

The Book You Never Knew You Needed

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FIRST EDITION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my cousin Sarah O'Hare Lennon (Specs) who lost her battle with COVID-19 in 2021. She was only 39 years old. The following poem is in her honour.



Echoes of Courage: A Heroine's Tale

In two cozy towns, where hills embraced,
Two shops stood, and a petrol station graced.
Sarah, a shop owner with dreams to sow,
Guided her haven through highs and lows.

With her spectacles on and a heart so kind,
She managed all with a welcoming mind.
In each small store, in these northern towns,
A resilient spirit, so deeply alive.

Amidst the pumps and the petrol's flow,
Sarah's courage would brightly show.
As Covid spread through the air so bare,
She served with love, a soul so rare.

Two shops and a station, in a quaint little space,
A heroine's tale, an enduring embrace.
Yet, as fate weaves its unpredictable thread,
The virus claimed her, and silence spread.

The townsfolk wept, as the news took flight,
A heroine's fall, in the quiet of night.
Her legacy lives in the shelves and the gas pump's glow,
A beacon in memory, an eternal flow.

In the heart of these towns, where mountains stand tall,
The shops echo her resilient call.
Though touched by sorrow, these communities find,
Strength in unity, in shared binds.

In aisles of memory, where pumps softly hum,
Her spirit lingers, a song unsung.
A shop owner's courage, a heroine's light,
In the town's embrace, forever bright.

CONTENTS

Preface	6
1 The power to shape your future is in your hands. Take control and build the life you want.	9
2 Find your obsession and hold it tight.	19
3 Pick one talent first and be the best in your field.	32
4 Design your life. Make a plan.	45
5 Work harder, smarter, and deeper than anyone else.	58
6 Learning is the rocket fuel that propels and transforms your life.	69
7 The law of growth requires patience and perseverance	83
8 When you imagine more, you achieve more.	88
9 Engineer your mind for success.	109
10 Expect opposition to your ambitions. Go perform anyway.	123
11 Nothing great can be achieved alone. Build meaningful relationships.	134
12 Life will test you. Never give up.	146
13 Balance doesn't mean equal splits. It's about optimising your unique mix.	156
14 Don't stop after reaching the top. Continue to create great experiences.	169
15 Be a link in the chain of changemakers. Leave your legacy.	182
Notes.	196

PREFACE

Welcome to a journey unlike any other—a journey into the depths of your potential, guided by principles you may never have realised you needed. This book, aptly titled “The Book You Never Knew You Needed,” is not just a collection of words bound together; it’s a map to unlocking the extraordinary within you.

Within these pages, you’ll discover a roadmap to empowerment, a blueprint for crafting a life of purpose and fulfillment. But beware, for this is not a passive read. It’s an invitation to engage, to challenge, and ultimately, to transform.

Consider the central principles laid out before you. Each one holds a key to unlocking a new dimension of your existence:

1. **The power to shape your future is in your hands.** Explore how to take control and construct the life you’ve always dreamed of.
2. **Find your obsession and hold it tight.** Delve into the pursuit of purpose and passion and where it can lead you to.
3. **Pick one talent first and be the best in your field.** Discover the power of focus and mastery and see the wonders it can bring to your pursuits.
4. **Design your life. Make a plan.** Embrace the power of intentionality as you chart your course towards the life you want.
5. **Work harder, smarter, and deeper than anyone else.** Uncover the secrets of commitment and the extraordinary results it can bring.
6. **Learning is the rocket fuel that propels and transforms your life.** Embark on a journey of continuous growth and watch as it propels you to new heights.
7. **The law of Growth requires patience and perseverance.** Discover the profound impact of persistence as you navigate the twists and turns of your journey.
8. **When you imagine more, you achieve more.** Dare to dream boldly, and witness the universe conspire to make those dreams a reality.
9. **Engineer your mind for success.** Unravel the mysteries of the mind and harness its immense power to help shape your reality.
10. **Expect opposition to your ambitions. Go perform anyway.** Embrace resilience in the face of adversity and let nothing deter you from your path.
11. **Nothing great can be achieved alone. Build meaningful relationships.** Recognise the importance of connection and collaboration as you forge ahead.
12. **Life will test you - Never give up.** Cultivate a fighting spirit in the face of life’s challenges and emerge victorious.
13. **Balance doesn’t mean equal splits. It’s about optimising your unique mix.** Find harmony amidst the chaos by embracing the beauty of balance tailored to your individual needs.
14. **Don’t stop after reaching the top. Continue to create great experiences.** Embrace the

journey of perpetual growth and evolution as you ascend to new heights.

15. **Be a link in the chain of changemakers. Leave your legacy.** Embrace your role as a catalyst for change and leave your mark on the world.

As you embark on this odyssey of self-discovery, remember: the greatest adventures often begin with a single step. So, turn the page, immerse yourself in the wisdom within, and prepare to unleash the extraordinary potential that lies within you. The journey awaits. Are you ready to embark?

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This book has incredible stories and lessons of influential people, icons, entrepreneurs, and athletes. Some of these individuals may be controversial. It's important to note that you may not agree with everything they say or do, and that's okay. You don't need to like or even approve of them. However, you can steal some of their valuable insights and implement certain aspects of their ideas into your own life. By doing so, you can benefit and also make a lasting impact.

Principle 1

The power to shape your future is in your hands.
Take control and build the life you want.

Have you ever seen the movie Rocky Balboa starring Sylvester Stallone? It's a story about a fighter who comes out for one last win. In the film, Rocky's son struggles with blaming his father for the problems in his life. But it is during an emotional father-son moment that Rocky teaches a significant lesson - a lesson I learned when I watched it, about the power of standing up for yourself and taking personal responsibility for the direction you want your life to go.

Rocky, with his usual trademark grit and determination, shares a hard-hitting truth with his son. He delivers these words, loaded with wisdom: "Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place and I don't care how tough you are, it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard ya hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done! Now, if you know what you're worth, then go out and get what you're worth. But ya gotta be willing to take the hits, and not pointing fingers, saying you ain't where you wanna be because of him, or her, or anybody! Cowards do that and that ain't you! You're better than that!"

These words shook me not just within the context of the movie, but because it applies to our very own lives. Ownership of our talent and life isn't in the hands of anyone else except ourselves. Because the truth is, nobody is waiting with a magic wand to improve our life. There is no straightforward path to success, and no knight in shining armour coming to create your future. There is no one coming to save you. The responsibility is entirely ours to carry. We must take action and make our own way in life.

In every part of life, from our careers to our personal journeys, accepting this responsibility is vital. This fundamental principle is the foundation of success. By taking ownership, we enable ourselves to make better choices and take control of our future. We have the power to shape our own

journey.

But taking control and being accountable is no easy task. It requires deliberate, intentional effort—a conscious decision to embrace responsibility. So how can we apply this principle in reality? Just like Rocky Balboa taught his son about the power of personal responsibility, we too can learn from our own experiences and take ownership of our lives. Here are 4 short yet powerful lessons to help guide you with this theory. This is a collection of real-life accounts from individuals who have changed their lives, and what we can learn from them.

Lesson 1. Define your path instead of relying on others.

Your current situation does not determine your future. The choice is in your hands. Instead of taking responsibility, we often blame others for our progress. We point fingers at our employers, parents, partners, the government, the economy, or college, but we rarely look in the mirror and accept that we are responsible for our own lives.

Humans naturally tend to blame others. And it doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor, upper class or normal class, we all do it sometimes, regardless of our wealth. Even Prince Philip of Great Britain, who was incredibly wealthy, sought to blame someone for his career.

His navy career had to end when he married Queen Elizabeth. Prior to his marriage, he served in the British Navy during World War II, enjoying a successful career and independent life. He had many interests and hobbies. But when he became the Queen's husband, he had to put aside his personal ambitions. He had to focus on supporting her and fulfilling his duties as a member of the royal family. Back in those days, it was very much unheard of for a man to give up his career for his wife, even if she was the queen.

Initially, he struggled to find meaning and purpose in his newfound duties. Things bothered him like being given the title of Prince Consort, rather than the more prestigious King Consort, left him upset. Being required to walk two steps behind the Queen and not receiving the same level of recognition also contributed to his anger. This resistance to change initially created some arguments in their marriage. His incessant complaining, and whining like a child in his new role, made him so ill that it is believed he came down with a severe case of jaundice, which took him weeks to recover.

When he realised no one was coming to define his role, Philip came out of his pity party, took control of his own life, and created a position of his own making. Driven by a thirst for knowledge and a strong sense of duty to others, he committed himself to an overwhelming number of roles in over 780 organisations. His commitment to the work of the Queen and the monarchy remained solid for over seven decades until his passing in 2021.

Drawing from his own journey, Prince Philip encouraged newcomers to British royalty to take ownership and carve out their own path of life. He established a benchmark of self-definition, encouraging others to forge their own unique identities. So, you could take the lesson of Prince Philip's transformation and realise that no one is going to map out your path for you. So it's best to avoid searching for external definitions and scapegoats to blame and embrace the power to

shape your own destiny.

Lesson 2. Your past doesn't determine your future story.

Life doesn't come with a script, and we all start on different pages, some with significant advantages and others with many disadvantages. We don't get to pick our parents. We do not choose our place of birth and early years. The circumstances we're born into can feel like the hand we've been dealt, shaping our early years and moulding our perception of what's possible. Yet despite the societal biases and an unequal playing field, we can unlock our potential with one truth: our past doesn't define us. Our past may shape our starting point, but it is the choices we make later on that establish how far we can go. We have the option to develop ourselves and either remain in that position or construct a life of our own.

Think about the incredible journey of Oprah Winfrey, a true rags-to-riches story that captures the spirit of triumph over hardship. Oprah endured horrible things in her early life. Growing up under her grandmother's care in a home plagued by abuse, she experienced unimaginable acts of violence. She wore clothing made from potato sacks, experienced regular beatings and suffered from sexual abuse. Her path seemed destined for darkness. Yet Oprah refused to let her past dictate her future. She became an icon of success and inspiration, conquering the space of media and philanthropy. Her empowering words remind us we hold the power to shape our own destiny. She said in one of her shows, "you are responsible for your life and if you're sitting around waiting on somebody to save you to fix you to even help you; you are wasting your time because only you have the power to take responsibility to move your life forward and the sooner you get that the sooner your life gets into gear."

Let's take another story; the one of Nadia Nadim. When she was young, the Taliban had executed her father. After that, her family didn't have many options, so decided to escape Afghanistan and move to London.

Plans fell through mid-way when they were all thrown off a truck in Denmark and left abandoned. As an immigrant facing prejudice and uncertainty, Nadia confronted the daunting question of identity and belonging. In a foreign land where her past meant nothing, she took charge, rising above societal barriers to become a member of the Danish national football team. Learning 11 languages and completing a medical degree, she defied expectations and earned her place on Forbes' list of "Most Powerful Women in International Sports". Nadia's journey is incredibly inspiring. She shows us how being tough and determined can change everything, and how the past doesn't have to define our future.

Whether it's Oprah or Nadia, these individuals showcase a common theme that resonates with anyone who has gone through pain but still dares to dream—they refuse to be tied to their past. It is not the circumstances they were born into or the challenges they faced that define their future path; it is their mindset and relentless pursuit of their potential. They took charge of their lives to shape a better future for themselves.

Today, you have the same opportunity within your grasp. Pause for a moment to figure out who you strive to be, the person you want to become, and the positive influence you can make on the

world. Accept the fact that your past doesn't determine your future. This is your time to leave the past behind and take control of your life's direction.

Lesson 3. Let the experience of pain drive your determination.

Life has a funny way of throwing unexpected challenges at us, leaving us wounded and hurt. It's easy to get caught up in our past struggles and use them as a crutch, an excuse for not moving on. The victim's song can be tempting, freeing us from facing the mirror and making the essential changes. But what if, instead of dwelling on our pain, we use it as a means for doing something extraordinary?

I once too found myself trapped in the cycle of victimhood, playing my melody of self-pity. The tragic loss of three of our beloved brothers and a broken family left me overwhelmed with despair. I clung to my past, using it as a reason for not doing much. I stayed in my comfort zone, afraid of getting hurt. However, I realised I couldn't continue to make excuses. If I wanted to live a more fulfilling existence, I had to leave my past behind. I reached out for help and it completely shifted my perspective on life.

In the wake of therapy, I let go of my past and began writing a new narrative. I flipped open a fresh page, ready to create a life brimming with possibility. It resulted in taking personal responsibility and embarking on a journey of self-improvement. Two years later, I set off on a backpacking adventure around the world, embracing my past struggles as the stepping stones to a better existence. And let me tell you, life took on a whole new level of excitement and intrigue. When you realise life is going to sometimes hurt, you have the power to not let it halt your life but instead convert it into something else.

Another significant story is that of J. K. Rowling, a single mother grappling with the challenges of welfare and a passion for writing. For years, she felt like a victim of circumstances that seemed determined to crush her dreams. Her childhood was riddled with hardship, her marriage ended in despair, she had no money, and at times her writing aspirations teetered on the brink of impossibility.

But one day, during her depression, a glimmer of an idea illuminated Rowling's path. She imagined a new tale while on a train journey and, with this newfound idea; she channelled her energy and poured her heart and soul into her writing. Every rejection fuelled her determination, each setback only made her stronger. And then, the breakthrough she had tirelessly worked for arrived—a publishing deal materialised. The rest, as they say, is history. The "Harry Potter" series took the world by storm, leaving an impactful mark on modern literature.

Throughout life, we will encounter difficulties that can either stop us in our tracks or drive us forward. It is up to us to choose how we respond to these battles. We can choose to remain defeated or to use that pain to fight back with everything we've got.

Whether we look at the inspiring stories of Nina Aouilk, Lopez Lomong, Tina Turner, Jordan Reynolds, Chatri Sityodtong, or Dan Gable, one thing becomes clear: these individuals refused to be defined by their circumstances. Instead, they took control of their lives, using their adversities

as rocket fuel to push them towards something bigger. Their painful experiences and setbacks became invaluable teachers, guiding them towards greatness.

So, I would say this: Don't let your struggles define you. Use them to push you forward. And I wouldn't run away from challenges either because they are part of the game in reaching your end goal and journey. Every valuable lesson in life I ever learned came from painful experiences and setbacks. It's up to you to turn your story around from one of pain into a captivating tale of success.

Lesson 4. If you want a change in life, then you must change.

It's simple to get caught up in waiting for others to shape our lives, but the truth is, change must start with you. Naval Ravikant, a guru of modern wisdom, laid bare this truth when he proclaimed, "Doctors won't make you healthy. Nutritionists won't make you slim. Teachers won't make you smart. Gurus won't make you calm. Mentors won't make you rich. Trainers won't make you fit. Ultimately, you have to take responsibility. Save yourself." This statement reminds us that we have to take charge of our own lives. Change can only occur if we will change ourselves first. For example, to build a better future, it is important that we work towards becoming the best versions of ourselves. The path to progress is right in front of us, but we must be the ones to start the journey.

It's super important to embrace change. And with A.I. evolving so fast, it's going to revolutionise nearly every aspect of our lives. Yet, change can be hard. The appeal of familiarity calls us to stay in our comfort zones, tempting us to avoid the hardship that comes with transformation. Our mind doesn't help in this situation and loves to throw a few roadblocks our way. It's just their instinctual way of protecting us from hurting. But deep down, we know that greatness resides beyond those self-imposed limits. We are meant to go outside the comfort zone, to evolve, to grow, and to transcend. If we avoid change, we will be doomed to a duller existence, missing out on fully experiencing life. Don't let anyone discourage you from embracing change; it is one of the most profound and exhilarating experiences life has to offer.

Change is tough and difficult. It requires bravery, facing difficult realities, persistence, and a relentless commitment to personal growth. But as my mother said, unless you change yourself, you'll always have what you've got. Don't be afraid to make the change. Be more afraid of what would happen if you don't.

So, how do you start on the path to greatness? How do you change? It all begins within—the foundation of self-love. But what does self-love truly mean? I had a hard time figuring it out since everyone sees it differently and it also sounds a little clichéd. One day, a friend sent me a powerful message about self-love. Queen Elizabeth had summed it up well, she said. "Self-love means nurturing our talents and using them to make a difference in our community." It makes sense. We should make the most of our talents. Each one of us is special, and we all have something valuable to contribute to the world. We're responsible to nurture and embrace our talents, acknowledging both the challenges and joys they bring. By executing this properly, we can reap benefits that extend beyond ourselves to include our neighbours as well.

Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror" also teaches us to look inward and start the change. The

song reminds us that we have the power to transform ourselves and make the world a better place. We shouldn't wait for change; we should start it ourselves. And we can do that by embracing our individual calling in life, whether that's as a farmer, teacher, nurse, doctor or shop assistant. But we must develop our talents first and commit to changing as the world changes. Embracing change allows us to reach our full potential.

Final thoughts to help implement this principle.

It is solely up to us to figure out what we want to do with our life. We cannot rely on others to do the work for us or to bring about the change we want. That responsibility lies on us to take and begin that journey of personal growth and transformation.

If you long for a better life, something with more meaning and purpose, you must first commit to improving yourself. That saying remains valid: if you keep doing what you've always done, don't expect anything different. It's time to start owning and shaping your own reality.

Embracing responsibility is not just empowering; it is liberating. It allows you to take control of your own life, no longer being controlled by others. The government, the economy, your family, your partner, or your boss no longer hold the power to dictate your path. You should have the authority to write your own story and determine your own destiny. You hold the very pen that writes your story, and that, my friend, is a beautiful thing. Grab the pen, for it is by taking responsibility for the path you take you find freedom.

Nobody knows what the future holds, but what you do now can change everything. You have the ability to build the life you want, to make your ambitions and dreams a reality. The choices you make today, the actions you take now, are good starting points. Will you be in the driver's seat, steering your life towards something great? Or will you be a passive observer, merely a passenger along for the ride? The choice is yours to make.

If there is one movie that sums up this first principle, then I'd watch "Good Will Hunting." It's about a young man with incredible intelligence, yet seems somewhat reluctant, almost afraid to move on from past pain and strive for something better. With the help of a therapist, he learns how to confront his past traumas and take back control of his life. This movie really got to me in so many ways and serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of taking charge of your destiny.

Remember this: life isn't fair, but how you respond to its difficulties and opportunities will ultimately determine your life's ambitions. Embrace this principle with open arms, but do not stop there. Find out how to figure out what you're passionate about and what drives you in Principle 2. The world awaits your extraordinary contribution.

