

## Step Four

# LEAVING A LEGACY

“I had an inheritance from my father,  
It was the moon and the sun.  
And though I roam all over the world,  
The spending of it’s never done”

*Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940)*

I remember once, a few years ago, attending some form of training course and sitting there thinking to myself, “there has to be more to this (life) than learning, teaching, treating . . . then retiring.” The focus of the training session was to explain and demonstrate a quick fix solution to money worries that would result in all of us becoming millionaires within a year. As I listened, I started to question my own path: not the journey I had been on to reach this point, or the path immediately in front of me from this point forward, but the path I would leave behind after leaving this body . . . the legacy.

I had discussed death and the afterlife before but I’d never given much thought to the afterlife left within this life! As I began to think about this during the training session, I slowly drifted off into a dazed state – while sitting on possibly the most uncomfortable chair known to mankind – and my thoughts led to a number of questions. The first was: what is more important, the work in this life or the continued work in the next? Would it be possible to create something, not knowing what it was at the time, that would continue to help

others when I was no longer in a position to? The second was: is it possible to create something that could be mass produced – thereby helping the masses – that would need little or no physical interaction from me? As my mind drifted further away from the present, I started to think about what would be said at my funeral . . . would anyone turn up, and what would be inscribed on my headstone?

**Beware of the man who seeks greatness as he will do anything in order to achieve it!**

The above pearl of wisdom is another that came from my father. He had a successful football career, but he once told me about the many people around him at the time who paid a heavy price for the same success. This is something that has been echoed recently in the world of cycling, with the realization that Lance Armstrong lost his grip on reality and *literally* did anything and everything he could to get to the top; achieving “greatness” in his view. Both my father and my uncle played professional football and, as part of a football legacy, I have seen first-hand those peers who were unable to deal with the fame . . . and then the rapid transition to *non*-fame. I can understand how hard this must be; one minute being in the public eye and becoming accustomed to being “the face” of the industry, and then the next, all of it being stripped from you as you are effectively thrown away. This simply highlights the importance of **legacy** over any short-term fulfilment. As I have said all along . . .

**It’s not the end that is important, but the path you take to get there: the journey to internal fulfilment, and the legacy you leave.**

I'm certain that having read this far, you're already thinking about going out and achieving more, but, before you do, continue to read the final section of this book and use the tools you find within it to help you *really* establish the legacy you are leaving behind.

## **Building your temple**

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My attitude has always been that the Western view on life is incorrect. That view is as follows:

- **Education** – from age 4 years to 16/24 years
- **Employment** – from age 18 years to 75 years
- **Retirement** – from age 75 years to death, which in England and Wales in 2010 was most common at 85 years for men and 89 years for women

This means that, if we average out the above statistics, we are in education for 16 years of our life, in employment for 57 years, and in retirement for 15 years. I looked at these statistics when I was still in my early 20s and made the decision then and there to do something about it: I made the *choice* not to comply.

- Does it make sense to work for a longer period of time than you have in retirement?
- Does it make sense to work for a longer period of time than you have to enjoy the freedom of not being tied to a desk or to a set working hour?

It may not make sense but it's a route through life many people follow because they believe they have no choice and there is no alternative.

Below is the alternative view I chose:

- **Education** – life
- **Employment** – life
- **Retirement** – life

Sometimes I sit on the tube in London and watch people coming and going: they all look the same and they all act the same. It makes me wonder if this is where the term “join the rat race” began! But it doesn't have to be this way. Someone who shares my attitude and demonstrates the benefits of adopting an alternative view of life is Sir Richard Branson. I am a great fan of his, not only because he is massively successful, but also because his chosen “lifestyle” incorporates all three aspects of life – education, employment, and retirement. There can be no denying that Richard Branson is building a lasting legacy; his temple stands on solid foundations, but you don't need to become an entrepreneurial multi-millionaire to achieve success . . . your success is your choice.

The temple you are building is *your* legacy, no one else's, and while it can be inspirational to learn from the successes of others, it's important to forge and maintain your own *true* identity.

It took me a long time to realize that not everyone wants to be successful; or to have a large house; or to raise a family;

or to achieve the utmost pinnacle of fulfilment in their life! I couldn't quite understand why anyone would choose this *unambitious* attitude to life: why wouldn't everyone want more; why wouldn't someone want to achieve the best in life? And wouldn't everyone rather enjoy life than struggle along every day? My understanding changed the day I met a lovely, larger than life man in his 50s who owned nothing more than a bicycle, the clothes on his back, a toothbrush and a passport. We were complete strangers but we got chatting over a cup of coffee. During the course of the conversation, stories emerged about his life . . . where he had been and what he had been doing for the last 30 years . . . and then out of the blue he asked me: "How do you cope with all that baggage?" The baggage he was referring to was my ambition and he asked: "What if what you're searching for doesn't produce the results you want and life becomes a struggle for no pay off: wouldn't it be better to live every day as it comes?"

As I look at my life now, it's not about the possessions I have or the successes I have achieved; it's about the enjoyment of the journey and the building of a legacy that can go on beyond my living days. Of course, earning a living and enjoying life's luxuries isn't something I resent being able to do, but it's being able to enjoy each day knowing that tomorrow is going to be an equally good day that makes being where I am not such a bad place to be. This is especially poignant for me, as there was a time on my journey, not so very long ago, when I took knockback after knockback and really began to question whether my chosen path would lead to the outcomes I wanted in life. There can be no doubt that the continual knockbacks led to everyone around me also questioning

my path, and this generated an atmosphere of doubt. However, I chose *not* to doubt myself and my resilience allowed me to continue building my temple, one step at a time, on solid foundations.

### ***Persistence, patience, practice . . . the perfect formula***

At one stage on my journey, I left the Army and found myself “unemployable”; so when I say I know how it feels to have nothing, I mean it . . . I was on the bread line for real, and it’s not something I say for effect! The point I want to make is that along with change in your life there is inevitably also going to be some form of setback . . . and it’s most likely going to hurt. The *true strength* and the building of truly rock solid foundations comes from being able to get back up and continue, knowing that what you’re doing is congruent with *your* chosen legacy. History is littered with stories of people who against all odds picked themselves up after facing a setback and carried on to produce a true masterpiece. I would love to know what the geniuses of our time actually said to themselves on those occasions when things didn’t quite work out as planned, yet they chose to carry on and give it another go.

*“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10 000 ways that won’t work”*

Thomas A Edison

In my mind it’s simple – **just get over it and get on with making it better.** An Army Sergeant of mine once said to me,

“If it can’t make you pregnant then it’s not worth worrying about.” While this may seem to be a fairly antiquated turn of phrase, there’s a “rustic” wisdom in his words and I understand what he means by them. There is nothing to be gained from worrying about things that really are not that big a deal in the grand scale of things – let them go. And, by the same token, when something is not working, there’s absolutely no point in carrying on with the same approach, effectively trying to get a square peg to fit into a round hole; it’s time to try a different approach.

**It’s not rocket science: if it’s not working, then work at something that will!**

Sure, we would all love to succeed in everything we do and to finish everything we start but, as the geniuses of our time show us, finishing what you start is only possible when you have the ability to keep going on your chosen path even when faced with obstacles and setbacks.

*“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”*

Albert Einstein

To me, failure isn’t about the outcome; it’s about the emotional feelings attached to failing to complete the task. It’s not getting an end result that’s different to the planned end result that creates feelings of failure; it’s not getting an end result at all through not getting to the end of the task that creates those feelings. For this reason, my tip to you is to only start things you are truly prepared to finish, and commit to



seeing through what you begin to the end. However, things change, and whatever it is you commit to seeing through must always be in line with your legacy. If your legacy changes, you must change the path you're on accordingly. The journey you take must always be a true reflection of the lasting legacy you want to leave behind. When you set out with positive intent and the congruity to finish what you've started, I don't believe you can ever really fail. Whether it's your chosen path to work on the shop floor providing an essential service to the public, or to manage the shop floor workers, or to own the shop floor and the whole company, makes no difference. It's doing what you love that matters and when you're doing that, you're on the perfect path for you.

When I was about 5 years old, my father told me that I had a choice; a choice that would shape my life beyond any other choice I would make in life, and it was a choice that would have to be made now. This choice, once made, would be a choice that I'd struggle to change in the future, as to bring about change would involve breaking *habits* established from this point forwards; habits of a "lifetime" that would keep pulling me back to my old ways . . . to the choice I was to make *now*.

Of course, as a 5 year old, I remember thinking my father was simply launching into another one of his long and not-so-interesting stories, but what he said that day would go on to shape my life and also the lives of those closest to me. This is what he said . . .

Life has two paths, that of the cups and saucers and that of the rollercoaster.

The cups and saucers represent safety and security, they attract the type of person that enjoys knowing where they have come from and knowing where they will go; they spin in the same direction and offer a very limited change in the scenery. It will come and go and each day will seem like the next.

The rollercoaster attracts another type of person. They live with the possibility that life will have its highs but will also have its lows, and although the path is still predestined, the journey is a whole lot more exciting.

Neither one is better than the other, but one will bring about adventure and excitement while the other will bring about stability which, at times, the other will lack.

I made my choice; and in my world, the only life worth living is the life that offers excitement, love, happiness, and challenges. Sure, the actions you take now may be different to the actions you take in the future – you *will* make mistakes, but GET OVER IT! Life will always test your beliefs and your path and, very often, just as you think things are going your way, it will put obstacles directly in your path. That's life.

I asked my wife today; what have you regretted? This was her genuine response . . .

Everything I do is a stepping stone and happens for a reason, and every mistake I make is a lesson to be learned, not a regret to be had.

This was a much better response than I had expected but, in a nutshell, it's spot on! Life is too short *not* to make changes: the sooner you start, the easier it will become.

## ***Do it your way . . .***

We can all learn from the experiences of others and we can all learn through modelling others. One of my mantras has always been a variation of the popular motivational slogan (and often product promoting slogan!) “*If I can do it, so can you.*” My version is; *if someone else has done it and documented their journey, then I can follow the same map.* Modelling a successful individual is *not* attempting to become a carbon copy of that individual, it’s about studying the character traits that led to their success and then adopting the same successful thought patterns and consequent actions into your own life and your own chosen legacy. Remember, the temple you are building is *your* legacy, and no one else’s.



### **Task**

- Write down the names of some people you admire. They can be people you know personally, or famous people you know of but have never met. They can be people who are alive today, or historical figures from the past. In fact, they could even be fictional characters you’ve come to know so well they’ve become “real” – James Bond or Harry Potter for example!
- Next to each name, make a note of the qualities they have that you admire; qualities you would like to adopt.
- Take each quality one at a time and write down the ways in which adopting that quality would have a positive effect on *your* life. For example, you may admire

Richard Branson’s adventurous “nothing ventured, nothing gained” spirit. In his legacy, he is using it to break records and set new records, but you don’t need to be planning passenger flights into space to benefit from adopting the same spirit. What would it mean to you in terms of *your* legacy?

### ***Getting on with it . . .***

Okay, getting over it and getting on with it may well be easier to say than to do, but one thing that’s for certain is that each and every one of us on the Earth’s surface will at some point reflect on our day and think of something we wish we could change or do differently. It’s inevitable; it’s just part of being human and it’s the way it has been since the beginning of mankind.

Getting on with it becomes much easier when you can begin each new day with thoughts of what can be achieved, not thoughts of what you did *not* achieve the previous day. When faced with setbacks, it’s all too easy to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the task ahead and to think of giving up rather than seeing it through to the end. However, when you think about it for a moment, a bricklayer could very easily feel overwhelmed by the sheer scale of a project as he looks at the plans: the realization that several million bricks will need to be laid to complete the project could very easily make laying the first brick a daunting task. This takes us full circle back to something you learned in Step One . . .

**The most common reason why many people fail to change is that they fail to lay their first brick: they stop, often with brick in hand. You only need one brick to start building, but building can only begin when you lay it.**

Yes, tasks can seem daunting when you look at the bigger picture but, just as a bricklayer continues to lay one brick at a time to turn plans on paper into a reality, you must take one step at a time to turn your plans for change into your reality . . . to build your temple and make your change a lasting legacy. The bigger picture is made up of many smaller pictures, and it's the culmination of many small projects on a building site that leads to the creation of the final structure. When a structure seems too big to deal with, it can stop you in your tracks with your brick in your hand, but by breaking it down into smaller projects and dealing with each one individually . . . and dealing with it in the present by *not* thinking of the whole structure . . . it becomes possible to *get on with it* and see the building of your temple through to the end from the first brick to the last.

Each and every one of us can apply this step-by-step approach to achieving whatever it is we want in life, yet so many of us continually fail to complete the tasks we set for ourselves: why is this? In my London practice, I deal with all types of clients with all kinds of issues but, before they even arrive, there's one common trait I can practically guarantee will present itself in each of them. I call it the **pre-perception post therapy prediction**: in other words, the thoughts of "I've failed already" that they carry with them as they walk through the door. This trait is commonly found in those looking to

lose weight. Most, if not all, of those currently “trying” to lose weight as they walk through the door would have tried at least one diet before, and the previous failure (assuming it failed, hence the reason to attempt an alternative) had already created the presupposition that they were going to fail again. With this in mind, continuing to go through the motions in some way or other acts as an internal buffer; it becomes a subconscious exercise that tricks the conscious mind into producing thoughts and affirmations such as “At least I am trying,” or “I am doing my best,” or “This isn’t working for me.” However, the therapy yo-yo effect this creates then becomes a key trigger for the establishment of self-doubt and negative belief patterns. Remember, the building of your temple can only begin once you’ve prepared the ground . . . and this means clearing away unnecessary baggage.

### ***Who are you kidding?***

Are you “trying”? Are you “doing your best”? Or are you just kidding yourself? This type of internal trickery does not work. The faster you make the choice to change, the quicker that change will happen.

It’s up to *you* to take control of your self-image. A lot of the clients that I meet talk about their emotions or feelings as if they are real: making them real makes them appear as something they have, something they are in possession of, and therefore something that can be removed or taken away . . . they will talk about the issue as if it has been given to them as a gift. When dissecting the boastful type of language used,

it becomes apparent that there is a sense of normality in having this behavioural defect . . .

- “. . . Oh, I have a phobia.”
- “. . . I am scared of needles.”
- “. . . I cannot lose the weight.”

**If you weren't born with it you don't have to accept it.**

Unfortunately, I lack sympathy with people who aren't willing to let go, and the use of the above language is a common trait among those who are choosing to hold on to the something they *have*. People often come to see me after consulting with another therapist, and my first question is – “why did you decide not to change before?” This confuses almost everyone! But, my reason for asking is to highlight the fact they are looking to the therapist to take away their particular trait/behaviour or strategies, when really the only person who can do that is them.

During speaking engagements, I often refer to a state, belief, phobia, fear, or mental illness as simple labels we use to identify various strategies. As I see it, people who “have” these issues need to understand that they are the ones “doing” the associated behaviours. This is a controversial and often criticized approach, but “having” something leads to the holder looking for someone else to take it from them, whereas “doing” something drives home the point that it's up to them to *stop doing* it! Be aware of using the word “I” in reference to negative issues, as it adds a sense of ownership over those particular strategies. Learn to accept that *everyone* has some-

thing they would love to change and you are no different. Accepting that you are not alone can bring about a great feeling of normality, but, avoid being normal . . . as you know already, I am not a great fan of normal! Normal for me is something that takes little effort and demonstrates low standards. **Different is where success can be found.** Our Western culture has set standards in terms of the way we should act or dress, and even the thoughts we should be having, but to make a life of internal success and fulfilment, to make a life that generates an inner smile, you have to go beyond normal.

### ***Stop lying and get honest . . .***

The smallest of lies can turn into a big, lifetime obstacle. The more you lie to yourself, and others, the more you tie yourself up in a tangled web that's hard to escape.

*"Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive"*

Sir Walter Scott

If you satisfy your thoughts with lies, then your mind, over time, will no longer know what is real and what has been created. This buffer is not conducive to positive thinking. So why do people lie? Lying is a strategy that helps to process a sense of normality, but, let me say it once more – *normality* should not be a target for you! Whenever I hear the word lie, it reminds me of a school playground; children are masters at being able to convince themselves that something is real; they can create and live in fantasy worlds at the drop of a



hat; and they can also look you in the eye and tell you that they did not eat the entire packet of biscuits . . . it was the dinosaur sitting opposite them who did that!

## Living with a smile

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It's fair to say that living a great life is what most people aim to achieve, however very few actually achieve it. My theory is that if we were to push the boundaries of our lives just a little further, we would more than likely be very happy with the results. For example, let's say your aim is to be able to measure your success on a financial scale, and you set yourself a target of achieving an annual salary of £100 000 in a successful career. If we then assume that you achieve 80 per cent of your target salary, your actual earnings would be reduced by £20 000 per annum. This means that to achieve what you *really* want you must learn to trick your mind with what it is you want *plus* 20 per cent. The tools set out within the pages of this book are designed to help you do exactly that, and the sooner you put them to good use in practice, the sooner you will achieve what you want *and* gain maximum satisfaction from every outcome in life. Do not lie . . . be honest with yourself about what you want, set your ambition scale to full speed, and then push the boundaries just a little bit further; make things just that little bit harder. Your comfort zone, in my opinion, is a place where you have reached your *minimum* standards in life, and by choosing to stay there you have chosen not to grow. In fact, comfort zones don't stay "comfortable" in the long term; they develop into dull, unexciting places in which everything begins to wilt and die. Our

emotions are our triggers to happiness and the lack of “fresh air” or movement within a comfort zone allows boredom to arise. My father always used to say, “Boring people get bored,” and I use his saying now because it is true in so many different ways. When you stop growing, you stagnate, and the outcome becomes boredom: boredom because you know what you have done and you know what you have to do; boredom because there is limited variation; and boredom because it’s unlikely there is ever going to be any variation in the “routine” that has become a life.

### ***Start to think differently . . .***

Start to think differently in all areas of your life and in every aspect. Choose to create an inner smile through achieving a life of excellence; a new life that you can look back on during your last days and smile about, knowing you achieved everything within your capabilities and you enjoyed a life of fulfillment as a result.

The key to change is finding the motivation to change. Prioritize your life into distinct areas you want to change – for example, finances, relationships, health, etc. – and think in terms of what you want to change first and last. This doesn’t have to follow any particular order but it’s important to consider the order in which change is likely to flow. Just as a river flows along the path of least resistance, your flow – your journey – should follow the path where you are least likely to come up against resistance or obstacles that might stop you in your tracks. Remember, the building of your legacy can only begin with the laying of the first brick, so

make the first brick something you feel *motivated* to lay in place. With the laying of the first brick, the building of your temple begins. Each new brick laid represents another step and another achievement, and the more you achieve, the greater the advances in terms of the legacy you will leave. However, keep in mind that things don't always go to plan on a building site . . . be flexible! Be flexible with your choices; be flexible in each step you take, and be flexible in the questions you ask yourself and the language you use to motivate change. For example, when things are not going entirely to plan, change negative thoughts of "I can't do this" to positive, productive thoughts of "How can I do this?" Push your boundaries just that little bit further by changing the internal language you use. Eliminating negative words such as can't, won't, and shouldn't will bring with it a completely different strategy that your mind will follow. Negative thoughts and words can only ever bring about a negative outcome; ask for a negative and that's exactly what you'll get, but ask for a positive and that's exactly what you'll get too! It's having this understanding of the link between your thoughts and your behaviours that begs the question – if your thoughts are to become your reality, wouldn't it be wise to create better thoughts?

### ***Change is as difficult as you want to make it . . .***

You can change as fast or as slow as you wish; you can take action or not, but whatever you choose will be the right choice . . . all you need to do is *not* regret it. Regret when

you reach a certain age turns into resentment. The more you fail to follow through with your dreams the more your resentment will grow. It's important to accept that life can change in an instant but, when you remain in your flexible state, you can make adjustments to flow with those changes. Life is unfair, get over it! If you are now in your 30s, you are never again going to be in your 20s – let it go! When you hold on to the past, you live in a reactive state but, when you ensure your thoughts and actions are in the present moment, you live in a productive state that will allow you to move on and bring new things into your life.

*“Life is not fair. The only fair you’ll get from me is your bus fare home”*

Lord Sugar, *The Apprentice*

Think of it this way; do you want to be in your 80s looking back on the exciting achievements of your life and looking forward to leaving a lasting legacy, or do you want to be in your 80s visiting plastic surgeon after plastic surgeon in an attempt to hold on to the youthful looks of your 30s? There comes a point in your life when the character can no longer support the act: a supermodel cannot hold on to her looks indefinitely as she ages, and an Olympic athlete cannot continue to go on improving his performance into his 90s. Choose to make changes that offer longevity, and choose to live for the here and now. Remember, New Year's resolutions fail because they offer no longevity so choose to make a lifestyle change rather than a target driven change.

It can be hard work practising your bad habits or your old beliefs. If you think about the amount of time you spend

practising *not* changing, it's no surprise that with little actual effort you become an expert at it! Change does require a certain amount of maintenance, and constant alterations may be needed, but just as a rudder on a sailing boat guides it from one place to another, conscious effort can guide your change and keep you on course to achieving what you want. The conscious effort you apply will in turn become your habit breaker, with each effort eventually becoming a subconscious action.



### Task

Section your life into parts that can be easily recognized; a storage system for your mind where you can place all of the bits needed for you to achieve a life full of success and happiness. For example, the parts could be related to career, finances, health, or relationships.

- Take one section at a time and work out *exactly* what it is you want to change. You'll need to be specific down to the smallest detail – if in doubt, get it out!
- Get into your *true state*, your success state where there is no failure, only feedback from which to learn.
- Change the sub-modalities one at a time. So, what does it **look** like when you have successfully made the change; what does it **sound, smell, taste, and feel** like?
- Take massive action to make it your physical reality – adopt an attitude of *already having*.
- Experience the rewards and move forwards towards reaping the rewards.

## ***Saving for a rainy day . . . ?***

It has become customary within Western culture to follow the accepted pattern of education, employment, and retirement as outlined earlier. However, there is an add-on element in the pattern, and that is the **Will**. It seems an accepted cultural mind-set that we should save for retirement . . . then save for a rainy day when in retirement . . . then make sure not to spend too much so that we have something to leave behind for our children . . .

**I've chosen a different mind-set: don't save for a rainy day,  
invest for a brighter future.**

This mind-set has taken me a few years to develop but it works wonders in terms of creating a carefree and trusting future. The more you begin to trust your own mind; the more you trust that you're doing the right thing for *you*, the more de-cluttered your conscious thinking becomes as a consequence.

**Achieving a clear mind is the highest form of achievement.**

The fun starts here! What are you going to do with all the newly acquired free space in your mind? This is a powerfully motivational element of change . . . see yourself in a future with you doing exactly as you wish, then change "I wish" for "I will"!

I love the idea of a "bucket list". A bucket list is essentially a "things to do before you die" list, or put another way, a list of things to do before you "kick the bucket"! In the 2007

film *The Bucket List*, Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson star as two terminally ill men who set about completing their own bucket lists before they die. Their “road trip” takes them around the world and sees them taking part in everything from skydiving to riding a motorbike on the Great Wall of China. However, for me, the most touching part of the story is the inclusion of “wishes” that money can’t buy on the list. These include “laugh till I cry” and “help a complete stranger for the good” – both of which are crossed off the list during the course of the film. The idea of kicking the bucket and taking a sense of completion with you is an amazing concept, and one that we should all aspire to . . . regardless of current health, age, status, or anything else. **Do something NOW that will change your life and your lasting legacy. Do the impossible with your new positive mind-set.**

**Do not accept “impossible” . . . accept “I-am-possible” instead.**

Make your life a fantastic reflection of what is perfect for *you*, but don’t aim for *perfection*, work towards doing your best in everything you do and pushing the boundaries of what it’s possible for you to achieve in life by choosing to step out of your comfort zone.



### **Task**

**Three stages to immediate wellbeing and improvement . . . do it right now!**

**One:**

**On a scale of 1–10, where are you now (currently) in terms of the following:**

**Lifestyle** – this includes career, relationships, friendship and family, wealth, etc. . . . and all other aspects that you have included in your personal description.

**Health** – this is commonsense, but it is important to understand how your current physical health compares with what it should be. Overall health also includes mental health, but make physical health your primary concern and arrange to have a medical “check-up” with your doctor or health professional if needed.

A check-up will provide you with answers to health concerns such as high or low blood pressure, weight – including your body fat percentage – and any other issues relevant to your age and gender. Being honest about your health and gathering hard facts is a big step towards being able to make essential changes happen. But remember, this is a complete overhaul of your lifestyle that must be legacy driven, *not* target driven.

**Fitness** – this area will greatly depend on your overall health, and your definition of fitness may also be dependent on your current interests and activities. For this reason, score your current level of fitness in terms of “fitness for purpose”! Are you fit enough to do the things you want to do to the level you want to be able to do them? For example, you might be fit enough to walk around the shops but you might want to be fit enough to walk up Kilimanjaro.

*(Continued)*



**Two:**

On the same 1–10 scale, where do you *want to be* in each of the above?

**Three:**

Move forward 100 years and ask yourself . . .

- What will history say about you in relation to all of the above?
- How will you be remembered by your ancestors?

Avoid making mountains out of molehills by making something more than it is, but don't settle for things being as they are either; make things what you want them to be. If you can make everything you do in your life reflect on your life in a positive way then you are setting the stones of your lasting legacy of a life lived with an inner smile.



**Think . . .**

Another interesting question to ponder over is: *what am I worth?* This is a question that originated from my mentor and it relates to your worth in terms of *self* and life rather than purely financial terms.

*What are you worth?*

Write it down: **I am worth . . .**

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We all seek significance in life, whether it's via acceptance in society or by doing something unusual and different that makes us stand out! You have the freedom to do as you please with your life. You can choose to book an around the world trip; you can choose to live an alternative lifestyle and go off grid; and you can choose to quit the job you hate and become self-employed. These are all choices that are yours to make, no one else can make them for you, so why do we rarely make these radical changes? Well, some people do: some people will leave the UK with nothing more than a toothbrush and a passport and head off to Africa for a month, others of course will remain slightly more cautious and will take steps to gain a little more security before taking this kind of massive action . . . but then still do it. The point I'm getting at is there are no "unrealistic goals" to set yourself in life. I'm not a fan of target driven goals, but in terms of setting yourself a legacy driven goal there are no limits. Your life, your legacy . . . the way you live your life and the way you are remembered is ultimately *your* choice.

*"If you can dream it, you can achieve it"*

Walt Disney

As mentioned earlier, I would love to have a time machine in which to go back and watch the many geniuses of our time at work. I'd love to know what strategies they used to cope with "failure" and I'd really love to know what thought processes inspired them to take action on what others often saw as radical new projects. One person I would particularly

like to have met is Walt Disney. Disneyland is his lasting legacy . . .

To all who come to this happy place; welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here age relives fond memories of the past . . . and here youth may savour the challenge and promise of the future. Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals, the dreams and the hard facts that have created America . . . with the hope that it will be a source of joy and inspiration to all the world.

## Passing on

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The majority of people who knew of Walt Disney's "Disneyland" plans thought he was mad! Disney himself, of course, had the strength of character to *believe* in his dream and took action to turn that dream into a reality, despite being surrounded by doubters.

Disney had a vision and he *knew* that his vision would become a reality. Sadly, Disney died before the gates of Disneyland opened to the public, but his death did not end his dream . . . it lives on in his lasting legacy. Look back at your vision board, or take action to create one now if you have not already done so. At home, we have a family board as well as our own individual boards. It's fair to say that these boards rarely get much conscious attention, but the simple act of adding an inspiring image or removing an item that's no longer relevant from time to time is enough to allow your subconscious to make a note. Just as you may fail to notice

all of the tiny cracks on a pavement you regularly walk along, your subconscious will note them every time.



### Task

Make a vision board a yearly ritual, perhaps even a family event, and get the kids involved by asking them to add their own meaning to each of the following:

- **Fun & Recreation** (re-creation) – add items or images that represent your “dreams” in terms of living a fun-filled life
- **Personal Growth** (aimed at a fulfilled outcome)
- **Relationship** (relation-ship; the vessels of communication)
- **Health** (both physical and mental)
- **Family & Friends**
- **Physical Environment**
- **Finances**

Remember, *perfection is achieved not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.* Your vision board should always be a representation of your “perfect” life with nothing left to take away. However, this should not prevent you from adding new things. Keep your life exciting by varying your interests. Add new things that fire your imagination and motivate you to “give it a go” – they can always be removed again if the spark proves to be short lived!

## ***Tell everyone or keep it to yourself?***

Should you tell everyone about your plans and the lasting legacy you want to leave, or should you keep yourself to yourself? There are two trains of thought on this: the first is to keep it to yourself, then if you fail only you will know; and the second is to tell everyone so that you will have a sense of accountability over whether you actually take action to achieve what you want to achieve.

In my world it's neither one; I keep it neutral. If someone asks, why not tell them? If no one asks, there's no need to go out of your way to say anything. My reasons for this approach are simple. The only people who will be interested in knowing about your plans and the changes you are making are those closest to you, and they will already sense the changes. Your journey will not re-inform them or change how they see you, only your success will. Anyone else outside of your personal circle will generally only pay attention once they start to see the changes you are making and the benefits you are realizing through your change . . . *then* they'll be interested!

However, **be a reader then a leader**. You already know of the benefits of sharing your ideas and the importance of *reading* in order to then *lead*. Share your ideas with anyone who will listen, and the more who listen the more change will happen. I have always shared everything I learn, not because I wish to brag, but because I truly believe that the more people have a better overall understanding of all things, the more they will endeavour to have a better understanding of life and, as

a result, this will better our ability to understand and communicate with one another.

Not everyone I meet holds the same view, and I am often surprised by the number of people I come across on my travels who claim ownership over information they have, making them reluctant to share it with others around them or reciprocate in any way with those who provided it. It has always struck me as being slightly odd that certain individuals will wait until an event has come to a standstill or things go wrong before saying, “Oh, I saw that coming all along” or “I could have told you that would happen.”

Of course, not everyone will listen! Those who don’t want to listen to your ideas are those who are unlikely to change or to follow the same path as you anyway. However, those who do are likely to spread your ideas and concepts and, just as importantly, your passion. These are the people who will support the infrastructure of the temple you are building; they add strength to your foundations, allowing you to continue building a lasting legacy.

### ***Don’t be a puppet on a string . . .***

It’s very easy in this modern age to accept everything we are being told via the many media outlets to be the truth. Take car manufacturers for example; with their advertising campaigns, they can convince us that a certain type of car makes us really “cool”; really “distinguished”; really “sexy”; a real “family man”; a real “independent woman; or virtually “indestructible”

on the road. You name it, there's a car that can do it for you! Any advertising campaign that "promises" some form of desirable change . . . *this product will make you younger; slimmer; more muscular; or irresistible to the opposite sex* . . . can be surprisingly effective in terms of boosting sales, and it would seem there's no limit to the marketing extremes some companies will go to in an effort to get you spending.

The best purchase for you is the purchase you need to make, not the purchase you are *told* you need to make. The same can be applied to your beliefs: when you think about the number of things we are told to believe in society, there is rarely a chance for any of us to make our own choices. Our main "puppeteers" are unfortunately usually those closest to us. Very often without any conscious thought, they pass on their beliefs . . . they *design* our thoughts and our behaviours by passing on what they believe to be the truth.

Nurture your mind with new learning and find your own truth. Learning new skills and trying new things is known to keep our minds alert into old age – but contrary to popular advertising, you don't need to buy a "brain trainer" to exercise your mind! Getting involved in something new not only increases your learning and broadens your horizons, sharing a new interest with another person can also bring about some exciting diversions in your thinking patterns.

### ***But life is all about balance . . .***

Lifelong learning is definitely a part of my alternative view of life, but so is lifelong employment and lifelong retirement.

It's all about balance. We use expressions such as, "*Chasing dreams*" or "*Working towards a goal*" to describe our desire to keep moving and keep improving in life, but life should not be all work and no play . . . we need to learn how to relax. I know, learning how to relax doesn't sound like something you would associate with taking massive action – quite the opposite! But, taking time out of your busy schedule to relax and unwind is essential to your overall health and, without adequate rest, your body is unable to recover and repair itself after the stresses of everyday life. Personally, I attempt to sleep for about 10 hours a day and although some see it as wasting my time – with comments along the lines of "You have plenty of time to sleep when you're dead" – my response is always to point out that an engine performs better when filled with fuel!

### ***Get some quality "zeds"!***

Sleep, and our need for it, has been the subject of countless scientific studies for many years, but we still don't have any concrete answers to the question of why we sleep. We know a lot about sleep – we understand sleep patterns, for example – and we know about the many detrimental physical effects a lack of sleep has on an individual, but we don't really have an understanding of exactly how much sleep is the "right" amount or why there's such a wide variation in the amount of sleep each of us finds ideal to function at our best.

For most us, one third of our lives will be spent asleep! That does sound like a huge chunk of life to devote to



being blissfully unaware of the world, so why do we need so much sleep?

The main reasons put forward by scientific research include:

- **Recuperation** – sleep allows your body to recuperate from the activities of the day.
- **Maintenance** – sleep is essential to the maintenance of cognitive skills; meaning to be able to speak normally, think efficiently, and remember everything that’s going on, we need to sleep. Inadequate sleep impairs all of the above and we know that there’s a connection between sleep and brain development (which is why babies need sleep and why adolescents appear to take up residence in their beds!).

Of course, for most of us, a lack of sleep leads to general grumpiness and an inability to think about anything other than when it’s time to go to bed! Sleep deprivation experiments (under controlled circumstances) have shown that staying awake for 17 hours has the same effect on your ability to concentrate as drinking two glasses of wine. Interestingly, two glasses of wine (or a 0.05 per cent alcohol level in your blood) is the legal limit in the UK for drinking and driving! Clearly, a lack of sleep can have serious consequences for drivers and, in many major incidents that involve “operator error,” a lack of sleep is often found to be the cause.

Inadequate sleep effectively slows your physical responses but, as any new parent will tell you, sleep deprivation also impacts your emotional health. A lack of quality sleep can

undoubtedly affect an individual's ability to cope with issues or happenings that might otherwise be taken in their stride. Tiredness often leads to emotional outbursts and "out of character" behaviours, and if anyone is going to make a mountain out of a molehill, it's going to be someone who is over-tired and in need of some quality rest and relaxation.

**In order to take massive action, take time out for rest and relaxation.**

*"A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book"*

Irish proverb

### ***Your mind needs structure . . .***

Just as a builder can start to build from structured, detailed plans, you can begin to build your temple by giving your mind a structured plan or map. Babies and young children need a clear routine, soldiers and servicemen need a clear routine, and your mind needs a clear routine. Our minds need clarity . . . clarity in our thoughts allows for clarity in our actions.

Think about it for a moment; do you work better when you have drawn out each day in your diary into hour by hour slots? Do you work best by knowing where it is you need to be at any given time, and thereby ensuring that you always have plenty of time in between each task to arrive on time at the next? Or do you function better when things are left to chance and you make decisions on the hop? I am fairly sure that almost everyone works best with detailed structure

in their daily lives. The reason for this is simple; the mind likes to know what, when, why, who, and where. When you know these things, you have clarity, and with clarity your day runs smoother and every task completed becomes much more enjoyable.

**See to it that everything you do in the course of your everyday life demonstrates importance and significance. Give your mind the clarity it needs to demonstrate the true you and the best you in everything you do.**

Taking caring of ourselves and giving ourselves every opportunity to enjoy life to the full should be part of everyone's legacy. There's a saying "It's not just about adding years to your life, it's about adding life to your years" and these are wise words. When you have life in your years, you have all the energy you need to build your lasting legacy. Our energy has to go somewhere, and this is something I gained a clearer understanding of when mourning the loss of a loved one. I always had a sense of feeling her presence; I could feel the energy of her presence and I am sure the energy I could feel was the very same energy she used when she was alive. Her energy brought about positive emotions when she was living and it has continued to bring the same positive emotions, even though the physical aspects of the relationship have now ended. The positive emotions can still be relived in just the same way, just by thinking of her.

*"Everyone must leave something behind when he dies . . . Something your hand touched some way so your soul has somewhere to go when you die . . . It doesn't matter*

*what you do, so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched it into something that's like you after you take your hands away"*

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 1953

Moving on from negative emotions is not always easy but it's important to avoid thinking of relationships or situations coming to an *end*. Choose to think of these happenings or *redirections* in your journey or *alterations* to the structure of your temple as you continue to build your lasting legacy. Having an *end* is all too final and, as you know, I'm not a fan of finality. The end is terminal, and something we only achieve when we pass on to the next life.

There is never a dead-end on your journey in this life . . . they just didn't build the road any further. It's time to pick up your tools and get building!

## Leaving a legacy checklist

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- Accept that it's not the end that's important, it's the path you take
- Choose to let go of excess baggage
- Accept that if you were not born with it, you *do not* have to accept it
- Choose not to accept the impossible
- Accept that change is only as difficult as *you* make it
- Choose to give your mind and your life structure