

*Let The World Be*  
YOUR GUIDE TO FREEDOM!

# TRAVEL

LEARN EARN



DR. MATTHEW HORKEY

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DR. MATTHEW HORKEY



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YOUR GUIDE TO FREEDOM!

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DR. MATTHEW HORKEY



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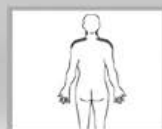
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# FOREWORD

*“Growth occurs in the space between  
order and chaos.”*

—Dr. Matthew Horkey

This book has been a lifelong dream that took nearly seven years to make. It is the story of how a small town boy travelled around the world with almost nothing, landed in a country not knowing a soul, got deported from a different country, lost everything multiple times, then broke through and built a business that generated annual revenues with seven figures.

This book is a quasi-memoir. Over the course of five years, it shows my journey, with descriptions of the lessons learned along the way, which you can take and apply in your life. Each chapter starts with a Facebook post that I wrote shortly after my experiences and the lessons learned from travelling, followed by my reflection and interpretation of those lessons five years later. The Facebook posts have not been edited to give a raw, organic feel and for you, the reader, to experience the emotions and excitement at such an important time in my life.

I have been fortunate to share my story with many people prior to writing this book. A common question is, “How did you work through the difficulties to succeed at a high level?” I can spare you the time from reading through the following pages by saying that it comes down to something so simple. The Buddha said it best: “All that we are is a result of what we have thought.”

If you want further elaboration, please feel free to read through this book. I want to preface it by letting you know that none of the concepts in this book are new or original. I always try to learn from

everybody and everything that comes into my life. I hope you will be entertained and inspired by the story. Feel free to reach out, share your story with me, and follow me and my team at [www.theblueroster.com](http://www.theblueroster.com).

I want to personally thank you for helping a small town farm boy's dream come true. Enjoy, and I hope I get to see you on the road someday.

*Dr. Matthew Horkey*

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# INTRODUCTION

## TRAVEL

Travel is an epiphany-friendly activity. It synthesises the value system, knowledge and environment, acting as a catalyst for growth. When we immerse ourselves in an unfamiliar environment as we do in travel, we learn to observe things, like a child figuring out the world. A childlike sense of observation is unparalleled, fuelled by relentless curiosity and abundance.

While the term *growth mindset* has gained traction in the business world, we can refer to it as self-efficacy, or in this book, we call it abundance. Abundance is a mindset which, like a muscle, can be strengthened over time through effort and experience. When we build up this muscle, we tap into a new toolbox that enhances everyday life.

Throughout our lives, circumstances can steer us towards or away from reaching our potential. What matters most is ensuring that our thoughts and words come from a place of abundance, and in addition to that, we have the courage to go from knowing what we should do to simply doing – taking action. The uncertainty that stems from being in a foreign and new place can force us into a whirlwind of decisive, immediate action. Doing so reminds us that the current situation is not the only option open to us; it shows us our innate talent in planning, connecting, creating and loving. It reminds us that our potential is not set in stone. This is a prerequisite to new adventures of not only the world, but also the mind.

### LEARN

Our values, belief systems and mindsets affect our words, actions and, most importantly, our outlooks and well-being. Technical skills, business skills and basic money-making skills are taught in schools. Mindsets, unfortunately, are not. This is why it becomes a paramount endeavour to seek refinement of the mind in order to achieve sustainable and fulfilling success.

We all have these fears – the fear of failure, fear of looking bad, fear of being judged and fear of not being liked. Travel gives us the opportunity to experience all these fears first-hand, and when we act in accordance with abundance, we begin to identify the unknown barriers that are blocking our way to success. As we begin to see our own set of unknown barriers, we let go of default options and a new realm of possibilities emerges.

Travel provides rapid iterations that require us to uncover the hidden barriers of the mind. It transforms us from being a passive learner to a master skilled at translating knowledge into actions, results and lifelong wisdom.

### EARN

As we identify the key distinctions to abundance, we can act, travel and achieve much more with a deliberate and intentional mind. People who feel abundance have a greater impact on their communities and the world at large.

Everyone has both the mindset of abundance and lack; the key is bringing out the dominance of abundance. The distinctions mentioned in this book will help you identify the mental blocks that hold back your abundance and help you focus your energy on the areas that bring breakthroughs and not incremental improvements. It will train your mind to seize the opportunity when it happens. Now, go out in the world and proactively seek travel experiences that will bring you success!

# 1

## GRATITUDE

*“You are ready to participate in the world.”*

—Jes Johansen, Founder of Store Friendly Self Storage Group

*Friday, 27 March 2009  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA*

*I had a great last day in Atlanta. It started out with an amazing breakfast, sharing my breakthroughs at Chiropractic College with my parents, dinner with my first roommate and my unofficial nephew, and sharing cake with my good old workout buddy.*

*As I was leaving and saying goodbye to the boy, as I was holding him, it hit me. I was overcome with emotion and I could not hold back the tears. Knowing that this wonderful journey is taking a brand new path is exciting, unnerving, and scary at the same time. In those moments, driving home with all my extraneous junk in the car, I really got that it is all about love and the relationships in your life. We have everything we need right here and now. That is what is going to make chiropractic practice special for each and every one of you.*

*I have done my best to get complete with everyone. However, I urge you to take the time to acknowledge someone in your life that isn't expecting it. I guarantee you will have a transformational moment for yourself and in the relationship. It will become even more powerful if it is someone who has no idea that you appreciate them. You never know if that acknowledgment will steer their life in a brand new direction.*



## GRATITUDE

*I want to personally thank all of you. You all have enriched my life in a very large way. I will see you all very soon. I think BJ Palmer said it best, "I love you, because you love the things that I love."*

**T**his was really where my journey around the world began. Eight years of formal education – four years of undergraduate studies and four years of chiropractic college – was coming to a close. In the latter four years, my mind had been expanded and challenged in more ways than in the previous 24 years of life combined. I vividly remember writing this note when my parents had arrived from an eleven-hour drive down from Michigan to Atlanta, Georgia, to help me pack up my belongings and make the move back to Michigan. The next step was fulfilling an internship before departing and beginning my journey around the world, three months later.



I remember driving back home with a car full of stuff, and it was just that; it was just “stuff”. It was funny that I had accumulated a lot of these things over the last few years, but in the end, they really meant nothing. Even today, looking back on it more than six years later, I cannot recall one thing that was in that car. None of it was or is important, not even the nice, shiny car. The most important thing in the car was me, myself and my thoughts. I decided to go home and write this note and dedicate it to everyone who was important to me at that moment in time.

## A FEELING CALLED HAPPINESS

Ask what the most important feeling in the world a person can have, and most people will give the same answer: Happiness. Happiness is important, but it is only one side of the coin. Imagine holding a 50-cent piece in your hand and one side is happiness; there are always two sides of the coin, so what would be the exact opposite of happiness? That is correct – unhappiness. I argue that the most important feeling to have is gratitude. Gratitude is seeing the whole 50-cent piece instead of just one side.

Gratitude is a neutral, yet free feeling. It is not the same as optimism and happiness, but it comes from the same place where all those emotions are born and where fear and jealousy go to die. When you are in a state of gratitude, it seems as though everything washes away – all the judgments, resentments and things that cloud the mind. When one is truly in a state of gratitude, one is free and sees both sides of the coin – one sees the order. It is like being a mediator between two friends who are fighting. When the first friend speaks, you are partial to the first friend; when you hear the second friend speak, you begin to see a different side of the story.

**WHEN ONE IS  
TRULY IN A STATE  
OF GRATITUDE, ONE  
IS FREE AND SEES  
BOTH SIDES OF THE  
COIN – ONE SEES  
THE ORDER.**

## GRATITUDE

When you take a step back and gather both sides of the story, you see a completely different scenario from what either friend sees. Gratitude is being in that space and seeing both sides of the story, the good and the bad.

### **GRATITUDE FOR FAMILY FIRST**

I am resolute that family is the number one thing we should be thankful for in our lives. People come and go throughout your life, but the only constant is your family. I do acknowledge and cherish my parents and sisters, who can always be counted on no matter what.

Family is probably the easiest aspect of life to be thankful for because family members are always there. They have shaped you to be the person that you are today. Even if you do not have a good relationship with them, be thankful. In some way or another, they moulded you to be who you are (even though at times you may have felt pushed away). Your view of the world is heavily weighted on the first seven years of your development, and guess who was there in those first seven years of your life?

### **GRATITUDE FOR FRIENDS, YOUR MOST INFLUENTIAL GROUP**

Having friends is something we must not take for granted. They become such an integral part of our lives. The people we choose to associate with outside our family are the ones who shape the nature of who we are. Judith Rich Harris, an American psychologist, said, “The need to survive at school and mix with friends has a more significant impact on a child’s behaviour than lessons learned in the home.” In the early years, we are influenced by our parents; from school age onwards, we are shaped by our friends.

A person once told me, “Show me your friends and I will show you your future.” I have been beyond blessed to have friends who push me to become a better version of myself. They have shaped me into

someone who cares about others as well as myself. I may have done a terrible job at maintaining some of those friendships, but I am always thankful for those who are in my life and for having the ability to mend those old friendships as well.

## **GRATITUDE FOR YOUR EXPERIENCES**

The third crucial component of life to be thankful for is our experiences. Often, when plans pan out poorly, people blame their circumstances. If you look into it with honesty and vulnerability, your circumstances always provide you with the opportunities to help you continue to be who you are being or provide a challenge to help you become who you want to be. That is it. Circumstances can be a hard thing to endure or overcome, but once we see the opportunities within the circumstances, we should be thankful for every single experience that we get to have in this short time on the planet.

If you reflect back on your life, would you want to trade your life experiences with someone else? Most people I have asked said that they would not trade or do anything differently. Why is that? It is because each and every single one of your experiences has helped you become who you are. Look back at your life and look at the most difficult experiences that you went through: What are the things you learned from those experiences? Write them down. Once you clearly identify the lessons you have learned, you immediately shift into a state of gratitude.

## **SELF-GRATITUDE**

So often, people do not give enough thanks to the most important person in their lives – themselves! You are the source of everything in your life – your health, your happiness and your future. You are the steward of your life and the most valuable asset that you own. Yet, with

## GRATITUDE

all the wonderful things that are going well in life, we find it hard to express gratitude to ourselves.

Self-gratitude, first, creates a space within you that is free of blames, hurt and failures. This space, then, compels you to fill it with new experiences and more gratitude. If someone cannot be grateful for who they are as a person, I don't know what they can be grateful for. Be grateful first to yourself if you wish to be grateful to others.

### ACKNOWLEDGING THE SOURCE OF GRATITUDE

The first thing to do is acknowledge the sources of gratitude – whatever or whomever you are directing it towards. The easiest way to do that is to write them down or type them out. I have kept a gratitude journal for the last seven years, writing in it every single day. As the entries

**THE FIRST THING TO DO IS ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCES OF GRATITUDE – WHATEVER OR WHOMEVER YOU ARE DIRECTING IT TOWARDS.**

into the journal keep piling up as I keep writing, I continuously get more and more inspired and more and more thankful. It is a very powerful exercise to do – try it out. Just write for five minutes the things you are grateful for. This is something that can dramatically change your life.

Another way to acknowledge the source is to sit down, visualise and think about everything that has occurred in your life that day, week, month or year. I am sure you can find something that arouses gratefulness. Once you find something that gives you a vast smile, sit on that thought and ruminate over it. The more you think about that event, person or thing, and the more clearly you picture it in your mind, the more gratitude you are going to feel.

## **EXPRESSING GRATITUDE**

The hardest thing about gratitude is when we have to express it to another person, be it face to face or over the phone. Finding the courage to do either one is well worth your time. Today, I invite you to express gratitude to someone, and I promise that something special will take place. Think of the last time someone truly thanked you for the contribution you made in their life. How did you feel? What if you could feel like that every single day? What if you could help someone else feel that way every single day?

After I wrote this post on Facebook, I tagged a few important people in my life and included a “thank-you” note at the end. The responses were encouraging and heart-warming. People called me, texted me and posted all sort of responses that tug at the heartstrings. When you give thanks, you usually receive thanks in return. While that should not be your ulterior motive, it is a very nice side product.

## **GRATITUDE ATTRACTS MORE GRATITUDE**

When you are in a state of gratitude, you feel weightless. This is the time that you also feel the most generous, and consequently, wonderful things start coming into your life. Have you ever noticed that when you feel great on a special day, more and more good things happen to you? That is the law of attraction at work. The law of attraction states that like attracts like. If you are in a state of thankfulness, you will attract more things to be thankful for.

## **EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR THE THINGS YOU WANT**

Be thankful for the things, experiences or situations you want in the future as if they have already happened to you. As funny as that sounds, it is a highly effective manifestation tool. When I look back through my gratitude journal, it is fun to chance upon what were written years ago – my desires, wants and goals – actually ended up happening. We all

## GRATITUDE

have the ability to be fortune-tellers and prophets. You can trick your mind into believing that you already have something. Dennis Whately said, “If you can hold it in your mind, you can hold it in your hands.”

Recently, I did a personal development programme entitled *Lifebook* by Jon Butcher, which required that I put together a book of my future. In this book, there are twelve chapters, and each chapter represents a component of life. For every chapter, I added pictures and writings about the things that I want to happen. Once the twelve-chapter book was finished and I took a look at my projected life moving forward, a sense of freedom overwhelmed me.

Expressing gratitude for a future that you desire and manifesting a future that you intentionally design can have a dramatic impact on your personal worth and sense of purpose. Beyond that, it works – it serves its primary purpose of turning your intention into reality. Some of those things that I had stated in the book are already starting to manifest in my life. In one part of the book, I documented my desire to take my family on amazing trips with unique experiences, having no idea how it would happen. At the time of writing this book, I have brought my sisters to one of the best beachfront resorts in Bali, Indonesia, and have already bought tickets to take my parents on a two-week trip through northern Italy and Switzerland. Be thankful in advance; see it in your mind and believe it!

### LET'S HUSTLE

**Keep a gratitude journal; it can be a simple notebook or a word document. Write about what you are thankful for every single day. After you write for thirty days straight, look back and reread what you wrote. You will begin to see yourself and your life in a different way. Who knows, you may achieve amazing things as a result of it.**

# 2

## INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANISATION

*“When you travel, you have to trust  
the innate good of people.”*

—Adrianna Tan, Founder and CEO at WoBe Indonesia

*Sunday, 5 July 2009  
Maharashtra, India*

*As the first few weeks in India passed, I am left with many lessons and experiences that have already helped shape and develop me into the practitioner and, more importantly, the person I aspire to become.*

*The first few days taking care of people deep in the desert of Maharashtra were quite daunting yet rewarding. It was a great way to start out my career as a Doctor of Chiropractic. The ashram was hosting this wonderful Chiropractic Camp, and people came from all over the country. Everyone from locals to people coming from the far reaches of Delhi came. A man travel 400 km (one way) to see me on five different occasions.*

*That first day was so challenging. I saw every condition under the sun; people were carried in on wheelchairs, and they were malnourished, deformed and everything else you could possibly think of. It was so heartbreaking to see children in terrible conditions. However, it was inspiring at the same time, as I saw how dedicated the parents were, many of them carrying their children on their backs into the clinic. All these people, most with no hope*



*whatsoever, had seen every other kind of doctor. I was amazed at how many people had reports, x-rays and MRIs.*

*In the first two days, my insecurities started to surface. It was so difficult to look into these people's eyes and not be able to tell them what would happen. Could I and, more importantly, chiropractic care help these people? I have seen chiropractic care results in some amazing things, from helping people overcome laminectomies to hyperthyroidism. However, these people were in terrible shape. What would happen if I couldn't do anything for them? On top of that, it was hot and conditions were harsh. I started to get an upset stomach – could I even make it through the two weeks?*

*Victor Frankl, a noted neurologist and psychiatrist, said that when you are pushed to the brink, you have two choices – you can give in, or use it as fuel to create a new possibility for growth and salvation. One thing I have learned in my short time dedicating my life to universal principles is that every time you are pushed to the brink, if you remain grounded in the principles, the universe will always answer the call. Answer the call it did.*

*BJ Palmer, the developer of chiropractor once said, “We chiropractors work with the subtle substance of the soul ... That power that animates the living world.”*

*That always sounds great in principle. However, the leap from knowledge to wisdom, or from thinking to doing, is often arduous and difficult. Despite the difficulties, everything started to take shape. The universe answered the call. I had a child with cerebral palsy who couldn't walk. After his first adjustment, he took his first step. A four-year-old child with severe brain injuries took her first step with us too. Another child with hydrocephalus had a reduction in the size of his cranium. A man who had been confined to a wheelchair for years walked (without his wheelchair) into the clinic after four visits. These were among the few great things to happen along with the countless cases of people starting to feel well.*

*One man tell me he was going to pray every night to the gods for me, while another who barely spoke English struggled to tell me, “I will never forget you.” The subtle substance of the soul and the gap between knowledge and wisdom had just dissolved away.*

*If that great inner power can be unleashed and utilised in the sickly, mutilated and almost dying, think about what it can do for anybody. What attracts me most to chiropractic is not the physical act, but the vitalistic and sound principles that it is built upon. The fact is that it teaches people to trust that inner power in their bodies, what we chiropractors refer to as innate intelligence.*

*When is the last time that you trusted your inner voice? Today in society, there are many reasons not to trust the light of your own soul: friends, media, family and our very own ego. One of my mentors once told me that you become a master when the inner voice becomes louder than all the voices from the outside combined. Listen to that voice. I guarantee it will lead you into the right direction, and in the process, you might be surprised at what you find.*

**A**s I wrote this post, I had just completed an intense service trip in the middle of a desert in India. Our team had set up a makeshift clinic in an ashram – a spiritual place of worship where followers study the teachings of a guru – in a remote town that was not identified in my *Lonely Planet India* guidebook. As I arrived in India and at the airport, the immigration officer stamped my passport, and after I stated my destination, he asked, “Why?”

My time there was incredible. Every day, I woke up at sunrise and practiced yoga. Not the type that we picture in the West, this one-hour yoga practice consisted of 45 minutes of breathing exercises while sitting, followed by 15 minutes of *asanas* (poses that people associate yoga with). That was my India’s yoga experience – sitting down cross-legged on the pavement with the scorching sun on my back, inhaling

## INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANISATION

through one nostril with my eyes closed and mosquitoes buzzing around my face.

After yoga, we would practice Agni Hotra, or fire meditation, where people living in the ashram burned cow dung and the meditators breathed in the smoke while sitting cross-legged. This happened every day, morning and night. The morning Agni Hotra session was followed by us, a team of 30 young chiropractors, taking care of thousands and thousands of people. I still remember starting the day in our makeshift clinic and seeing an endless line of people outside. The endless line persisted, extending down the dry, dusty road until late in the evening.



We had over 18,000 people who attended the clinic in less than three weeks.

## POWER

In his book, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson wrote about the incredible amount of energy that lies within each human being. Bryson wrote that if we followed Einstein's equation, which states that energy equals mass times the speed of light squared ( $E = MC^2$ ), and if we learned how to self-detonate, we could produce an explosion equal to six atomic bombs.

We hear so many times that the human spirit is capable of anything as long as people put their mind to it. Yet, how many of us really believe that? If you look back on some of the greatest things to happen in the last couple of decades, you would see that they often started with an idea by one person. I am connected to my iPhone – in many more ways and meanings than one – I use it constantly throughout the day. What a powerful device, and it all started because of one man's idea and his ability to turn it into reality.

## UNIVERSAL INTELLIGENCE

In the documentary *I Am* by Tom Shadyac, he interviewed many philosophers, scientists and authors to find out what is good about the world. There is one portion of the film where he was describing the element argon, which is element number 18 for all you chemistry nerds like me. Argon is an inert gas, which means it does not undergo any chemical reactions most of the time. In the film, Shadyac explained that every living creature takes in a specific number of molecules of argon with every breath. We can calculate the number of molecules of argon that we breathe in and out. There are a finite number of argon molecules in the world that are constantly floating in the air and have been for millions of years. That means we have been breathing

## INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANISATION

in the same molecules of argon that were inhaled and exhaled by the dinosaurs, Socrates and our grandfathers!

Why did I use that example? In essence, we have a physical, measurable connection to every living thing that has existed on the planet. Many great religions and ancient philosophies teach that we all have access to the wisdom of the ages. The Greeks called it *intelleki*. The Abrahamic religions call it *God*. Whatever you may call it, there is something greater that powers the universe; human beings have been forever trying to identify it, and we are connected to it. In the chiropractic profession, it is identified as universal intelligence.



## ORGANISATION

In 1918, when Max Planck accepted the Nobel Prize for physics, he said this as part of his acceptance speech:

*“All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter.”*

If you are neither religious nor spiritual and shiver at the sound of the “G” word, then look at it this way: Substitute the word organisation for intelligence, just as Max Planck described it. The world is made up of building blocks called atoms – at least in the Newtonian model – and there is organisation to the structure of those atoms. There is also an organisation for many atoms to create an element and organisation for many elements to create compounds, molecules and so forth, including objects that we see in everyday life, including you. The organisation of the world is mind-blowing. That organisation is universal intelligence.

## THE FLOW OF INTELLIGENCE

The flow of intelligence goes down from the macro level to the micro level. If you need to think of it in terms of systems, think about it as levels of hierarchy. I like to use a model in the philosophy of chiropractic as a framework. We start out with universal intelligence, which flows into each of us, and we can then say it is innate or inborn intelligence. From our innate intelligence comes the running of automatic processes of the body; our educated or conscious mind stems from this.

UNIVERSAL INTELLIGENCE → INNATE INTELLIGENCE → EDUCATED MIND

The educated mind is what we are most familiar with because that is where conscious awareness comes from. It is where all our thinking, habits and language come from. When you hear the word *intelligence*, what comes to mind? *Education*, *smart*, and *information* are words that commonly come up. That is all stuff we have been programmed with in our conscious or educated minds. For this conversation's sake, when we talk about intelligence, we will refer to it as innate intelligence, an extension of universal intelligence. If you feel these words are too ethereal, you can once again substitute *organisation* for *intelligence*.

## ACCESSING INTELLIGENCE

How to tap into our higher power is a question that human beings have tried to solve for as long as we have walked the earth. Throughout early human history, we subjugated ourselves to higher beings such as gods and deities. The few people who had different ideas were often labelled heretics and were even burned at the stake during the Middle Ages in Europe.

Today, the world is different and people understand either consciously or subconsciously that there is something more powerful behind our words, thoughts and actions. The proliferation of information on the Internet enables us to read and witness things that look like “divine acts”. In Tibet, monks go out and meditate in

**PEOPLE UNDERSTAND EITHER CONSCIOUSLY OR SUBCONSCIOUSLY THAT THERE IS SOMETHING MORE POWERFUL BEHIND OUR WORDS, THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS.**

freezing temperatures. There are stories of people lifting up cars to save people who are trapped. How is this possible? When we tap deeper into our amazing, inborn, innate intelligence, amazing things are possible.

We always tap into our innate intelligence without even knowing it. Think about everything that is happening right now as you read

this book; your eyes are taking in light that is relayed as information into your brain. Meanwhile, your stomach is digesting that extra snack you probably should not have eaten. Simultaneously, your body is maintained at a toasty 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Your heart is beating regularly, and you are taking about sixteen to twenty breaths every minute. Do you have to consciously think about any of those activities? That is the magic of this intelligence that is running your body without you even knowing it.

Dr. Sherwin B. Nuland, a world-renowned surgeon and author, sums it up beautifully:

*“Here we are with our 75 trillion cells it’s been estimated. There are about four million cell divisions every second. You are working so hard right now while you’re sitting here.”*

Innate intelligence is real and tangible. You would not be alive right now, and you would not be able to see this or to put this information into coherent thought without this intelligence, this wisdom of your body.

## COMMUNICATING WITH INTELLIGENCE

How can we connect to this power? Many people have tried through the ages. The monks in Tibet do it through meditation, the followers of Abrahamic religions do it through prayer, and others do it through ceremonies. Which way is the best way?

I would contend that the way you truly connect with this power is to let it communicate with you. Have you ever been in the shower when a solution to a problem, which you have been trying to solve for weeks, pops up in your mind? Have you ever just made a decision by “following your heart” that led to massive changes in your life? Have you ever written, performed or spoken before when it seemed like someone or something else was in your body? That is the organisation,



the wisdom and the intelligence of the universe communicating with you. That intelligence communicates with you all the time, whether you are consciously aware of it or not.

## USING INTELLIGENCE

Through the ages, people have always tapped into this greater intelligence for insight and guidance. “The Force” in the *Star Wars* films is an exemplary analogy. In the second film of the original trilogy, *The Empire Strikes Back*, the teacher Yoda says to his student Luke: “For my ally is the force . . . and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings we are, not this crude matter.”

Even though *Star Wars* is a fictional film, it uses parables to tell universal truths. Yoda is trying to instil in Luke a deep respect for this amazing power that flows around and through us, which is “The Force”. In the film, Yoda performs what appears to be a miracle. He harnesses “The Force” to help lift a ship out of a swamp. This is immediately followed by Luke saying, “I don’t believe it!” Yoda stares at him, and after a pause, he says, “That is why you fail.”

**YOU ARE AN EXPRESSION OF  
THIS INTELLIGENCE, AND YOUR  
BODY IS AN INSTRUMENT TO  
EXPRESS DIVINITY.**

This is of course a fictional film, but it is a story to show that when you harness your inner power, the power that is connecting you with everything else, amazing things are possible. Men really can move mountains. You can see that if you take a road trip through the great American West or a train ride through Switzerland. How do you think those roads and tracks got there? Men tapped into this power to create machinery, to organise crews, to raise funds and to execute plans.



You are an expression of this intelligence, and your body is an instrument to express divinity. Elizabeth Gilbert, the author of the international phenomenon *Eat Pray Love*, delivered an amazing TED talk in which she spoke about this great power – in ancient Greece and ancient Rome, great philosophers, intellectuals and artists did not take credit for their work because they felt that *Damon* or *Genius* acted through them to produce the material. It was understood in those times that if their work bombed, *Damon* or *Genius* was not working great that day. If they did produce great work, it was to the credit of their *Damon* or *Genius*, who was kicking some serious butt. They understood the power of tapping into this intelligence back then.

What can you do with all this information that seems completely surreal and impractical? Well, if you tap into that inner voice, you too are capable of amazing things! One of my mentors, Dr. John Demartini, always says:

*“The true genius listens to the light of his own soul and obeys. Once the voice on the inside becomes louder than all the voices on the outside, you have mastered your life.”*

Tap into that greater power, that inner voice. If you do, I think you are capable of amazing things. If you listen to that inner voice and do what you were meant to do, you will contribute to the world in a big way. Even impacting one life can make a profound difference in the world. A prominent figure in the history of chiropractic, BJ Palmer, said it best: “You never know how far reaching something you may think, say, or do, will affect the lives of millions tomorrow.”

## LET'S HUSTLE

**Take some time each day, even if it is just ten minutes, to sit alone in silence. Listen to the light of your own soul, create a space for your innate intelligence to speak with you, and then have the courage to take action based on it.**

# 3

## PRESENCE

*“Travel revitalises your mind. If you take care of your mind, all else will follow.”*

—Claire Chiang, Senior Vice President at Banyan Tree Holdings

*Thursday, 30 July 2009  
Ladakh, India*

*The magical land of Ladakh has really stirred my soul. Very fitting that it is in the land of exiles. Here I am sitting on the disputed border of India, Pakistan and Tibetan China, and I feel like I am on the edge of civilisation. In the beautiful high desert region of the Himalayas, I have braved the highest motorable road in the world and the three highest motorable mountain passes, ridden a camel, taken a dip in the highest saltwater lake in the world, soaked up views of high-up Buddhist monasteries, and interacted with the Ladakhi and Tibetan people.*

*The people from this region have an unbelievable glow to them. It is unlike anything I have ever seen in the world thus far. I became so inspired that I decided to register for a three-day Buddhist meditation retreat up in the mountains.*

*The retreat centre was absolutely gorgeous, and upon arrival, I was greeted by a few friendly monks. The routine for the retreat was arduous and taxing. It included waking up at 5 a.m. every morning, meditating for 11 hours, and taking a vow of silence. The scenery was awe-inspiring. Every day, we also did an hour of yoga every morning*

*at sunrise and every evening at sunset with the beautiful backdrop of the high desert and the snow-capped Himalayas in the background. The yoga, however, was the easy part.*

*Vipassana meditation is the highest form of practice in Buddhism. The meditation consists of walking and sitting. As I began the first day of walking, I found it hard to keep my mind from wandering. I was very surprised to observe how much my mind wavered from the present and jumped between the past and the future. I found that I was never really in the present, always somewhere else. I guess you could say I was never here nor there.*

*The sitting was even more challenging. Vipassana requires that once you take the sitting position, you observe any pain that arises and focus on it until you can identify every single characteristic and become present to it. Only then you can go beyond the pain and enter a completely new realm of possibility. This concept is not foreign to me; if you have a big bill, it doesn't make sense to put it aside and procrastinate. Ultimately, it will become more painful if you put it off rather than dealing with it immediately.*

*That said, becoming present to the pain and remaining still was beyond challenging for me. I am not the nimblest person in the world, and I am always restless, so I found it hard to get into the groove. The teacher kept emphasising that the difference between meditators and non-meditators is the simple fact that when you become present and focused, you see yourself as an observer. Non-meditators see thoughts and emotions scroll through and take ownership of them.*

*Late on the second day, I was having trouble sitting. I was imagining all the thoughts and emotions of my life thus far play on a big screen, flipping like a picture show. I began to separate myself from them, and I became present to something.*

*Nothing is really mine.*

*The thoughts, emotions and feelings are present in everyone in every form at one time or another. They all belong to some organisation beyond the realm of our identities.*

*In Buddhism, they identify the universal consciousness as dharma. From this, everything is impermanent. It is very congruent with chiropractic philosophy, as we identify this as universal intelligence. It has been named a number of things along the course of human history. It doesn't matter what you name it. Aristotle called it Intellecti, the Christians call it the Holy Spirit, the Hindus call it Brahman, and the agnostics may call it a fish or a spoon (that is a joke).*

*Some of the greatest minds in human history have delved into this universal consciousness to obtain infinite wisdom and insight. Einstein even said, "All I want to know are the thoughts of God, and nothing more." If we can connect this bridge somehow or some way, we can have whatever we desire: health, wealth, happiness and freedom. It is available to all of us if we can find a way to go beyond ourselves.*

*I believe one of the most influential and profound women of our time said it best:*

*"I'm a little pencil, in the writing hand of a loving  
God, who is sending a love letter to the world."*

—Mother Theresa

*I urge you all to continue to write bold and bright.*

India always holds a special place in many travellers' hearts. It is such an intense country in every sense of the word. The sights and sounds can be overwhelming at times, not to mention the heat, rain and filth. Having travelled through India, I have heard and witnessed so many stories of people arriving and planning to travel in the country for a few months, only to leave after a few days. It is that intense.

## PRESENCE

That is India. She has the ability to inspire and confound, often at the same time. Before Ladakh, I was cast as an extra in a Bollywood film and was “kidnapped” by a group of locals. I also slept on a houseboat in a place that Bill Clinton called “the most dangerous place on the planet”. I also ate, ate and ate, which in India is always followed by the infamous “Delhi belly”. Let’s just say that diarrhoea was a daily affair for about the first two and a half weeks of my time there.

All that did not matter, every day in India was stimulating, and the experiences just got better and better, week after week. This all culminated in Ladakh. It was there that my mind was completely blown. It is ironic because the only reason I ended up there was because I got conned into flying to Kashmir and got ripped off in the process. There was no time to be bitter, as fate had led me to a place where walls of rock and ice are surrounded by impossibly blue skies. Ladakh was a truly magical place.



## A SPACE OF NOTHING

Meditation is challenging for most people because we are hardly present. Constantly, the mind is thinking about the past or something that will happen or is desired in the future. Take an inventory of your thoughts right now. You can classify your thoughts as thinking about the past, thinking about the future or thinking about the present. Put this book down and think for one minute. Just let thoughts come into your head. Now that you have done that, how many thoughts were actually in the present tense? Isn't it incredibly difficult to focus on the present? If you were totally focused on the present during the exercise, you would be thinking only about your chest rising and falling with every single breath, the sensations on your skin or your heart beating. Did you have those thoughts?

That state of presence is rarefied air. It is a place that the Buddhist monks strive for their whole lives and sometimes never attain. Simply put, it is not an easy place to get to. We all know that things that take work and effort are the things that are worth the most in life. This is one thing that is worth working towards. If you get to that space, a whole new world will open to you.

When your mind is focused on the present, you are conscious of only what is happening in your body – your breath, your heartbeats and the vital signs that remind you that you are expressing life. You come to a different space. You come to a space called nothing. This is a place where you do not think of the past or the future. You just think of where you are right now. It is an empty space, a vacuum. The beautiful thing about being

**A SPACE OF NOTHING IS A PLACE WHERE YOU DO NOT THINK OF THE PAST OR THE FUTURE. YOU JUST THINK OF WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW. IT IS AN EMPTY SPACE, A VACUUM. THE BEAUTIFUL THING ABOUT BEING IN THIS PLACE IS THAT YOU CAN CREATE WHATEVER YOU WANT; THE UNIVERSE ALWAYS FILLS A VACUUM.**



in this place is that you can create whatever you want; the universe always fills a vacuum. We will talk about that in a bit.

You have been there before without recognising it. Have you ever ridden a roller coaster or other rides at an amusement park? When you ride a roller coaster, it makes its slow ascent up, and you may be thinking about a lot of stuff; your mind is jumping all over the place. Once the car hits the peak and you start flying down at high speed, what are you thinking of? Nothing, you are screaming, feeling the wind hit your face. You are present there, only in that moment.

This is an elusive space to get to. Practise being present and empty your mind. Imagine yourself standing in a black void with absolutely nothing around you – literally nothing but you. Once you can get to this space of nothing, the law of vacuum takes over. To explain the law of vacuum, go outside and dig a hole; it doesn't even have to be deep. The hole is a vacuum, and there is nothing in it. Take a few days and return to the hole that you dug. What is in it? There could be more dirt, water and vegetation. The point is that the universe filled that space. The whole point of this space of nothingness is if you can get to a space of nothing, complete emptiness in your mind, you can fill it with whatever you want.

## **We Start Out As Nothing. When You Are Born, You Are In This Space**

I know that a lot of this can be too conceptual or metaphysical. Please stick with me though. I want you to understand that being in a space of nothing is our very nature. Think about yourself as a baby, or think of your child, niece or nephew as a baby. When they come into this world, do they make conscious decisions? Do they decide to think or speak in a certain way? No, they are a completely blank slate; they are in a state of nothing. The actions of their caretakers, parents and teachers fill that space. A baby is like a new computer. They have the system to operate their very basic vital functions, and then they get things added to their hard drive constantly as they go through life.

What if you could reboot yourself and undo the programming? What kind of belief system or operating system would you like to install?

## **We Get Programmed At An Early Age**

Where do our existing programmes come from? They come from what Dr. Larry Markson calls our mothers, fathers, teachers and preachers. As a child, you come into this world like an empty jar. The people closest to you in the early stages of life are what fill up that jar; they write your programming. Most of the time, they are just giving you the best that they know.

I know my parents did the best they could for me concerning the idea of money. My father was someone who wanted to always save, save, save, and my mother was always spending money she did not have. Just growing up with those two examples day in and day out shaped my belief system about money. It took me many years of learning and experimenting with new ideas to successfully install a new belief system about money and abundance. After more than thirty years, I'm still learning – constantly rebooting my system and finding an updated version of a programme that serves me best. If you want a new programme, you have to get to that state of presence or that state of emptiness first.

## **Empty The Mind; Take Out The Trash**

*The Way of the Peaceful Warrior* is a remarkable book by Dan Millman. It is about Dan, a young college athlete, getting acquainted with a wise old man at a car service station. After forming a friendship with this old man, Dan names this man Socrates. The book was turned into a film in 2006, and the film crew and cast did a rare job of bringing the book to life onscreen beautifully.

There is a scene in the film where Socrates is talking to Dan about calming the mind by taking out the trash – not in a literal sense though. Socrates says:

*“The trash is anything that is keeping you from the only thing that matters, this moment, here and now ... And when you truly are in the here and now, you’ll be amazed at what you can do, and how well you can do it.”*

That is a great line and a vital distinction. If you have a glass that is full of water and you start pouring water in, what happens? The glass will overflow, as the new water has a hard time getting in. If you have an empty glass and you pour water in, the glass fills effortlessly and naturally. Taking out the trash is critical. It allows you to fill the glass of your mind with what you want to fill it with.

When you get to that point of clearing your space, you are incredibly present and you can do amazing things. Have you ever seen a performer in action, and it seems like someone or something is inside of him or her? You find yourself drawn to that performance, and you feel like you don’t want to do anything else but watch.

One of my favourite examples took place in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, in 1986. There was a young man by the name of Michael Jordan, who played for the Chicago Bulls of the National Basketball Association. Jordan was known for his amazing mental toughness and his ability to completely lock into the game and focus with pinpoint precision. His team was up against the heavily favoured Boston Celtics. In the game, Jordan scored an NBA Playoff record of 63 points; it still stands to this day. After the game, Larry Bird, the best player on the Boston Celtics, told the reporters that they had just witnessed “God disguised as Michael Jordan”.

What about this – have you ever read a book that gets to a point of being absolutely riveting? You could not put it down, you could

chew on every word, you could feel what the protagonist was going through, and you could see what the antagonist was seeing. You became engrossed in the world of the book, it seemed like you were literally in the story. Once you finally put that book down and had a quick glance at the clock, you realise that hours had passed.

That is what happens when you get into this moment. Once your mind is there, time and space collapse. Athletes can relate to this place; they call it getting into the “zone”. Musicians get into this space when they are on stage performing. It happens once you truly master the power of focus. The mind is so powerful, but it is often scattered, similar to light rays spreading out from a light bulb in multiple directions and lighting up a room. Take that same light source, concentrate those rays, and they can become a laser beam that can cut through steel. That is the power of focus.

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I remember the first time when I got to that place. I was attending a personal development seminar, and the whole weekend at the seminar was supposed to lead the participants to a space of nothing. It took a lot of work and focus, and at first, I just kept getting to a space of nothing but irritation. Being a rather fidgety person, I was feeling uncomfortable, perspiring and moving all over the place. Once my mind crossed over all the physical barriers, I saw myself in a dark void of nothing; it was transformational. I was inspired to know that once my mind was empty, I could put anything that I wanted into that space.

## PRESENCE

The second time I got to that space was during a meditation retreat, which I mentioned in the first part of this chapter. However, it was different the second time: Instead of a dark void, I started seeing the events and emotions of my life scroll through like a film. It was a surreal feeling. As I felt myself letting go of all those events and emotions, no longer taking ownership of them, I felt a tremendous sense of freedom rush through me. In that moment, I had an epiphany. We often identify emotions as if they are who we are: I am happy, I am sad, or I am frustrated. When we use the words “I am”, we identify ourselves as that particular emotion. It should really be: I feel happy, I feel sad, or I feel frustrated. We can express those emotions, but we should not identify ourselves as them.



## RELEASING ATTACHMENTS TO EMOTIONS

Learning how to become unattached to emotions is a skill that takes practice. We all go through ups and downs in life. Making the distinction that we are just feeling those emotions instead of identifying ourselves as them has far-reaching implications.

Let's use an example. I am going to give you two scenarios. What if you went outside and rolled around in the mud for an hour, and once you came back into the house, you discovered that your shower was broken and the plumber was out of town? You would not be able to fix your shower till next week, and you would have to remain in this state of messy indecency for a whole week. How would you feel about that? The second scenario is that you went outside and still rolled around in the mud for an hour, but then you came into the house, and you went right to the bathroom and washed yourself squeaky clean. Which scenario would you prefer? My guess is that you would choose scenario two. Do you know that most of us choose scenario one in our everyday life? That is what happens when you identify yourself as an emotion. We choose to become that negative emotion. The better choice is to realise that emotion is not ours; we can feel it for a moment or maybe even for hours. However, just like the mud, we can shower ourselves clean of that emotion as long as we do not take ownership of it.

## STAYING IN THE VACUUM

For those who have experienced the space of nothing, a more advanced challenge is to stay there. I have struggled with this ever since that day up in the Himalayas. I keep telling myself that if I had gotten to that place once, I should be able to get there at will and stay there. The truth is that if I were that good, which I do not claim in any way, shape or form, I could find all the answers to life.

Perhaps we are not meant to stay at that point once we have reached it; perhaps it is like mountain climbing. When you climb, you get dirty,

your thighs hurt as you make your way up, your lungs start to burn and it becomes a struggle to even take in a single breath. You get dizzy and start to feel discombobulated. Your fingers and toes freeze from the high altitude. You start to second-guess why you put yourself through this in the first place. As you reach the peak and you stare out as the sun rises, all the hard work you put in is instantly worth it, and you see why you did what you did. You take it all in, and after a while, you realise that you can't stay up there – you have to descend and go back to camp. Perhaps you will climb another mountain again. Perhaps it will be soon, but you must go back down to survive and climb another day.

Clearing the mind and becoming present may demand a lot of discipline. However, anything that is worth anything takes time and effort. Remember, that space is where possibility and creation occur.

## LET'S HUSTLE

**First off, congratulations on making it to this point. This is a heavy chapter. To understand this state of presence, you have to experience it first. Take something that you really enjoy doing – I will take eating as an example. Before you eat, look at the colours of the food, take in the smell, and feel the silverware as you touch it. When you put the food into your mouth, chew slowly and deliberately. Try to identify all the flavours. Enjoy and pay close attention to the entire process of eating. Stay as focused as a laser beam. The next step is to apply that level of focus into other areas of your life. Good luck – it is a lifelong journey.**

# 4

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

*“I have found money is best spent on experiences and meeting people.”*

—Benny Lewis, Author and Founder of [Fluentin3months.com](http://Fluentin3months.com)

*Saturday, 15 August 2009  
Lamphun, Northern Thailand*

*After a quick stop back in Bangkok, I boarded a train and headed for the mountains in northern Thailand. Unfortunately, I didn't realise how bad my seat was: a third class seat, with no AC, in a car packed to the seams, in extremely hot and humid weather. The 14-hour overnight train ride turned into a 17-hour no sleep, fun-filled extravaganza.*

*Upon arrival in Chiang Mai, I met up with three Brits and one Frenchman whom I had encountered just a few days before in central Thailand. The five of us plus two Italians, a French couple and our Thai guide strapped on our packs and headed into the jungle for a three-day trek.*

*The first day was a lot more challenging than I thought it was going to be. Sloshing through the mud all day, I struggled to make one of the climbs due to the uneasy footing. I fell no less than a dozen times, including a nice landing straight on my back. Despite all the early challenges and frustrations, the trek was absolutely incredible. I got to ride an elephant and a bamboo raft, kill and eat a venomous spider, make my own bowl*



*and chopsticks out of a bamboo tree, and interact with the local people. In fact, the first place we stayed was a one-family “village”, and the second night we stayed in a seven-family village.*

*The first night, the locals let some of us go night hunting with them. It was incredible to see how skilled they were. Their guns reminded me of old Civil War muskets. They even let me take a shot (unfortunately, I missed). Our breakfast the next morning consisted of their victims. Flying squirrels do not taste exceptional.*

*We were having a great time getting to know each other. We had a special moment the first night when one of the Frenchmen, the two Italians, our Thai guide and I sat down late at night and struggled to communicate with one another.*

*The biggest breakthrough came for me after dinner on the second night. Often when I travel and people ask for more clarification about what I do, it becomes difficult. This is because there is often a slight language barrier. At times, such a powerful message of what I do gets lost in translation. This tends to get frustrating and at times puts me in a state of resignation.*

*As we were all sitting down, I began an in-depth conversation with one of the English girls about chiropractic philosophy, life and human relationships. As we started talking more and more, I began to go even further into details of why I do what I do and the keys and tools available to everyone to be healthier and more fully self-expressed. I had really gotten on a roll.*

*I paused for a second and looked around. The whole energy around us had changed. Everyone had their eyes on me. As I continued, everyone started asking me more and more questions. What was more interesting was the fact that the Italians, the three people from France, and the single Thai were just as engrossed and interactive as the English. The French lady told me that she was very thankful for what I shared, and even though she couldn't follow me completely, she now knew what I was really all about and wished me the best of luck.*

*In that moment, I became extremely present to something: When you have a message coming from a place of purpose, certainty, and love, it will transcend a great many things, including language.*

*You hear it in a variety of different phrases: the magnitude of your life is dependent on the magnitude of your purpose; he with the most certainty wins; and love conquers all. I am here to say that each one of those is absolutely true. When you come from a place of sheer being and share an authentic message that comes from the heart with purpose and certainty, you will become a more effective communicator than you can possibly imagine.*

*Communication is a lost art. There has never been a time in human history when we had more technology to connect us, but we are less connected than we have ever been. Many times with loved ones, relationships begin to become rocky because communication breaks down. I urge you all to continue to be clear in your communication. When you speak, speak with purpose, certainty and love in your heart.*

*And if you have a message that you need to share with the world, don't hold back.*

*Special thanks to: Mad, Terri, Julian and Chris.*

Thailand is synonymous with great beaches and mouth-watering food, coupled with diverse culture, rich history and positive indicators of globalisation. I remember fondly that when planning this trip around the world, I was thrilled about going to Thailand. That excitement wore off once in Thailand. Arriving fresh from India, I was disappointed when riding down the highway in Bangkok – a wide, modern, seven-lane road heading straight into the city. I was confused, having pictured Thailand in a very different and exotic way before arriving.

The trip to the north was not a pleasant one; it was possibly and arguably the worst train ride ever. It did, however, lay the groundwork

for the most important lesson learned in what is commonly referred to as “The Golden Land”.

## **The Journey Is More Important Than The Destination**

Think about a time when you accomplished something that was important to you. Put yourself back into that place, the feeling of euphoria after you finally climbed that personal mountain. How long did that high last? More often than not, the accomplishment was only so special because of all the blood, sweat and tears you put into attaining it. The wisdom you gain and the character you build during the journey can be more valuable than your intended accomplishment.

My friend Rob loves to travel as much as I do. Before he goes on a trip, he puts so much time into planning out where he will go, what he is going to do when he gets there and all the food he is going to eat. Rob goes out and buys travel guides and books on the culture

**THE WISDOM YOU GAIN  
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of the place he wants to visit, and he researches all the restaurants that he wants to go to. He starts getting excited about saving up money for the trip and counts down the days until he leaves. He really enjoys the whole process. He said that, at times, the build-up that goes into the trip and learning about a place trump the experience of being there.

## **Conquering Big Obstacles Makes The Journey Worth It**

The book *The Obstacle is the Way* by Ryan Holiday sums up this point. The book delivers a modern look on the philosophy of Stoicism. A few of the most famous Stoics were Cicero and the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The Stoics were very pragmatic



people – when faced with a problem, they did not ask why something was happening, but instead they used the problem to accelerate their learning process and advancement in life. What a wonderful way to view the world and see different obstacles in your life! In business, people understand that the bigger the problem, the greater the potential for a bigger reward.

Look at your own life, and think about a time you faced something challenging in your life – a broken relationship, losing a job or dealing with the death of a loved one. Now think of what you learned from the experience. Did you perhaps see that you were not true to yourself, you were not in the right place, or you did not treasure your loved ones enough? Think long and hard about it, and see what comes up. Congratulations – you just thought like a Stoic.

## LANGUAGE

Language is among mankind's best creations. Without language, the world would not exist. Everything in the world exists or can be described simply because it exists in language. Consider a world where language does not exist. It's difficult, isn't it? If there was no language, you would not even know how to express that fact.

Language has the power to create and the power to destroy. In the film *Dead Poets Society*, the late Robin Williams plays a teacher who guides his students to think for themselves and to savour words and language. On the first day of class, he has them tear up their poetry books as he boldly exclaims, "No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world."



It's true. Some of the largest movements in the world – the civil rights movement in America, India's separation from the British Empire and even Nazi Germany – gained momentum because there was a great orator, or a great communicator, behind the movement. All those events changed the course of human history, and they would not have been possible without men who had an incredible ability to speak. Essentially, those movements were made possible by the phenomenon of language.

Words and language also have the power to tear and destroy. This is most evident when we look at children. Children are so alive and filled with possibility. Think back to the time when you were a child, or think about your own children, nieces or nephews. Recall or look at the spark in their eyes, the wonder and the curiosity. What happens to that spark as they grow up? For most children, adults tell them they can't do something, or they get bullied in school, or they get in trouble for imagining and not paying attention in class. That spark is beaten out of them from people telling them what not to do.

## PURPOSE

Now that we understand the power of language, we can start talking about creation. How big our lives are is directly proportionate to how clear our purpose is. What is your purpose? Why do you get out of bed each and every single day? I know some people who live solely for the weekend. While there is inherently nothing wrong with that, is that a truly inspiring life? Is that a life that makes you want to jump out of bed and feel excited about starting your day?

CEO Evita Robinson of Nomadness Travel Tribe and I had a conversation about this, and she shared this bit of wisdom:

*“When you realise what your purpose in life is and you accept that responsibility without hesitation, it's scary but beyond worth it.”*

People who have a clear and defined purpose make the biggest impact on the world. It can be the desire to start a cultural movement or a goal to lead a Fortune 500 company or a commitment to be a dedicated mother for her newborn. The clearer the purpose, the more impactful you are. Have a big, clear and defined purpose, and you will have a big life. The beautiful thing is that when you have a big purpose, people will listen and follow you; they feel inspired and want to be enrolled in your purpose. Robinson articulated that point beautifully:

*“Tribe members will follow leaders,  
when they see leaders play all out.”*

## HEARING VERSUS LISTENING

In order to move people, others must listen and not just hear you. There is a distinct difference. Hearing is what most of us do these days, especially with technology all around us. I have a good friend who



watches television while getting sporadically distracted by her iPad and her iPhone playing music all at the same time. Do you know anyone who does the same thing? That is hearing; when we do that, all the sound that comes into our ears turns into white noise. How much of that input can we really process and retain? It is not just scenarios like that – most of the time we go through our daily activities just hearing. When we are at work, or when our spouse or children complain to us, we just stand there and hear – we do not listen.

Listening is a skill. Listening is staying present and actively hearing, without judgment, to the input going into your ear so that you can process it. Listening is processing with a completely empty mind. Most of us hear with things already in our head – constructing our responses, vacillating between conclusions, assessing if we agree or disagree, or exploring what is in it for us. You know when people are listening to you versus just hearing. Think about a time when you were so excited or concerned about something and you were trying to tell a loved one, but you knew they were not present with you. How did you feel?

## **COMMUNICATION EXISTS IN LISTENING**

Without listening, there is no true communication between people. If you are talking and one person is just hearing you, that is not a dialogue but a monologue; ideas are not exchanged.

When we travel, we often meet people who do not speak the same language as we do. That is a perfect example of hearing versus listening. When you have people who speak different languages attempting to talk to one another, you get nothing but hearing. To each person, there are many random sounds going back and forth, with no meaning attached to the sounds. If you travel, you may have had a different experience as well – two people who do not speak the same language but they are truly communicating – they are both listening to each other and observing the tone of the voice, the body gestures and the



## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

facial expressions. If you truly listen to someone, you do not have to speak the same language to communicate.

When we listen and have real communication with people, our whole world shifts. As human beings, our whole lives depend on interactions with other humans. How can you get what you want in life without communication? The way our society is structured, if you cannot communicate, you cannot advance.



Listening and communication are practical skills that put dollars in your pocket. In fact, communication might be the one skill that will be able to deliver immediate results once you master it. Stephen Covey, the author of the classic *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, often talks about the seventh habit, which is “sharpening the saw”. What he means is that you must constantly be working on the skills that will provide you with the greatest return. Listening and communication will provide you with the greatest return.

Improving your listening is simple, not easy, but simple. The next time you have a conversation with someone, practise listening. Do not think about the weather or what you are doing later, and don’t judge them. Just be present, listen to every single word they are saying, feel the tone of their voice, relate to them, and try to understand them. I guarantee that you will leave a big, positive impression on them.

## **Technology Connects And Disconnects Us**

EatWith is a company that is often referred to as the “Airbnb for home-cooked meals”. I had the pleasure of speaking with the co-founder Guy Michlin. He said:

*“There is a bigger need for social interaction because our lives have become so virtual.”*

I agree with Guy. However, it is a challenge to have a true conversation, real communication and honest connection in today’s digitally connected world. Often, one person may be talking while the other person is in a hurry, or checking his or her smart phone.

Technology has added to the noise of our daily lives. You have 50,000 to 70,000 thoughts that swirl through your head on a daily basis. Now add your Facebook and Twitter feeds, your usual website browsing activities and your favourite YouTube channels. Is it any wonder why, at a time when we are the most connected, we are the

most distant from each other? Now that information is available at our fingertips, when does the distraction stop? Do we have the discipline to block it out?

Tom Chatfield wrote in his book, *How to Thrive in the Digital Age*:

*“Unlike machines, we humans do not have the capacity to thread our attention effortlessly between multiple complex tasks. Instead, we switch rapidly between them, not so much performing operations simultaneously as steadily dividing our attention into discrete pockets.”*

I find myself an occasional victim to this digital binge – spending more time on Facebook than I should, checking my phone when my partner talks to me. Does that make it right? Not at all – my relationships and communication suffer immensely when I senselessly succumb to technology. I catch myself and stop browsing or put my phone down and try to get present with the other person; I work hard on really listening. Everybody falls off the track once in a while, but we have the ability to be conscious of it and get back on track.

Communication is what holds our relationships together. No communication equals no relationship. Since the lack of listening kills communication, this is the most critical skill that you should master. Your life, your wealth and your relationships depend on it.

## FEELING TOUCHED, MOVED AND INSPIRED

*“I feel inspired by being around inspiring people.”*

—Steve Munroe, Co-Founder of Hubud

So how do you know when you have truly gotten through to someone and they have really listened to you? You will feel present if they are present. If you feel touched, moved and inspired, you know that they have been touched, moved and inspired.



When you have a conversation in which both people are listening, it does not matter where you are from, and it does not matter what language you speak. Listening is the midwife of understanding. When you come from the heart, there is a connection that is made, and both parties can feel it. That is when true communication exists, and that is when things get done in this world.

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In *A Way of Being*, the influential psychologist Carl Rogers wrote:

*“When I have been listened to and when I have been heard, I am able to perceive my world in a new way and to go on. It is astonishing how elements that seem insoluble become soluble when someone listens, how confusions which seem irremediable turn into relatively clear flowing streams when one is heard.”*

## LET'S HUSTLE

**In the next conversation that you have with someone, stay present, put your phone down, turn off your computer screen, and listen. Silence your inner chatter. Shut out all your opinions, ideas, assumptions and judgments. Observe the difference.**



# 5

## EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIVE

*“Travel allows you to try on different hats of your personality.”*

—Dave Fox, Humour and Travel Author,  
Writing Coach and Public Speaker

*Tuesday, 1 September 2009  
Bangkok, Thailand*

*Thailand is often referred to as the “Golden Land”. This is not because the land is blessed with precious metals but because of the vast amount of diversity, natural resources and the disposition of the people.*

*I definitely see the reason behind the nickname, and the country is definitely at a cultural crossroads.*

*I spent my last days in Thailand bathing myself in a little luxury and Western comforts. The day before my flight, I checked into a five-star hotel (at a very reasonable price) and shopped around Siam Square, Thailand’s evidence of global Westernisation. In the afternoon, I strolled around the mall and picked up a pair of dress shoes and bought a ticket to the American film, GI Joe.*

*The theatre was something else. For around \$6 USD, I got a ticket into the film, a soda and popcorn! Inside the theatre I sat on a reclining couch*

*with a blanket, quite an interesting and comfortable way to see a film on the silver screen. The cinema was beyond any kind of movie experience I have had in America. On the way home, I took Bangkok's infamous sky train and soaked in the views of the quintessential cosmopolitan Southeast Asian city.*

*As I stared out at the skyline, I realised that I had travelled through Thailand at exactly the right time in my journey. Thailand is fascinating to me because it seems to me that it doesn't know what it really wants to be. Half the country is caught up in the Western lifestyle, modern conveniences, and an influx of tourism that has brought a new degree of wealth along with it that is not common among its fellow Southeast Asian countries. However, there is another part of Thailand that remains hidden from the millions of tourists flooding the land. Here, you can still find villages tucked in the mountains on the borders of Laos and Myanmar (Burma) where life slows down to a crawl and people still live off the land. There are still parts of Bangkok where people don't speak a lick of English and are happy to slaughter and fry up a chicken right in front of your face.*

*Thai people are the best I have seen in my travels over the last five years in terms of balancing their cultural identity and sunny disposition with the wave of influence from the Western world. However, there is still a wave of uncertainty, and I feel that I could return to Thailand within my lifetime and discern no difference between America and the "Golden Land" (besides the fascinating Thai landscape).*

*Through my adventures in Thailand, I have heavily observed the two sides to myself as well. One part is a little sad knowing that I am over halfway through my travels, and the nomad lifestyle I have adopted will be put to rest for at least a little bit. The other half is very anxious and excited to get my life of service started as a chiropractor in Singapore. Living life out of a backpack in new places all the time has been invigorating, mysterious and exciting. At some point in my life, I would like to do it for two years. However, transforming people's lives each and every day and seeing long-term changes in the way people function while in practice also provides a feeling that I have found unparalleled.*

*To me, the Chinese Dao is one of the most powerful symbols in the universe. The yin and the yang represent the dichotomy in the universe, both sides of the coin, the balance between lightness and darkness. All this is wrapped into a circle, representing the complete cycle of life and being separated by a wave. For me, it was a symbol that spoke loudly to me on this leg of my journey.*

*I was in the right country at the right time. During this part of my adventure, I had struggled with the major question in my life at the time: whether to squeeze a couple more months of travel in versus committing to a definite date of arrival in Singapore – much like the dilemma I faced in Thailand. Sure I loved the convenience of travel and the comforts of the Western world. However, this minimised the adventure of travelling in a developing or third world country. In the end, right before I left, I saw everything come full circle.*

*How many times in our lives do we see things only from one side? Just like the wave that separates the yin and the yang, we waver between both sides. This teetering of emotions can get out of balance at times and keeps our attachment to only one of the two sides. Seeing only one side of the coin limits our creative mind, and it keeps us from seeing things full circle. However, when we integrate, we see the order, and we see full circle. The world of possibility opens up. For me, it was helpful to understand the dichotomy in my life: travelling versus committing to buckling down and Thailand's Western side versus the adventuresome side. I was able to see that both sides are what make the people, places and things what they are, not what they should be.*

*Do you see the full Dao of the people, places and things in your life?*

**W**hen I wrote this note, I had been on the road for exactly three months. I vividly remember the feelings that came over me as I left Thailand. It felt as if Thailand was the perfect place to be at that point in time. Coming from India, where everything was exotic, chaotic and different, Thailand seemed bland. Remembering my disgust for the place when I first landed there, the feeling had changed. Travelling through a country always reveals an intricate character beyond







the façade. Just like any place, the deeper you get under the skin, the more you understand. When I started digging into the soft underbelly of the Kingdom of Siam, I learned to appreciate and enjoy my time there more. To me, that is the same with people. People are cordial when you first meet them, and perhaps still so after the third or fourth time. As two people create a friendship and open up to each other over time, we see more of what lies within.

Kelly Tompkins, the founder of AdventureLink, said:

*“Travel wires your brain to think in a more objective way.”*

Travel allows you to see the balance. If you go beyond the travel postcards, marketing brochures, flashy resorts and fancy restaurants, there is still a lot of substance to be had. Start to build a relationship with a country, and if you are lucky, maybe she will reveal some of her secrets to you.

## NEW EXPERIENCES INVIGORATE US

*“Travel changes perspective.”*

—Jaka Wirasdisuria, Co-founder and CEO at Valadoo

When we do the same things over and over again and get into a routine, we start doing things subconsciously, and our brains run on autopilot. There is a term called neuroplasticity, which describes how the brain is wired in patterns, beliefs and/or behaviours. When we experience something new, it may be difficult for our brains to process. These new experiences are essential for keeping our lives from becoming stale, giving us an extra jolt of excitement and, more importantly, generating electrical spikes in our brain to keep it engaged.

## TRAVEL, AN EXPRESSION OF A HUMAN NEED

*“Even if you are not conscious of your history,  
you are a product of your history.”*

—Paul Bennett, Co-founder of Context Travel

**ADVENTURE STEMS FROM TRAVEL, AS IT SCARES AND EXCITES US AT THE SAME TIME. GROWTH LIES SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THE SPACES OF ORDER AND CHAOS. WE NEVER GROW UNLESS WE STEP OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE OR UNLESS WE MOVE SOME THINGS AROUND INTERNALLY.**

Something has always called human beings to reach out beyond their borders to see new lands and try new things. Travel is something that fills that desire in our lives. Adventure stems from travel, as it scares and excites us at the same time. Growth lies somewhere in between the spaces of order and chaos. We never grow unless we step out of our comfort zone or unless we move some things around internally. Darren Jensen, a humanitarian

and entrepreneur based in Cambodia, said, “When I get comfortable, I need to shake things up.” That is what travel and adventure do.

I have always had the calling for adventure in my heart. Tony Robbins has a model of the human psyche in which he describes that we all have six human needs and that our behaviour is just an attempt to meet those needs. According to Robbins, the six needs are certainty, uncertainty, significance, love/connection, growth and contribution. For me, uncertainty is the highest of my needs. Certainty is nice, but if I could predict how my day would pan out and how the result and consequence of every action would turn out, disenchantment would engulf me quickly. Travel and adventure fills my need for surprises and uncertainty.

We are a migratory species. If human beings did not have the curiosity and the desire to explore, then mankind would not have evolved to the point we are at today. In the book *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond talks about how and why civilisations spread the way that they have throughout human history. Throughout human history, man has always ventured out to distant lands in search of three things: Riches, information and empire expansion. Human beings have always travelled, and because these three things are so important, they will continue to travel. Richard Bangs, whom many consider to be the “Godfather of Adventure Travel”, is the co-founder of Mountain Travel Sobek. He said, very concisely:

*“Some people have an adventure gene, a desire to go on a quest, and an insatiable itch to see what is beyond the next mountain. Throughout history, these people have expanded horizons, brought trade and new ideas to the world.”*

Today, I believe there are three new core reasons that people explore: To gain experience, to self-reflect, and to serve and give back. We have talked about how new experiences invigorate us. Exploring different lands and seeing new cultures also help stimulate introspection; Dr.

Daniel Quadt, an avid traveller and the founder of GuideGecko Travel Guide, says it best:

*“Travel helps to put your own life into perspective.”*

When you gain perspective, you broaden your horizon; when your horizons broaden, you see the bigger picture; when you see the bigger picture, you see the balance. The further you get away from an object, the more of it that you can see. On serving and giving back, Steve Dawkins from Namaste Cruises agrees:

*“I want to know that after my life is passed,  
I was able to give back to people.”*

## THE LAW OF POLARITY

People always say they are striving to achieve balance. What they do not realise is that they already have balance. Without balance, their bodies and the world around them would fall apart. Your body has to have

**WHETHER YOU WANT  
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a perfect amount of internal resistance pushing against the force of gravity, which is constantly pushing down on us. If there were not a perfect balance to these forces, you would either be flattened like a pancake or you would explode from the internal pressure of your body. So whether you want to acknowledge it or not, balance exists in your life. Don't look for balance – it is already there.

It is paramount to see the balance of both sides of the coin. We often loathe on one side and sit in that space, whether it is good or bad, failing to see the bigger picture. When we look at any situation objectively, we see there is a law that Bob Proctor calls the law of

polarity. Simply put, this law states that if there is something that is positive, there is something that is equally negative as well.

Imagine if we draw a line in the sand (literally, not metaphorically). If we move ten steps forward, that represents a positive figure of ten. If we walk ten steps behind the line, that represents a negative figure of ten. The law of polarity states that if we judge something to have a positive figure of x number of steps forward, there is an equally negative figure that is x number of steps backwards.

We start to feel inner turmoil and frustration when we see only one side of a situation. Remember, light cannot be experienced without darkness. When you get a promotion at work, you become joyful and exuberant. There is another side to that. What is the new level of expectations for your performance? How much more time do you have to put into work? We often don't think of the whole picture, we become blinded to one side.

I try to observe that law every single day when I get too high or low. One day, while I was in chiropractic practice, my clinic was not as busy as it normally was. A lot of people had rescheduled or cancelled their appointments. I felt frustrated and upset. I thought to myself, "Don't these people respect themselves and my time?" At the end of my day, one of the clinic assistants said to me, "Doc, shouldn't we be thankful and happy for the people that did make it in today?" That stuck with me for a long time. My vision had



been clouded. I only chose to see the negative part of the day, when there was a part that was equally positive.

With the law of polarity, you can make any situation negative or positive by virtue of how you choose to think about it.

## The Pull And Tug We Experience

The Chinese Dao is an artful symbol. It is a great way to illustrate the yin and the yang, both sides of the coin. If you look at the line that separates the yin and the yang, you see it is not a straight line, but a wave. To me, it represents the ebbs and flow of the universe and suggests that the balance of life does not happen in a straight line. There is a delicate flow between the yin and the yang.

The Dao is a fantastic example of the law of polarity. The yin and the yang are contrasting colours. They may look different, but they are, in fact, equal. Split the two apart, and you have something that looks funny and unsymmetrical. Put them together, and you have a full circle. It is an object that is better than the sum of its parts, and that is how life is supposed to be seen.

### LET'S HUSTLE

**There is a common phrase that says, "You always have 20/20 vision in hindsight." While that may be true, what if you had the power to have 20/20 vision in foresight? With challenging situations in your life, look at both sides and use the law of polarity. If the situation looks negative, look at it from the positive viewpoint or vice versa.**



# 6

## BREAKTHROUGH AND TRANSFORMATION

*“Life is not about getting there as quickly and conveniently as possible; climbing the mountain is just as important as reaching the summit.”*

—Mark Smith, Founder of seat61.com

*Tuesday, 8 September 2009  
Tongariro National Park, New Zealand*

*The first leg of my adventure has been a challenging one. I really had to apply everything I have been writing about the last three months and put it into practice.*

*After the amazing conference over my first weekend, I found out that my credit card had been locked and my debit card numbers had been stolen. I sat in my friend’s house for three days with no money, just itching to get out and explore. It was really frustrating to travel this far only to be confined to a small suburb outside of Auckland while I waited for a new debit card to be mailed. Not only that, my bank was not helpful throughout the process. My card arrived three days later than promised.*

*Once I finally got on the road, I tried to rush to the first destination, Lake Taupo, the skydiving capital of the world. As I was awaiting my first skydive, I was informed that there was no way we could go that day due to the high winds. It was especially frustrating looking outside and seeing the crystal clear weather with not a cloud in the sky.*



## BREAKTHROUGH AND TRANSFORMATION

*I chose to move along and make my way to Tongariro National Park, home of “Mt Doom” from the Lord of the Rings trilogy. It is where, reputedly, the “best daywalk” in New Zealand resides. Upon arrival, I was informed at the office that the daywalk, an alpine crossing, would probably not be navigable for the next few days due to fierce winds.*

*I searched from guesthouse to guesthouse for a bed to no avail. It seemed as if the whole tiny town had been booked up. Thoughts began to creep into my head. Should I have just stayed in Southeast Asia instead of heading this way? New Zealand was much more expensive than I had expected, and the early spring months made for short days, with the sun usually setting at 6 p.m. I then began to become quite frustrated with everything. Feelings of resentment came into play, and I kept asking myself if I had made the right choice. In that moment, I settled down and made myself see the order.*

*Since my card had come so late, my friend was able to negotiate a deal to get me a very inexpensive rental car. On top of that, I am beyond lucky to even be able to travel and take in all the experiences I have had thus far.*

*It is amazing what happens once your mindset and state of being changes.*

*The next day, the crossing at Tongariro National Park opened up. Not only that, there was not a cloud in the sky, and the weather was beautiful, albeit a bit cold.*

*The national park is absolutely stunning. Upon a flat plateau sits three volcanoes that just shoot up out of the earth. The three volcanoes sit in a straight line, and each get progressively taller, with the perfect symmetrical cone of Mt Ngauruhoe (Mt Doom) straddling the middle.*

*The climb up the crossing in the winter conditions was amazing. We went from brush to volcanic fields to a high alpine environment. As we strapped on the crampons, we headed up the 60-degree slope, braving wind gusts that reached 40 mph at times. We were rewarded with a beautiful summit on the red crater. The summit was not snow covered due to the fact that the volcano is a slumbering giant, exploding several times in the*

*last decade. We were also rewarded with incredible views of the other two volcanoes and the surrounding snow-capped ridges. The adventure had really begun; this is what I came for.*

*Often we have a breakthrough and feel as if we have arrived. The truth is that we never arrive. Breakthrough and transformation are not a one-time thing. To live a powerful life, we have to continuously look at whom we are “being” and know how to get back on the track when the train occasionally derails – and derail it will.*

*Keep looking and keep living.*

I had never planned on going to New Zealand. While volunteering in India, we had a group of chiropractors from all over the world, and among them were a handful of New Zealanders. Not only were they fantastic chiropractors, they were great friends. A bond was quickly formed with a few of them, and they insisted that I visit them in New Zealand. It sounded like a good idea at the time. It seemed logical, since I was already on this side of the world.

Assuming it was just a quick hop from Southeast Asia, I arrived at the airport with a one-way ticket about two hours prior to check-in time. The lady at the check-in counter revealed that to get into New Zealand, there must also be a return ticket. After a frantic scramble to buy a return ticket in the nick of time, I was off on another adventure. There was something else that was miscalculated – New Zealand was not a quick hop across the pond! To this day, it still amuses me that what I had anticipated as a short flight was really a nine-and-a-half-hour haul.

Arriving at New Zealand shook me up in more ways than one. The hustle, bustle and chaos of Asia were replaced by the laid-back crawl of the countryside. Also, it was the last leg of my trip, and my funds were running dry; an uncomfortable feeling in my stomach crawled up every time I reached into my pocket to pay for a meal.

## OBSTACLE

John Lennon said, “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.” Obstacles will come up along your path many times throughout life. How you deal with them is what life is all about. Every one of us is a wizard and powerhouse in our own right; we have the ability to create uncanny results in our lives. In order to achieve this, climbing over or around these hurdles is a must. Breaking through these barriers creates exhilarating excitement and necessary growth in life.

One of my favourite parables about weathering obstacles is the story of the stone and the stream. Imagine a stream with a steady constant flow of water that never dries up, and you set a large stone in the middle of the water. Which one wins out eventually? The stone puts up immediate resistance and the stream may be stopped momentarily; but over time, the stream finds ways to flow around, under and over the stone. After a while, the water erodes the stone and the constant flow of water wins. Life may throw stones in our path, and we must have the perseverance and ingenuity to weather them away.

## SELF-DOUBT

*“Mentorship is crucial to your growth and development.”*

—John Langan, Co-founder of Massive Collective

I constantly work on personal development to change, fine-tune and improve my life. Working hard on this area got me discouraged a few years ago because I could not stop the negative thoughts from creeping into my head. It came to a point where disempowerment started kicking in as I wondered if that part of my life had become an irremediable failure, and if mastery may not be attainable. Working with a performance coach, this question was raised, and the answer

was surprising. The coach said, “It is human to occasionally have those thoughts; accept it and deal with it.” What you resist persists.

Another mentor gave me a great suggestion about fighting those negative thoughts. He said, “If you hear a negative voice inside your head and it is holding you back, imagine it is coming from a wild predator. You need to take that predator and wrestle it to the ground into submission.” Oftentimes, the only thing that stops us from moving forward is ourselves.

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## RESENTMENT

When obstacles or negative thoughts get in our way, resentment starts to form. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines *resentment* as a feeling of anger because something has happened that you think is unfair. That is what happens when things do not go our way – we tend to blame other people or situations when faced with adversity. This resentment acts as an invisible shield, blocking us from getting what we want. It casts a shell over us, a barrier. It is a self-imposed obstacle, and it is a formidable one. It damages and eventually destroys relationships with others and yourself.

Taking personal responsibility for everything – and I do mean everything – that happens in our lives is what creates breakthroughs. Taking responsibility for everything in our lives and how we react to things leads to smashing through resentment. When you take responsibility for something, you are also declaring yourself as being a cause in the matter. Being a cause in the matter means you have both the power and resources to shape the result that you desire.

After starting my chiropractic practice, I would frequently get upset at my staff for not doing things the right way – my way. I often

## BREAKTHROUGH AND TRANSFORMATION





got upset because I felt they were not competent or could not follow instructions properly. Resentment built up and often led to me getting visibly frustrated when talking to them. One day, I sat and took all this in. I took responsibility for not training them properly and not communicating clearly. Once I took up and wholeheartedly owned that responsibility, everything changed; it seemed as if, almost magically, the office began to run smoothly, and I was instantly less frustrated.

## **BREAKTHROUGH**

Having those moments of clarity to see the order of life is called a breakthrough. Breaking through in an area that we have been stuck is inspiring and empowering. Think about the last time when you had a problem that you had been trying to solve, driving yourself nuts thinking about the solution. Oftentimes, when we are taking a shower or lying in bed at night, the answer suddenly appears in our head. That is a true breakthrough, seeing something that you have never seen before.

## BREAKTHROUGH AND TRANSFORMATION

It is the invisible barriers that hold us back from reaching the best version of ourselves. If you are trapped inside a glass bubble and you keep hitting your head on the ceiling, once you finally bust through that ceiling, you become someone that you have not been before. If you think of climbing a skyscraper, with every level that you rise, you start to see things that you haven't seen before on the ground below. Every time you break through glass ceilings, you grow.

### TRANSFORMATION

When it comes to altering behaviour, people resist change. The word *change* can have a negative connotation to it. Think of a relationship that you have had or that you are currently in. Has your partner ever told you that you have to change? How did you feel when he or she said that? The need to change implies that something is wrong or something needs to be better. A change that leads to improvement is reversible.

There is a better way to forever alter behaviour – it is called transformation. Transformation is what happens as a result of a breakthrough. In nature, transformation happens frequently. For example, in geology, when a simple-looking limestone rock is exposed to high heat and pressure over time, a threshold is reached and the limestone transforms into marble, which can be used to make some of the most beautiful structures in the world. Once you are transformed, you can never be what you once were. Transformation is permanent. Transformation means a shift in your core, your identity and your fundamental being.

### DISCIPLINE

To excel in life, we have to make a choice: To either endure the pain of discipline or the pain of regret.

For a variety of reasons, at some point, you will derail as you walk down your path of life, even if you think you have the best plan in the world. I think Anirudh Gupta, co-founder of the travel portal Tripoto, said it best: “However great your ideas may be, execution is always more difficult than you expected it to be.”

Many people see getting derailed as a failure, when in truth, the failure lies in the refusal to find your way to get back on track. There is a brilliant Japanese Proverb that states, “Fall seven times, stand up eight.” This means that no matter how many times you fall off track, you just keep getting back on. Everyone who succeeds in life, business or sports will attribute their success to the refusal to stay on the ground after they get knocked down. Sergio Mello, the Head of Innovation at Travelstart and CEO at Satisfly, explained, “The only reason that I made it is because I didn’t give up. I met two or three people who had the same idea as me, but they gave up along the way.”

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Mountain climbing is the perfect analogy for success. When you start a climb, you start with a vision and a purpose to reach the summit. Leading up to the climb, no matter how big or small the mountain is, you need to prepare your gear, clothing and, possibly, your body. As you start the ascent, everything is new and exciting. A whole new world of possibility opens up as you breathe in the fresh air, listen to the birds chirp and feel the warm sunlight on your skin. Then you start to perspire, you get hungry, and you may slip and lose your footing several times. All of a sudden, it does not seem so fun; it seems like a lot of work. Every step becomes a struggle, your head is pounding, and your vision is blurry from the altitude. As you camp before the morning summit, you have a hard time sleeping, and then you rise at an ungodly hour for the final push. During the final push,



every step becomes a demanding order, and it is difficult to even see the next step ahead. All of a sudden, you reach the summit, and you feel tired, beaten up and defeated. It is frigid up there. Then the sun peaks over the horizon, and the view from the top is truly indescribable. A sense of accomplishment rushes over you, emotion fills your body, and you are brought to tears. Every moment of preparation, every step, and all the mental fortitude that it took to get up the summit were worth it.

So you have reached the top – now what? You stay and soak up the sights and sounds, but you can't stay there forever. The solitude and serenity at the top is beautiful, but it is cold and lonely up there. Eventually, you have to come back down the mountain to where you came. Perhaps you will climb another one very soon; perhaps the next one you climb will be higher. It is all about what you choose to do. Will you let future derailments throw you off the course of your next climb, or will you hold on tight to your vision, tenacity and discipline, and break through to even higher heights?

### LET'S HUSTLE

**Select an area in your life that you would like to transform. To create a breakthrough in that area, commit to taking one action each day in that area to uncover invisible barriers.**

# 7

## POSSIBILITY

*“Being exposed to many cultures has made me a better human being, a better businessman, and a better father.”*

—Charles Ferguson, Division Vice President,  
Sales and Marketing, Asia Pacific, at ADP

*Monday, 21 September 2009  
Fjordlands, New Zealand*

*If you are a backpacker, trumper or traveller, you would have heard or will hear about the Milford Track at some point in your life. In 1908, a London newspaper published an article on the track with the headline “The Finest Walk in the World”. Over one hundred years later, the title still stands, and at some points during the high season, you have to reserve a spot, up to a year in advance, to walk on the track. The four-day trek starts with a boat taxi across Lake Te Anau and traverses through mountain passes, glacial valleys, wetlands and rainforest before dumping out into the majestic Milford Sound. This legendary walk is one of the main reasons that I have travelled to New Zealand.*

*I had my hopes incredibly high as I arrived in Fjordland at the end of the winter season. Much to my dismay, I learned that no one has completed the track this winter, and it is currently impassable due to high avalanche risk. The lady at the Department of Conservation obviously saw the disappointment in my face, as she tried to suggest a multitude of other things to do instead.*

## POSSIBILITY

*The Milford Sound is something that I have fiercely wanted to see for the last five years. However, I would have preferred to arrive there on foot, watching the view open up from the rainforest after a long, arduous four-day tramp.*

*Nonetheless, I approached The Sound by car, albeit a bit disappointed. The 100-mile journey started in the grasslands as it approached glacial valleys, mirror lakes and towering mountains. I finally reached the Homer Tunnel, an amazing engineering feat that took more than 20 years to build. The tunnel, only 55 years old, burrows through the base of the mountain and opens up in a giant fiord on the way down to The Sound. The view is nothing short of spectacular.*

*Following a winding road heading to the water, there were towering cliffs to each side filled in with green, lush Jurassic forest. Then, the view opened up. Milford Sound is unbelievably beautiful. Iconic Mitre peak sits in the centre of mountains that rise vertically out of the water, as if they were shot out of a cannon. Truly, it is a mind-blowing sight.*

*That night, we ventured down to see The Sound under the stars. It was an uncharacteristically clear night (Milford receives 27 feet of rain per year). Milford was heartbreakingly beautiful at night. The shadows of the monstrous peaks were filled in with the bright twinkling of the heavens, mixed with the soft glow of the Milky Way. The stars shed so much light that I could see the snow on top of the black shadows of the mountains. The melody of the calm water as it hit the beach beautifully synchronised with the roar of a large waterfall off in the distance. I sat there in complete awe. The sight was so beautiful that it brought tears to my eyes. I reached into my pocket for my camera, and as I turned it on, the screen remained black. Some things are just not meant to be photographed.*

*The next morning, I explored The Sound via sea kayak. The clouds returned that morning and brought rain. The clouds and mist dipped in and out of the mountains and valleys and created a mysterious effect. The rainwater fell and actually beaded on the mysteriously black, yet crisp water of The Sound. We seemed dwarfed as we kayaked along the mountains. Everything about it was spectacular. The rocky cliffs shot out of the water vertically and combined with the rain, creating a cascade of waterfalls*

*at literally every corner. The Sound was quite possibly the most beautiful thing I have ever seen; experiencing it at water level from the kayak made everything more magnificent. The day trip was completely awe-inspiring and one of the favourite things that I have ever done.*

*A few days before that, I was utterly disappointed because of a minor setback. So many times in life, we experience disappointment and find ourselves stopped dead in our tracks. In actuality, that setback does nothing but open a world of possibility if we are just willing to look. If door number one is locked, what's behind door number two? Why don't you open it and tell me?*

*As for the Milford Track, is it really "The Finest Walk in the World"? I don't know, but if it is anything similar to The Sound, I'll be on a plane back to New Zealand very, very soon.*

**K**evin Bowler, the Chief Executive of Tourism in New Zealand, said, "What is special about New Zealand is the big diversity in a small space." That is a very good description of what travelling around this country brings. It includes the big city of Auckland, the geysers of Rotorua, the world-class vineyards of Marlborough, the majestic west coast mountains and the fjords of the deep south. The number of landscapes in such a small country is mind-boggling.

Travelling around the country, I found the travel experience to be varied as well, from tramping on a few of New Zealand's nine great walks to sipping wine in empty tasting rooms, picking up hitchhiking travellers, climbing glaciers and experiencing an adrenaline rush while skydiving. Despite my initial reservations about the country, it turned out to be a fantastic experience. The people are lovely, the fish and chips are divine, and the landscapes beg you to explore them.

The reason I wanted to go to New Zealand was the mythical Milford Track. Driving down the islands in a north to south direction, it just seemed like a fitting ending that Milford would be at the end of my journey. I enjoyed the ride, but the Milford Track was the prize that I was keeping my eye on.

POSSIBILITY





## EXPECTATION

The Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines *expectation* as the act or state of looking forward and anticipating. That is the literal definition. Let's go deeper. There are many expectations that are set on each of us, by others and by ourselves. The construction of expectation occurs when we want a desired outcome of a future event; as such, *expectation* is a way of perceiving how the future "should" or "must be".

## DISAPPOINTMENT

When an expectation is not met, disappointment occurs. When things do not happen in the way that we expect, we express disappointment. Does this make any sense if you look at it objectively? We feel disappointed because of the time frame or the picture we painted, and not reality itself.

I don't think that anyone is immune to this; it is just what happens as we weave through the course of life. To handle disappointment effectively, we should let go of expectations and come to grips with the fact that

## POSSIBILITY

we had unrealistic timelines or unrealistic interpretations of what we wanted. From there, we must take personal responsibility for our unique situation and move on. The key is to take personal responsibility for having a distorted view of reality. Once personal responsibility is taken, then and only then can we move on.

Once we release our attachment to expectations, the real magic happens. The intelligence of the universe starts to permeate our lives to make things happen. You can do one of two things in life when an expectation has not been met – you can sulk, get emotional and be upset that things did not turn out your way or within your time frame; or you can accept it, know that your expectation and/or time frame was off and move on. The former puts a blindfold on you to future opportunities, and the latter allows you to move forward.

How exhausting would it be to go through every single day with a pack of heavy rocks strapped to your back? That is what happens when you hold on to your expectations; dropping them is equivalent to unstrapping the pack, letting it fall to the ground. You are now more effective, more nimble and more energetic. Your mind is now free to see different paths and different opportunities that you were once too fatigued to observe. New possibilities unfold right in front of your eyes.

## POSSIBILITY

Possibility is what pulls your dream into the realm of reality. When most people think of the word *possibility*, they think of something that may or is likely to happen in the future. It is thought of as a “someday maybe event” that has no presence in your life now. I am asking you to think of the word *possibility* as something in the present that propels you into a future that you want. You create a possibility where your thoughts and actions at present shift to become consistent with the near future you are about to realise. Think of possibility as a springboard that is pointing at the direction you are excited to go in



life. All you have to do is jump from it into the future you desire. Who you are in the present is shaped by the future into which you are living.

In the story above, where I ran into an obstacle and I was not able to do the Milford Track, once I was able to unload my disappointment and shed my pack of rocks, something happened. A new possibility was revealed to me. I could opt to kayak The Sound instead. I jumped on that chance, which offered me memorable experiences that included approaching The Sound by car, passing through the tunnel and exploring The Sound in the rain.

## LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

There are certain experiences in life that forever change us. During these experiences, we are totally present; our minds process all the sounds, smells and sights. It is as if time stands still. The serenity of the moment seems to react with our soul and it creates something completely new and different – just like taking chocolate, flour, sugar and eggs, and mixing them together to bake a cake. It is a chemical reaction, a magical reaction of life.

Travel opens you up to such experiences constantly. Claire Chiang, Senior Vice President at Banyan Tree Holdings, agrees that travel is a wonderful journey, and more specifically, “It’s a journey that uplifts your cognitive development. You use your eyes, your ears, you taste the food, you use your nose; it’s very sensorial.” That is what travel brings to the table. It is life in the fast lane; it is life on an interactive and high-definition projection. Ask any travellers to name just one of their favourite experiences; they will pause, go through the inventory in their minds, and come up with at least one amazing tale in living colour. You may even be moved by the story because they tell it with such vigour. Maybe you have one of those stories yourself; they are the experiences that shape the very fabric of our being.

Why do these experiences touch us in such a way that we are forever changed? We have thousands of experiences every day that we seem to sleepwalk through. Think back on a routine working day last week.



## POSSIBILITY

Once you have that particular day in mind, ask yourself: How many of those experiences really touched the core of who you really are? What is it that makes a special experience and brands an image into our minds that never fades away?

An amazing experience is similar to an amazing friend. If you have someone who is truly special come into your life and who sticks with you through thick and thin, you become a better person by simply associating yourself with that person. I know I have a handful of friends who have pushed me to be the best version of myself. A great travel experience is the same thing: It attaches to you, it shifts your mindset, it doesn't let go, and it pushes you to be the best you can be.

### LET'S HUSTLE

**The next time you are disappointed, ask yourself what you are disappointed about. What expectation did you set? How is the reality different from what you expected? How can you let go of the expectation and create a new possibility? Mark it down, and jump back on track.**

# 8

## EXCELLING

*“The new travel trend is CV building,  
the working holiday.”*

—Andrew Gay, Managing Director, New  
Zealand and Asia, STA Travel

*Monday, 12 October 2009,  
Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand*

*Cold and rainy pretty much sums up the last few days. As I sat in my car trying to stay warm, the rain remained relentless, obstructing my views through the windshield. I managed to keep my eye on the prize, a small rocky outcropping just off the shore. I sat and watched, as the wind remained strong and constant, creating three-foot swells that kept violently crashing onto the windswept white sands. The beach was beautiful, snuggled in between a couple of giant green cliffs. However, the sky remained bleak and grey; these were not ideal swimming conditions. I watched patiently for about an hour, waiting for the sinking tide to fall to the rocks. The water level was falling, closer, closer now; it was about that time. Now!!!*

*I got out of my car and took off, the target in my sights. I was joined by about 30 other people who had been waiting anxiously in the car park. All their eyes were on the same thing, the stretch of sand that sat in front of the rocks. Everybody was braving the cold weather in their swimsuits, with shovels in hand. The scene resembled a mixture of a department store on Black Friday and a low-grade horror flick.*

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*The sprint was soon followed by a symphony of shovels hitting the sand; dirt was thrown in every direction possible. Holes and small dirt walls were sprouting up all over the place, only to be filled in and toppled over by the waves that kept crashing into them, negating all our hard work. I could start to feel my toes go a little numb. It was freezing!*

*At last, I defeated Mother Nature temporarily; I took a seat in my little hole. Hot spring water seeped up through the sand, mixing with the seawater to create an intimate, natural and relaxing hot tub. I instantly began to feel a sense of relaxation. The stress that had built up in my body from the sprint and continuous digging melted away. I sat there and kicked my feet back, watching the waves come in, the rain continuing to fall and people laughing. What a unique place – the “hot water beach” on the North Island.*

*The last couple of weeks have been wonderful. My journey has taken me from the large deep fjords of the south to the snow-capped peaks of Mt Cook, the art deco architecture and rolling vineyards of Napier, and the “burbs” and golden islands of Auckland. New Zealand is a unique place. It is as if Mother Nature took every possible landscape possible, threw them into a blender, took the mixture, baked it and then cut it into two pieces. Voila! Welcome to New Zealand.*

*Yes, the landscape is incredible and the views are impeccable. However, I really needed the experience at hot water beach. I was beginning to feel a little bored until that cold, rainy day at the beach reminded me of something: the contributions of people in my life.*

*I am always fascinated by nearly everyone I meet. Travellers have a special place in my heart. Mark Twain said, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.” I have always been impressed with people I meet when I travel because they seem to embody this statement. Travellers always seem to be open to new ideas, people and places. They are always interested in not only exploring the world but also exploring themselves. That is something that really resonates with me.*

*Something special happens when you travel. I personally believe that when you travel, it's not about what you see, but who you become. As I start to come down the home stretch of my big adventure, I find myself appreciating this idea more and more. However, this principle is not exclusive to travellers. You don't have to go to the ends of the earth to appreciate it; all of us are having a big adventure called LIFE. And after all, isn't life all about who we become?*

**A**fter six and a half weeks in New Zealand, I was starting to grasp the hard truth that I was approaching the end of my travel adventures. It was a bittersweet feeling. My journey began in Auckland, where I drove to the bottom of the South Island. I then made my way up to the North Island before returning to Auckland. New Zealand is the first country that I have travelled to where I feel that I have seen most of the country. The first week in New Zealand was met with a mild sense of disappointment, but as the journey unfolded, I met some incredible people who would eventually shape my outlook of travel.

The hospitality of the locals or “kiwis”, as they are commonly called, was exceptional. I slept on a number of couches, ate succulent lamb, and attended Jacuzzi parties in amazing holiday homes. The people were laid-back and easy-going in New Zealand. I actually had “culture shock” the more time I spent there because of the molasses-like speed and vibrant demeanour of the locals. In the South Island, things slow down to a crawl. I had thought of myself as a laid-back person, but in New Zealand, I was considered high strung in comparison to most of the people there.

In stark contrast, the travelling crowd was the opposite of the locals. The travellers were full of energy and had an incredible exuberance for life. Everyone going through New Zealand was ready to take full advantage of the adventure that the country is known for. The travelling crowd in New Zealand was younger than the typical travelling gang. It seemed as if they were at the perfect age to allow themselves to be more than invigorated by adventure, but to also be moulded into somebody new. The travelling crowd was all wide-eyed with big dreams. Everyone seemed open to everything

EXCELLING





– from sitting around random campfires to trekking for days on end and hitchhiking their way through the country. As the years passed, I really treasure the time spent in New Zealand because of the people I met there.

## TOURIST VERSUS TRAVELLER

*“Travel allows you to become very comfortable in heterogeneous environments.”*

—Victor Mieres,  
Vice President,  
Emerging Markets,  
National Instruments

The traveller versus the tourist argument is one that often comes up when you are on the road. When this argument arises, remember to tread with caution, or emotions will start to fly. Call a backpacker a “tourist”, and he or she may throw the bag down and go into the ring with you, toe to toe. Even people who take up package tours or short-term trips are reluctant to be classified as tourists. Why is there a negative stigma associated with the word *tourist*?

What is a tourist? Most people that travel think of tourists as people who sign up on a package tour and refuse to fully immerse themselves into the local culture. The World Tourism Organisation defines *tourists* as people who are “traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”. The Merriam-Webster dictionary has a definition that is even more general; it says a *tourist* is “a person who travels to a place for pleasure”. So by these definitions, almost everyone who takes a trip outside their domicile for leisure is a *tourist*.

The other camp wants to be identified as “travellers”. They associate tourists as people who stay in resorts and go to the well-trodden areas whilst a map is stuck on their hands. “Travellers” like to think of themselves as people who are cultured and open to what the world has to offer. To a traveller, a tourist is a person who is not open to new things. To a traveller, a tourist just wants to eat the same comfort food and have the same experiences over and over again.

I will admit it: I have gotten stuck in that mindset – perceiving myself as high and mighty, thinking that *those tourists don't know what it is like to really travel and experience a place*. The ironic thing is, referring back to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a *traveller* is defined as the exact same way as a *tourist*. A *traveller* is “a person who travels to a place for pleasure”. I guess people are not wrong when they call me a *tourist*.

Rolf Potts offers a new way at approaching this topic in his book, *Vagabonding*. He says that vagabonding is more than a way to identify a person; it is also a philosophy about how we travel. He defines *vagabonding* as (1) the act of leaving behind the orderly world to travel independently for an extended period of time; (2) a privately meaningful manner of travel that emphasises creativity, adventure, awareness, simplicity, discovery, independence, realism, self-reliance and the growth of the spirit; and (3) a deliberate way of living that makes the freedom to travel possible.

Potts' new term is an interesting take on what people – be it tourists, travellers or vagabonds – want. It does not matter how you identify yourself. Travelling to gain the experience of freedom, excitement and adventure by going to a new place is what should take centre stage. Taking it one step further, I propose that travel should really be about those things that shape us into who we want to become.

**TRAVEL SHOULD  
REALLY BE ABOUT  
THOSE THINGS  
THAT SHAPE US  
INTO WHO WE  
WANT TO BECOME.**

The famous psychologist Carl Jung said:

*“As far as we can discern, the sole purpose  
of human existence is to kindle a light  
in the darkness of mere being.”*

Our journey through life is all about changing the essence of who we are. We are human “beings”, not human doings. Getting caught in the rat race in our routines can become very easy. We run from here to there, doing this and that without understanding the hows or whys. Knowing ourselves and who we are at the “being” level is the most important thing one could ever hope to obtain.

## **BE, DO, HAVE**

First of all, we must understand what *being* is. In order to understand this, I am going to introduce the concept of “Be-Do-Have”. This is not original to me. I saw this while attending a course called Landmark Education. I subsequently internalised the idea as I read about it in more books and training seminars that advocate the same concept. This is the most powerful thing that I have ever learned to obtain results quickly. It is a new way to look at yourself and your life. Most people use this concept every single day without even knowing it, albeit in the wrong order. Let's see the proper order from left to right.



BE → DO → HAVE

Think of something that you really want in life – it can be a material good, an experience or even a certain person. Do you have something or someone in mind? Good. As we go through this example, you can insert what or who you want into the formula. Using myself as an example here, I had always wanted to have a million dollars since high school. Even though my parents were financially healthy, there were occasional disagreements about money. I came from a rural farm town surrounded by good-natured people from humble backgrounds. Oftentimes, over at friends' homes, I observed bleak situations due to the lack of money. I remember getting invited to a sleepover at a friend's house, and there was nothing to eat for dinner – nothing, no food in the cabinets and no way or place to even get something to eat. I thought, "If I HAVE one million dollars, I will DO the things I really want to do in life, and I will BE happy." At times, I may have switched the order around to think of the things I must DO, to HAVE the million dollars, and then BE happy and abundant.

Before fully comprehending and internalising this concept, I had the process out of order and was constantly frustrated. I was looking for new things to DO and to earn more money. No matter what I did, the results were not positive, and I was definitely not feeling happy. The feeling of abundance never came. I definitely did not HAVE the wealth that I was yearning for. Why were the results just not sticking? It is because I was looking at the whole situation from the wrong order:

HAVE → DO → BE  
OR  
DO → HAVE → BE

Notice that in both cases, the HAVE or the DO is the primary focus, with the BE as an afterthought. I could continue on this path but more than likely I would keep hitting a brick wall, or if the goal was ever achieved, the feeling of fulfilment and happiness would not be sustainable.

Most people who put this concept out of order seldom get the thing they want. On the rare occasion that they get what they want – HAVE the car, the money or the girl – their happiness or fulfilment begins to fade over time. They see someone with a bigger car, or more money or a prettier girl, and they HAVE to start the cycle all over again. In the cycle, a person needs more and more. Does this sound familiar? I know this cycle all too well.

Once I focused on putting the primary focus on the BE, my world started to shift drastically. I started making myself feel abundant. I wanted to BE abundant first. I visualised what I would be doing with the money that flows into my life effortlessly. I started drinking nicer wine, I forced myself to go to a tailor and get custom-made clothing, and I started to give more freely. I acted as if money was already abundant. As I became more generous, more business came, and people could see and feel my genuine happiness and pleasant disposition. As a result, my wealth began to grow.

Working on something as simple as being happy can improve results in your life dramatically. We all have heard the phrase “when it rains, it pours”. It happens both ways – when we are in a happy, cheerful and grateful mindset, abundance starts to pour in and bless every area of our life. When we are in an angry, frustrated and hesitant state, the “lack” mentality, the survival instinct and fear take reign. How can you apply this in your life?

## BEING

*“Travel allows you to acquire more empathy.”*

—Judy Lum, Group Vice President,  
Sales and Marketing, Tour East Singapore

## EXCELLING

I think travel is the most effective way to mould our state and transform who we are by getting to our core essence of being. When you are on the road, you meet many people who seem to have less – usually materialistically – but in so many other ways, they have so much more –spiritually, emotionally and, in general, well-being – than you do. Travel shows you the stark contrasts in life and the polarity of truth. It grants you gratitude. It exposes your vulnerability. Most of all, it teaches you empathy.

I remember strolling through a town in rural Thailand where there were no roads for a few kilometres. There was a family that had everyone cramped into and living in a tiny room. The kids ran around barefoot jovially as they played with each other. That same family invited me in for food. It was impossible to not be humbled – they seemed to have so little, but they were so willing to give. My life, my mindset and my outlook of life were forever changed because of their kindness and generosity. It helped me to BE humble. Those people helped me become a better person.

As my personal coach and mentor, Dr. Rick Markson, said when I was having a difficult time, “Just be, just BE.”

### LET'S HUSTLE

**Reread the description of the BE-DO-HAVE principle. Dedicate yourself to follow this sequence and see what comes out of it.**

# 9

## CHOICES

*“Travel teaches you the most important lesson you need for business: Resilience.”*

—Martin Rudden, General Manager at  
The American Club Singapore

*Monday, 26 October 2009  
Singapore*

*I thought at this time that I would be writing a final entry encompassing all my great adventures and what I have learned over the last four months now that I am all settled down. Isn't it funny that life always seems to be making its own plans, without informing you.*

*I arrived a few weeks ago in Singapore – the land of spotless streets, glistening skyscrapers and decadent cuisine. My life in the “Lion City” has been interesting to say the least. Singapore’s diversity is pretty astounding, especially since it often gets the rep of being sterile or gets labelled with my favourite nickname, “SingaBORE”. Here, the culture is largely centred on food. From pleasant Chinatown to hectic Little India, you will find the most unbelievable and affordable cuisine. The affordable part is the most convenient for me, having exhausted most of my funds during the last few months of travels, I find myself at a backpacker’s hostel and walking around with my first pay cheque, which I can’t cash because my local account is not yet open.*

## CHOICES

*I thought that travelling up to this point had already brought all the crazy surprises and that I was ready to start practising here. As I walked through my future clinic, I couldn't help but be impressed. It was set on the eighth floor on top of a mall in one of the nicer areas of the city, with an incredible window view to boot. It seemed almost too good to be true. As I sat and had a cup of coffee in the mall, I started dreaming. This is the place where I am going to help thousands, if not millions, of people reach and realise their full potential. The mall had everything: coffee houses, a gym and an incredible wine shop tucked away in the basement.*

*Then I got a call. "So what do you think about Jakarta?"*

*The next day, I was on a plane to Jakarta, Indonesia. "The Big Durian" is its nickname, referring to the large, spiky fruit that only grows in Southeast Asia; Westerners are quick to mention that it smells like a rotten sewer.*

*Jakarta is the antithesis of Singapore. Once referred to as a poverty-stricken hellhole, the city has come a long way in even the last 10 years. It is a city full of energy and foreign investment to boot. I wasn't surprised to find malls that housed stores with Versace, D&G and Tag Heuer. Still, Jakarta is an urban planner's worst nightmare. Big towers shoot up everywhere. Streets snake in between the skyscrapers, while cars come to a standstill due to the traffic and motorbikes zooming by.*

*Despite these, the energy of an up-and-coming city is undeniably seductive. Here, in a city that has 25 million "registered" inhabitants in the metropolitan area, chiropractors are almost unknown.*

*I flew back to Singapore, as my boss asked me to think about it and said that the choice was totally up to me. I had the biggest dilemma. Yes, Singapore is a great, clean and safe place. I sat by the Singapore River that night thinking, with a glass of wine. The young and affluent were all around, surrounded by glimmering towers. I found myself utterly confused. This decision would play a big part in the next few years of my life. Singapore is great; however, Jakarta is wild and untamed. What excited*

*me the most was the possibility of starting something new there, to learn the Indonesian language and to be, in some sense, a trailblazer.*

*As I talked to one of my great mentors that night, he challenged the heck out of me. This grandiose idea of going to Jakarta suddenly didn't look so hot. He ended with what I believe is the best advice you can ever give to somebody.*

*Just listen to “innate”; it will tell you. “INNATE is God in human beings. INNATE is good in human beings. INNATE cannot be cheated, violated, or tricked. INNATE is always waiting, and ready to communicate with you, and when INNATE is in contact you are in tune with the infinite.” – BJ Palmer, DC*

*Of course, this idea sounded great. However, I was on a timeline here. This was going to be one of the biggest decisions I had made in my life thus far. This might define who I am and how I grow. How the heck was I going to get this answer in such a short time? Actually, I was starting to get quite scared. I broke into a sweat. Maybe Jakarta isn't the right choice. I have already taken a chance coming here – do I really need to go overboard?*

*I sat in my room and meditated on it for about an hour. I stopped perspiring. The anxiety settled down into a sense of calmness. “Whatever decision I come to will be great,” I kept telling myself. I went down the hall and walked to the bathroom. Now, after staying in this place for nearly two weeks, I had used this bathroom the whole time. I stepped in, closed the door and looked down. Suddenly a chill ran up my spine.*

*In one of the tiles next to the toilet seat, there was a word engraved there, big and bold. I had never noticed it before – “Indonesia”.*

*So here I am again, packing up once more, ready for yet again an adventure of a lifetime, something special. Did I make the right choice? All I know is that I am diving in head first. Like many times on this wild ride of the last four months, I feel like I did come in contact with innate, the infinite, just to reiterate BJ. I believe Ralph Waldo Emerson said the same thing, perhaps more eloquently:*

*“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”*

**M**y flight from Auckland, New Zealand, to Singapore via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was seven hours late. I sat in the Auckland airport while the tension kept building up as the flight was delayed for 45 minutes, then two hours and finally six hours. Those six hours went by slowly and miserably. I was tired, dirty and broke. I was anxious to arrive in Singapore and start my career. The thought of my ex-classmates who had mostly started their careers made me feel guilty for not being on the ground, like them, actively helping and serving people.

Since the flight was late to Kuala Lumpur, I missed the last flight to Singapore. Luckily, the airline offered a complementary stay at a hotel, which turned out to be my very first five-star hotel experience! The pleasure ended quickly, as it was 2 a.m. when I checked in at the hotel, and I had to be at the airport by 7:30 a.m. for the flight to Singapore.

By the time the plane landed in Singapore, there was \$50 USD left in my account. I had exhausted everything. My employer offered me a loan to help alleviate the financial situation, and I was issued a cheque in Singapore dollars. Since the work visa was still pending, I could not open a local bank account, and the cheque remained as just a cheque – back to square one.

The first few weeks, I bounced around from hostel to hostel, paying with a credit card that was already close to its limit. After staying in one hostel for a few weeks, I had to switch to another because the former had been booked up. In the second hostel, I had my first encounter with bed bugs. Of all the crazy places I had been in the last five years, it was in Singapore, a place known for its cleanliness, where bed bugs reared their ugly heads. It was one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life. My body was covered from head to toe in big, red, itchy bites. The long, lonely nights in the hostel were spent watching the entire series of *How I Met Your Mother* on a laptop screen. It was a

very lean time, but I loved every second of it – all the excitement and changes – and then I was thrown a curveball.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING NOTHING

I truly believe that life will not give you everything until you are willing to have nothing. As we read biographies of successful people, a common theme comes up – they take action. There may never be the “right” time, but they step up and make a choice, even if it means that they have to sacrifice in the short term. There will be tough and lean times, but that allows you to build up resilience. There is an incredible man named Gaurav Kripalani. I met him in Singapore. Gaurav runs the Singapore Repertory Theatre, and he shared a profound insight with me: “One of the most character-building things is running operations at a deficit, finding a way to move forward, and finally breaking through.”

The victory and the breakthrough are much sweeter when you face adversity and work through it. Whenever there is a rough day, I think back to where I came from. I appreciate success so much because I remember the struggles it took to climb the mountain, remembering what it was like to live on a few dollars per day. Having nothing allowed me to build a foundation to have everything. I imagine you have had times like that too, rough times that prepared you to live the life you are living today.

**THE VICTORY AND  
THE BREAKTHROUGH  
ARE MUCH SWEETER  
WHEN YOU FACE  
ADVERSITY AND  
WORK THROUGH IT.**

## BEING RESOURCEFUL

*“When you travel, you have to come up  
with creative ways to solve problems.”*

– Kelly Tompkins, Founder and CEO at AdventureLink Travel Inc.



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One of the most valuable skills you learn while on the road is resourcefulness. Sergio Mello from Travelstart and Satisfly thinks so: “You can’t count on resources that you are normally accustomed to.” A very exciting and, at times, tenuous thing about extended, independent travel is learning to deal with the issue of limited funds. I have seen some very creative ways around this problem, being around travellers for the last 10 years. In 2006, while taking a backpacking trip to Europe with a few friends, we missed a bus and had to reschedule for the next morning. It was late and we had no accommodation, so we ended up taking a few pieces of cardboard and slept outside, next to the bus station. I saw things on that trip that ranged from fellow travellers eating nothing but bread to finding creative ways around paying for public transport, just so they could travel longer.



Gaining that resourcefulness spills over to all areas of life. Utilising the resources that you have is an incredibly practical skill that can be leveraged over the course of your life. When it comes to starting up any business or venture, there may be limited funds and time. What are you going to do with what you do have? Are you willing to go through lean times? If you have a dream or an idea, just do it. Mike Denzel, the founder of Fastbreak said:

*“Seeing tremendous opportunities can pull you through tough times.”*

## **INNATE: THE WISDOM OF YOUR BODY**

We went over universal intelligence in Chapter 2 of the book. Let’s discuss how that expresses itself in the individual. *Innate* means “inborn”. Within different schools of philosophy and religions throughout the world, there has always been an utmost respect for the power in human beings. Sometimes, we have difficulty identifying what this power is, and we have disagreed on what to name it. I came into the chiropractic profession because of its philosophy. In chiropractic philosophy, wisdom in the body is identified as innate intelligence.

The concept of a spirit or an intelligence inside our body is one that is met with much resistance and contention. As humans, we tend not to understand things that cannot be measured, seen or touched. We need to see before we believe. One thing to remember is that just because we cannot see something does not mean it isn’t there. We enjoy the benefits of having electricity to light up the world. What is electricity? It is not a matter, and we can’t see it or smell it; in fact, nobody can actually identify what it is. That does not stop us from enjoying the benefits of electricity each and every single day.

Let’s follow this analogy. Think about the body as a computer, with the brain as a processor and innate intelligence as the information in the system. When you want information on your computer, it

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is instantly available to you. Your computer contains a vast amount of information that has been downloaded from all different types of sources. You may have information in a file that you misplaced somewhere on the hard drive. The file is there, stored in the computer; your job is just to find it.

The human body is no different. The body is constantly uploading and downloading information into the brain. According to Dr. James Chestnut, it is estimated that three trillion bits of information run through the brain every second. Think about how many seconds you have been alive. There are 31.5 million seconds each year; multiply that by your age, and you can imagine the extent of information your brain has processed in your lifetime.

So what is the point? We have access to a massive amount of information that is already in our heads. There is a countless amount of knowledge inside our brains, in addition to the inborn or innate programming we were born with. Acknowledge this, and it will give you tremendous confidence in seeking answers from yourself.

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So now that we realise we have access to all that information, it is what we do with it that matters. The statement “knowledge is power” is incorrect; it is the application of that knowledge which is power. The requirement to apply that knowledge means there is a necessity of choice. Unfortunately, we often get stuck and confused when it comes to options, especially in today’s world. We are spoiled with choices due to the emergence of all the information we have coming to us from Facebook, Twitter and the web itself. We think we want something; then we second-guess ourselves and flip our selection, only to think back and flip it again.

**THE STATEMENT  
“KNOWLEDGE IS  
POWER” IS INCORRECT;  
IT IS THE APPLICATION  
OF THAT KNOWLEDGE  
WHICH IS POWER.**

Why is making a decision so difficult? Oftentimes, it is because we are making decisions, not making choices. A decision is when we weigh out all the possible options and select based on comparison or consideration. Have you ever heard the phrase “paralysis by over-analysis”? That is when we look at our options and we contemplate too much because there are numerous pros and cons to each option. We go back and forth in our minds, wasting valuable time and energy. A choice is different: A choice is selecting without going back and forth in our minds. In other words, it is selecting and then moving forward full throttle without hesitation. To make a choice is to select freely and without consideration.

Let’s use an example. Pretend you are on a beach on a warm, but not extremely hot summer day. You go down to the water and ask yourself if you should get in or just stay on the beach. You dip your toe in the water and find that it is cold. The back-and-forth process in your mind plays out:



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I am starting to get hot just sitting here in the sun; however, the water seems pretty cold. What happens if I get in and I can't stand the temperature? Then I will have to get out and dry myself off, but it may be cold when I get out, and I don't want to get sandy from being wet.

This is making a decision, going back and forth, considering and weighing the options. Let us pretend that while you go back and forth in your mind, someone next to you runs from the beach and jumps into the water with no hesitation. That person just made a choice!

One characteristic of highly successful people is their ability to make choices, to choose quickly and then observe the results. They fire and then aim, instead of aim and then fire. You can always adjust or make a new choice once you see the effects from the first one. If you stand there and over-think, and go back and forth in your head as you try to make a decision, you will still be standing there while life races past you. You have the wisdom inside you; acknowledge that and then act. Darrell Wade, the co-founder of one of the largest tour operators in the world, Intrepid Travel, has many inspiring stories to tell about this topic. He said:

*“Give it a shot, and don't worry  
about what you don't know.”*

### LET'S HUSTLE

**The next time you feel stuck while making a decision, sit back and look inside yourself for the answer. Immediately act and make a choice! Make any adjustments or additional choices after that based on the results.**

# 10

## THE LAW OF RHYTHM

*“Travel is the ultimate industry that pulls culture, learning, and business together.”*

—John Mims, Chief Connector and Managing Director, The Hunting Ridge Group

6 August 2010

Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand

*The last two and a half months have been nothing short of a tornado of experiences flying through my life, leaving me completely discombobulated. After the initial struggle of building a practice in a different culture, I was deported from the country I started to call home (a story all in itself). This was only supposed to last a week. The next thing I knew I was living out of a small hotel in Singapore, constantly getting teased about being able to come back only to have the exact opposite told to me a few days later. After this game of cat and mouse began to get boring, I started to think about the possibility of making Singapore my new home. At least I could start over new again (with almost all my belongings left behind in Indonesia). The next thing I heard, my company is committed to getting me back to Indonesia (yeah, but when?). I found myself covering a practice for a few weeks; however, with the return of the primary doctor to his clinic, I had to step aside. Once again, I am more confused than when I first arrived in the Lion City two and half months ago.*

*With not much to do, I decided to hop on a cheap flight to the land where the sea is deep blue, the beaches are powder white, and the food packs more heat than the tropical weather – Thailand.*

*Having travelled in the country before, I decided to go island hopping at a place where it is nothing short of paradise – the Andaman side of the country. Where else can you swim in crystalline waters, follow it up with uniquely mouth-watering food, and then finish it off with an extremely painful yet relaxing massage without burning a hole in your wallet? Enough reasons for a short holiday? I think so.*

*Before long I was in the air and then on a boat to the province of Krabi, where limestone cliffs jettison out of the impossibly blue Andaman sea. Though I am in the country during monsoon season, I have been blessed with incredible clear skies. On the boat ride to Krabi, jellyfish peppered the deep clear water as the limestone karsts came into view. This is exactly what I was waiting for.*

*In the next few days, I often found myself vertical on the limestone. Having been about a year and half since I last rock climbed, to say I struggled is an understatement. Add that to the relentless sun and sweltering 40 degree heat (104 degrees F for my fellow Americans), and you could say I was nothing short of exhausted. The last run was a 35-meter (100 ft) climb up a craggy face close to sunset which I struggled to complete but was rewarded by incredible panoramic views that stuffed the frame of my new camera. Too bad, my forearms were burning so bad that hitting the shutter button was almost as difficult as the actual climb itself.*

*When I reached the ground, I was hurting everywhere. My face and arms were sun-dried and burnt, and my legs were cramping; let's not even start to talk about my forearms. I was battered, beaten and bruised. I thought that I came to Thailand to escape all this.*

*Afterwards, it took every last ounce of energy for me to take a five-minute stroll to Phra Nang beach, reputedly the best in Thailand. Phra Nang is astonishing – white sands encapsulated by giant overhanging cliffs*

*and limestone teeth shooting skyward offshore. I walked to the corner, where I had the beach to myself, and basically fell into the cerulean waters.*

*I bobbed back and forth in the water, letting the waves take me as they wish while the sun set, laying soft light on the limestone cliffs. It was an incredibly tranquil experience. I tipped my head back and smiled. This was all too much like my experiences of the last few months. Who knows where I am going to end up at this point? Am I going to get back to Indonesia? Am I going to make Singapore my new home? Is this all too much work and frustration? Is more travelling in the cards?*

*Who knows? I guess I will just have to sit back, smile and ride the waves.*

**A**fter arriving in Singapore and scouting out the place for one month, I made the choice to move to Jakarta, Indonesia, and start a few chiropractic clinics there. From the second I landed, there was a connection, a kinship to the city. Coincidentally, one year earlier in 2008, I spent three weeks in the rural east side of Bali, Indonesia, doing volunteer work and providing free chiropractic care to the villagers. After working for a few weeks, the opportunity to practice in Singapore surfaced, which ultimately led me back to Asia. While working in Bali, I fell in love with the hospitality of the people. There was a calm, warm energy that seemed to emanate from the people. These experiences led me to feel a connection, a bond with Indonesia.

Jakarta is different from Bali and is wild and intoxicating to all the senses. Jakarta is loud, polluted, smelly and incredibly vibrant. The people are enthusiastic and optimistic about not only their own lives but the possibilities that lie ahead for Indonesia. The country itself is packed full of adventure, with more than 14,000 islands spread across the Indian Ocean. The islands are home to more than 240 million people speaking over 700 languages. It is the most volcanically active country on the planet and has the largest rainforests outside of the Amazon. Jakarta is the capital of Indonesia and the biggest city in the country. It has all the energy and diversity one would expect from



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such a huge city. I arrived in the city full of energy, hopes and dreams, holding the vision of a large and successful practice, and a mission to inspire and help the masses regain their health through the chiropractic philosophy and practice.

In the first few months in Jakarta, there were so many highs and lows in practice and life. There were the amazing experiences of learning the language, eating the different kinds of food, mingling with Indonesian high society, and going out with movie stars and models. I rubbed elbows with the powerful people that made the city move. It was a new and seductive experience, akin to a small town kid going away for the first time to a university far away from home, letting loose and having a blast. With those highs came the lows as well. As the first chiropractor in my group to practise on the ground in Indonesia, business was unpredictable and did not go as well as planned at first. Student loan bills started coming in, and the little money I made went straight to paying those bills down, as well as paying the huge credit card bills that had accumulated from travel and undergraduate and



graduate schools. I did not know one soul prior to moving there, and it was incredibly lonely at times. Those first couple of months, after paying the bills, I had about \$10 USD a day to eat on. That budget meant a lot of cheap street food. One evening, after a very discouraging day at the clinic, I ate a big plate of fried rice with extra chilli peppers. As I walked back to my shabby room, which had no windows and was furnished by only a bed and a dresser, I took out my contact lenses. It completely slipped my mind that I had forgotten to wash my hands. The remnants of chilli on my fingers burned my eyes so badly that I fell on the floor immediately. Unable to open my eyes, I reached for the bathtub faucet, and since it (and everything else in the room) was in such bad shape, the handle broke and water squirted everywhere while I was lying there in pain, still unable to open my eyes.

Despite such embarrassing setbacks, I pushed forward and applied everything I learned, and as my confidence and competence grew, the clinic began to grow. I was suddenly having a great time, the clinic staff members were starting to come on board with my vision, and they were beginning to understand the tenets of chiropractic. Finally, some financial wiggle room came, things were moving in the right direction, and suddenly, things took a turn again. Because of mistakes that the staff and I had made with my visa and work permit, I was blacklisted and deported from the Republic of Indonesia, a place I was starting to call home.

Assuming I would be back in Indonesia and naively thinking it would be easy to get the paperwork straightened out quickly, I left most of my belongings there. I flew back to Singapore and did coverage work for doctors that were on holiday. After a few months, the coverage work dried up, and it was revealed that I would not be able to get back into Indonesia for at least a year. It felt like a punch in the gut. With the coverage work no longer available, the small amount of money I had put away started to disappear again.

I took a two-week trip to Thailand to rethink my next move. Doubt about myself and my choices began to creep in. Should I have done things differently?

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## SHOULD: THE CURSE WORD

*“Freedom has a lot to do with time management. We don’t realise it but, sometimes, we spend a great deal of time doing something which does not benefit us.”*

—Magdalene Wan,  
Founder of Matchbox,  
the Concept Hostel and  
BornToBunk.com

A few years ago, I heard the phrase, “Don’t should all over yourself”. You can quickly think you should have done this or should have done that for everything that has happened in the past. What is dangerous about this phrase and this way of thinking is looking back and using the words *should have*. You create a space in your mind that is separate from reality and what actually happened. You then attach yourself to that space, and it becomes an anchor on your tail that keeps you from being in the present and moving forward into the future. It also puts your focus on how things may have been different. “Shoulding all over yourself” disassociates you from reality.

I am not immune to this – at times, I have second-guessed my choices too. A few years ago, as I looked back at my finances, a thought crept in: “I really should have saved more money last year.” Putting focus on what should have been done does nothing for me, and it will do nothing for you too. The only effect is more stress and self-resentment. Make a choice to do things differently in the future and move on. The next time you find yourself “shoulding all over yourself”, stop, release it, and make a commitment to focus on what you will do differently in the future.

## BIG PROBLEM

*“Attitude is what makes a difference, no matter if you are rich or broke.”*

—Jacqui Hocking, Co-founder of Gone Adventurin

Oftentimes, when we get beaten and bruised in life, we wish that all our problems would just go away. Problems that may not seem big become huge once they become our problems. If someone you know goes through a break-up, you may feel bad, but it is not going to keep you up every single night (unless that person keeps calling you). Now turn the tables, think of a time when you went through a break-up; I bet it was awfully painful.

**THERE IS A SECRET THAT SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE SHARE WHEN IT COMES TO PROBLEMS, AND IT IS COUNTERINTUITIVE. THE PEOPLE WHO REALLY MAKE A DENT IN THIS WORLD DO NOT AVOID PROBLEMS; THEY TRY TO CREATE BIGGER PROBLEMS.**

Because of the pain or discomfort we feel when we are faced with problems, it becomes natural to avoid them at all costs. There is a secret that successful people share when it comes to problems, and it is counterintuitive. The people who really make a dent in this world do not avoid problems; they try to create

bigger problems. When the late Steve Jobs started Apple, he wanted the best technology and products to be in the hands of the masses. Jobs never felt as though he solved the problem; that is why he kept pushing and innovating until his passing.

Creating big problems is important if you want to play on a big stage. Ben Clymer from Hodinkee said this about tackling a big problem and starting a movement:

*“It’s changing one little corner of the world, in our own little way, that keeps me going.”*

Changing the world, even if it is a small piece of your world, is no small task. It is a big problem that comes with obstacles, challenges, and ups and downs. In return, you will be rewarded with fulfilment, inspiration, continuous growth and a purposeful attitude.

## THE LAW OF RHYTHM

Why is it that the path that life gives us constantly fluctuates? Life can feel like a roller coaster, shifting directions quickly and without warning. Why are there constantly up-and-down cycles as we navigate through life? If you are not careful, it becomes easy to get caught up in the extreme peaks or the valleys without seeing the bigger picture. That is a big pitfall that people fall victim to because they do not understand the law of rhythm.

The law of rhythm states that everything goes up and down. We can observe this in nature – the rising and falling of the tides, the rising and setting of the sun and the moon. This law is a description of a wave. A wave is a curve that has peaks and valleys while moving in a certain direction. If you are having a hard time holding the image in your mind, think of watching waves come into the beach. As the waves come towards you, they move up and down, some higher than others and some lower than others. You could also take one end of your

headphones while they are connected to your phone and start shaking the end you have grabbed up and down – that is a wave. We cannot control the fact that there will be ups and downs in whatever paths we may choose. It is just how nature works. What we can control is the direction that we want our life to move into.

Imagine yourself owning a powerful machine that can aim waves in a specific direction. Being a big nerd, I imagine a big contraption, such as Project X in Ayn Rand's novel, *Atlas Shrugged*. In the book, a group of scientists invent a large machine that shoots sound waves in a particular direction with devastating effects. We have that same ability. We can point our mind, which is an incredibly powerful instrument, and focus in a single direction. Thoughts are actually waves. Once the direction is set, we must understand that there will be ups and downs.

It is critical to understand this law. Misunderstanding this law or not being familiar with it can get you stuck in a never-ending cycle. Once you understand this law, you will realise that ups and downs are all part of a process. Just because you are experiencing the down does not mean that you have stopped moving forward. It is hard to see the peaks of the mountain when you are in the depths of the valley, but being at the bottom makes the climb to the top and the view that much sweeter.

## LET'S HUSTLE

**What is a big problem that you can take on that will enliven and inspire you? Create your own big problem intentionally and watch the rest of the problems in your life disappear.**

# 11

## VISION

*“Champions aren’t made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them – a desire, a dream, a vision.”*

—Muhammad Ali

*Wednesday, 12 January 2011  
Singapore*

*As I lie here in bed with my computer back from the dead (after a lengthy repair process), I just have to laugh as I bask in gratitude. It is quite fitting as I say goodbye to 2010 and welcome 2011 with open arms. I had quite a year in 2009; it included graduating from chiropractic college, moving back home for three months and saying goodbye to friends and family, followed by a six-month globe trot. It closed with the opening of my first chiropractic clinic. If anything, I was looking forward to having stability in 2010. Well, I was hit with a stark reality – my life revolves around chaos.*

*The beginning of 2010 placed me in Indonesia, with no knowledge of the language, no friends or family, and not a dime to my name. I scratched and clawed to grow a clinic from the ground up, only to be uprooted and deported out of the country. I landed in Singapore with a backpack on my shoulders and most of my possessions still back in Indonesia. I bounced around from hotel to hotel – and the floors of my boss’ two empty homes – only to find out I could not return, for one whole year, to Indonesia, a country I was starting to call home. After I started practising in two Singapore clinics, I decided to take two weeks and head to Thailand to get my head clear.*



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*Upon arrival back in Singapore, I discovered that I would be opening a new clinic there, and I would only have to wait three more months.*

*I vividly remember sitting in my boss' car after getting back from Thailand, with tears flowing uncontrollably from my eyes. Why was everything in shambles for me? I had prepared so hard for this moment to have the chance to practise as a chiropractor and to make a difference in people's lives. I was completely discombobulated and totally confused. What should I do? I thought seriously about giving up my dream of becoming a great chiropractor; perhaps the universe was trying to point me in a different direction.*

*It's funny when you look at the curve balls that life throws at us. I truly believe we are tested to see what we are made of, and yes the strong survive. Calvin Coolidge said it best:*

*Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.*

*With the help from some of you and some good old words from cool Cal, I made the choice to put my head down and move forward. So here it is.*

*In 2010, I began my chiropractic career; I started two clinics from scratch in two different countries, and I was on television twice. I learned what it felt like to become deported. I was published in two chiropractic journals, I went out with a Miss Indonesia finalist, and I lost everything financially. I travelled with a great healer through the Golden Land (Thailand), and I lived in a guesthouse, a high-rise apartment, two hotels and on the floors of two different houses. I shed more tears and had more self doubt than in any time of my life, and while building the third clinic, I increased my monthly income tenfold in two months' time.*

*In 2010, I truly can say I laid it all on the line. It was painful, crazy and exhilarating all at the same time. I now sit in gratitude as the second clinic is flourishing, and I'm having a blast once again turning on life in the clinic each and every day. In 2010, I not only hit the bottom of the barrel, I got trapped in it while it was rolled down a steep hill. I wouldn't change anything about the tumultuous year because it was in 2010 that I faced the biggest challenges in my young career.*

*Is chaos a good thing? On the other side of chaos lies growth. Chaos is necessary for adaptation and for survival. We all have a dream. However, are we going to shrivel up and turn our backs when challenges come our way? Or do we choose to be steadfast and exhibit perseverance as President Coolidge suggested? What are we willing to do to make our dreams into reality?*

*One of my favourite chiropractors, John Demartini, said it best:*

*"You must do whatever it takes, travel whatever distance, and pay whatever price.*

*May your journey be fruitful and full of chaos."*

**A**fter arriving from my two-week stint in Thailand, I chose to stay in Singapore and give it everything. Since leaving home a year ago with a vision to build a successful practice and business, I looked deep inside myself and knew that was still the desire and what I had travelled all this distance for.

The first three months after returning to Singapore did not go as smoothly as hoped. I was not practising and was therefore not earning money. The little savings that had been put away dwindled yet again. It was back to a familiar territory, barely getting by and eating one meal per day, which was all that I could afford. Hainanese chicken rice, once per day for weeks on end, became the staple meal. The groundwork started for the new clinic, the third I would start in two years. There was nothing to do but push forward.

## VISION

One evening, a dear friend and mentor, Dr. Matt Kan, gave me a ride home. As we sat in his car, tears started flowing down my face. I had worked so hard to get to this point. Why couldn't things just go smoothly as planned?

“We all have to go our own path. This is just a small slip. There are going to be things you go through in life that you feel like you may never recover from; stay on your own path and you will be very successful,” said Dr. Kan. Those words stuck with me.

The next day, I set my stuff down on the floor after the long one-and-a-half-hour train ride from the clinic. I was staying in a tiny room with a mattress on the floor in an empty house that was about to get torn down. I sat and stared out the window wondering how I had gotten myself into this situation and what the future held. I talked to a friend from graduate school on the phone. Sensing the frustration in my voice, he said, “Your life is so amazing now; just imagine what it will be like when you start earning income.”

Within the next few weeks, there were a few events staged, and the clinic's business exploded. My income went from nearly nothing to five figures monthly in the blink of an eye. The clinic continued to grow, and at the time of writing this, it is a model clinic within the Chiropractic First group and one of the largest in Singapore. The clinic is generating revenue in the seven figures annually.

Often, people ask me what I am doing to create success. I have come to the conclusion that it does not matter what you are doing but how you are doing it. It is what's going on inside you, not outside of you, that matters most, and that is exactly what this whole book is about.

## VISION

I've met so many people along the way in writing this book. Among them are successful entrepreneurs who all share a common belief:

*“Do well daily. Have a focus and vision.  
Believe and you will achieve.”*

—Tan Tse Yong, Founder of FitLion

*“The most important thing is to have a dream.  
The clearer the vision, the easier the how.”*

—Millie Leung, Entrepreneur, Author and Speaker

*“Have a dream, a vision, and always pursue it.”*

—Nick Gundry, Co-founder of Boatbay

*“Starting with the mission and vision to be a  
community leader first and a businessperson  
second is essential to be influential.”*

—Amarit Charoenphan, Co-founder of HUBBA Bangkok

*“It’s great to have a clear vision, have practicality  
in the short term but vision in the long term.”*

—Anirudh Gupta, Co-Founder of Tripoto

What theme comes up over and over again? Everyone above brought up the word *vision*. I contend that the level of success in your life depends on how clear the image is fixed in your mind. I will use an example of taking a photograph. Imagine you are looking through the lens and have problems focusing on the subject you are trying to shoot. Even if the focus is not the clearest, you can still create a physical photograph. The sharpness of the focus will however determine the quality of the photograph. Fine-tune the focus, and the photo becomes clearer.

My father is a farmer. Whenever he plants a seed in the soil and allows it to receive water and sunlight, it does not matter what is planted – the seed will flourish and grow. Think of your mind as the soil and any vision you have as the seed. The more specific the type of seed, the more specific your crop will be. So get specific about what vision, what idea you plant in your mind. You really do reap what you sow.

## VISION

The challenge is getting clarity on what we really want. Often, people know exactly what they do not want, but rarely will you find people who know what they want. More rarely will you find someone who knows exactly what they want and how they are going to get it.

Clarity may be hard to obtain, but it is possible, and it may be closer than you think. Many years ago, when I started driving, it was the mid 1990s, and cars still had analogue stereos in them. There were two knobs, one to adjust the volume and the other to adjust the frequency for the right stereo channel; frequency was displayed by a bar that scrolled across a numeric scale. My favourite channel was FM92.5. When adjusting the frequency with the knob, as it came closer to number 92 on the scale, the sound coming from the speakers would start as static. The closer to the exact frequency, the clearer the sound got. Often times, it would get to the point where music could be heard

**THE CHALLENGE IS GETTING CLARITY ON WHAT WE REALLY WANT.**

from the channel, but there was still a faint sound of static. When I continued to turn the knob ever so slightly, less than one degree, the station would finally come in crystal clear.

You may be very close to having clarity, and sharpening your vision may mean adjusting it less than one degree. Work on adjusting, carving out and clarifying the vision of what you want to the slightest detail. It takes effort. Antonio Centeno of Real Men, Real Style said it best: “It comes down to the details; it’s hard to find people that get all the details right.” Is it a surprise that so few people get what they really want? If you are ever frustrated with your results, look closer and see what details you may be missing out on.

## THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

Prof. Edward Norton Lorenz describes a phenomenon where he noticed that small differences in initial conditions can create vastly different

outcomes, making it difficult to predict future events. He thought that if you could go back and change that initial event, you would get not a small, but a drastically different, possibly even unpredictable outcome. He named this the Butterfly Effect, which is used to describe events in chaos theory.

In the film trilogy *Back to the Future*, as the main characters Marty McFly and Doc Brown keep travelling through time, they found that if any events were altered in the past, no matter how large or small, there were dramatically different consequences in the future as a result. Marty travels to the past and interrupts an event at which his parents originally met, and when he looks at a photograph of his family that he brought with him from the future, he notices that his siblings begin to disappear in the photo. Changing the meeting of his parents drastically altered events in the future to the point where he and his sibling may not even be born. The Butterfly Effect is a rather complex field of study; I hope I have done it justice by describing the gist of it.

Looking back in hindsight, everything that you have experienced or gone through has prepared you for this point in your life. In other words, the world is a big, complex and dynamic place, and you are exactly where you are supposed to be. You might have taken one step in the opposite direction ten years ago that may have led to drastically different results. Now, you may not even be in the same career or country. I am adopted; being Korean-born, my adoptive parents were unable to see me in person as they were living in the USA. They chose to adopt me by going through photographs of different children. What if the photos had been in a different order that day? What if my mother had

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## VISION

sneezed and knocked all the photos to the floor? What if my photos were left out of the stack that day?

Hearing the term *chaos* may insinuate that everything has gone wrong and there is a big mess, but it may be exactly what the doctor, or rather the universe, ordered.

### LET'S HUSTLE

**Accept that everything you have ever done in life has put you in position to be in this exact moment right now. Next, make a choice on what you really want; sit down and write out what your perfect day would entail. Don't leave out any detail!**



# CONCLUSION

*“When I think about creating abundance, it’s not about creating a life of luxury for everybody on this planet; it’s about creating a life of possibility. It is about taking that which was scarce and making it abundant.”*

—Peter Diamandis, Greek-American Engineer,  
Physician and Entrepreneur

3 March 2011  
Similan Islands, Thailand

*“Cross the border, into the big bad world.”*

—Paolo Nutini

*The sun had already set on the crystalline Andaman Sea, and darkness had fallen. A handful of us strapped on our tanks, checked our air supply and tightened our masks. The cruise had been remarkable thus far, consisting of eating and diving, in no particular order. We had already logged five dives over the first two gruelling days. However, this was a whole new ball game: the night dive. I could feel a bit of nitrogen narcosis setting in. In other words, I was exhausted. There was no other way to slice it.*

*All geared up, I took the plunge into the dark open sea. The evening times on the Andaman Sea are incredibly cool, and the ocean breeze is refreshing since the days can be scorching. The water on this night was very comfortable, as warm as bath water. Once everybody was in, we did a quick check and then started our descent.*

*After two days of diving, I was beginning to feel very comfortable with descending and being in the water with all the gear strapped on. However,*



## CONCLUSION

*this dive was completely different; it was pitch black, so I had no way of orienting myself. My breathing increased rapidly, and my heart rate shot up. Because of the quick descent, I had problems with the equalisation of my ears for the first time in my diving career. My eardrums were unbearably painful. My torch was pointed down, so I couldn't see much, and my sympathetic nerve system was off the charts. I remember very vividly that I considered giving the sign for "I have a problem" to the dive instructor and ascending quicker than I came down.*

*Then something amazing happened; my body adapted. My ears equalised, and the pressure disappeared. My heart rate returned to normal, and I lifted my torch to illuminate this new strange and mysterious world. It was amazing. As I turned my head and saw all the beams from my fellow divers cut through the darkness, it looked like a scene from *The Abyss*. The wildlife was completely different. A huge crab scurried around the bottom (I wish I could have grabbed it for dinner), while the coral expressed many different colours at night. I was surprised how much my eyes adapted. Soon I could see a lot around me without my light in the dark water. We all turned off our torches and were amazed to see bioluminescent creatures, shining like tiny soft lights. They looked much like fireflies, as they danced all around our bodies. It was incredibly magical.*

*I liken the whole night dive to my life at this moment in time. I have just stepped into another world, not your proverbial border crossing, but one of consciousness. Gone are the days of the "student" mindset, when I was constantly scrapping together enough change to just eat and get by. Now is the time to welcome stability and abundance. Yet, I still find it hard to feel comfortable. The practice is picking up, and yet, as I learn more and more, there is more yet that I don't know. Life is new, frustrating and fascinating at the same time. However, the most uncomfortable moments and experiences in the last few months have brought with them the most incredible highs.*

*Many times in life, we dare not take the plunge into the unknown. The unknown is exactly that, the unknown. The sense of newness unlocks incredible power, adaptability and joy that we may never know exists in us.*

*That newfound power brings incredible experiences and lessons that open up a whole new world to us if we are simply willing to take that first step and cross the border.*

*And sorry Paolo – I contend that the world isn't so big and bad after all.*

## ABUNDANCE AND GROWTH

*“When you travel you learn skills that allow you become more adaptable, which helps you in your career.”*

—Todd Arthur, Managing Director at HRS the Hotel Portal

**S**o many things go right into our bodies each and every second that we take them for granted. In the last breath you took, your lungs had used the oxygen from the air and synthesised it for your continued survival. At the same time, millions and millions of chemical reactions just occurred to keep your body temperature constant. If you are seeing these words right now and understanding them, we know that your eyes, brain and nervous system are receiving and processing millions of stimulants per second.

You have incredible abundance. Yes, I'm talking to you. If you are reading this now, it means you have access to things beyond your basic needs for food and shelter. We have access to more information and opportunity than any of the great kings from the ancient world. Did you have to go out and hunt for your dinner? Chances are, if you are reading this, you went to the supermarket or a local restaurant to get your dinner. You may even have bought a bottle of wine just because you felt like it. Abundance is all around us in today's world, and you are the beneficiary.

I began to feel uncomfortable as more and more abundance was flowing into my life. The epiphany came when I finally understood that I already had abundance. Abundance is a mindset, and to have the abundance mindset and to feel worthy and deserved is a game changer

## CONCLUSION

– this world gives you every opportunity to be successful and to have what you really want. Most people pass the opportunities by because their eyes are not open to them, or they do not feel worthy. Once you start to understand yourself, the world and the universe at large, doors start to open up and new opportunities will reveal themselves to you over and over again.

When you open your mind to abundance, you create a long and sustainable path of positive growth. Growth is what allows you to see things differently. You see the world differently as an adult than you did as a teenager. Growth occurs when you take that step into the unknown, into that space between chaos and order. Travel is a life education on steroids that offers you expansive growth; it teaches you skill sets you must learn on the fly. Matt Kepnes, also known as Nomadic Matt, runs one of the most visited travel blogs. He said:

*“Travel teaches you a lot about yourself, how to survive and how to be independent.”*

Personally, I believe travel is the best tool for helping you step into the unknown, literally and figuratively. If you want maximum impact, transformation and breakthroughs, you have to be willing to jump into the unknown. Just beware that it is addictive. Once you get bitten by the travel bug, it is hard to go back. Once you start, you will forever be someone new. You will learn from other people and yourself. Don't worry about what other people think or say. As Clinton Ang of Cornerstone Wines said:

*“The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do...”*

At the time of publication, I will have stepped out of chiropractic practice to get out on the road again and take in more of whatever this world has to teach me. I invite you to follow, learn and grow with me and my team at [www.theblueroster.com](http://www.theblueroster.com). Get out there and travel, learn and earn!

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I would also like to thank everyone I met on the road and all the people I was fortunate to care for through my chiropractic practice during my five years in Southeast Asia. Last but not least, thanks to you, the reader. I hope you feel inspired to go out there and allow the world to be your classroom and your guide as you reach new levels of happiness and abundance.





Scan here for inspiring photos and live updates to keep you fired up about traveling, learning, and earning.

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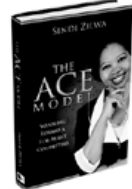
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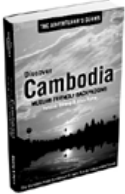
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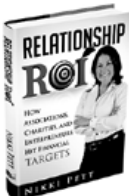
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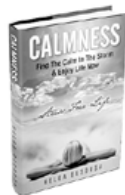
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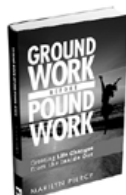
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**W**hy are so many people frustrated with their lives? Why, in today's world where we have more communication tools at our fingertips than at any time in human history, are we more disconnected than we have ever been? What is it that keeps us from living the life that we want? Is it possible for us to flourish while living life on our own terms?

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**James MacNeil**, Author of *The Guru Builder*  
[www.thegurubuilder.com](http://www.thegurubuilder.com)



In 2009, Matthew Horkey obtained his Doctor of Chiropractic degree in Atlanta, Georgia. The very next day, with tears in his eyes, he kissed his family goodbye and hopped on a plane with a one-way ticket, a backpack, and a heart full of dreams.

Today, Dr. Matthew Horkey is an author, speaker, and adventurer dedicated to helping people realize their potential. He is passionate about using storytelling as a tool to enable people overcome the hidden obstacles in their lives. *Travel Learn Earn* is his first book. Part travel memoir, part instructional guide, he aims to teach and inspire people through the natural laws of the universe. Travel manifests these laws, guiding people to personal transformations and massive breakthroughs in their wealth and freedom.

