**In summary: everything about you – from Head to Toe - must be in sync with your message** or you’ll simply never be able to effectively convey the sincere emotions you’re experiencing.
FOCUS Your Emotions

It’s time to unlock your potential as a charismatic communicator by learning how to ‘tune-in’, feel, and focus your emotions! Whenever you are willing to be ‘emotionally present’, your outward expressions automatically ‘get in sync’ with your internal world and… “Voilà!”…you’re ‘in the moment’. Suddenly you’re triggering the mirror neurons in your audience to fire off, and ‘seeing’ how it feels to have a truly shared experience of reality (as opposed to being all ‘cut-off ’ and separate from one another). Needless to say, this sense of community and connection is a powerful influencing tool!

Many of us lead with our logical brain when interacting with others, but you need to set this aside and learn to connect with genuine Heart and Soul. This will help you focus your emotions and increase the impact of your message. The challenge is how to overcome years of ‘programming’ (parents, school, society), which have trained you to hide your emotions away in public and cultivate your ‘poker face’ instead.

It therefore takes courage and consistent work on your ‘self’ to let this poker face ‘slip’ and reveal the ‘real’ you. This ‘real’ you (and later, your more ‘ideal’ you) is way more charismatic than anything you could ever conjure up. Yes, we must work within some boundaries of taste and discernment…but if you’re hiding your true ‘self ’ from yourself, other people or the world at large, then everything enlightening will similarly be hidden from YOU – and that doesn’t sound like very much fun, now does it?

Delivering “THE MESSAGE”

It may surprise you to learn that on every single occasion – whether personal or professional, public or private – you always have a message to deliver and a purpose for doing so (you’re not alone: we all do). Common examples include:

- at WORK: “I’m a committed hard worker who has earned this promotion”;
- at PLAY : “I’m fun, easy going and terrific company to be around”;
- in RELATIONSHIPS: “I’m here to love you, to let you love me; to meet your needs and experience life together through thick and thin.”

In each case, we must convey this message congruently ‘from head to toe’ in order not to trigger any primal protective mechanisms in the other person. If you fail to set a clear intention for your interactions with other people, you risk having zero impact on them – or worse still, creating a bad impression, as demonstrated earlier with the Energetic Scale.

Learning to find the balance between “coming on too strong vs. not being assertive enough” is a skill that will steadily develop over time in response to you practicing your own self-experimentation and versatility in contrasting situations and environments. So don’t be afraid to flex your newfound intuitive muscles!
ETHOS, PATHOS and LOGOS: making the MESSAGE more PALATABLE

Just as we discussed which elements increase your perceived value in the marketplace, so we must also understand the architecture of credibility (how credibility is formed). Why? Because credibility is vital for you being perceived as “someone who’s got IT”; as someone with the X-factor. Being taken seriously by your peers, mentor, family and friends will help you exude the kind of calm, warm ‘nothing-to-prove’ confidence that connects (and vice versa!).

According to the eminent Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, successful persuasion and communication can only be achieved when we master these three key elements:

* **ETHOS**: One’s appeal based on character;
* **LOGOS**: One’s appeal based on logic or reason;
* **PATHOS**: One’s appeal based on emotion

Society’s most influential leaders are those who artfully combine all three of these elements to communicate effectively and ‘get the message across’. Indeed, cultivating ‘the Art of je ne sais quoi’ is very similar:

* without the appeal of personality there is nothing for us to connect with;
* without the appeal of logic or reason we switch off or ‘tune out’;
* without the appeal of genuine emotion our Hearts and Minds are unmoved.

Missing out on any one of these three key ingredients is, in each case, like failing to put the raising agent in a cake: you can mix it up and bake it all you like…but the taste you leave behind will be as bland as the cake is flat. Which would be fine if this book was called, CLICK…BY BEING INSTANTLY FORGETTABLE... but it’s not, is it? No – far from, it in fact! So let’s power on and step up yet another gear, okay? Okay! Onwards and upwards…
Translating War & Peace into Haiku

**haiku |ˈhʌɪkuː|**
noun (pl. same or -kus)
  * a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables in **three lines of: five, seven, five**
  * traditionally evoking images of the natural world
  * an English imitation of this

ORIGIN Japanese, contracted form of haikai no ku ‘light verse.’

**Believe me, I do understand how you feel:** integrating everything we’ve learned so far feels ambitious, right? Kinda like condensing **WAR AND PEACE** into the Japanese art of haiku! It’s an art, no doubt about it.

But it IS a skill you can practice and master. And once you have and you begin to experience those golden moments where everything aligns and **Je ne sais quoi** is beaming out of you in every direction…well, let’s just say you’re going to be VERY glad you stuck with it all and put the hard yards in, and believe me!

In fact the more preparation you are willing to do in advance to get up to speed, the LESS effort will eventually be required for you to truly SHINE. Why? Because instead of wasting energy on ‘closing the gap’ between your real and ideal selves…you’ll be authentically BEING your ideal self all the time: thus presenting as a congruent and naturally inspiring human being. You will effortlessly embody your overall message and be perceived as ‘one complete package’ (congruent message) received loud and clear (a condition known as, ‘thin slicing’).

**Easy Quick Decisions from THIN SLICES (of INFORMATION not PIZZA, by the way!)**

Providing that YOU have done YOUR homework too, many studies have shown how even the briefest of well-observed encounters can be enough for you to gain reliable insights and draw accurate conclusions about another person. This super-fast assessment-and-assimilation process is otherwise known as acquiring ‘thin slices’ of information.

By assessing yourself from **head to toe** you reduce the chance of others coming to the wrong conclusion about you or forming ill-advised assumptions about your character. **Thin slices** are particularly useful in bringing a person’s **X-factor** to the fore. To achieve this, we need to:

* look at ourselves objectively;
* examine each ‘bit’ of information separately and completely;
* assess them to see how well they interact with one another (do they complement, undermine, support or negate one another?);
* evaluate how they could be perceived externally.

Having done this, make sure you ‘clear up’ any inconsistencies. Focus upon any areas of dissonance you find until they dissolve and melt into a seamless part of the whole (‘entire’) picture naturally. This is called ‘integrating your shadow self’ and is well documented in various ways in spiritual and self-help literature, so I won’t go into it much further here.

The point is, whether you consciously acknowledge it or not, you do have a constant message you’re conveying through all these thin slices of information. Rather than think of yourself as a full life story written out page after page, imagine yourself as the book COVER instead: your entire self is being communicated by way of one message overall and one message only. So it pays to make it count, right? Right!

The Most Important Element

Okay, so it’s not THE most important – but without this one key ingredient, everything else falls flat:

**You must be able to charm others sincerely (as opposed to superficially), into genuine rapport.**

Charm is a valuable, learnable skill and one that you can bank on to significantly increase your income and improve your social life. It can be a beautiful talent to nurture, when developed with the right intentions at heart. Some tips for improving your capacity for this follow:

* practice and cultivate the state of peripheral vision described previously;
* use your increased awareness to pay closer attention to your environment;
* allow yourself to naturally become more aware of emotions and feelings;
* learn to distinguish (and ‘own’) your own feelings as distinctly separate from (and yet interacting with) other people’s emotions;
* keep your spirits high on the Energetic Scale (you can only hold ONE thought in your brain, so choose a positive one);
* imagine yourself moving effortlessly through your space feeling grounded at all times;
* treat other people with compassion, joy and grace – because everyone deserves the same high calibre respect.

Now, if you ever find yourself feeling nervous in a room full of people, realise it’s because you’re fretting more about how you are being perceived by others, than bothering to ‘perceive’ anyone else yourself. The irony being that if everyone else is doing the same thing then you’re not criticising anyone…and nobody’s actually criticising you! Liberating, isn’t it?

Take the attention off yourself and observe others and see how they are. By shifting the focus from yourself and on to other people, you will begin to pick up subtle energies in the
space (grimaces, awkward silences, nervousness, mischief, humour, tension, joy), those present with the **X-factor** will naturally respond to the environment by ‘re-balancing’ the energy into a positive sphere no matter what is going on.

**This must all be achieved by genuinely connecting with one’s own self and interacting honestly with others.** Insincerity simply won’t wash because you’ll only give yourself away through ‘tells’ in facial expression, body language etc. One technique commonly used to appear more charismatic is to imagine you are being reunited with your very dear, very long-lost friend for the first time in a decade! This deliberately manufactured mis-perception of pre-existing rapport will create an instant spark between you because your subconscious doesn’t know the difference between IMAGINATION and FACT. It merely reflects the face value back at us and we behave as if the familiarity is ‘true’ and already there. Easy!

With all of the distractions in the world today, learning how to **be present** is a very real, very necessary skill that’s worth its weight in gold. Observe how **Oprah** is fully **present in the moment** when she is interviewing her guests on television. Anything less and she never would have achieved the success she’s generated to date.

**Leave Your (Signature) Foot-Print**

I feel I was a very lucky child. I grew up around an incredibly charismatic father who allowed himself to be **who he truly was** and through doing, encouraged us to have the spirit to do the same. Did we cringe on occasion? Absolutely! But that was all part of the fun in not taking ourselves too seriously, caring about people, and appreciating life.

> “Life is too important to be taken seriously.”
> ~ Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900)

**Promise me this:** that you **WILL** leave your own unique signature footprint on this earth by sharing your IDEAL ‘self ’ with other people and the world…**fully,** okay?

No half-hearted attempts. Surrender fully to the process and the process will give you back more than you could possibly imagine, dare or hope for right now…!

**Speed = Charisma**
Q. “But what if I’m just not naturally charismatic?!”

Because of the personal transformations I have seen over the years, I firmly believe that everyone has the potential to become an infinitely more engaging and successful human being – as long as they set their heart and mind to it, that is.

Some introverted personality types may feel they have to work twice as hard to nurture charisma, but a triumph hard won is twice as sweet! Take it from one who knows: it’s worth the effort to LICK this into shape! Later on in Chapter 9, I will discuss compartmentalisation and how you can leverage this tool to assist you in developing a more charismatic persona.

Meanwhile, one immediate technique you can apply to boost your powers of influence is to vary the rate of your speech. How come? Well, a 2005 study found those who spoke faster were rated more charismatic than those who took their time. So having a few variously-paced yet equally fluid speaking styles up your sleeve to draw on, will help blend the overall package of who you are wonderfully together, projecting a positive impression of an energetically fine-tuned and confident person with nothing to prove: perfect! And incredibly seductive in nature, such as self-mastery is!

Now, if you can also commit to having fun as you apply all this… along with your ability to notice / select / mirror / repeat keywords in conversation / communication…well then, you’ll be Finding The Moment When Everything CLICKS And Falls Into Place and tripping over your own je ne sais quoi faster than you can say, “Thank You”.

So, Good Luck…! I’ll see you again in chapter 8.
CHAPTER EIGHT - For VANITY or SURVIVAL

A Cost Benefit Analysis of Beauty, Face Shapes and Outcomes: Becoming an ICON in Your Own World

As we’ve already explored, impressive and instantaneous results are possible through effectively managing others’ perception of us. And – like it or not – one of the biggest contributory factors to this is your physical appearance. Ouch! Here’s just a taste of some of the studies that back this up:

* According to economist Daniel Hamermesh, a good-looking man will make $250,000 more over the course of his career compared to his less-attractive counterpart;

* A survey conducted by NEWSWEEK revealed 57% of hiring managers agreed that unattractive candidates had a significantly harder time landing the job.

* In addition, more than half (of the NEWSWEEK study hiring managers above) recommended candidates invest at least as much time and money on being physically attractive as perfecting their resume.

* A Cornell study found unattractive defendants were 22% more likely to be convicted and given longer, harsher sentences (22 months longer in prison on average). This particular study highlighted a major flaw in judicial system, with candidates being unfairly favoured or dismissed based upon their appearance.

Vanity for Survival: and ANYONE can LOOK GOOD

Paying attention to your looks isn’t just a question of vanity – it’s a matter of economic survival…and in some ways even freedom (certainly freedom of choice at any rate). But hey – DON’T PANIC! You do not need to look like a supermodel for all this to apply to you.

The significant advantages that come from ‘looking good’ are far more about making the most of what you’ve got than being some randomly blessed genetic physical miracle! We’re talking good grooming, flattering and well-chosen attire, hygiene, manicures and haircuts here…things anyone can learn to improve upon, no question.

And it’s important stuff to master – because the plain fact is that your physical appearance is one area you can rest assured you’re being judged on...all the time, in every situation. After all, you’re doing it too! Your primal brain automatically scans the face and features of other people (especially their eyes), searching for any sign of threat (i.e. Friend or foe? Fight or flight?).
As with the racing car driver who made the snap decision to slam on his brakes before turning the corner, your subconscious is making decisions to protect you way faster than your conscious / logical thoughts are processing.

These fast, unconscious processes are the ones so often responsible for making or breaking your career, steering your love life and determining your happiness. Your subconscious has its uses, granted, but as we’ve already seen, it has its limits too. In order not to be at the whim of anyone or anything (including your own subconscious!) you would do well to take control by arming yourself with the knowledge of how things really work presented in this book…and then taking a more active role in working with / influencing them consciously. Make sense? Terrific!

The Merit of Your Work

We’d all love to believe we’re judged solely on the merit of our work and inner beauty. But the fact is, if people have to fight to see past an external mess first, you run the risk of them not being as ‘consciously evolved’ as you. In short, they’ll write you off before you’ve even had a chance to interact with them from a genuine ‘internal’ standpoint. So why hold yourself back?

“By the way – if you’ve ever been bullied over your physical appearance or have struggled with your weight and find this chapter already pushing your buttons, or you’re sensing deep resistance in yourself to ‘get with the program’ and improve your personal grooming / health and fitness / physical appearance… then…

*! NEWSFLASH!* 

…this is SELF-SABOTAGE at work – so recognise it for what it is! It can take somebody else to point it out to you sometimes and that’s what I’m here for…so if this applies to YOU, please don’t waste the opportunity to learn and grow: it’s what you’re reading this book for in the first place, right?”

~ Ben Angel

When we meet new people, our subconscious mind seeks to find a ‘fit’ (congruence; integrity) between how someone looks and the role they could potentially play in our personal or professional life. **Where there is a fit, instant credibility follows.** Where there is none or we feel something is ‘NQR’, credibility remains elusive and will be hard to come by, both ‘in the moment’ and in future.

Remember: this is also happening in reverse, with **their** subconscious mind evaluating you in the same way!
Help is at hand to make the most of these initial and ongoing encounters, and in this chapter I will reveal the **key strategies guaranteed to help package you up as an easily marketable brand**, for whatever area of life you’re focusing on.

Before we dive headlong into all this however, let’s take a look at the famous ‘Golden Ratio’ formula – as beautifully represented by Leonardo da Vinci’s world-renowned Vitruvian Man illustration of the human body emphasising its ideal **Golden Ratio** proportions.

### The Golden Ratio – External Beauty Demystified

Mathematics has more of relevance to say about external beauty than you may have realised. In fact, **physical attraction correlates to specific ratios and features of symmetry and proportion**, as Leonardo da Vinci and many before him (Plato springs to mind) already knew centuries ago.

Modern research studies have supported this knowledge and shown how these features increase attractiveness in humans, leading us to **perceive those who possess them** as being healthier and more desirable.

**Leonardo da Vinci**’s famous illustration highlighted the intricate mathematical proportions of the human body and related these to the workings of the universe – and indeed, the **Golden Ratio** is not a formula limited to the human body. Its numerical perfection of scale can be found replicated everywhere from music, architecture, and science to the natural world, clothing, and even human facial expressions. In this regard, the **Golden Ratio** exists in close relationship with something known as ‘the Fibonacci Sequence’:

**The Fibonacci Sequence**  
(Fibonacci numbers)

The **Golden Ratio** is based on **Fibonacci Numbers**, where by definition each subsequent number equals the sum of the previous two. For example:

0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144...

According to a 2009 study conducted by the University of California, San Diego and the University of Toronto, beauty is not only in the eye of the beholder, it is also in relationship to the positioning of the eyes and mouth. Researchers tested the existence of an ‘ideal’ facial arrangement – and found one!

They discovered the most favourable relationship to be between the eyes, the mouth and the edge of the face for individual beauty. The two **Golden Ratios** confirmed for width and length are as follows:
Female faces were perceived to be more attractive when:

* the vertical distance between eyes and mouth was approximately 36% of overall face length;

* the horizontal distance (width) between eyes was approximately 46% of overall face width.

The good news is these ratios do coincide with those of the average face (“Phew!”) and research also suggests that facial attractiveness results from a cognitive process by which people take in all the faces they see and average them to get an ideal width and length ratio to refer to. This ‘averaging out’ also helps to account for the ‘exception to the rule’, where distinctly divergent or exaggerated features are favoured in some non-western cultures.

A study published in the December edition of Psychological Science implies that we pay closer attention to people we find attractive and adds weight to the advantages of perceived beauty – and although this isn’t groundbreaking news in itself, the study also revealed other noteworthy conclusions. The aim of the study was to determine how an individual’s attractiveness impacts upon others’ ability to discern their personality traits. The research was spearheaded by Professor Jeremy Biesanz (UBC Department of Psychology), PhD student Lauren Human, and undergraduate student Genevieve Lorenzo.

For over half a century scientists have spent considerable time and resources trying to determine what sort of people most accurately perceive the personality traits of others. But the study referred to above revealed it to be less about who best judges another’s personality, but rather that some people’s personalities are more easily perceived. It was shown that beautiful people convey specific personality traits more convincingly during first impressions than that of their less attractive counterparts.

**physiognomy** (pl. –mies) noun

* a person’s facial features or expressions, esp. when regarded as indicative of character or ethnic origin.
* The supposed art of judging character from facial characteristics.
* The general form or appearance of something: the physiognomy of the landscape.

Attractiveness therefore has a significant role to play in our world – a role that YOU can take full advantage of once you understand the basic ‘human universals’ and the effects they have on you, me, him, her…basically, everybody!
Predicting Electoral Outcomes

Is it really possible to predict the outcome of an election merely by looking at someone’s face? Apparently so, yes!

Alexander Todorov, psychologist at Princeton University, verified that a split-second glance at two candidates’ faces was enough to determine who would win an election. Todorov had previously conducted research to demonstrate people’s unconscious judgement of the competence (credibility) of unfamiliar faces, which occurs within a tenth of a second(!). These same findings have since been applied to the political landscape as follows:

Todorov’s research showed that a rapid assessment of the comparative competence of two candidates’ faces was enough to predict the winner in 70% of election races for the positions of U.S. senator and state governor in the 2006 elections.

Charles Ballew, an undergraduate psychology major from Princeton joined Todorov to undertake three experiments in which they asked several dozen participants make snap decisions about characteristics based on people’s faces.

The participants were shown a series of photographs containing a pair of faces and asked to instinctively and rapidly decide which face they felt exhibited greater competence. They were only given a tenth of a second to choose, and in the few instances where participants recognised the faces, their findings were omitted from the research.

This study and many like it have demonstrated time and again that the physical representation of competence is a universal, recognisable and measurable quality, which gives those who possess it more obviously a clearly defined advantage over those who do not.

VISUAL SHORTHAND: How the Subconscious mind copes with ‘Overwhelm’

Clearly not everybody will vote based on how competent a candidate looks: beliefs and values also play a vital role.

All other things considered equal, however, most people will tend to default to the visual representation of an individual for insight into their competence, a subconscious skill otherwise known as ‘visual shorthand’.

Visual shorthand kicks in whenever we feel overwhelmed by the amount of dissonant information streaming in. During political campaigns we are especially bombarded by conflicting messages from all sides: the media, each candidate, their opponents, social commentators, lobbyists, action groups, minority spokespeople, friends, family and more.
A significant amount of this information inevitably gets taken or presented out of context, whether deliberately or not. This additional layer of complexity contributes to our conscious brain spiralling into panic and our subconscious mind coming to the rescue.

**CASE STUDY : Australian Politics and Perceived Intelligence**

* In 2010 the leader of the opposition party Tony Abbott (Liberal) went head-to-head with Julia Gillard (Labor) for the role of Prime Minister. The battle was on, not only to win ‘Government’, but also ‘the Hearts and Minds’ of the Australian people.

* The August election resulted in Labor losing 13 seats, which delivered a hung parliament. This forced Prime Minister Julia Gillard to cut a deal with independent MPs and the Green Party in order to hold onto power.

* In July of 2010, Gillard and Abbott were rated on specific personality attributes in an online Essentials Report:

**Julia Gillard:**

* 87% rated her as “intelligent”
* 72% rated her as “capable”

**Tony Abbott:**

* 76% as “intelligent” (11 point negative gap)  
* 48% as “capable” (28 point negative gap)

At the time, this presented a staggering chasm between the two potential leaders, particularly where the ratings of capability were concerned.

What’s fascinating is how these survey results appear to coincide with the party leaders’ face shapes and the type of rapid subconscious assessments being made by the electorate as a result. This was especially true of voters with limited education about the specific policy and background (beliefs and values) of each candidate and their respective party.
Democratically Selected: Are you sure?

With face shapes and beauty having such a strong influence over the voting process, studies such as these call into question just how fairly our so-called ‘democratically elected leaders’ really are selected. Worryingly, research has also shown we tend to vote for leaders with more masculine features in times of war than in peace – which doesn’t seem like the best rule of thumb to be using when so many lives are at stake!

We may not be able to ‘stop’ this primal programming from occurring, but at least through being more educated about it we can increase our chances of success when it comes to things such as:

* hiring decisions;
* how we treat / are treated by our peers;
* how we select / are selected as a life partner etc

By associating specific facial features with particular attributes, we’re all guilty of using our subconscious observations to categorise individuals and treat them accordingly…unless we make a special effort to get beneath the surface and become more aware of what we are doing (and being subjected to).

Following on from the CASE STUDY above, the relevance-to- success of Abbott and Gillard’s face shapes even coincides with the findings of another independent study. According to researchers Ran Hassin and Yaacov Trope at the University of New York, scientific research has shown society has a general ‘idea’ of what makes someone look / feel / appear intelligent or not:

* **Low Intelligence:** features thick, straight eyebrows; larger- than-average ears; a drooping mouth; and a low forehead (Abbott has distinctly large ears and a drooping mouth and eyes);
* **High Intelligence:** features rounded eyebrows; a high forehead; clear, bright eyes’; short ears; and a naturally upturned mouth even when not smiling. (Gillard exhibits round eyebrows and a mouth that turns up slightly at the edges and while her large ear lobes have attracted some media attention, they are usually covered by her hair and so fail to distract the public).

Why it’s NOT a Question of INTELLIGENCE…

What this research demonstrates is the GAP WHICH CAN EXIST BETWEEN how we perceive intelligence and the actual level of intelligence itself. An entire society unknowingly defaulting to visual shorthand (appearance / looks) is a worrying fact because it will always define the stereotype assigned to the individual…including yours!

“Okay…but so what?”
Hey, I hear you – and it’s a fair question. In the Australian example, both parties were neck and neck to the very end on a preferred party policy basis, so it’s admittedly very hard to tell whether Gillard’s physical advantage was the cherry on the cake…or insignificant compared to other elements at play.

What IS apparent, however, is the inextricable link between looks, perceived intelligence and competency. Does it mean the person with the perceived intellectual advantage will always come out on top? Not necessarily – but it DOES point to the extra ‘ace up their sleeve’ advantage when it comes to subconsciously influencing outcomes.

“Okay…but what if I’m in the position of needing to ‘look smart’ but possessing facial features which seem to state otherwise?!”

Again – I hear you! And you’re in luck, because there’s an easy solution: you simply change your communication style to fit your face, thus ‘realigning’ your appearance and message to be congruent. Cool, huh?

Through understanding how you are perceived in particular environments, you can regain complete control of your outcomes by adapting your communication style to fit your face shape and physicality. Because even though you may not be able to change your face shape, you can still make other external and behavioural changes to counteract any disadvantages you have, as you will discover throughout the rest of this chapter.

This means you’re no longer the hapless victim of evolution! Instead, through aligning visual cues with your verbal message, you can reclaim your destiny and Captain your own ship – “Success, Ahoy!”

The Exception to the Rule (there’s always at least ONE!)

The presence of an exception serves two important purposes:

1. It establishes the fact that a general rule does indeed exist, and;

2. It proves the realm of infinite possibility, which can occasionally also be leveraged.

There are always exceptions to every rule…but don’t aim to be the exception to this one! Matching your visual and verbal signals will give you an edge never to be underestimated.
Less than Perfect

When presenting ourselves in the best possible light, we must keep in mind that ‘perfection’ comes at its own price as well. If someone presents his or herself as too perfect (aka ‘too good to be true’) it can actually end up arousing suspicion that something is ‘NQR’ and actually work against the individual in question.

Some studies have even shown that good-looking women in upper-echelons of any field historically male dominated can suffer from the so-called ‘bimbo effect’, which seems rather unfair! Their physical perfection stirs up jealousy in some colleagues and can sometimes lead to them being viewed as “too feminine” or “less competent” by both male and female peers. Conversely, women in lower-level positions (i.e. support staff; secretarial) were perceived to be at a disadvantage if “not attractive enough”.

Does this mean women should become more masculine to gain promotion? Absolutely not! Instead I share these studies in order to empower, not limit (knowledge is power!). It’s all about striking a balance between communication style and physical presentation.

Just as with the Energetic Scale explored earlier, both men and women must create the right blend of masculine and feminine energies to influence their own environment to achieve specific goals and ambitions. Either one in excess can be overpowering and come across as ‘false’. Learn to choose wisely as to how / when / where you amplify these qualities – a technique known as ‘self-mastery’ - a topic we will be examining in more detail in the next chapter.

“My training and personal experience have both convinced me of the fact that no matter how great the message or intention a person holds dear, they will never achieve the desired outcome unless they also visually represent it: full stop!”

~ Ben Angel

Environmental Factors and Instantaneous Outcomes

For the past eight years I have been engaged as a consultant focusing on team dynamics and networking skills for individual professionals and large companies, including: Toyota; Australia Post; and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

At one point, however, my successful track record hit a critical juncture: I realised that with some individuals, no matter how well they applied the skills I taught them, they simply couldn’t achieve the same outstanding results that others did (increased sales, influence, profile, relationship success etc).
This puzzled me…so I kept investigating all available data until one day it dawned on me why: it was because of a misalignment in their visual representation and the message.

It was at this point in my career that I realised the critical importance of image consultancy and began to study ‘the Art of Personal Presentation’, perfecting my understanding of the impact on visual appearance and perception created by:

* clothes
* shapes
* colours
* lines
* contours
* face shapes
* textures
* hair colour
* skin tone
* make-up…etc.

Two full months into this extensive training, I found myself becoming acutely aware of how others presented (and often mis-presented) themselves in public. I also found myself becoming more and more obsessed with how I looked – to the point at which it became unhealthy for a while (not recommended!).

“I am as vain as I allow.”
~ Lady Gaga (Lyrics from So happy I could die)

It is important that we learn to distinguish for ourselves both the relationship and difference between ‘self-image’ and ‘beauty’. The purpose of me revealing these insights into the immediate impact of visual appearance to you is to empower you to objectively critique yourself and make improvements where necessary. This doesn’t have to mean plastic surgery, though, okay? Something we shall soon find out…

“As your eyes are the windows to your soul, so your wardrobe is the window on your state of mind.”
~ Ben Angel
‘The Clothes Whisperer’

In the same way as psychologists have proved we can learn how to accurately assess a person by observing their belongings, we can also tell how someone feels about his or herself by what they choose to wear. Likewise the cut, colour and quality of YOUR clothing convey messages loud and clear to others about you, too.

Every morning when you wake and make a selection from your wardrobe, you are making a conscious or unconscious statement about where you’re at, your state of mind, how ‘together’ your life is, and how YOU feel about YOURSELF in that moment. This statement is going to lead to three varying experiences for you and others throughout that day which shall either be:

* Positive
* Negative
* Neutral

By objectively categorising your appearance into one of these three headings, you are empowered to make significant adjustments to instantly improve your impact, influence and outcome.

To test this theory yourself, get dressed up in your poshest suit and visit an expensive retail store. Observe the welcome you receive. On another occasion, go back to the same store in your daggiest clothes. You will experience firsthand the impact your image has on your day- to-day life (noticeable in the contrasting way the staff are liable to treat you).

When seeking promotion, trying to score a date, garnering more respect, or re-lighting the spark in your relationship, ask yourself the following question: “What message am I giving out with the clothes I’m wearing today?”

Your own answers may surprise you – and in so doing act as a guiding light to more immediate and positive outcomes in your life...providing you listen to your own inner wisdom and intuition as it develops!

“Is a rock hard or soft? That all depends on whether or not it’s been polished!”

~ Ben Angel

Reading and Maximising Your Visual Presence

The beauty of better understanding how humans perceive and respond to appearance, is that you can not only groom yourself to maximise your results but also read others and their intentions more effectively. The next few pages outline effective key strategies to help you adapt, improve,
mould and align the visual-verbal messages you’re transmitting – not only in person but through photographs and other visual mediums, such as training videos or television, as well (did I hear someone say, “OPRAH”?).

**FACIAL FEATURES AND EFFECTS**

**Stronger, more MASCULINE features**

These are particularly helpful as a leader, however there will also be times when a ‘softer approach’ is more useful, for example when getting a sensitive message across (remember Julia Gillard and the QLD floods?). **Strong masculine features include:** a sharp jaw line, prominent (large/straight) nose, angular (square) face shape, triangular hairline, and thick/ coarse hair. To soften the look and the message when you need to:

* wear contact lenses instead of eye-glasses so people can see your eyes (useful when hiring or firing; for media interviews; when on a first date etc);
* soften the way your hair is styled (minimal hair product so your hair appears ‘touchable’; no spiky or sharp lines; a soft blow-dry is ideal for women here);
* medium contrast clothing (this will be described in more detail shortly).

**NEUTRAL features**

Neutral features are neither masculine nor feminine. Your face is more flexible than anything else at your (instant) disposal. It gives you a phenomenal ability to hold ‘strength’ in one moment and ‘softness’ in the next. Play with the techniques above and below when you require more feminine or masculine energy to make a particular point.

**Softer, more FEMININE features**

As discussed earlier, studies have shown how too much femininity can be perceived as weak, just as too much masculinity can be perceived as arrogant. **Soft feminine features include:** round face/ nose, rounded eyebrows, shorter stature, fine / fair hair. To convey a more assertive, severe tone you can opt for:

* highly stylised hair (stiffer hair product; straightened; sharp cutting or shape);
* high-contrast clothing combinations (again, we’ll get to this shortly);
* choose eye-glasses with a bold, structured frame (not round);
* add inches to your height (wear heels or elongate your body with streamlined clothing (more about this coming up)).
Don’t Dress to Depress! or – How to master ‘the Art of Contrast’

Mastering the **Art of Contrast** is a key component for well managing the visual impression you create. Anyone observing or meeting you will automatically pick up on contrast (colour variation) and quite literally be subconsciously ‘awakened’ by the stimuli provided by your attire.

**High-contrast clothing combinations** have the effect of you being remembered, taken notice of, and listened to more attentively. **Low- contrast combinations** are preferable for ‘flying under the radar’: they result in you becoming less visible, more discreet, and less threatening - not great for when you’re trying to close a sale or stand out…but ideal for moments when you want to have a more gentle or understated effect on people.

**CASE STUDY : Successful Styling for a Job interview**

A client of mine called Ann once asked me to style her for a job interview. She was one of fifty high calibre candidates being grilled over the course of a few days. What made her stand out head and shoulders above the rest, when all of them were similarly qualified? Her choice of high-contrast colour combination outfits. She even received compliments about her style from her competitors and the hiring board alike!

**HIGH CONTRAST: Show them who’s ‘Top Dog’**

High-contrast clothing combinations include bright colours combined with dark shades, or variously bright colours combined with each other. For example:

- highest contrast corporate wear = striking black or dark navy suit with a white shirt and dark tie;
- tone this down (to tailor to the occasion) by wearing more casual clothes that still demonstrate high colour contrast, i.e. red on brown = high contrast, high influence vs. brown on brown = low contrast, low influence.

This style of dressing can make others feel mediocre and will have you screaming at the top of your lungs, **“Bow down, my minions!”** Okay, so not really... But this is the most suitable choice for situations where you require others to pay close attention to your message. Subconsciously they won’t know why they’re hanging on to every word, but they will be hanging on! Just make sure you back the visual up with something worth saying and you’ll have a winning combination.
MEDIUM CONTRAST: Appear Welcoming and Approachable

Medium-contrast clothing combinations are the most socially acceptable. They create a welcoming impression and will make you appear easygoing and sociable, yet still influential (although not as ‘serious’, assertive or powerful as the ‘high-C’ combination).

Choose medium contrast clothing for situations when you need to be approachable. ‘Medium-C’ combinations include:

* light / medium or dark / medium variations in colour;
* light grey pinstripe suits with white or blue shirts;
* any non-offensive, neutral shade combinations in soft, tactile fabrics;
* khaki pants with a black polo top are a good casual option for the men.

LOW CONTRAST: ‘Wear’ the hell did you go?

If you’re having ‘a fat day’, ‘an ugly day’, or ‘a bad hair day’ (and God knows we do all have them from time to time!) then you will probably feel like ‘hiding’ from the world (not to mention all your manic fans!). Under these circumstances, low contrast combination clothing is definitely the way to go. ‘Low-C’ choices include:

* little or no colour difference between garments;
* subtle-toned, low-key accessories;
* understated, classic, well-cut pieces in muted shades;
* for those wanting to hide from the paparazzi (or a debt collector!) ‘black-on-black’ (i.e. black pants with a black shirt) is a classic old favourite with good reason…just be mindful of white deodorant marks!

Low contrast combinations work well when your aim is to blend into the background, ‘observe without being seen’, or avoid being perceived as intimidating. Definitely not ideal if your goal is to make a lasting or memorable impression, score a date, inspire your partner to look up from the television at you, or covert a new client, however!

TOP TIP: For more in-depth information on the emotional resonance of different colours, please refer to benangel.co for further details. It’s fascinating stuff!
The Literal Meaning Behind ‘Elements’

Each and every day we interact with key elements in our lives – ‘attributes of environment’ and elements which show up variously as being or feeling: hard, soft, intrusive, gentle, textured, multi-layered, structured, threatening, calming, welcoming, intense or banal.

It is important to understand the ‘literal’ psychological perception these elements create when we come into contact with others and how we can leverage them to our advantage for more impactful communications. For example:

* **Roundness** – Whether it be facially, in clothing, or featured in buildings and architecture, any round or curved ‘elements’ will create an impression of softness. Be aware that ‘round elements’ in clothing (e.g. collars, patterns) will usually add extra ‘weight’ to your appearance and give the impression of a fuller figure – which may or may not be desirable for you. As one might expect, curves and rounded contours are more naturally associated with feminine as opposed to masculine energy.

* **Straight lines and/or structured angles** – Straight or structured lines in clothing or on the face add strength, length and width (depending on how they are placed). Balance them with rounder features to strike a ‘yin and yang’ (happy medium) between the masculine energy of these ‘linear elements’ and the curvaceousness of those described above.

* **Light** – Light is closely associated with a sense of happiness and fulfilment. Wear light coloured clothing whenever you want to accentuate your compassionate, ‘enlightened’ or more spiritual side…

* **Dark** – Dark colours are powerful but can also sometimes feel far too oppressive. Counteract this by keeping the lines clean and simple (i.e. the infamous ‘little black dress’ is only sexy because it is minimalist and form-fitting, as opposed to over-the-top, lavish and heavy with layers and layers of dense fabric!).

In order to ‘fine tune’ the message you wish to portray, go over the elements above and look for ways to mix and match your hair, make-up (ladies only!) and wardrobe in order to create combinations with varying degrees of power and emotional intensity. Be daring at home…and then rein it in if you must before stepping out. Remember: anything that goes ‘too far’ will have adverse effects… yet if it isn’t bold enough, you’ll be as memorable as a wallflower! Be mindful of which note on the scale (positive, negative or neutral) you’re aiming for…and then just go for it. Have fun!
**Become an ICON in Your Own LIFETIME**

There have been many icons in our time but few people understand how they came to be so powerful. Take Madonna for example: she made it a point to personify a radical departure from the mainstream, yet still always managed to represent an enormous ‘underbelly’ of cutting edge fashion swarming just beneath the surface.

She was always on the cusp, planting herself firmly in the juxtaposition between what was already acceptable and the daring elements that hadn’t broken through yet (largely influenced by her years spent dancing in funky underground New York clubs). Madge regularly sent intelligent and influential shock waves throughout the entire world and paved the way for more recent examples of female self-expression and empowerment, such as Lady Gaga.

It is important to grasp the highly strategic approaches of both these artists. They are experts at leveraging everything – ‘good’ or ‘bad’ – that comes their way and always turning it to their advantage. To become similarly ‘super-influential’ in your own life, you need to take an honest look at how much you can apply this same ‘**iconic win-win attitude**’ at a level practical for you (e.g. how much of a risk are you willing to take in order to ‘strike a pose’ uniquely yours?). To become an ICON in your own lifetime, you must be aware of the extent of your own ‘**iconic imagery**’ and get familiar with your ‘**somatic markers**’. Luckily I’m here to show you how – too easy! Let’s take a look…

**Somatic Markers**

Step 6 in the *Je ne sais quoi* ‘menu’ talks about creating ‘**somatic markers**’ in the minds of others. This is achieved by presenting them with whatever strong theme (message) you stand for in an influential way with real impact. You can apply this to any and all areas of your life (dating, parenting, teaching, job hunting, love-making, activism, promotion, philanthropy, sport etc).

Every single time you make a decision you are assessing the **incentive value** of the choices available by comparing the size of ‘payoff’ of one option over another. And whenever you feel overwhelmed by too much information, **somatic markers** will help you to settle on a choice based reasonably upon your previous experience(s) and/or stimuli.

**Somatic markers** are ‘associations’ between reinforcing stimuli that induce specific physiological states. Every time you interact with another person, you create and leave some kind of impression. Whether or not the impression is particularly positive, negative, influential or memorable is up to YOU.

Whenever you pay attention and focus on producing the appropriate stimuli for any given environment (particularly in the bedroom!) you can create ‘**somatic markers**’ in the mind of your companion, which they will associate you with from then on. In a business context, this might lead to you being the preferred supplier for many clients, for example.
**Somatic markers** are even more effective when created using a combination of elements, such as:

* experience
* colour / texture
* clothing
* mode of communication
* music / movement (kinetic energy)
* engaging the senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell *and feelings*)

Leave any one of these out and you’ve left money on the table, which is never a good idea.

**Photographic Imagery**

One area, which many of us do not capitalise on enough, is the use of photographic imagery. Images of you are easily accessible in these digital days, particularly if you engage with social platforms such as Facebook.

These images possess significant power to influence outcomes and can leave a positive lasting impression when handled well. From my own experience with long-distance coaching, for example, a well-presented image is often the first ice-breaker in terms of creating a ‘visual calling card’ and establishing rapport / trust.

Images are so powerful because they bypass the language function in the **primal brain** and speak straight to the heart and mind of another person. They can therefore be used to great influential effect for a whole gamut of communication, such as:

* online dating
* résumés / business cards
* building social networks
* boosting perceived value

A well-chosen image will greatly assist you in creating positive ‘**somatic markers**’ in the minds of people you interact with. Getting your images ‘right’ is an art in itself however, so let’s take a look at some **TOP TIPS** for succeeding with photographic imagery…
A NEW ICON is BORN: The Power of Effective Imagery

Lady Gaga is an exceptional example of someone adept at creating powerful visual imagery to transform herself into an icon with a significant and devoted following. A self-confessed “master of fame”, she has achieved this in various ways, for example:

a) **FAME is in-built in her NAME**: the title ‘Lady’ immediately elevates Gaga’s status, creating intrigue, perceived value and personal presence from the outset.

b) **Leveraging video / still imagery to portray herself as a Queen**: appearing on a throne; killing boyfriends in music videos to assert power; presenting herself and her work as being all her OWN making, thus appearing uncompromising etc.

c) **Using classic ‘black & white’ imagery**: monotone gives the impression of timeless chic, style and wisdom. It also triggers primal brain somatic marker responses (audience association with other iconic images, e.g. Marilyn Monroe).

d) **ICONIC clothing**: Specialising in SUPER High-Contrast theatrical talking points!

e) **A Healthy Dose of Controversy**: intelligent, opinionated and outspoken, Lady Gaga is a multi-million-dollar, multi-million- somatic marker-generating maverick marketing DREAM MACHINE!

Now, Lady Gaga is a lot of things, but subtle isn’t one of them! So if her oh-so-bold approach feels too overt for you, don’t worry: it’s the principle we’re learning here. My advice is: figure out how daring you feel comfortable being…and then venture just a little further. This will guarantee you’ll be creating ripples, waves and whole stylistic tsunamis faster than your fans can scream, “Fame Monster!”

Let’s consider some of the easy steps YOU can take to rock what you’ve got and knock the socks off everyone else – especially when it comes to appearing in photographs:

“**Work it Baby!**”

As with other areas we examine in this book, ‘good enough’ just isn’t good enough when it comes to creating your visual imagery, so don’t settle for it! To go beyond ‘good’ and instead achieve ‘great’, it’s all about the way you ‘share yourself’ when being photographed. In other words, how you look into the lens of the camera.

As any portrait photographer will tell you, most people are so super- self-critical that they tend to shy away or slink down when being snapped. Not good, let alone great!
A great shot is one that conveys exactly what YOU DESIRE IT TO – whether that be warmth, compassion, power, approachability, professionalism, humour or connection. In any case, your eyes should always beam with energy and this is easily achieved when you know how:

So instead of looking at the tip of the camera (i.e. the lens) imagine you are looking all the way through it and out the other side. This works even better if you imagine you are looking straight into the face of someone supportive that you love being around because they make you feel good.

This combination of ‘far-sighted’ gaze and familiar recipient actually has a physical impact on the size of your pupils, creating that ever-elusive and valuable _je ne sais quoi_ we all seek.

The reason why so many people’s eyes look dead in photographs is because they are only ‘half’ connecting by limiting their own gaze and imagination. Looking ‘all the way through’ with warmth and familiarity creates a far more intense and palpable connection with your viewer(s).

**Extra HEIGHT = even more PRESENCE**

As already discussed, physical height is another attractive attribute with a huge impact on how we get treated and the level of success we often reach. The good news is that not only can we elongate ourselves in person by the clothes we wear (long, lean, form-fitting lines; attention drawn to the top of neck by a tie or chic jewellery), we can also achieve it in photographs. How? Like this:

* ask your photographer take the photograph from near ground-level, looking up at you;
* position yourself so you are looking slightly down into (and through!) the camera lens;
* Don’t be afraid to practice: check the image (easy with today’s digital equipment) and adjust your position accordingly to create the maximum ‘lengthening’ effect;
* the taller you appear, the more natural presence your imagery will convey;

“Okay…I get it. So what’s next?”

Throughout this book you will have noticed the prevalence of credible scientific studies cited in support of the practical tips and information you are learning. **This is to assist you in understanding the psychology behind persuasion, perception and influence.** And now? Well…now we’re ready to turn our attention towards achieving **RADICALLY SIGNIFICANT** outcomes within a short period of time. How? You’ll have to keep on reading to find out... Let’s go!
WATCH THE SHORT FILM BASED ON THIS BOOK!

Visit benangel.co/whoami to watch the short film based on this book. It was featured by both Entrepreneur & Success Magazine’s to their collective audiences of 6 million followers.

And, also checkout my groundbreaking Audio Program, “The Entrepreneurs Vision” (benangel.co/entrepreneursvision) This program will help you achieve more in the next 30 days than in the past 3 months. Based on several powerful visualisation techniques it will help you realise your potential to get more out of your health, wealth, career and relationships.

Enter in your exclusive password VISION for a special surprise.
CHAPTER NINE - SECRETS of SELF MASTERY

Achieve More in 30 Days than in THREE WHOLE MONTHS, Why You Get Stressed and The Law of Diminishing Returns

“Breathe. Let go. And remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure.”

~ Oprah Winfrey

I was terrible at managing my ‘self’ in my mid-late teens. I was never able to ‘catch’ myself before taking something too far and would always overindulge to the point of making myself sick but my addiction wasn’t to food…

Unlike most other teens that were out getting drunk, playing sport or knocking up their girlfriends, I was feverishly busy pursuing far less rebellious pursuits, which included:

* doing work experience one day a week in Adelaide (an hour’s drive from home);
* working on my metal sculpture business;
* diligently completing year 11;
* managing the sound and lighting for local stage productions;
* completing an audio and lighting engineering course;
* and writing music whenever I could find a spare moment…

…I feel exhausted even just talking about it now!

I had friends, but my social life was limited. Growing up on a farm taught me to enjoy my own space, but the solitude became unhealthy and I spiralled into depression. I didn’t know who I was. I was looking under every rock to find my purpose and myself. Not only that, but I was also grappling with my dawning sexuality. I was desperately seeking external validation and yearned to be accepted by my peers (despite not having many): I needed to know I was ‘okay’ as a person.

Because of this relentless personal search for meaning, I ‘burned out’ at the age of sixteen, which is the first time I remember crying for apparently no reason. After that it kept on happening… every single week without respite. No one around me had the foggiest idea what was going on because I kept it all locked away and hidden within. I’d lost control of my private ‘self’ but was able to keep up my ‘public persona’: a schism I would pay for dearly with several miserable years of what should have been the time of my life.

This continued for six long years from my late teens into early twenties, until I finally got a handle on my depression and uncovered the causes of it. I was addicted to work and ‘busy-ness’. I felt (mistakenly) that as long as I was moving or doing something I was important and useful
and making headway. In fact, I was merely running myself into the ground – without even pausing to smell the flowers!

“The motivation is self-perpetuating; the structure is not.”
~ Ben Angel

Self Mastery

Self-mastery is a hard-won skill: well worth achieving yet far from easily come by! It takes focus, discipline and a passion to manage every aspect of your life with flair and attention... simultaneously! We all have the limitless potential to step into this realm...yet few do.

Once you discover what truly turns you on (as opposed to mere passing fancies which only get you off a few times before you’re done) you will know it. How? Because you’ll want to dive in headfirst and live it, breathe it, smell it and do it...every single second of the day. In this sense then: the motivation is self-perpetuating; the structure is not.

But finding ‘YOUR THING’? Well, unless you’re very blessed, this is what takes a real willingness to conduct a lot of self-experimentation. It took me years to realise that it was ‘okay’ for me to do a billion different things at once – providing each was profitable in its own right, and I could still achieve an acceptable level of mastery in every area. In fact, I discovered ‘my thing’ to be precisely that: continual evolution of the ‘self’ through many and varied career paths and ongoing education.

These days I’m very comfortable in my own skin. I’m addicted to learning on the fly and applying everything I’ve learnt to real-world scenarios; testing the results and pinpointing every aspect I can significantly improve along the way. To achieve this I have had to learn to keep in place a useful ‘structure’ around my passions so that they are not only enjoyable, but also yield results.

Serious Results

In order to achieve serious results in life, you must be willing to take a leap of faith and apply consistent, disciplined action on a daily basis. Don’t worry, this doesn’t mean forfeiting all your fun! It means learning to do what you love with enough personal mastery that it yields serious results. You will develop successful habits over time if you focus on the areas you are naturally motivated in, but do it seriously and with enough self-discipline to do what is required of you in this moment and look forward to receiving the pay-off (delayed gratification) next week. Remember: in the battle of immediate vs. delayed gratification, it’s the long-term potential that’s really worth leveraging for significantly greater benefits just a bit later on!
You begin your journey to **self-mastery** when you begin to apply some serious and consistent self-discipline, and over time your results will be increasingly easier to come by (which is something to look forward to, at least!). This is because your brain consolidates the process for obtaining maximum outcomes and begins to apply it habitually: it becomes ‘second nature’. Instead of goals taking longer to reach, they take less time because they are pursued with a much more formulaic and structured process, leaving little room for failure but ample room for planned spontaneity.

Because let’s face it, everybody benefits from having FUN - even if it is in a structured manner! And ‘getting into shape’ emotionally or career-wise is no different than doing so physically: to begin with it feels like a really hard slog...but in next to no time you’re healthier and more energised, are seeing great results, feeling like you can take on the world and struggling to find a personal trainer hard enough to give you a run for your money! **Self-mastery** is all about getting to that level in every single area of your life, simultaneously. Exciting stuff, isn’t it?

**Self Mastery in the face of adversary – Chopin Style!**

Scientists who examined the 19th century composer Frederic Chopin say he probably suffered from epilepsy. Biographies of Chopin demonstrate that he experienced brief hallucinations. In one such experience he believed creatures were emerging from his piano. He would at times continue to play during these attacks.

**Your MIND wanders MORE often than you can possibly IMAGINE...**

You’re at home cooking dinner and you find yourself drift off into a daze pondering ‘the Big Questions’ of life instead of stirring the pot... Or you’re reading an important report at work and suddenly realise you’re not taking any of it in and have to start all again... Or you’re standing in line at the bank, lost in thoughts of what happened yesterday or what you need to do tomorrow, and in the meantime not being fully present in the HERE AND NOW so that someone else has to nudge you to the counter when your turn arrives.

**And you are not alone.** The chronic inability to focus one’s mind has become a global epidemic. There are even controversial terms like ADD, which have been invented to describe (and, tragically, profit from medicating) this lamentable human condition. And yet **this inability to quieten, focus and master the mind is nothing new** and has been addressed by every culture over countless centuries in various different ways. Buddhist meditation and Tony Robbins’ ‘fire-walking’ are two popular and contrasting examples of not merely ‘mind-over-matter’, but rather; ‘**mastery over the mind**’, which is way more powerful!

The simple truth is, that if we can hold our attention for long enough to watch a Harry Potter or Avatar like film (3 hours plus), sit in front of the computer for hours on end and have our kids
intently focused playing computer games ALL DAY, then we too can master our focus in other areas of our lives to great benefit.

**You must be willing to train yourself HOW to ‘catch yourself’ so that:**

1. you **notice** whenever your mind wanders away from the task at hand;

2. you are able to observe this ‘wandering off’ **without judging yourself negatively** for it;

3. you are able to bring your mind back and re-focus with renewed determination;

4. you are willing to **commit yourself** to consistently repeating all of these steps again and again, continually increasing the extent of your **self-mastery** through developing **mastery over the mind**.

Your ability to deepen the intensity of this self-awareness, self-discipline, concentration and **single-minded focus on the task at hand in that moment** will skyrocket your chances of success more powerfully than I can explain or you can imagine: you need to **experience it through self-experimentation** to really understand, which is why I so encourage you to do so. Studies have shown how the average mind wanders off within moments for a staggering 30% of the time during normal everyday activities, and even more so when we’re bored or stuck in traffic!

In one sense, ‘a wandering mind’ is a great thing because it is an imaginative, creative and sometimes exciting experience, often generating a lot of good ideas. When driving for example, it allows one part of your brain to focus on travelling safely, while another part is free to roam…explore…review your ‘higher goals’ and so forth.

Let’s be clear: I’m not saying it’s necessarily **wrong** to be cooking dinner with a small amount of concentration while your mind is on the next day’s high-powered business pitch…but I **am** suggesting that if you **could** learn to **master your mind to be fully present in each moment**…well, you’d end up with a tastier meal, a better presentation and probably a lot less anxiety!

Not convinced? Well you’re not alone. Despite many studies to the contrary proving the staggering increased capacity of the brains of long-term meditators (monks with 20,000+ hours of practise; or ‘energy-sensitivities’ expert in contemplative techniques such as Qigong), other research conducted at UC, Santa Barbara suggests that people whose minds wander more often tend to be more creative and more capable problem solvers...up to a point. This is because they have trained their brains to focus somewhat on the task at hand **while simultaneously processing information about future events and making constant new connections**.

The real trick is simply to be aware of which type of person you are, what your mind is doing and therefore consciously **CHOOSE** where and how exclusively to focus your mind’s attention. As with all things there is a balance to be struck: the ideal is not to divide your attention and
‘spiral off’ so much that you can’t get any one thing done properly…while at the same time not being so rigid in your singularity of focus that you’re unable to enjoy your daydreams and flights of fancy. After all, Albert Einstein was always very clear to emphasise that, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” Learning how to strike this perfect balance in ALL areas of your life simultaneously is ‘Self-Mastery’ in action.

You Overestimate Your Responses to Future Events

Your wandering mind only presents a real obstacle when it leaves you incapable of creating immediate outcomes in the present time. It happens daily: whenever you think about what you have to do next (the next day, next week, next month, next year…) and stress yourself to the max about the amount of work ahead. Later on however, when the big event comes, it often turns out to be nowhere near as bad as first imagined. What a waste of mental energy all the worrying was!

In his book, ‘Stumbling on Happiness’, Dan Gilbert discusses his findings and those of other researchers around how humans predict or estimate their own future emotional reaction to events. Gilbert found that we all have a tendency to overestimate our emotional response to perceived future successes such as:

* scoring a new job;
* getting promoted;
* meeting the love of your life;
* getting married / having a baby;
* getting a philanthropic project changing lives successfully over the line;
* or attending the biggest social event on this year’s calendar.

We place our happiness in imagined future outcomes, mistakenly predicting that if the event does live up to expectations we shall be ecstatically happy (rarely true, at least for very long!); and if it doesn’t, we will be devastated by it for a long time (not true either).

Luckily for us, we have a built-in regulator: so in fact, when it comes to the event – whether positive or negative – we experience the normal level of ‘happiness’ or ‘sadness’ in our response that we’re akin to experiencing. This ’emotional scale’ remains consistent and is dependent on our general response held previously to other events that have stimulated similar emotions.

These findings have two major implications:

1. People may sound initially excited but fail to follow through…

Have you ever heard over-ecstatic responses to your proposal (“Yes, I will buy! I absolutely love it!”; “Yes, we should catch up again, that sounds great!”) then wondered why the same people who were so initially excited have failed to follow through? It is because they have overestimated their positive response to the offer in the moment, and not thoroughly thought it
through (hence my earlier advice to judge people by their actions, not their words). Remember: good intentions alone won’t pay the bills or keep you warm at night – however great they are!

2. Our mistakenly exaggerated negative emotional predictions cause us to overestimate the stress and energy it takes to complete a required activity – hence why we procrastinate and avoid starting it, putting the whole thing off for so long that we create a mountain out of a molehill…or a monster under the bed. Yikes!

By fully realising (i.e. assimilating into your conscious awareness) just how deeply the two key implications above impact upon you every day, you can find a way to free yourself and work around them – in particular using the following technique:

Predicting Future Events: The Reverse & Rewind Technique

Mental planning is a time consuming and emotionally draining activity. Generally speaking, this is because your brain has not previously positively experienced the scenario you are planning. If it had, the planning process would be easy and quick because your brain could reference past experiences and fill in the blanks naturally from a trusted source of information. This would in turn require less energy to predict the future outcome(s) – freeing you up from unnecessary emotional tension.

When this isn’t possible however (and it often isn’t) ‘self-mastery’ must be applied instead. View a situation like this as the perfect opportunity to hone these skills! Prior to setting yourself a challenging goal, sit down and write out your desired outcome. For example, if you’re planning to get fit, be specific: “I will weigh 75kgs by May 13, 2011.” This goal is measurable. It includes a specific outcome and date.

Keep creatively visualising – right up to the moment of achieving your desired outcome…and then beyond it to the next day. Picture yourself happy, relaxed and enjoying your success. Now imagine it happening as rapidly as a DVD on fast forward…then rewind it all and watch it through again a few times (more about this further down).

DOWNLOAD THE REVERSE & REWIND AUDIO PROGRAM

To help make your life even easier, I recorded The Entrepreneurs Vision, a ground breaking audio program that utilises the Reverse & Rewind Technique at its heart to obliterate self-sabotaging behaviours & stress to help you create an unstoppable vision. Visit www.benangel.co/entrepreneursvision & enter VISION for a special surprise at checkout.
Why You Get Stressed and How to Switch it OFF

The reason why so many of us get stressed is because:

a. We over exaggerate when predicting our emotional responses;

b. We cannot see past the outcome we want to achieve to what will follow...

For example: Say you have to make a speech at work this Friday. You may find yourself overindulging in negative emotions of self-doubt: not very beneficial to the desired outcome! In this instance, the mistake many of us make is failing to look past Friday and into Saturday, when the scary event is all over and life continues to go on as normal. It’s as if life stops on Friday and that’s it. Everything good ceases to exist, and (without consciously realising it) this damaging mental process compresses perceived time and dramatically increases stress levels caused by the exaggerated predictive emotional response to the task at hand.

To release this tension we must imagine not only the process and the steps to be taken, but also the week beyond it, including positive social interactions with others in which we are smiling and laughing and getting on with life. This takes the pressure off and relieves tension so that you can focus your energy more effectively in the present moment.

This is the ability to be single-minded we discussed earlier. Try not to let your mind drift or wander off - and if it does, practice bringing it back! This will enable you to get the required activities done without feeling like you’re labouring under any undue stress or pressure.

Trick Your Subconscious and Reach Your Outcome

Once you have visualised yourself:
  i. doing the activities to achieve your goal;
  ii. obtaining the goal itself;
  iii. feeling the feelings of success and victory;
  iv. enjoying the other events following it…

…then it’s time for you to hit the ‘rewind’ button: rewind the entire visualisation back to the start as fast as you can. Now fast-forward it again. Continue to rewind and fast forward back and forth several times. The more you do it, the more effective these ‘practice runs’ will be.

This process tricks the subconscious mind into believing that you’ve already obtained your outcome and makes your own success familiar to you. Once your success becomes familiar, your subconscious will no longer reject it and you will cure yourself of procrastinating or self-sabotaging your own work.
It will also allow you to relax into the moment when carrying out your tasks and enjoy getting into a state of flow, as discussed in the next chapter. I have successfully used the Reverse & Rewind Technique for years on all sorts of things, including presentations and major projects such as writing my first book and also this one. As you can see by what you’re holding in your hands right now (as it were) - it works every time!

If you do the technique properly the first time, you will only ever need to go through it once for every major project. If you feel yourself beginning to procrastinate, take ten minutes out and go over it again, but this time really focus on creating strong emotions in order to connect with the process at a deeper level of control, power and focus.

And Now…Let it all GO!

Once you’ve set your intentions, you need to let them go completely. Holding onto it will cause undue stress and anxiety and divert your focus from where it’s better employed. Having used the Reverse & Rewind Technique to deliver the request to your subconscious mind, you must now relax and allow it to work for you. If not, you risk forcing your subconscious into retreat and self-sabotaging your progress.

Creating this mental plan of the days, weeks and months ahead allows you to relieve pressure. Treat the technique as one of the key elements you default to whenever you get stuck. Trust in the process and the process will support you!

Achieve more in 30 Days than in THREE WHOLE MONTHS!

Do you dream of achieving bigger outcomes in smaller timeframes? Well the good news is it’s absolutely possible, but only when the conditions are right. In setting out to write this book I only allowed myself 30 days to actually sit and do it (not including the fifteen years of research leading up to it!) – a goal that would have most people quivering in their boots with fear.

To pull it off successfully (as it were) I had to set up certain conditions in my environment to ensure I stayed on time, on focus and en Pointe (basically then, no ‘bright shiny object’ syndrome!). This was to prove to myself that I was capable of achieving what I set out to do with minimal stress and maximum high quality output. It was also done in the hope of inspiring you to create the right conditions in your own environment to dramatically improve your outcomes, too.
Select Your Outcome

Whether you desire to study for a degree, set-up a new business, win that promotion, build a house, clean up your life, lose 10kgs or find a new love, if the conditions are not optimal the results will not be either!

To assist you in creating your own optimal conditions for success I’ve compiled the Ten Conditions that enabled me to write this book in 30 days. They will help you to achieve your goals as well… providing you understand that each condition is as important as the last: to skip one would be to jeopardise the whole. Let’s take a look…

Achieve More in 30 Days than in THREE WHOLE MONTHS – Critical Conditions

1. **Structure and Scope:** Defining the scope of your project and mapping out the best use of your time in advance is a crucial starting point: don’t begin without it!

2. **Self-Management:** Do you know your ‘self’ well enough to ‘manage’ yourself and your energy levels? If not, time to up-skill…and fast.

3. **Self-Mastery:** Advance creative visualisation utilising the Reverse & Rewind Technique should be applied to your project to ease the stress of implementation.

4. **Health:** Do you enjoy exercising your body as well as your mind? Without physical fitness you cannot maintain the level of focus required to reach your goal with ease.

5. **Accountability / External Pressure:** In order for goals to be meaningful, you must be held accountable to them. I set a date for my book launch and took pre-orders before I’d even written half of the content! What can YOU do? Maybe post your goal up publicly on Facebook to keep you to task? Invite others to share in your journey.

6. **Environment:** Your home, work and/or gym environment should also be optimised. This means: streamlined (easy to navigate; clean & tidy). Have everything in its place so you can focus on what’s critical instead of being distracted by visual clutter.

7. **Illusion of Progress:** The illusion of progress is just as motivating as progress itself.

8. **Illusion of Movement:** The illusion of movement can be motivating in itself. To speed up your progress, try playing fast music in the background at a low volume.
9. **Routine**: Retain elements of your existing routine. If you change everything overnight you may trigger your *reptilian brain* and cause it to categorise the change as threatening or dangerous to deflect feeling *overwhelmed*. By retaining continuity in a few key areas (i.e. gym session at the same time daily; weekly catch up with mates) you help your *subconscious* stay relaxed and avoid *primal brain rebellion!*

10. **Compartmentalisation**: Learning to compartmentalise your life and ‘shift mindset’ will *quadruple* your progress. Pretty neat, huh?

**Proper Planning**

One of the reasons so many people fail to maximise their results is due to a lack of preparation. They think they can just rock up and pick up any task mid-stream, ‘work hard’ and achieve the same end result as others who’ve taken years to master the topic. Not so.

Yes, there are exceptions to every rule. However, for major projects in any area of your life, putting in place the right *conditions* will always allow things to flourish more smoothly. It will also help you troubleshoot any major issues before they even arise, which is why the *Planning Process* that follows here will set the stage for your success...

**Set your STAGE for SUCCESS**

Map out your project in full detail prior to commencing. How much time do you estimate that it will take you to complete it? If you tend to overestimate time, cut it back slightly. If you typically run late, double up to allow for plenty of leeway. Have this planned from the very beginning. Once you’ve set your timeline you need to break your project down into key stages:

**Stage 1: Research** – How much research is required prior to getting started? Do the bulk of your research before commencing, otherwise it will only slow you down and jolt you out of ‘flow’. Just bite the bullet and get it out of the way at the start. By doing so, you also get the complete picture of what is required of you. You don’t want to get half way through your project and discover you’re missing some major jigsaw pieces of the information you need to pull it all together.

**Stage 2: Allocate Time** – Block out the time you need to complete the project in your diary (it doesn’t necessarily have to be 30 days!). At time of writing, Google Calendars is a very useful free service, which will send you sms updates of your schedule. Remember to retain some healthy regular activities from your pre-project life as this continuity of routine will appease your subconscious mind.
Note: Taking these steps effectively may mean cutting back on your social life for the duration of your project – although I wouldn’t suggest eliminating it completely. Personally, I found that cutting FUN with my friends out completely only sent me stir crazy!

During the first two weeks of writing this book I locked myself away to stay focused – yet only succeeded in entering the stage called ‘diminishing returns’. It’s different for everybody, but most of us find that retaining some level of sociability and FUN is essential for succeeding with a major project. When we become too insular we fail to be objective about our work or ourselves. Social interaction gives us the feedback and perspective to snap out of this.

Lead a Normal Life, Achieve Extraordinary Results!

It is important to note that I still lived a normal life during the 30 days I steamed into my book project. I only worked two full weekends on the project, and even then I still took the mornings off. During the week, I did not have full ‘9 to 5’ hours to devote to my book because I run another business with numerous clients and speaking engagements. So I focused on what I could do: namely, schedule in three to four hours of writing per day. This meant I had to be incredibly focused during the time I did have to write, and got all of my planning done beforehand so I could dive straight in without delay.

Set Your Health Regime

When embarking on a major project, most people sacrifice their exercise routine first. Although it seems logical, it has a huge detrimental impact on your energy levels and self-perception (luckily I knew this from having studied to be a personal trainer when I was twenty years old and so I avoided this rookie mistake).

Increased fitness levels will help you cope with the additional stress and pressure of your project, not detract from it. When taking on a major new responsibility of any kind, there needs to be some kind of tension release as you go. Without it, overwhelm is assured and will cause untold damage. In preparation for writing this book, I significantly upped my exercise regime during the two weeks prior to starting. It looked something like this:

- **Sunday** Rest day
- **Monday** Weights: 1 hr full body workout (heavy weights)
- **Tuesday** Interval training: 20 mins steep incline treadmill running; light-weight exercises for all major muscle groups at a rapid pace; abdominal workout totalling approximately 1 hr.
- **Wednesday** Interval training
- **Thursday** Interval training
- **Friday** Interval training
- **Saturday** Rest day or interval training
My normal regime would be a more relaxed overall program. The reason I focused on my cardio is that my writing project confined me to sitting at a desk for lengthy periods of relative inactivity. It’s easy to feel stagnant with sluggish energy when your body isn’t moving, hence the hard workouts at the end of each day.

**The additional side benefits of this routine included:** sleeping more soundly at night (I’m usually restless); feeling significantly more alert throughout the day; remaining focused through the *positive tension release* of physical exercise; reducing stress and anxiety.

There was only one day in my whole schedule where I experienced anxiety about getting the project completed on time. I attribute my calmness towards this project to the strict exercise and eating regime I took onboard.

**NB:** Please see your doctor and/or nutritionist before participating in physical activity or significantly adjusting your normal routine.

**Bad Eating can Hinder Your Results**

Most people disregard at their peril just how much impact food has on their body and mindset. When looking to achieve major goals, you must take into consideration what goes into your mouth (so to speak) and the chemical impact it has on your alertness, overall health and also your ability to get things done in a super-productive, focused way.

**CASE STUDY: the Sad Fact about Trans-Fats**

According to a Spanish study published in the US, eating foods in saturated and high-trans fats increases the risk of depression. A study conducted by the universities of Navarra and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria analysed the diet and lifestyle of over 12,000 participants over six years. Here are the results:

* At the beginning of the research, none of the volunteers had been diagnosed with depression; yet by the end, 657 of them were sufferers.4

* Volunteers with elevated levels of consumption of trans-fats (present in artificial form, i.e. pastries, fast food...) were 48% more likely to suffer from depression than those who did not consume these fats.

* The authors of the study also reported approximately 150 million people suffering from depression around the world at that time, with the figure increasing. They attributed this to the rise in fats consumed.

**TOP TIP:** Keep a food journal throughout the day for one week and record your response to certain foods an hour after you have consumed them (it can take this long for food to hit the
bloodstream). Measure the response and cull all the foods that slow you down. Introduce higher quantities of healthier options that your body responds well to; foods that keep you alert. Due to my strict exercise regime, I added three extra servings of protein per day. This assisted in levelling out my energy levels and reduced any late afternoon slumps in activity.

**Environment**

As discussed, your environments will always reflect and influence your outcomes. A chaotic living or working space can send you into a nosedive and have you spinning your wheels in the mud. Your external surroundings represent your internal feelings and vice versa – so tidy up your space and keep it clean! **Clutter will give the intimidating false impression that you have more work to complete than you actually do.** Dedicate set times per week to keep your environment in great shape.

**NB:** ‘Cleaning’ and de-cluttering is *not* to be used as an excuse to procrastinate! I set aside a couple of hours each Sunday afternoon to clean. Every six months or so I have a major clean out and give away anything I haven’t used during that time that is taking up space.

> “Are you sitting comfortably? Then let’s begin…”

Now that you’ve done all your necessary planning and have mentally, physically and emotionally prepared yourself for the tasks ahead, it’s time to begin your work...*almost.* Because just before you do, you must create what I call a ‘**Default List**’. Here’s how it works:

**Don’t HALT...just DEFAULT! The magical medicine of your ‘DEFAULT LIST’**

When embarking on any major project, you will no doubt hit some kind of a wall or barrier, one you may significantly struggle with to overcome. What must you do? Keep going!

> “*When you’re going through hell...keep going!*”
> ~ Winston Churchill

By giving up at your most testing moment you are ‘giving in’ – a disastrous message to send to your subconscious brain just when you need it on side the most! You must ‘un-train’ yourself so that you *don’t give in* when you get tired, frustrated, angry, upset, distracted or just plain bored. **This is Self-Mastery at its finest in action** and will produce massive results in your life. Many people fall just short of success because of not being able to push through their own psychological blocks: refuse to be one of them

> “*If you’re going to do something, do it properly.*”
> ~ Steele Angel
Remember – this block is only in the mind: you can unplug it any time you choose to. Put simply: *sometimes you just have to “Suck it up!”*

One especially great technique to help you get through this is what I call the ‘Default List’, detailed below. Refer to this list whenever you get stuck and need to snap yourself out of inertia.

**DEFAULT LIST: Miracle Steps for whenever you get Stuck**

1. **Revisit your initial plan:**

   Whenever we get stuck it’s usually because we’ve forgotten the direction we’re supposed to be going in. Revisit your initial plan, uncover your next step *and just do it!* This will put you back on track in no time.

2. **If Step #1 doesn’t work…**

   Go over the work you have completed to date and find the flow of it again. Ask yourself: “When did I stall? Where was the ‘flow’ of work impeded?” By answering these questions for yourself you will locate the sticking point you need to break free from (it’s okay to do more research at this point to un-stick yourself if you need to).

3. **In the unlikely event that neither Step #1 nor Step #2 work…**

   Practice the ‘Reverse & Rewind Technique’ again (visit [www.benangel.co/entrepreneursvision](http://www.benangel.co/entrepreneursvision) for the audio version of this). This should be enough to get you moving!

**The Law of Diminishing Returns**

The **Law of Diminishing Returns** states that our extra output decreases when we increase more input whilst holding other variables fixed. In other words, too much of a good thing can turn into a bad thing – sitting still for long periods of focused concentration instead of taking a break to go to the gym for example. With ultra-structured programs like the one described above, you must keep a watchful eye on yourself to ensure you don’t tip the scale from healthy to unhealthy by becoming too strict and regress.

It is also crucial to be able to distinguish a ‘sticking point’ from sheer exhaustion. A sticking point is simply a lack of focus, whereas **exhaustion point** is where you literally can’t think anymore and want to collapse face first on the ground! Let’s be honest: it takes quite a lot to experience this kind of exhaustion – so don’t be a pussy, okay? Okay!

**Self-mastery will get you through the sticking points** – but only proper physical rest will resolve exhaustion. Once again, manage your stress levels through physical fitness and healthy eating. Be **aware of when you are approaching your point of diminishing** returns. These are
best spotted in advance because once you’re really into it, it can be damaging and demoralising. You’ll know when you’re in the territory of **diminishing returns** because the more time you spend on your project, the less you achieve. Short, well-focused bursts of time on a goal will always produce better outcomes than lengthy drawn-out steps.

**Compartmentalisation**

Now, I’ve encountered a few challenges throughout the course of my life to date (that’s an understatement!) but nonetheless I’ve kept myself moving whenever possible. I couldn’t have achieved this without applying a very useful technique known as ‘**Compartmentalisation**’, which I’m going to share with you now…

Compartmentalising your life allows you to step away from one activity and swiftly shift gears and refocus on another seamlessly. Politicians, models, speakers, authors, actors, radio hosts and other public figures who do not get the luxury of ‘downtime’ use compartmentalisation to cope with having to be ‘on form’ so much of the time.

Whatever they have going on for them at that time in their life, no matter how devastating it is, they must leave it at home and slip into their ‘professional’ mode regardless. This is professionalism to the nth degree (and isn’t necessarily all that healthy for their private lives – but that’s another story!). The sad fact is that because of the enormous pressure of constant exposure and scrutiny, they **must** compartmentalise their lives to stay in control and focus or risk it falling to bits…in front of millions.

Hopefully your success will be witnessed by millions, but you’re not in any danger of failing in front of that many! In any case, even if you’re ‘only’ embarking upon a major personal project in your own home environment, it does not mean that you should be casual about it.

**Relaxed outfit = Relaxed persona (generally lower outcomes);**
**Structured outfit = Structured persona (significantly greater outcomes).**

In the initial years of working from home I would still get dressed in smart pants and a crisp shirt before I sat down at my desk to work a strict 9 to 5 before hitting the gym. This helped me to snap into my ‘professional’ mode instantly. Although I no longer need to implement this technique, it trained me to shift gears simply by changing outfits, which has been really helpful over the years.

At one point in my life, when I was grieving for dad and found myself ineffective during the day, I even set out to **compartmentalise my grieving process**. I made it very clear to myself that day-time (9 to 5) was work time, but that I could grieve at night and on the weekends.
Something funny happened when I gave myself these set grieving times, however: I found that I didn’t want to use them all. Just the fact that I had asserted that I could grieve somehow released significant pressure in and of itself. This same technique can be applied not only to the loss of a loved one, but relationship breakdowns, loss of a job or any other devastating news.

Once you have given yourself your set time to deal with it, it’s time to get on with the job and continue with the art of living. Just be sure that you are dealing with your grief and not burying it: I wouldn’t want to wish my subconscious night terrors on anyone!

I Was Hypnotised to Grieve in My Sleep

After the doctor told me that my body was no longer coping with the loss of my father (hence going into shock at night) I went on the search for answers. I needed to get my life back on track and really just wanted to feel normal again. I was so tired of feeling messed-up. I took a brave step to keep myself moving…I decided to go and see an NLP Hypnotherapist by the name of Vesna Grubacevic.

Vesna hypnotised me to grieve in my sleep between the hours of 1am and 2am each night for a year. Sounds crazy, right!? But it worked like a dream (excuse the pun)!

I would wake-up in the morning and remember dreams of crying over the loss of my father. It was incredible. And this allowed me to get on with my daily activities, which was a blessed relief: I was getting my life back together and it felt good.

In fact, it worked so well that my mum also underwent the same hypnosis. I remember picking her up in the car after her appointment. It was as if an enormous incumbent block of grief had been lifted off her shoulders. I know that sounds like a cliché but it was so noticeable, physically, that she had been relieved of some of her emotional burden.

It taught me that there are few things more gratifying than seeing your own parent lovingly supported in their time of need, instead of always having them looking out for everybody else.

You Do What it Takes

Self-mastery means doing what it takes to make things work for you. Whatever that is, discover the formula that works best for you through your own self-experimentation…and you will unlock portals of outstanding opportunity you never thought were possible.
Mum was sitting in the front row, my greatest supporter as always. Good job she was on my side too, since she’d just got her gun license and I might need her skills! (Yup, don’t mess with Fay Angel! She outshot the men every single time when she took her exam. Mum put them all to shame at the ripe age of 53 – bullseye!). All this talk of being in the firing line is actually more relevant than it may at first appear considering that on this occasion it was me who felt like the target…

I was about to walk onto stage and deliver a presentation to over 600 students, parents and teachers at my old High School in Balaklava. I’d been invited to deliver a speech to their year 12 graduates on what life had been like for me after leaving (ironic considering I barely scraped through year 11).

On the eve of the speech I found myself freaking out about my safety at the event. I was a nervous wreck, restlessly tossing and turning in bed as I contemplated what the repercussions of this might be. You see, I planned to ‘out’ myself on stage for the first time ever and candidly share my struggles with depression, suicide and sexuality with 600 teenagers and their principle caregivers. This was not to be your average year 12 graduation speech (!)…but then again, nothing I seem to do ever is: I’m a self-confessed adrenalin junky if ever there was one.

In truth, I’d always promised myself that if I had a chance to make a difference in someone else’s life and the perfect platform to do so, I would take it – even if I came under intense fire or scrutiny for doing so. Did that make me feel any calmer? Hell no! In fact it only stressed me to the max: I’d never done anything like this before and all my insecurities bubbled to the surface. I had to deal with each one as it came up or else I knew they’d overwhelm me and prevent me from being in flow enough to take advantage of this opportunity.

I decided I could not allow this moment go to waste like so many other times in my life where the chance to give back had slipped through my fingers because of insecurities I’d chosen to ignore and bury deep. So how did I go through with it? I chose to focus on how rare an opportunity it was and drew on everything I’d learned. I knew that when a moment like this is presented to us, we must grasp it with both hands…even if those two hands are shaking uncontrollably, which mine were! Want to know what happened? Then see this chapter all the way through…
“We must go to the brink… and then keep going in order to fully give of ourselves in the moment, even if we are completely unsure of the outcome.”

~ Ben Angel

Get to the Brink…and Keep Going!

Every day we are presented with chances big and small to give of ourselves completely and find the moment when everything ‘CLICKS’ and falls into place OR choose to withhold ourselves and run away into hiding. For example:

* You can give yourself completely to your lover…or give in to fear;

* Dive deep into some exciting new project with sheer abandonment…or stay safe in the shallows of your comfort zone;

* Resist change…or embrace its inevitability and push past the threshold of the old and into the dawn of a brand new beginning.

What would YOU do? Well, I knew I wasn’t going to run.

I was 28 years old at the time with a credible business reputation, which I felt terrified about risking. Yet even though I worried about how ‘outing’ myself on so many levels could completely undo my life, this was also my moment - a real opportunity to give myself fully to an audience in the hope they might give fully of and to themselves in return. I felt more stripped bare and vulnerable than ever before – way more than during my wild year of sex addiction!

Nonetheless, I was on a mission because; “What if?”

Despite feeling terrified, what was amazing was that somehow I also felt more determined than ever, too. I think it was because I could sense that something just clicked about this chance to be real and raw on stage. I kept thinking:

* What if there was even one suicidal teenager in the audience who needed to see they weren’t alone?

* What if I could show them that things do get better when they commit themselves to creating a life they love?

* What if my willingness to be vulnerable prevented someone else from taking his or her own life, like I’d seriously contemplated doing back when I was living there?
It may sound dramatic, but suicide was sadly only too possible. It had even already happened in the community a year or two earlier, so I couldn’t dismiss the likelihood and pretend that everything was okay when I clearly knew it wasn’t. If I had, I would have been lying to myself and others just in order to keep up appearances and put a lid on my own fear.

I reflected on how we lie to ourselves far too often about the state of our own lives and realised I wasn’t about to make that worse by lying to an audience to save face. It wasn’t a matter of giving them what they ‘wanted’ to hear, but what they ‘needed’ to hear – even if it was confronting for some of them. In fact, especially if it was confronting!

**Never Underestimate Your Impact on Another**

Every single action we take is an expression of consciousness at work. Because our feelings and thoughts lead to ideas and beliefs, which translate into decision and action, we are literally sending out ripples of energetic consciousness that impact on everyone around us...and everyone around them. This is why *even the smallest things count* and we must **tune in to what’s in our periphery** to fully comprehend the impact we have not only on our own life and success but also that of others.

**I May Have Been Arrogant**

It may have been arrogant of me to think I could make such a difference in another person’s life, but even so I didn’t care. I knew how desperate I’d been for reassurance and some kind of acknowledgement that I was ‘okay’ at the really low points in my life.

We all get presented with **moments** where we are ‘gifted’ the chance to say or do something simple but profoundly loving and true to effect real positive change and yet we don’t. Why? Because **fear holds us back** – not just fear of failure but also fear of success...or in my case, **fear of appearing arrogant**. The thing is, I had seen this fear railroad too many other sincere attempts at change and success in the past, so I decided I simply had to overcome it.

Similarly, there are also too many **moments** where we withhold ourselves and prevent things from **clicking and falling into place** because we can’t see past our current ‘self’ and into the IDEAL ‘self’ we are becoming. Psychological factors come into play and we revert back to old **primal brain instincts** that hold us back – but only if we allow them to. This whole book is designed to move us all past that point. Why?

**Just IMAGINE: “What if…”**

* You’d taken the risk and stepped over the threshold and it changed everything in your life for the better?
* You’d given yourself to the moment, surrendered to the process and allowed for things to unfold as they were meant to, not with sheer force?
* You gave yourself to your lover freely and enjoyed all the bliss, challenge and uncertainty that came with truly letting them in?
* You finally let go of the past to be present in the here and now?
* You gave more of yourself to every aspect of your life, without fear?

It makes you wonder, doesn’t it? Just imagine what your life would be like if it was run by tuning in and being courageous... instead of tuning out and being fearful. Each step moves you on, and your final outcome is built upon the foundation of all the outcomes before it. If you withhold your brilliance and compassion for fear of how you will look, then the outcome will also withhold itself from being what it truly could be in all of its glory. And there’s nothing ego-driven about that: it’s just the truth.

**Sporadic VS Consistent Effort**

The reason why so many people fail to achieve the great success they aspire to is because they only apply sporadic effort while expecting dramatic results. If this describes how you have been in the past, beware! With each sporadic attempt you are only giving of yourself ever so ‘slightly’. This prevents you from getting to ‘the point of no return’ with success; the realm in which you make the clear cut decision that, “I will make this work, no matter what!”

These scattered attempts only ever result in scattered wins at best, further wasting our energy each time we pick up and put down a new short-term task, or struggle needlessly to get the longer-term ones back on track. In contrast, self mastery and the discipline to ‘see it through’ will always pay far greater dividends – but only when we give of ourselves completely to the process.

**CRITICAL MASS**

“Critical mass is the minimum amount of energy required to start or maintain momentum.”

**Hit Critical Mass…each and every Time!**

Critical mass is defined as the minimum amount of energy required to start or maintain momentum. And – just like that other great ‘point of no return’, the orgasm – when you hit critical mass, you know it!

How? Well for starters, your life changes overnight. Perhaps you have worked diligently on a project and receive a sudden boost in windfall within weeks instead of years. Suddenly you feel things ‘CLICK’ and fall into place in all areas of your life, not just at work. This is the real secret unfolding: that serious life-changing results come from serious, consistent effort.

Knowing this, it’s important to commit to the minimum amount of consistent effort required with any project to see the desired outcome. What the minimum amount actually is, only you can answer. Take a look at various areas in your life (relationships, health, wealth, career, social
networks etc). Ask yourself: “Where have I been putting in the majority of my energy lately and how does it show?” **You cannot expect a relationship to be amazing if you only put the same level of energy into that as it takes to brush your teeth!**

This is what truly separates the stars from the plebs – and I know you’re not a pleb. The stars are willing to do whatever it takes to hit that flow when things ‘CLICK’ each and every time. This is what will unlock your true potential and open you up to endless possibilities and nothing less: just sheer focused attention and a commitment not to turn back.

Just as a rocket expends most of its energy in lift-off to reach **critical mass**, so must YOU in order to push yourself over the threshold. Once over the line, things become significantly easier and you require less energy to keep momentum flowing while consistently producing greater results at an entirely new level.

Be warned: the Threshold is both the most challenging AND rewarding place to be!

Just like my 28 year old ‘self ’ tossing and turning and panicking on the eve of outing myself on stage at my old school, you too will recognise the threshold because it will throw up ALL of your old insecurities. **You will be invited to finally face them down and not run away.** Speaking from experience, I say: “**GO FOR IT!**” Because the great news is that by reading this book to the end, you have already been given all the tools to assist you along the way – including the reassurance that you ARE okay…AND you CAN be better!

**Experiencing FLOW**

Learning how to make yourself available for an experience of the mental state that psychologists refer to as ‘flow’ in everything you do is a joyful skill to master. Flow requires a combination of the right conditions, experience and passion. It can come and go as it pleases, but when you recognise and experience it, it’s pure magic: **You lose all concept of time and space** (even your ‘self ’) and instead become all-consumed in the pleasure of what you’re accomplishing **in the moment**. This is one of those rare times when you’re not paying attention to anything sitting out in the **periphery** because it’s just a haze of insignificance. In fact, it would take a bomb going off there to break the spell!

You may find that your busy life does not at first appear to allow much room for flow to occur, in which case you must set the **right conditions**, i.e.:

* shutting your office or bedroom door;
* turning off the phone and laptop;
* putting a, ‘Do not disturb – I’m sleeping my way to the top’ sign up!

Treat this as your sacred space, somewhere safe and private for you to ‘check in’ with yourself and investigate what has and has not **‘CLICKED’** for you so far in your life. From here (this
standpoint of honesty) you can find the momentum required to reach critical mass and answer your TRUE calling. But first, you need to be willing to learn and trust the process...

Finding the Beat to a New Chart “HIT!”

Imagine being able to locate all the algorithms in your life which hold the patterns to unlocking your unbridled brilliance – pretty cool, eh? Well the great news is…they DO exist!

These patterns come in all forms, shapes and sizes – including the ones already discussed earlier in the book (i.e. look, feel, engagement, influence etc). When the right combination is found, watch out: you have a NUMBER ONE HIT (and therefore also a runaway train of critical mass!) on your hands. How great is that?!

“This program is meant to analyse music; its mechanism is inspired. It’s brilliant actually. We all like to think we have our own unique taste but we don’t. There are certain rhythms, certain key changes, core patterns that we all as humans respond to. Just like there are smells we all find pleasant or not. This program samples thousands and thousands of hit songs, analyses what they all have in common and from there creates a fairly accurate statistical guess of what will be a hit and what won’t.”

~ Charlie Eppes, the main character of prime-time TV Drama, “Numbers” (Episode Inspired by Hit Song Science; CBS1)

Hit Song Science (HSS) is a technology launched by Polyphonic HMI in 2003 that employs statistical and signal processing techniques to help artists and music labels predict whether a particular song will have viable commercial success.2 It’s caused such ripples in the media that even Anastacia was accused of using HSS for her 2004 hit song, Left Outside Alone - although her publicists fervently deny that the software was ever used.3

The software company themselves claim they ran Norah Jones’ 2002 album, Come Away With Me through the program and knew it had “HIT” written all over it well before she won awards and sold millions of copies.

Whether or not you agree with it ethically speaking for producing music, this software presents us with a very clever insight into how there are certain general patterns, rhythms, smells and behaviours that humans on the whole respond to more positively (many of which have already been covered in this book). Utilising these patterns on a daily basis will help you significantly throughout your life. To take it to the next level however, you will need to find our own algorithms.
“Fashion is architecture: it is a matter of proportions.”
~ CoCo Chanel

Your SUCCESS ALGORITHM Uncovered

Uncovering the algorithm in your own life and the patterns essential to hitting critical mass sooner rather than later are vital for superstar success in any area of life. Each time you reach an outcome, it isn’t just a matter of celebrating, (essential of course!) but also a matter of identifying which 5% of activity resulted in the 95% of results.

It is the finer distinctions that make up the patterns of true success. These cannot be uncovered without acute observation from yourself, of yourself, by yourself. There is a science to success: it is a matter of embracing what you know based on primal instincts and scientific studies and self-experimentation to apply all this to your own life and to your own and others’ advantage.

THE “CLICK” FORMULA TO INSTANT SUCCESS:
Message + Perception = Reality / Results

It takes much more to achieve true (‘CLICK’) success than just focusing on yourself. Whenever you clearly communicate a distinct message to others, you are perceived in a very particular way, and based on these perceptions you end up with a certain result.

If the result isn’t what you expected (i.e. they didn’t like what you had to say; didn’t take the required action of hiring, firing, loving or leaving) it’s because the message didn’t deliver the required perception that was needed of it for things to ‘CLICK’ for someone else. This is why you need to be as focused on others’ perception as you are on yourself.

“We require the collective assistance and consciousness of others to help us reach our goals, no matter what outcome we seek. When we align with one another, this is the ‘true’ moment that things CLICK and fall into place.”
~ Ben Angel

We cannot achieve MASSIVE results without the collective consciousness and support of others in our sphere – Trust me…I’ve tried and failed miserably time after time until I surrendered to the fact I simply could not do it alone.

Whenever I did go it alone, I could only ever achieve a certain level of success before plateauing out and falling short. I would get stuck. I wouldn’t be able to take another step until I went and
sought out vital education from others. This in turn meant I would take my eye off the ball on other things and end up taking one step back before three steps forward.

Any delay in progress in your life is there as a subconscious buffer to protect you from rejecting new change coming in at full throttle. However, it must never be used as an excuse to consciously delay progress or balk at leaping confidently over the threshold. Leave that for the weak that would rather things stay the same and never change!

**Message + Perception = Reality**

Throughout this book we have looked in-depth at the art of influence, persuasion and human behaviour. A simple formula for you to take away from it is this: Message + Perception = Reality / Results.

If the reality that you have willed into play at this minute (consciously or not) isn’t what you desire, you must go back to the beginning and look at the messages you’re giving out and then how they are being perceived. Perception is reality in the eyes of others – and this is the ‘reality’ that we are working with.

If the person or audience you are communicating with only see what they want to see and not the core beliefs, passions or messages you want to get across, then it doesn’t matter what you do – the results will always be hard come by and you will have to fight every step of the way. In other words, you’re ‘dead man walking’ before you’ve even been given the chance to take your first step!

Successful results flow easily when we become congruent with what it is that we are truly trying to express to others, and not before. But to achieve this, we must truly know ourselves first and observe what has been (past and current ‘self’) so we can see what will become (IDEAL ‘self’).

**Things Began to Fall Into Place**

As I mentioned earlier in the book, when I received the news about my dad’s brain tumour, I knew instinctively that it wasn’t going to end well. Six months prior to my dad getting sick I had an experience that I simply couldn’t explain. Try as I might to put my finger on it I had no idea what was happening…

I was leaving my office at the time on a bright sunny day. The leaves on the trees were a deep rich green colour and ever so slightly rustled in the breeze. I particularly remember the sky on this one afternoon: there were just a few white clouds freckled about in the big blue but that was it, nothing else: it was all so still.
Something felt different when I walked out of the office this time. It was as if every sense in my body was tingling: sight, sound, smell… but in particular the sensation of feeling. Things ‘felt’ distinctly different, a feeling like nothing I’d ever experienced before in my life.

I paused for a moment and in that moment a notion came over me...

“Someone is going to die!”

It wasn’t a moment of panic. It was a moment of a strange calm clarity, and

a) where did that just come from?
b) who is going to die?
c) how soon is this going to happen?

My scientific brain kicked into higher gear as I tried to decipher my feelings and work out what could have triggered such a thought.

Have you ever had a moment in your life where you just knew that something was about to happen? Maybe something like getting the job, falling in love or avoiding a particular road because you had a ‘sense’ it would be better to go another way today…only to find out later how lucky you’ve been? Well this was like that, only turned right up to the max! It was comparatively imminent, I just didn’t know who or when – I only knew it was going to happen soon. It felt as real as if someone had just passed me a contract with an ‘intention’ on it, a contract with no escape clause.

I was intrigued. Strangely, I’d never felt this calm before. The message and the feeling seemed to be in conflict with one another. Perhaps I should have been worried or just dismissed it all together but I couldn’t. Nothing had happened yet though, so maybe it was wrong?

Then I started to think about three good friends of mine who’d all had their mothers pass away within the last year. Maybe it was just my subconscious mind going into overdrive and placing an ‘idea’ into my head – but it was an idea that wouldn’t be resolved for another six months.

I started to believe it was going to be my mum who was about to die. I carried this around with me for months. There was only one close friend I confided in; I mean it sounded crazy, right!? What was I meant to do with this? I couldn’t tell my mum, I couldn’t tell my dad…I just had to pretend like everything was going to be fine when I knew it wasn’t.

And that’s when the news broke and it ‘CLICKED’: the exact moment my brother rang and told me the news about my father. It wasn’t going to be my mum after all: it was dad all along.

When dad got sick, no matter how much I wished I could believe that things were going to be fine, I knew they weren’t. I felt like a liar carrying a heavy burden on my shoulders, putting on a
brave front for my family, trying to reassure them. I desperately tried to convince myself but I just couldn’t. At the time I could only confide in my best friend Adam, who I’d been mates with since primary school.

Adam knew I’d always been energetically sensitive (or, “a little bit special” as he used to call it). I was aware of the thoughts and feelings of others before they’d even said a word. I always seemed to guess what someone was thinking or feeling just by looking at them, an innate skill that has come in really handy in the business world! I just didn’t realise that maybe I was also in tune with something else…

**Come to Accept Yourself**

Over the years I have come to accept myself and trust my intuition - but not after fighting it every step of the way in my teenage years first (which is why I hope this book will help speed the process up for YOU)! When we give up the fight against ourselves things transform instantaneously. For me, it happened on stage in front of 600 people the night I gave the year 12 graduation speech – but I had to be willing to give up the fight and step over the threshold I thought I’d already conquered, but which was suddenly triggering all my old insecurities again.

> “When we incite conversation, we incite change.”
> ~ Ben Angel

**Back to School**

I took to the stage for the last time that year. Within me I held onto the hope that this was the right thing for me to do and the perfect time for everyone involved. I shared with the audience the pain I’d experienced throughout my life: the pain of genuine self-hatred; of losing a loved one; and eventually losing myself…until the moment later on when everything clicked and fell into place synchronistically.

To my surprise, instead of getting shunned, shot or booed off stage, I received very different feedback: and for the first time in my life I felt truly accepted. I think it was the universe’s way of rewarding me for fully accepting myself. After all, I’d just exposed everything to a massive crowd in my own hometown and openly come out as gay. Most of the people in the audience had no idea about my sexuality and some had even shown their homophobic colours a few months beforehand when a local Church became gay friendly (half the parish moved to another Church in protest!).

After I left the stage I remember one couple who came up to shake my hand distinctly. They were there to see their daughter graduate and her father had tears in his eyes as he turned to me and said,
“I knew your father and he would have been SO PROUD of you for doing what you just did.”

It took everything I had to keep myself from bursting into tears.

**I Crossed the Threshold That Day**

I really crossed the threshold that day – in more ways than one, which is (I’ve discovered) the only way to properly do it. I felt initially shaken from the experience – particularly from allowing myself to be so vulnerable in such a public forum. Whether the message got through or not, I will never know. But at least I will never have the regret of having arrived at the brink and turning back in fear.

And just as every other time in my life, things CLICKED and fell into place in the moment... and continued to fall during the weeks and months afterwards, just as they will for you too. Things may not always seem obvious at first, but over time a flash of something from the past now blindingly obvious in hindsight will suddenly ‘CLICK’ and make sense to you all of a sudden.

Burying my identity with my father at his funeral to have it reborn again, grooming myself in all aspects of communication, learning how to express myself clearly, overcoming a sexual addiction and diving deep into the subconscious to uncover why my body was revolting against me - all these things helped me ‘CLICK’ and find the moment.

Which moment? The moment in which I can honestly say that whatever I have been through and whatever I am about to experience, is just right and ‘perfect’ in every way – just as the moments you have experienced in your own life are and will be.

As I finish writing this, I am just about to turn thirty years old. For me, this book closes a chapter in my life and now sits in YOUR hands in hope it will be reborn to open up a new chapter for you - because it is only YOU who can make the necessary observations and changes for things to ‘CLICK’ and fall into place for you – BIGGER BETTER HARDER and FASTER than ever before!

I sit with my thoughts as they echo around my mind. One after the other they begin to fall into place, each inextricably linked to the next. They cannot be forced; they must be drawn together like magnets meeting in the middle by their own sheer will.

The undercurrent is sweeping them up and placing them exactly where they need to be, CLICK…CLICK…CLICK…
The correlation to the connection is time and perception. Without this link the connections cease to exist and instead sit at opposing ends of the spectrum battling for a position of presence within the mind, causing internal conflict and grief. The moment things fall into place is the moment I cross the threshold… and keep on going.

The question is not **how I will take the next step…but when.**

~ Ben Angel

I wish you every success in *Finding The Moment That Everything CLICKS And Falls Into Place*…in everything you do!

Ben Angel

x

---

**WATCH THE SHORT FILM BASED ON THIS BOOK!**

Visit [benangel.co/whoami](http://benangel.co/whoami) to watch the short film based on this book. It was featured by both Entrepreneur & Success Magazine’s to their collective audiences of 6 million followers.

And, also checkout my groundbreaking Audio Program, “The Entrepreneurs Vision” ([benangel.co/entrepreneursvision](http://benangel.co/entrepreneursvision)) This program will help you achieve more in the next 30 days than in the past 3 months alone. Based on several powerful visualisation techniques it will help you realise your potential to get more out of your health, wealth, career and relationships.

Enter in your exclusive password VISION for a special surprise.
References

Chapter 1: References
1. Joan Rivers Biography
http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/13087ctl
http://www.thefreedictionary.com/cognitive

Chapter 2: References
3. The Psychology of Persuasion, Robert B. Cialdini, PH.D. first published in 1984
5. www.goop.com/newsletter/103/
6. www.goop.com/newsletter/103/

Chapter 3: References
3. ‘Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion,’ Robert B. Cialdini, PHD,
Chapter 4: References

Chapter 5: References
Chapter 6: References
3. The Four Hour Body – Timothy Ferriss page 158
4. Extract taken from The Quantified Self: The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Self-Experimentation – Seth Roberts
7. Dogs Detect Cancer http://topnews.us/content/234214-dog-detects-cancer-traces-high-accuracy-levels

Chapter 7: References

Chapter 8: References
Chapter 9: References
1. Quotes Net; http://www.quotes.net/authors/Oprah+Winfrey
4. Bad eating can give you depression: study: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jfUz8ryvzYGF8m8XMhFl5TM4K9aw?docId=CNG.32ed027d9136847068e142 0850fb9209.e91

Chapter 10: References
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I must thank my mum (Fay Angel) for her support and endless encouragement through some of the toughest moments in my life. Her courage and persistence to keep going when all of the cards were down is nothing short of remarkable and serves as a constant source of inspiration.

Secondly, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my tireless and insightful editor, who by virtue of my 30-day goal to launch by my 30th birthday, was automatically tasked with turning a very big job around in very little time. As ever, the suggestions put forth and changes made were of consistently high calibre - Thank You.

A huge thank you goes to all of my close friends that have each impacted my life and shaped me in amazing ways; Johnny, Mat, Dean, Adam, Jaya, Rarnee and Alex. You have each truly shown me how to laugh and have fun particularly over the past year. Thank you.

And last but not least, to YOU the reader. Thank you for purchasing this book and putting your trust in my hands. I trust you have enjoyed coming on the journey with me and I can’t wait to see what you have planned in the future. Remember, if it doesn’t make you nervous then it’s not worth doing!!!

Ben Angel

Contact Info
Email Ben at info@benangel.co
DINE FOR A CURE
FUNDING BRAIN CANCER RESEARCH

CAN YOU HELP THE FIGHT AGAINST BRAIN CANCER?

Every year thousands of families lose someone they love to brain cancer. In 2005, one of those families was Ben Angel's.

- Brain cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in people aged under 39 years.
- Brain cancer is the most deadly of all cancers but receives the least government funding.
- The most common malignant brain cancer, high grade glioma, is almost 100% fatal.

To change that, we need money for research.

Every donation to Dine for a Cure helps to fund crucial brain cancer research.

BEN ANGEL SUPPORTS DINE FOR A CURE
WILL YOU JOIN US?
Book Ben to speak at your next event through:  
benangel.co

Specialised Keynotes / Presentations:
Ben can tailor his presentations to your needs whether it’s for a keynote, workshop or personal consultation. Ben speaks on the following topics:
- Social Media / Online Marketing
- Networking
- Personal Branding
- Public Relations / Media
- Visual Communications
- Video Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Motivation

Media Appearances:
Do you need someone to comment on a business, lifestyle or marketing topic?
Ben is comfortable and experienced in the media limelight; his exuberant personality thrives on being interviewed or delivering a segment on radio or television. Ben will work with your producers to deliver provocative sound bytes or presentations that engage and captivate your audience. He is as conservative or as controversial as he needs to be.

Whether you need a five-minute phone comment or an extended television feature, Ben can customize his material to accommodate your requirements. You may prefer to commission Ben to contribute an article or column for your magazine or newspaper. Visit www.benangel.co for more details.

Ben’s website links:
www.benangel.co